

FINDING THE PHOENIX VIDEO #7

NEO-SHAMANIC TECHNIQUE/ ACCESSING YOUR INNER WISDOM

The ancient technique of shamanism is centered on the ability of the practitioner to induce an altered state of consciousness in order to undertake willed, focused “journey” to interface with the spirit world for the benefit of the tribal community. The shamanic journey state is unique because it is:

- Undertaken at will and entered from a state of normal waking consciousness.
- Has a specific purpose and destination.
- Allows the shaman to seek out and interact with spirit entities and anomalous phenomena.
- Is undertaken for the benefit of the community for purposes of healing, gathering of information, invoking protection.
- In the journey state the limbic system and the cerebral cortex are in rare communication so that the shaman can (a) direct the journey, (b) abort the journey, (c) narrate the journey as it is taking place.

The shamanic journey is used by contemporary Neo-shamanic practitioners. Since it is self-directed and focused it is an extraordinarily precise and effective method of deep self-exploration.

What is Neo-shamanic Technique?

- Definition – Neo-shamanic technique is a form of deep, focused meditation entered at will for purposes of healing, and gathering information that is used by contemporary Neo-shamanic practitioners.
- Drumming – Steady, repetitive drumming is the usual method used by Neo-shamanic practitioners to reduce the frequency of their brain waves in order to access an altered state of consciousness in which they can perceive phenomena that cannot usually be perceived while in a normal waking state of consciousness (NWC).
- Characteristics of the Neo-shamanic Journey:
 - Focus
 - Willed experience

- o Ability to abort at will and return to NWC
- o Stated purpose

***Neo-shamanism and Mental Health* (Bouse, K. 2019) provides an accessible overview of Neo-shamanism.**

- Excerpts from recorded journeys
- Testimonials from participants about benefits of using technique
- Good overview of phenomenology
- Everyday people
- Discussions of potential pitfalls inherent in Neo-shamanic practice.

Differences between Contemporary Neo-shamanism and Traditional Shamanism:

- Community (Traditional) vs. non-community (Neo)
- Cultural inclusion (Traditional) vs. cultural exclusion (Neo)
- Traditional acceptance (Traditional) vs. societal anomaly (Neo)
- Animistic, mystic worldview (Traditional) vs. material, scientific worldview (Neo)
- Connection to imminent divinity (Traditional) vs. belief in transcendent divinity (Neo)
- Acceptance of existence of spirit world beyond our physical senses (Traditional) vs. rejection of anything the physical senses cannot perceive (Neo)
- Belief in nature spirits, ancestors (Traditional) vs. non-belief in these (Neo).

What Constitutes the Neo-shamanic Worldview?

- Mystical orientation
- Animistic beliefs
- Presence of the sacred in all things
- Immanent divinity – the presence of the divine spirit in all being
- Existence of nature spirits, animal spirits, planet spirits, and ancestors and their ability to heal and intercede with the universe on behalf of tribe

- Acceptance of anomalous phenomena and experiences as part of life
- Belief in mutability of death

Using Neo-shamanic Technique for Self-Exploration:

- Non-traditional use of the technique
- Using it for self-exploration does not make someone a “shaman”
- Is completely self-directed and is not intended for healing or community benefit
- Needs to be undertaken with supervision
- Drumming can cause seizures so if you have a condition e.g. epilepsy you should avoid using a drumming CD or drumming to journey *This is Important.*
- Must clearly state your destination and purpose e.g. “I am going to the lower world to find an animal spirit to help me in my life.”

Benefits and Pitfalls of Using Neo-shamanic Technique for Self-Exploration:

- Connection with natural and spirit world
- Peak experiences
- Increased sense of wellbeing
- Increased self-awareness through self-discovery
- Enhanced identity and *Dasein*
- Expanded consciousness
- Integration of mystic and mundane
- Spiritual bypassing
- Cultural dissonance
- Dysfunctional identity
 - Grandiosity
 - Fantasy proneness
 - Sleep paralysis
 - Schizotypy

What is the Shamanic Journey?

- Altered state
- Neuroscience of the journey state
- Different room of the house
- Perception of phenomena and experience outside of normal waking consciousness

Using Neo-shamanic Technique in Personal Mythology

- Use to find weapon for defense
- Use to find teacher or spirit guide
- Use to find an animal spirit
- Use to answer specific questions
- Once you ask the question, everything that happens in the journey is part of the answer.

Recommended Readings:

Bouse, K. (2019). *Neo-shamanism and mental health*. London, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

Eliade, M. (1964). *Shamanism: Archaic techniques of ecstasy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

MacKinnon, C. (2012). *Shamanism and spirituality in therapeutic practice*. Philadelphia, PA: Singing Dragon.

Poncelet, C. (2014). *The shaman within: A physicist's guide to the deeper dimensions of your life, the universe and everything*. Boulder, CO: Sounds True.

Rock, A., & Krippner, S. (2011). *Demystifying shamans and their world: An interdisciplinary study*. Charlottesville, VA: Imprint-academic.

Winkelman, M. (2010). *Shamanism: A biopsychosocial paradigm of consciousness and healing*. (2nd ed.). Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger.