

Past Lives and Shamanic Spirit Guides: The WiseWomanSeer's Work in the World

*Spirits of Air and Earth, Fire and Water, shamanic guardians and teacher-guides, and ancestors who have walked the Red Road surround you always and protect in all journeys through all worlds.
Be the Medicine of Truth, Wisdom, and Empowerment. ~ RedHawk, Spirit Guide*

I am a shamanic practitioner, a reader of astrology and tarot, and a spiritual teacher. My work is mainly grounded in a shamanic paradigm for understanding and interpreting intuitive and channeled insights for my clients. But I have a background in psychology, and so my readings and workshops are psychologically grounded and oriented towards the personally empowering aspects of what these spiritual tools can reveal. As a spiritual warrior, I introduce others to their own spiritual powers, provide reliable knowledge, teach new skills, straighten out confusions, help build confidence, and encourage learning through spiritual risks.

I often call myself a seer. The word signifies the abilities of clairvoyance and claircognizance, which are the two intuitive talents that are the strongest for me. I connect visually when doing shamanic journeys, seeking past life visions, reading astrology charts or tarot cards, and when teaching. During any of those services, I get a strong sense of direct knowing that presses into my consciousness about the issues at hand. So *seer* seems the right word – one who sees and perceives or knows what others do not. I liked the word *seer* too because I can use it as a kind of shorthand for the longer descriptor of shamanic practitioner. The kind of shamanic work I do is mainly through journeying, which is for me a very visual skill. Journeys produce a rich amount of visual information, some of it metaphoric, some of it literal, along with insights on what the visions mean. Astrology, tarot cards, and other tools used for divination and accessing messages from the spirit world – such as reading rocks, trees, clouds, and other aspects of Nature – also rely on interpreting visual input and emergent connections between what is noticed and what it means for the client. So *seer* just fits with what I do.

Professionally, I've been reading cards for almost 30 years, and doing astrology for about 25. Both of those interests started when I was in graduate school to become a psychotherapist, and during the first years of private practice. I found that tarot was similar to the Rorschach test that was well regarded in some psychological circles, but tarot was more fun for clients. And I actually fell into reading cards when I volunteered to work in a friend's bookstore. There was always an open deck of tarot cards on the counter, and when the store had no customers, I got to play.

Learning astrology was, for me, a matter of social survival. I'd just finished grad school and was working in the office of a healing arts center in Seattle. All the staff and many of the healers and clients spoke in what I'd call *astro-babble*, and I had no idea what they were talking about. But there was an astrology program on the computer in the office, and lots of reference books in our center's library, and I was encouraged to learn about it. So I did. And what I soon discovered, from first exploring my chart and that of my family members, is that an astrology chart yields even better information than a personality test. It helps explain the normal craziness of why people are the way they are. And a chart can help you understand in a deeper way why you behave and feel the way you do. So it's no wonder to me that physicians such as Hippocrates and Carl Jung both felt that a knowledge of astrology was essential for a clinician if they wanted to really understand their patients.

Now I can interpret charts for couples having trouble in their relationship or for parents wanting to better understand their kids. I can help people understand their soul plan, which are revealed in the organization of an astrology chart. And there are ways to determine if you'd be better off living in a different city or country. Astrology is both science and art, and endlessly fascinating. I have learned to use a chart to open the door to shamanic journeys that can see details of the past lives that have a bearing on your current life's struggles. That ability to see actual visual bits of lives that are suggested in a chart began spontaneously one day and has become a major part of my work. It's pretty profound what astrology can reveal.

Shamanic journeying for me is very similar to lucid dreaming, autohypnosis or visual meditation, at least in terms of the neuro-mechanics of expanding awareness and working directly with non-ordinary states of consciousness. I'd taken training to learn transpersonal hypnotherapy during the last year of my master's degree program. This form of hypnotherapy emphasizes meeting guides, getting messages from the spirit world, and having little adventures in your inner mind. And really that's what shamanic journeying is, in one sense. So I'm in my 25th year of using that skill professionally as well. And I'm currently in more training to extend my skills as a shamanic practitioner, where I'm learning advanced levels of shamanic healing and soul retrievals.

Spiritually, I work solely with shamanic spirit guides, which are mostly animal archetypes. There are primarily seven guides who came to me during a couple of spiritual rituals more than 25 years ago. One of them actually has been with me almost all my life. I can't tell you specifically what they are, because to speak too openly about them is to dilute the sacred resonance we have. These spirit guides are also my guardians of the Seven Directions – the cardinal points of East, South, West, and North, as well as the directions of the Above, the Below, and the Within. So they form a sphere of protection around me at all times.

