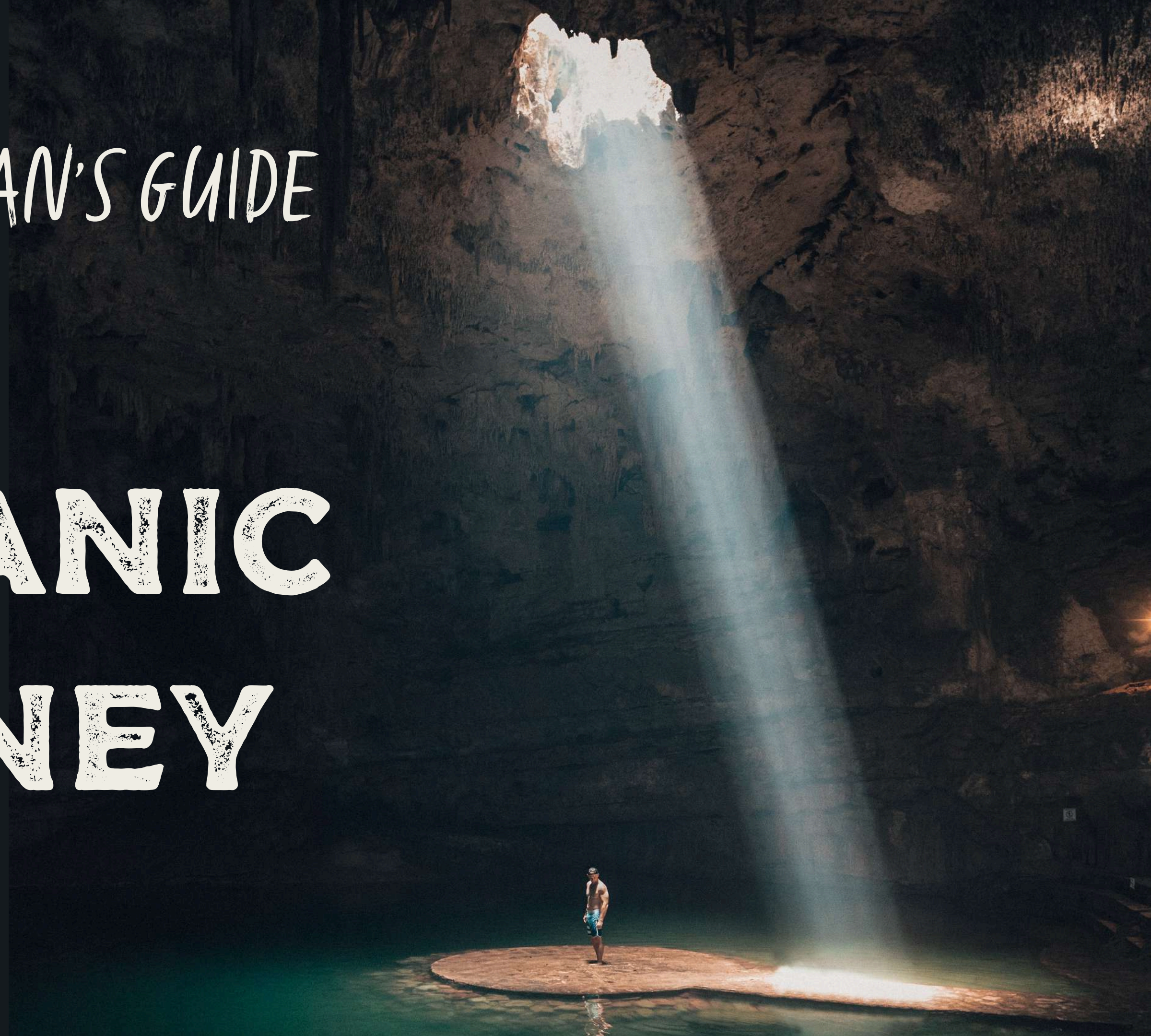


THE SOBER SHAMAN'S GUIDE  
TO THE  
**SHAMANIC**  
**JOURNEY**





# GUIDE TO THE SHAMANIC JOURNEY

*First thing's first.*

*What's a shaman anyway?*

*And what the heck are we up to?*

A shaman is someone who's in relationship with spirits and can employ them on behalf of an individual or community to help solve problems here in ordinary reality.





# GUIDE TO THE SHAMANIC JOURNEY

The shaman engages with these spirits through the shamanic journey. This method is a means of gathering information, knowledge, and power while in partnership with the spirits. The shaman then returns with these gifts to use for our benefit.

Traditionally, the shaman was an essential component of a society. Their role was to maintain a healthy relationship between the activities of a culture and the natural world around them. This interdependence and ongoing conversation was considered a vital part of society's day-to-day endeavors and how it stayed healthy.



# GUIDE TO THE SHAMANIC JOURNEY

*Why should you learn to journey?*

Somewhere along the path to modernization, we've silenced this conversation and lost touch with this interdependence. We divested the shaman of their societal role. We relegated our innate abilities to hear the messages and receive knowledge, information, and healing power from spirit to "authorities" (who tell us that they know better).



# GUIDE TO THE SHAMANIC JOURNEY

Many people today are experiencing a void due to this disconnect from spirit and nature. In response, many are also seeking to fill that void with the only thing that fits: one's own ability to engage in and receive direct revelation from spirit—without an intermediary and without censorship.

Today, we'll explore how the shamanic journey is one way of doing exactly this and how we can apply what we receive to healing—specifically in addiction recovery and trauma resolution.



# GUIDE TO THE SHAMANIC JOURNEY

We'll address the following:

- What is this journey?
- Where do we go?
- How do we get there?
- Exactly what spirits do we meet?
- How does it help with recovery from addiction and the resolution of trauma?

Let's take these one by one.



# GUIDE TO THE SHAMANIC JOURNEY

## *What is this journey?*

Shamans have existed on every continent and in all ancient cultures. While they journey using different methods, all involve a change in consciousness.

Some such methods include:

- Rhythm and music (African dance)
- Repetitive movement (Sufi spinning)
- Ingestion of mind-altering substances (Elysian mysteries, psychedelic renaissance)
- Dreaming (Iroquois and Australian Aboriginals)
- Breathing techniques (Yogic, Holotropic)
- Deprivation (e.g., of sleep, food, shelter, personal contact, as in The Vision Quest)



# GUIDE TO THE SHAMANIC JOURNEY

Many of the same methods take other forms and names in today's world. Participants report experiences similar to those of the shaman, whether or not that was their original intention and whether or not they received specific guidance.

For our purposes (which take legality, simplicity, and effectiveness into account), we'll be focusing on how to achieve this state of altered consciousness by using a steady, monotonous drumbeat. 1

Because this method is not as physically invasive and involuntarily forceful as many of the others, it does require some learned abilities. Through this method, we are participants riding the line between watching things unfold and actively employing the guiding instructions.



# GUIDE TO THE SHAMANIC JOURNEY

To achieve this monotonous drumbeat, we can bang on our own drum and enter into trance, or we can use a recorded drum track while we lie down, cover our eyes, and put on headphones.

Once we have these logistics in place, we can employ the guiding instructions, which you'll find below.

**But first...**



# GUIDE TO THE SHAMANIC JOURNEY

## *Where do we go?*

Using the term made popular by the author Carlos Casteneda through his works on The Teachings of Don Juan, where we go is called “non-ordinary reality.” This is the place of spirit, which is separated from our “ordinary reality” world by a veil that keeps the two separate.

Once we pass through this veil and enter the realm of spirit, what we find is that there is amazing congruency among ancient cultures around the geographical layout of this realm.

Generally, it is divided into three parts:

- **The Upperworld**
- **The Middleworld**
- **The Lowerworld**

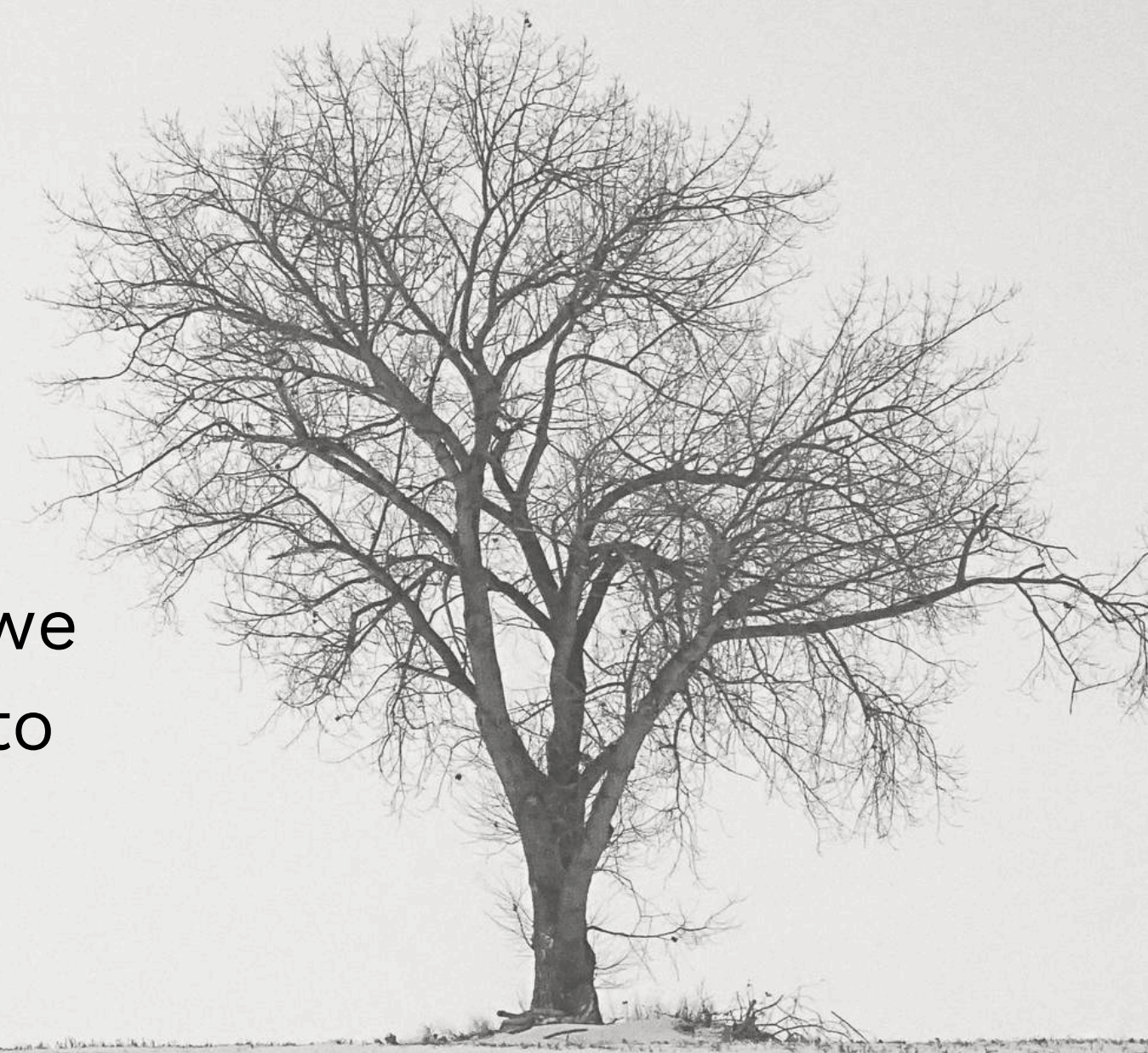


# GUIDE TO THE SHAMANIC JOURNEY

One of the most common “maps” laying out the territory of these three regions of non-ordinary reality is seen in **The Tree of Life**.

We find this imagery in the traditions of the Norse as Yggdrasil and the Celtic people as Crann Bethadh. We also find it in Egypt and throughout the Middle East, as well as throughout the African continent.

Each culture has their own name for it. But, whatever we call it, this Tree of Life has its branches reaching up into the Upperworld, its roots digging down into the Lowerworld, and its trunk growing in this Middleworld.





# GUIDE TO THE SHAMANIC JOURNEY

Meanwhile, the Chinese call them: Heaven, Person, and Earth. Going up, into the direction and energy of Yang, into the cosmos of the Upperworld. Going down, into the direction and with the energy of Yin, into the Earth's Lowerworld. And here we are, as a Person, existing in the Middleworld, harmonizing the Yin-Yang forces of existence.

The Chinese character for Heaven, '天' (tiān), is written in a bold, black, calligraphic style. It consists of a horizontal top bar, a curved middle stroke, and a long, sweeping tail that curves upwards and to the right.

HEAVEN

The Chinese character for Person, '人' (rén), is written in a bold, black, calligraphic style. It features a single, continuous, sweeping stroke that starts from the top left, curves down and to the right, and then sweeps back up and to the right.

PERSON

The Chinese character for Earth, '土' (tǔ), is written in a bold, black, calligraphic style. It consists of a vertical stem with a horizontal crossbar in the middle and a short, thick base at the bottom.

EARTH



# GUIDE TO THE SHAMANIC JOURNEY

We can also understand a bit more about these three worlds through the tales of **modern storytellers**. Taking a trip to the Upperworld, we pass through the veil of clouds in Jack and the Beanstalk. Going down into the Earth through the tunnel of the rabbit hole, we discover fantastic places of the Lowerworld from The Adventures of Alice in Wonderland. And dreaming for twenty years, we are transported through time and the Middleworld in Rip Van Winkle.





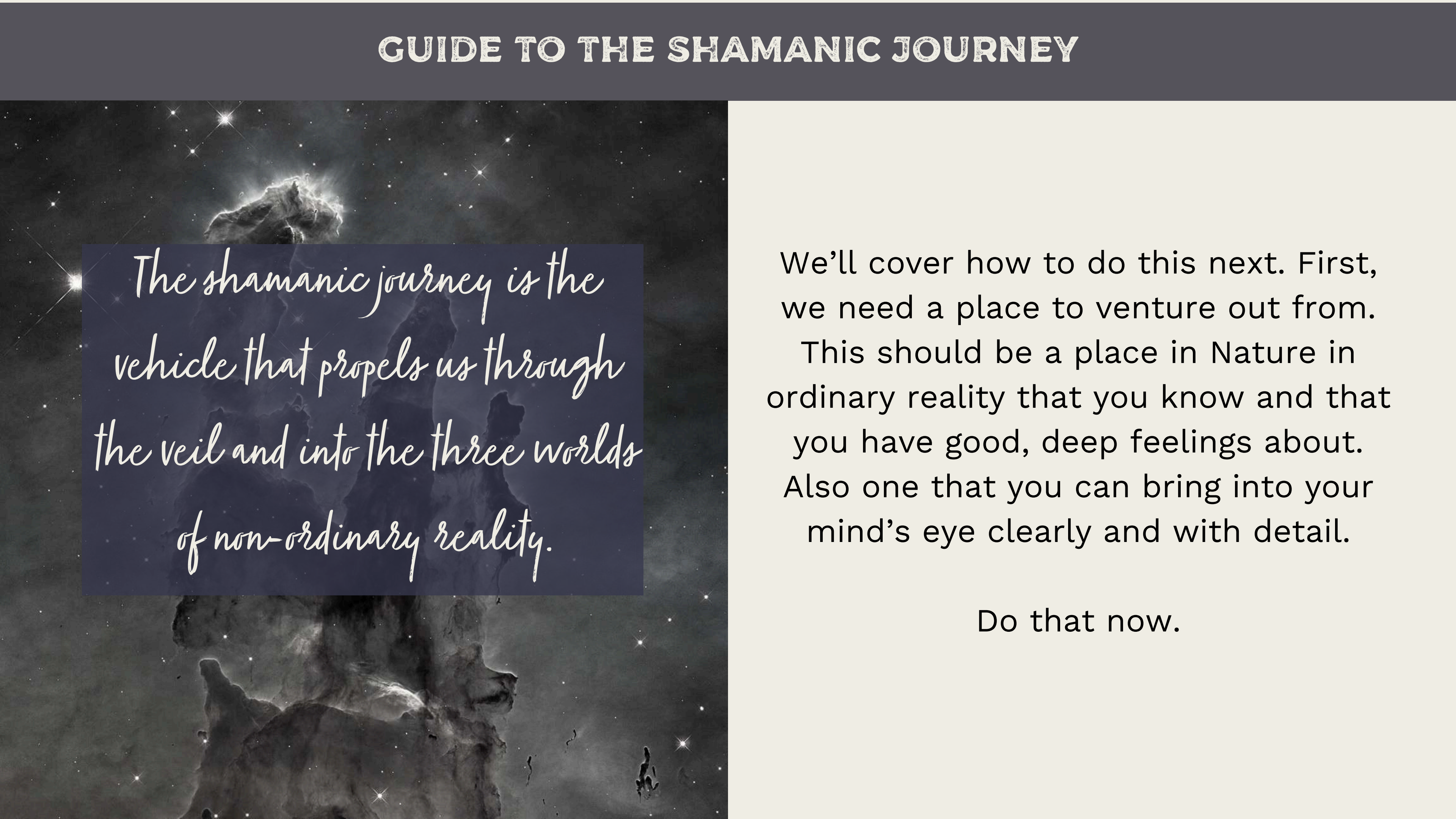
# GUIDE TO THE SHAMANIC JOURNEY

Whether we're going up to the Upperworld, down into the Lowerworld, or out into the Middleworld, there are two main points:

- **First, we are not alone.** We are following the shamans who have ventured into these realms since our earliest beginnings. These places are known, and there is trusted help waiting for us there in the form of our compassionate spirits.
- **Second, we are entering into another reality**—one that is just as real as the one we reside in here. Like those dreams we have, which upon waking “feel even more real than reality,” this non-ordinary reality abides by different rules and has different inhabitants and relationships.



# GUIDE TO THE SHAMANIC JOURNEY

A cosmic background featuring a dark, starry space with a prominent, glowing nebula in the upper left and lower left. The nebulae are composed of intricate, swirling patterns of gas and dust, illuminated from within, creating a sense of depth and mystery. Numerous bright stars are scattered across the field, some appearing as sharp points of light, others as soft, out-of-focus glows. The overall color palette is dominated by deep blues, blacks, and greys, with highlights of white and light blue from the nebulae and stars.

*The shamanic journey is the vehicle that propels us through the veil and into the three worlds of non-ordinary reality.*

We'll cover how to do this next. First, we need a place to venture out from.

This should be a place in Nature in ordinary reality that you know and that you have good, deep feelings about. Also one that you can bring into your mind's eye clearly and with detail.

Do that now.



# GUIDE TO THE SHAMANIC JOURNEY



For a trip to the Upperworld, you can follow the path upward provided by large trees or smoke from a chimney or campfire.



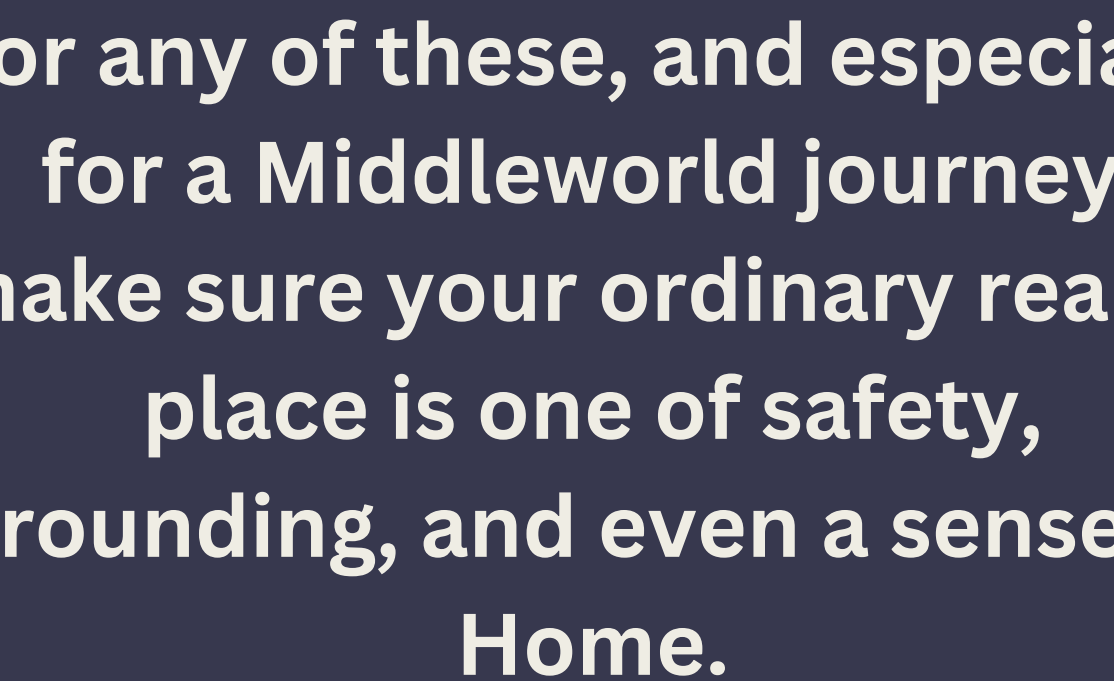
# GUIDE TO THE SHAMANIC JOURNEY



For a trip to the Lowerworld, choose an opening into the Earth, such as a cave, animal hole, or tunnels made by tree roots. The requirement here is that you can see the opening clearly but do not know where this opening ends up.



# GUIDE TO THE SHAMANIC JOURNEY



For any of these, and especially  
for a Middleworld journey,  
make sure your ordinary reality  
place is one of safety,  
grounding, and even a sense of  
Home.



# GUIDE TO THE SHAMANIC JOURNEY

*Close your eyes and bring yourself  
into this place.*

See it in all of its colors, then bring in the other senses of smell (e.g., What season is it? Spring smells different than fall.), feeling (e.g., Feel with your mind's eye the ground upon which you stand, the sun on your face.), hearing (e.g., wind, water), and possibly even “tasting the air.”

Make note of these. You're working your senses in ways that are probably new—they're like muscles that need to be flexed in order to get stronger. Opening your senses in these ways prepares you to receive the information of your journey and grounds you into your ordinary reality starting place.

Now that you've got these down, we can go through the step-by-step process of how to undertake the shamanic journey.



# GUIDE TO THE SHAMANIC JOURNEY

## *How do we get there?*

Generally speaking, the steps of shamanic journeying go something like this:

- 1. Setup**
- 2. Focus**
- 3. Lights**
- 4. Drums**
- 5. Starting Place**
- 6. Intention**
- 7. Go**

- 8. Through**
- 9. Emerge**
- 10. Calling**
- 11. Moving**
- 12. Return**
- 13. Back**
- 14. Share**



# GUIDE TO THE SHAMANIC JOURNEY



## #1. *SETUP*

Find a quiet place to lie down with your back on the floor, making sure that you're comfortable but not so relaxed that you'll fall asleep. You'll want to maintain strong focus during the journey and do not want to doze off. Many journeyers designate a particular blanket for this specific purpose. (Note: If you have any physical concerns that would limit your ability to perform this—or any other of these requirements—don't attempt anything beyond your normal range of comfort. The journeying process can be adapted so that anyone can undertake it.)



# GUIDE TO THE SHAMANIC JOURNEY



## #2. FOCUS

Turn off any phones, alarms, buzzers, etc., that could possibly interrupt your journey. Have your equipment and/or materials that you will use to record your journey close by.



# GUIDE TO THE SHAMANIC JOURNEY



## #3. LIGHTS

Lower all lighting to the point of necessity. This would be a level that would allow you to safely turn the lights back on when you're finished. You may also wish to cover your eyes while journeying to prevent seeing any light, which may prove distracting. A bandana, eye mask, shirtsleeve, a piece of cloth, or your arm itself can work.



# GUIDE TO THE SHAMANIC JOURNEY



## #4. DRUMS

Once you're situated in your space and have completed the above steps, start the drumming audio track (you can use the free one included in the The Sober Shaman's Welcome email or one of your own that keeps a pace of about 200 beats per minute). Other instruments, such as the rattle, didgeridu, bell, or chimes may also be used, but we generally suggest starting with drums.



# GUIDE TO THE SHAMANIC JOURNEY



## #5. PLACE

Your visualization will start with your place in ordinary reality. Again, this is somewhere in Nature that you're familiar with and have good feelings about or memories around. It can be from your childhood or an opening you saw this morning. (For a Lowerworld journey, just make sure you don't know where the hole eventually opens to or ends up.) To begin, bring the place into your mind's eye with as much clarity and using as many senses as possible. For example: What season is it? What time of day? What's the temperature? What's the weather like?



# GUIDE TO THE SHAMANIC JOURNEY



State your purpose for journeying aloud, and send it three times and with strong intention into the direction you're traveling. For example: "I am journeying to the Lowerworld to meet my guiding spirit. I am journeying to the Lowerworld to meet my guiding spirit. I am journeying to the Lowerworld to meet my guiding spirit."



# GUIDE TO THE SHAMANIC JOURNEY

SEND YOUR INTENTION



I AM JOURNEYING TO  
THE LOWERWORLD TO  
MEET MY HELPING AND  
COMPASSIONATE SPIRITS



# GUIDE TO THE SHAMANIC JOURNEY



Begin your journey by going up, down, or out. For example, if going to the Lowerworld, enter into the opening and visualize a tunnel that leads down into the earth. Go through this tunnel while keeping your senses open. Is it damp or dry? Is it rocky or soft dirt? Etc.



# GUIDE TO THE SHAMANIC JOURNEY



Eventually you'll pass through the veil. Whether like clouds into the Upperworld, or the tunnel down into the Lowerworld, or out of your physical body and into the Middleworld, you'll open up into a landscape of non-ordinary reality.



# GUIDE TO THE SHAMANIC JOURNEY



## #9. EMERGE

Emerge from the clouds or tunnel and enter into the realms of non-ordinary reality. It may appear as a landscape from ordinary reality or may look completely different. Summer beaches made of winter snow, barren deserts in the middle of tropical islands, or an undersea medieval golf course, etc. In this reality, the possibilities are limitless!



# GUIDE TO THE SHAMANIC JOURNEY



## #10. CALL

Call for and send out with a strong intention the desire to be met by your guiding spirit. It will come. It may be in the form of an animal, a human, an angel, or any combination thereof. When it does, make and maintain as much eye contact as possible. As spirits approach you in this world, be sure to address and treat them with the courtesy and respect you'd like to receive yourself. Ask them questions as you would any new acquaintance, and be sure to establish that they are indeed your guiding spirits. If they are or are not, they will tell you through words, actions, feelings, or perhaps some other way.



# GUIDE TO THE SHAMANIC JOURNEY



I HAVE JOURNEYED TO  
THE UPPERWORLD TO  
MEET MY HELPING AND  
COMPASSIONATE SPIRITS

Find out how communication is performed here. This is a new and particular “muscle” that must be trained to become effective in this world. If you do not meet a guiding spirit, keep sending out your intention. You can also ask spirits that you meet but which are not your guides to take you to one that is. Keep trying. Eventually our guides show up. They want to help as much as we want help.



# GUIDE TO THE SHAMANIC JOURNEY



## #11. MOVE

You will discover how to travel in this world of non-ordinary reality. Go with your guiding spirit, and do the things that are necessary in order to carry out the specific purpose you came for. Travel will be another new “muscle” that’s revealed and trained.



# GUIDE TO THE SHAMANIC JOURNEY



After a set amount of time (often between 5 and 15 minutes; sometimes longer if preferred), the drummer or recording in ordinary reality will issue a “callback.” This is a break in the pattern and a change of speed in the drumbeat. During this time, stop whatever you’re doing in non-ordinary reality and tell whomever you’re with that it’s time for you to return to ordinary reality. Thank all that you’ve seen, met, and done as you come back the same way you went along your journey. This will include everything in the non-ordinary reality landscape—back up the tunnel or down through the clouds or back into your energetic field, and finally, back into your body waiting in the ordinary reality place in Nature from where you started.



# GUIDE TO THE SHAMANIC JOURNEY



## #13. BACK

Upon return from callback, the drums will cease and you'll feel yourself fully back in your physical body. Take your time. Sit up slowly and proceed to record the journey using whatever means you decided beforehand. Some prefer writing in a journal, while others prefer talking into a recorder. Experiment to see which is best for you.



# GUIDE TO THE SHAMANIC JOURNEY



## #14. *SHARE*

You may wish to share the events of the journey with your partner, other journeyers, or a shamanic counselor.



# GUIDE TO THE SHAMANIC JOURNEY



*And that's it!*

Everything we need to get there, do the work, and come back with the knowledge, information, and power we require for the tasks and healing we need to do in ordinary reality.

Next, let's take a look at who is providing this help.



# GUIDE TO THE SHAMANIC JOURNEY

## *Exactly what spirits do you meet?*

You will meet your helping and compassionate spirits. There are two primary reasons for this:

- First, this is the clear and focused intention that you're sending ahead of you before embarking on the journey.
- Second, these spirits want to help and are waiting for your call.

It's like puzzle pieces fitting together: You send a call for help with Yang energy through the veil. It's received and answered by spirits in non-ordinary reality, where they hold the Yin energy of healing information, knowledge, and power.



# GUIDE TO THE SHAMANIC JOURNEY

***“When the student is ready, the teacher will appear.”***

***—Lao Tzu***

***“You can’t always get what you want.  
But sometimes, you just might find, you  
get what you need.”***

***—The Rolling Stones***

*What form your helping and compassionate spirits take is often a surprise.*

*This is a good thing.*



# GUIDE TO THE SHAMANIC JOURNEY

Generally speaking, we all hold heroic fantasies of being in partnership with “the big spirits” and may desire to be met in non-ordinary reality by a dragon, bear, or Merlin...only to end up with a salamander, shrew, or hobbled old ancestor.

Don't judge. Treat your new spirit with respect, and honor their answering of your call. We have no idea what they may offer us.

Upon first meeting a spirit ask:

***“Are you my helping and compassionate spirit?”***

Often, the true nature of a spirit isn't revealed until we make this direct inquiry.



# GUIDE TO THE SHAMANIC JOURNEY

*From here, move through the following.*

- 1 What's your first impression? Is there an overwhelming sense of love and connection? Is there trepidation and hesitancy? Is it yours or theirs?
- 2 Can you look it directly in the eyes? This is the “standard” way to make connection. Then, view it from three different angles; in each, look it in the eyes. What's it like to see the spirit in this way? What's it like to be seen by the spirit in this way
- 3 How do you communicate? Words? Actions? Feelings? Focused thoughts? A deep knowing?



# GUIDE TO THE SHAMANIC JOURNEY



Listening to the answers you receive and paying attention to how they're transmitted may be the first part of your learning.

Working in the shamanic realms often requires expanding our perspective, which in turn expands our abilities, which may then be the next parts and necessary components for healing and growth.



## GUIDE TO THE SHAMANIC JOURNEY

*How does taking a shamanic journey help with recovery from addiction and resolution of trauma?*

I'll answer this question in two ways: First, with a traditional response. Second, with what I've discovered through my own recovery and in working with clients.

**Traditionally**, there are a number of healing events that can occur during the shamanic journey, and these can appear in a variety of forms. Common themes include flight and travel to other worlds, merging to become as-one-with your spirit, dismemberment or obliteration of “your form,” seeing through your spirit’s eyes, becoming one-with-all-things, and many others.

If your trusted helping and compassionate spirits invite you to participate in any of the above, you should follow their lead. **The spirits know.**



# GUIDE TO THE SHAMANIC JOURNEY

*These actions involve healing through three basic means:*

- **Power Retrieval**
- **Soul Retrieval**
- **Removal of Intrusions**

*And they correspondingly are the medicines for the three basic shamanic pathologies.*

- **Power Loss**
- **Soul Loss**
- **Spiritual Intrusion**



# GUIDE TO THE SHAMANIC JOURNEY

All of these can be powerful and essential parts of your recovery, growth, and healing. They can occur spontaneously during a journey, or they can be planned using specific intention, preparation, and ritual.

These are traditional shamanic ways that have helped many recover from addiction and resolve trauma. And while this is not an either-or scenario (indeed, any of the traditional ways of healing may occur during what I'll share next), I've found it useful to guide the journeys so that they provide more immediate, tangible answers to an individual's questions and situation. That way, we can explain any information received in plain English and the individual can more readily integrate it.



# GUIDE TO THE SHAMANIC JOURNEY

*In my own process and work with clients, this means...*

*More specific questions get more specific answers.*

While traditional shamanic healings are time-tested in myriad cultures across every continent, the work that I've dedicated myself to—and what I've found essential in my own recovery and that of my clients—is to take specific shamanic journeys to specific places in non-ordinary reality led by very specific intentions.

I've found that more specific questions yield more specific answers. And when we have this kind of information, we can more easily understand how to apply it when life presents opportunities to do so—because these moments are the precise points in the cycle of addiction when we must leverage our new awareness and employ the power to change.



# GUIDE TO THE SHAMANIC JOURNEY

*Natural patterns offer an invitation and opportunity.*

Shamanic cultures living in conversation with spirit derived great wisdom from observing the cyclical patterns of Nature. Whether we're considering the seasons, stars, movements of animals, or growth of plants, certain events and patterns cycle and repeat through time.

