

Foreword to

"Modern Shamans" by Nancy DeYoung

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by PMH Atwater, L.H.D.

The term "shaman" is said to be a Tibetan word meaning "one who knows." What distinguishes shamanism from other forms of knowing is that practitioners of the artform "journey" to non-ordinary states of consciousness both within the self and throughout the "luminous energy matrix" that undergirds all creation and all created things. They seek for learning, for guidance, for knowledge, for direction, for the power to heal in service to others, their community, themselves.

Shamanism is not a game, nor is it a system of techniques or another "new age" gimmick. It is a journey into nothing (nothing) where endings are revealed and the mystery of mysteries is laid bare. It is a journey into spirit in the company of spirits, to reach in and beyond that which is "spiritual." Shamanism is as old as the First Peoples and as young as babes of the 21st century. . . forever relevant. My childhood arranged itself around this truth, unveiling an energy matrix more real than fingers and toes, more touchable and lively than what I was later taught to regard as "physical." Then I met the Spirit Keepers.

It was a bright Saturday. I may have been 10, perhaps 11, when the high pasture near the rim of Rock Creek Canyon south of Twin Falls, Idaho, became my refuge. Hatred oozed from each step as I screamed at the injustices and cruelty of my life, of a mother who never mothered me, of another mother who did yet we were kept apart, of a parade of men each answering to the title "father" who convinced me they was no such thing. I sat on a log to moan my fate.

Suddenly, from the grasses, soil, and rocks there arose the energy that resided within each of those forms, the energy that enabled the natural world to exist. This energy lifted as if "mountains" were oozing upward from the earth to create large and small peaks; all around me, peaks, I could see through and feel through. I imagined on each peak a face yet there were none, no features, just glistening, shimmering mini-mountains of purest energy. We spoke, though not in words so much as feelings, senses, images, sounds, rhythms, pulsations. They called themselves Spirit Keepers and impressed upon me that it was their job to hold together spirit and matter, like "glue," so Creation could manifest. They showed me how each area on the planet had Spirit Keepers to maintain the flow of The Great Breath as It breathed through Its own thoughts. . . Creation assured.

I learned more from the Spirit Keepers than I did from school. They taught me things like how to merge into rock and soil, become whatever I focused on, how to release what twisted my soul.

They were my friends and we shared many moments. For years afterward I encountered them wherever I went. After I died three times in three months in 1977, and each time had a near-death experience, I walked out on my life and journeyed east, settling down in the state of Virginia.

Part of my healing journey into wholeness was a particular evening when I encountered the Spirit Keepers of the Shenandoah River and came to realize that I, too, was a Spirit Keeper. We all are. As we awaken to other worlds and greater realities, as we peer through the veils that separate perception from fact, we become as if acupuncture needles in how our energy, the sum of us, steadies and nourishes the earth and all therein with each step we take, each breath we breathe.

Part of everyone's journey into wholeness is reaching that place in knowing where we can accept our call to serve the healing of self, others, our world. Shamans, once they move through the artforms of knowing that they know, become invaluable servers who quietly and dependably restore balance as they reconnect the head with the heart.

This is where Nancy DeYoung shines. She takes the alchemical process of clearing and cleaning subtle-body energy and turns it into practical, usable measures anyone can use to heal self and others. She speaks with a voice that is direct and practical, that unites the sensitivities of tradition with the demands of our modern world and the tension we all feel in these rapidly changing times. I never imagined that a do-it-yourself manual would be possible in shamanism. Here it is: not so much in explaining what really cannot be explained, but rather in application, how to become what a shaman really is. . . a healer who serves.

Congratulations, Nancy. Job well done.

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The Magical Language of Runes
Coming Back to Life: The Aftereffects of the Near-Death Experience
Beyond the Light: What Isn't Being Said About the Near-Death Experience
Future Memory: How Those Who 'See the Future' Shed New Light on the
Workings of the Human Mind
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As You Die (CD and DVD)
The Complete Idiot's Guide to Near-Death Experiences
The New Children and Near-Death Experiences
We Live Forever: The Real Truth About Death
Beyond the Indigo Children: The New Children and the Coming of the Fifth World. The addendum to the book, entitled "Beyond the Indigo Children EXTRAS" is on her website
The Secrets in My Soul (release in 2007)
The Near-Death Experience ~ A Single Sourcebook That Tells All (release in 2007)
Various self-published books and e-books available over her website, <http://www.pmhatwater.com>
Dozens of research papers presented at conferences, some

published in various peer-reviewed journals, including
mention of her work in the Dutch Study of Near-Death
Experiences, Lancet medical journal (12-15-01)
Countless columns written for newsletters and websites, now
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