And I also work with a few other spirits I consider *special purpose guides and teachers*. Of these, one is a native ancestral figure, a medicine woman, going back in my genealogy to pre-colonial times. Another is pure energy which presents itself to me as a column of swirling, sparkling, opalescent light. And a third is half human, half animal. These special purpose guides and teachers change from time to time, depending on what I'm needing to do for a client.

I started working with my first spirit guide when I was child, although at the time, I didn't completely realize it. I mean, there were no shamanic role models in my very conventional suburban Missouri community where I grew up. My Catholic friends had their saints to call on. My Jewish friends had their connection with Adonai Eloheinu. And my Protestant parents talked about angels during the holidays, but no one I knew was connected to an animal guide. But I was aware of the presence of one of mine from an early age. And I put up quite a fit when we'd be out shopping and elevator doors would close before we both got out. I was determined to not be separated from what intuitively felt at the time like a life line. Many years later when I learned to do ritual to call for spirit guides, he was the first to show up.

Most recently a spirit guide named RedHawk swooped in during a journey one night and announced he was the guide for a group on Facebook. He said he'd been watching us and that he wanted me to pass along some thoughts now and then. Well, that has grown into RedHawk doing whole readings on request -- currently a really special part of my work.

How Deah's Shamanic Guides Help in Her Work

My shamanic directional guardians surround my physical self and the physical space whenever I do a reading or a journey. And also when I journey on behalf of a client, one of the guides accompanies me. If the purpose of the journey has to do with a healing issue, I will first consult with my teacher or healer guide, and follow their direction. Then depending on what is needed, I might request various forms of help from one of my spirit guides to find and retrieve what the client needs. The thing about shamanic work is that only the arrogant or untrained think they can go it alone, no matter how experienced. Normally, I don't do healings per se, but rather bring back healing prescriptions for the client for using flower essence remedies or doing certain rituals, with instructions on exactly what to do.

Unlike many psychics, healers and some other shamanic practitioners, I don't routinely access the client's guides, as typically they are of a different spiritual system that I don't work with. On occasion I have noticed a client's shamanic animal guide present and watchful during a journey, and sometimes they are enlisted to help take a certain result of a shamanic process to the client. More often, though, I have asked the client to connect with one or more of their non-shamanic guides to ensure that they are willing to allow what mine may be seeking, retrieving, or mending on the client's behalf. Not mixing spiritual paradigms was a lesson I'd learned early in my training, and it's a boundary that has worked well for me.

Recently I had an experience that illustrates the importance of this boundary. I had asked a shamanic healer to do some of her distance work on me. And because it wasn't going to be me doing the work, I neglected to inform my spirit guides and guardians in advance that they might sense an unfamiliar but invited energetic presence in my subtle body fields. Wow, was that a mistake! My guardians were not at all sure what to make of the different energy, and they got antsy trying to figure out what to do. I could literally not sit still during the distance healing session. My guides' nervous uncertainty was a great lesson for me, and for the next session I told them what to expect and that I wanted them to allow it. I could feel them being on watchful alert but they let me be in the desired meditative state the second time.

Opening the mind or the connection to the world of the Nature spirits I work with is, for me, like flipping a switch – I have to activate the ability somehow, it's not just always there like it is with many others who channel. Whereas some psychics have to learn how to turn off their spirit connections in order to maintain grounded sanity, I've had to learn how to turn my on. Trees and plants, crystals and clouds, and animal guides don't usually start pouring out information without me first grounding, clearing, and shifting in my own consciousness, approaching them in a sacred manner and requesting their wisdom. Then I simply open my mind to the natural shamanic spirit world, asking for guidance, and discerning the meanings of the images and messages I'm given. I always do this in the context of a shamanic journey, especially when working on past life astrology readings when I can go in a time regression and see details of several of the client's lifetimes that have significance for the current life. Other times I do this more spontaneously, during readings and spiritual coaching, and what I call spirit wisdom just flows out. There's a qualitative difference I can feel in how that spirit wisdom comes to me, so I know it isn't me.

Another method I use is a form of automatic writing. This is the ability to be in a partial trance state or in a shamanic journey, and there being a direct link between what I see and known, and what my hands can type on a keyboard. It's almost like there is a spiritwriter that merges with me to answer client questions or capture content and meaning of the visual into the verbal. There is something magical in the act of transferring the visual into the verbal that

produces more detail and unlocks more significance. I've only known one other person who does automatic writing this way, and she was using it as a research method for her PhD dissertation.

Clients tend to seek my services when feeling stuck in a situation and wanting to broaden their options, or understand what might be going on, on an energetic level. They are looking for insight and sometimes for an explanation of why things are the way they are. And some clients are just curious to experience a past life reading or spiritwrites journey. One client stands out who wondered about past life connections with family members. While analyzing her astrology chart for past life karmic indicators, I felt myself being pulled into a shamanic journey. I saw several of her lifetimes in which she had connection with current life family members, although not in the same type of relationships. I was able to give her details from those lifetimes that strongly correlated to current life situations, and helped her understand those relationships more deeply. Being able to journey and write at the same time enables me to give readings that are much more rich than if they were just speaking on the phone about what a chart showed me.

I strive for clients to be enlightened and empowered by my work for them. If I can help them understand a personal dilemma, make a good decision, change an old self-sabotaging attitude, or see themselves in a more amazing way, I feel good about the teaching I've done. The client might have ordered an astrology or tarot reading or shamanic journey, but in essence for me, it all about teaching them something they didn't know about themselves before.

Shamanic Spirituality is a Way of Being and a Moral Compass

Spirituality to me is in daily life. It's what you believe about the nature of reality, and how you interact with Nature and other sentient beings. It's not a set of practices you do on particular days, then forget about. Shamanic spirituality especially is a way of being and a moral compass. There is no separation between my spirituality and daily life – they are one in the same. As a spiritual warrior, I live my purpose of combatting ignorance and fear in ways that are meant to cause people to think and gain new perspectives.

As other self-aware practitioners will tell you when working with spiritual realities, there is often the question of whether what we are experiencing and doing is real or if we're just making it all up. And for those like me who tend to question how things work, and what's really going on, I think there is a normal bit of skepticism that keeps us honest. One big aha came for me when I realized my visually vivid imagination was a form of clairvoyance -- and that I could stop asking whether something was real or true because the better question to ask was *what message or meaning is coming to me from this, and what does it apply to?*

Being able to offer spiritual answers and a sense of connection to the spirituality of Nature through the work I do is very satisfying for me. I never push my beliefs on others, but I'm more than happy to talk about how I view spirituality and things like shamanic spirit guides, karma, past lives, and soul purpose and all that. It's a good day when that's what I've been able to do all day. The downside for me comes when a client wants more of a fortune-telling kind of predictive work, which is not what I do. I'm suited to tell you about the spiritual and psychological energies that are creating a certain dynamic that can be changed if you do x, y and z, but I'm not able to tell you when your house will sell, or when you'll meet your true love. So I will often refer those kind of questions to someone else.

It's a real blessing to be connected with several online communities via Facebook and the other great professional healers, readers, and artisans I've been privileged to meet. The work I do has given me a much wider lens on the spirit world and has deepened my perspectives on what in some circles is called the Great Mystery. It certainly provides a much needed balance to the constant litany of bad news, crass capitalism and fear-based politics and religion that permeate the rest of daily life. And I feel blessed to enjoy a wonderful sense of inner peace most of the time, because of the work I do.

Deah's Training

When I was getting my master's and doctoral degrees I was fortunate to get advanced training in a wide variety of psychospiritual philosophies and methods, including:

- Guided imagery for healing
- Transpersonal healing hypnotherapy
- Past life regressions
- Subtle energy medicine
- Energy psychology / energy medicine
- Flower essence remedies

I've had a blend of self-directed learning and many workshops for my tarot and astrology skills, and I had years of private shamanic and magickal apprenticeships. I've completed a year of advanced training in core shamanism with Steve Serr, who has trained with Michael Harner, and another year with Steve's associates.

When thinking about expanding my services, if I need new skills or knowledge I first look for credible teachers who themselves have been well trained. I want teachers who know the history of their knowledge – where was it first developed? by whom? -- and who are good critical thinkers, questioning dogma and context and relevance to contemporary times. And then something about what is offered has to resonate with me, with my sense of being the right thing at the right time for my soul's path. Because my primary soul mission in this lifetime is about empowering others, I pay attention to what people say they can't do or have trouble believing, and then I look for ways to help them gain more skills or knowledge to empower themselves. So I'm constantly looking for new ways to do a reading, or new kinds of shamanic practices that will provide deeper insights or remove more roadblocks for those who are ready for change. It's extremely important to me to only do that for which I am deeply trained.