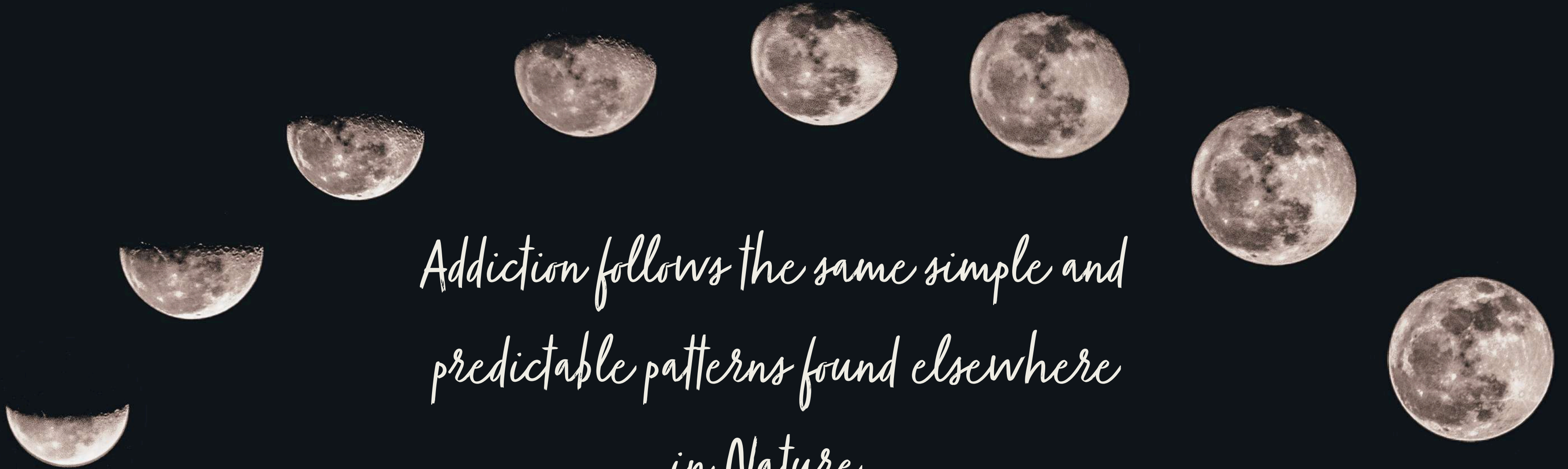
This provides a tremendous opportunity to learn and apply the same wisdom to the problem of addiction. In other words:



# GUIDE TO THE SHAMANIC JOURNEY

*Addiction does not need to be as overwhelming, unknowable, and mysterious as it sometimes seems.*

*Addiction follows the same simple and predictable patterns found elsewhere in Nature.*





# GUIDE TO THE SHAMANIC JOURNEY

By studying these patterns, we have a clear and reliable map of how addiction unfolds and can see and understand the way trauma informs its creation.

Following this map, we can pinpoint the places of opportunity—meaning, where we can leverage our strengths and break the cycle once and for all.

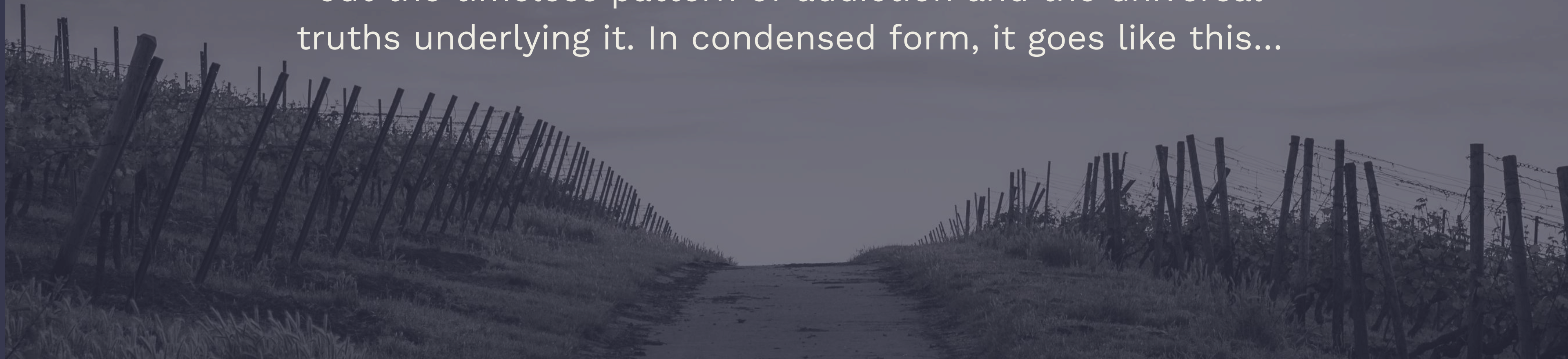


# GUIDE TO THE SHAMANIC JOURNEY

## *The Sober Shaman's Path of Recovery*

I call my rendering and practice of this map  
The Sober Shaman's Path of Recovery.

It follows Three Principles, which are how I explain and lay  
out the timeless pattern of addiction and the universal  
truths underlying it. In condensed form, it goes like this...





# GUIDE TO THE SHAMANIC JOURNEY

*Addiction recovery follows three basic principles.*

- 1. Addiction affects the whole person.**
- 2. Addiction is a cycle.**
- 3. Addiction impacts every relationship**



# GUIDE TO THE SHAMANIC JOURNEY

*Principle 1: Addiction affects the whole person.*



Addiction affects our mental, spiritual, emotional, and physical aspects. Thus, we can use the information, knowledge, and power gained during shamanic journeys and apply it to heal every aspect of the whole person.



# GUIDE TO THE SHAMANIC JOURNEY

## *Principle 2: Addiction is a cycle.*

As a participant in the cycle, we know firsthand how an addiction perpetuates and keeps itself alive—from the deep, underlying beliefs rooted in trauma and lying at the core...to the machinations of mental planning for relief...to the frantic acts of acquisition...to the communal rituals of using...to the inevitable lying and covering up—which then validate the original core beliefs and plant the seeds for addiction's next go-round.

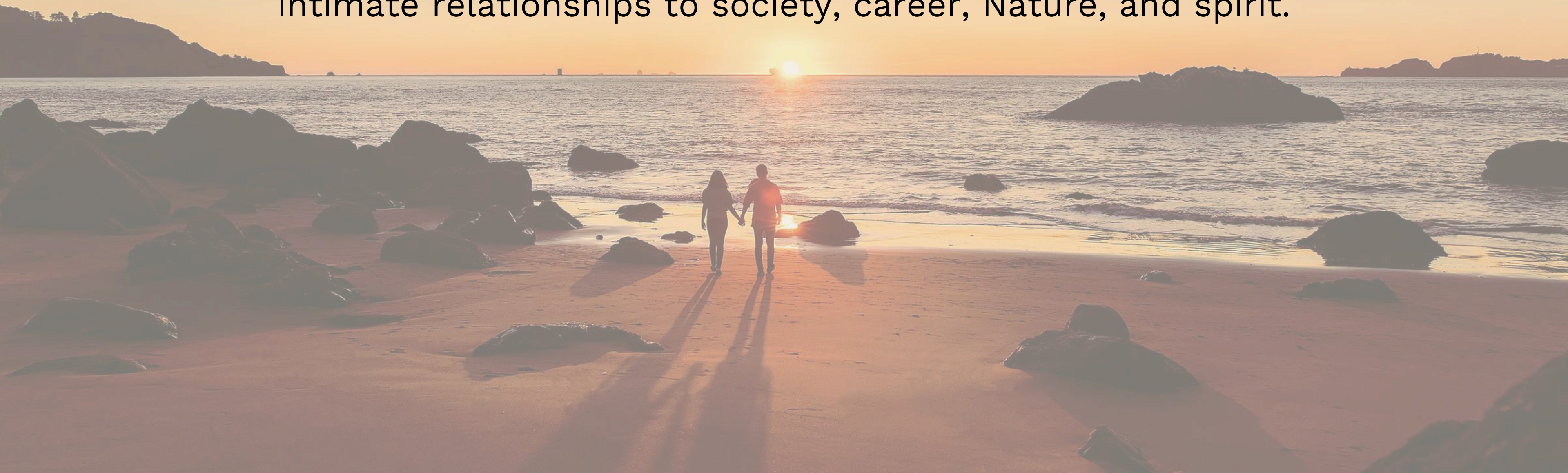
**Seeing this through the spiritual eyes and experiential knowing of shamanic journeying provides us with insights and shows us where our cycle of addiction is at its weakest and where we can break once and for all.**



# GUIDE TO THE SHAMANIC JOURNEY

## *Principle 3: Addiction impacts every relationship.*

Employing the spiritual conversation to our most intimate relationships causes the entire dance and dynamic of that relationship to change—not only with our closest partners, but also with our intimate relationships to society, career, Nature, and spirit.





# GUIDE TO THE SHAMANIC JOURNEY

*These Three Principles guide the way through the rocky terrain of recovery from addiction and the healing of trauma.*

This is by no means the only map —just the one that I've created while on my own journey and while helping others.

And, it's not finished. This map —like the landscape of recovery—is always growing and evolving as we learn to speak new languages and incorporate new approaches.



# GUIDE TO THE SHAMANIC JOURNEY

That's one of the beauties of using universal principles and timeless truths: There will always be new ways of seeing and interpreting “the truth” and applying it to those who need it for this current time.

And that's exactly what the shamanic journey—and your ongoing conversation with spirit—can help you with as you grow, heal, and travel along your own path in recovery.





# GUIDE TO THE SHAMANIC JOURNEY

## *Now You*

If you'd like to go on a guided Medicine Journey (which is what I call the specific shamanic journeys for healing addiction and trauma) or do a Shamanic wRites exercise, you'll find them as components within all 52 Lessons of The Program.

Have questions, comments, thoughts or want to work with me 1-on1?

Email me directly at: [Spirit@RandalLyons.com](mailto:Spirit@RandalLyons.com)

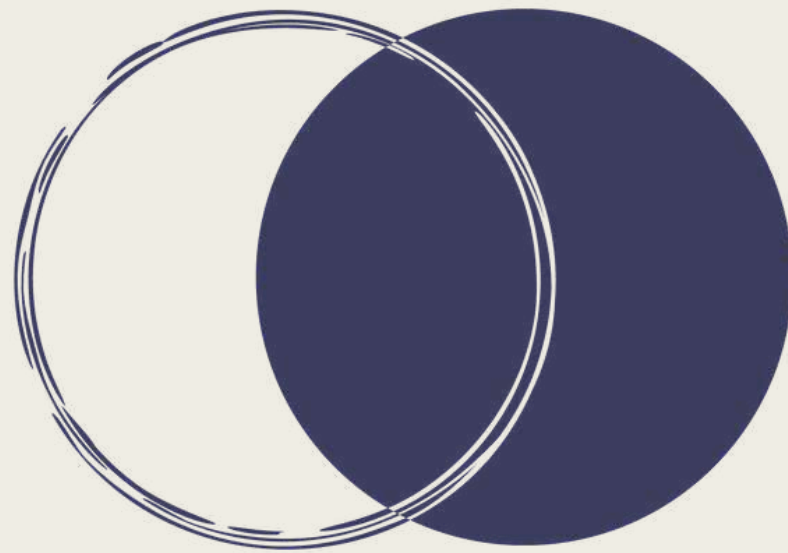
With All Good Medicine,  
Randal

1 For more, see: Neural Correlates of the Shamanic State of Consciousness and Brain Scans of Shamans Show Ability to Alter Consciousness Naturally.



# THE SOBER SHAMAN

SUSTAINABLE  
RECOVERY



STARTS IN  
THE SOUL

[www.RandallYons.com](http://www.RandallYons.com)