

Shamanism -- remembering Janine Ellison (practitioner on Whidbey Island)

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Shamanism is a great teacher, particularly about the interconnectedness of all life. Soul retrievals can be most helpful



when one is moving through a major change in life. Shamanic experiences can also assist those desiring to heal. These experiences always serve a purpose and can bring deeper meaning to the situation.

The following is a brief introduction to shamanism and how it relates to end-of-life

issues. It was written by Janine Ellison, a shamanic practitioner who I had the privilege of meeting on Whidbey Island. I hope you will be in touch with a shaman in your area, especially if you desire further knowledge regarding shamanism and how it can help with the process of letting go and moving forward in your life.

Traditionally, one of the roles of the shaman was to offer healing to both the living



and the dead. In current times also, the shaman is trained in administering healing to those who are living, and in the grieving

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processes over the loss of a deceased loved one. He/she is also skilled in offering assistance to people in the dying process, to help alleviate the fears and uncertainties that arise during this passage.

The shaman is also knowledgeable in offering assistance to souls who have already crossed over, and who are in need of shamanic help and healing in order to move forward in their evolution. To be effective in this work, the shaman needs to be very familiar with the territories and evolutionary processes of the soul...before, during, and after death. Through extensive training, involving explorations into these vast terrains, the shaman acquires great knowledge and skill in assisting the dying, as well as in offering help to the deceased. Oftentimes, the shaman would also gain wisdom and knowledge from personal initiatory experiences, such as in the case of a serious illness, or a near-death experience, which adds to the genuine compassion and empathy that he/she brings to the work.

[Janine Ellison](#) was a shamanic practitioner in the state of Washington. Having received extensive training in cross-cultural shamanic practices, Janine drew on a wide variety of time-tested shamanic tools and techniques to assist the dying, helping to make the transition a smooth one for those approaching this threshold. With compassion and skill, she also offered healing services to those who

were living, and who were in the process of letting go of their loved ones. In addition, Janine drew on ancient and universal shamanic



techniques to help souls who had already crossed over, and who need assistance on their evolutionary paths.

I have had a few experiences with shamanism at the end of life. In one situation, I recall taking a woman on our hospice who desired to be healed, to see a shaman. Laurie had a second visit with the shaman, unbeknownst to me. After her death, I was so relieved to find out through the shaman that Laurie had been able to talk to her about

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her death on that second visit. (Until that time, Laurie had not spoken of her death to anyone, as she was so totally focused on healing.) Laurie also had made a “journey” with the shaman, in which an eagle came to take her Home. Laurie suddenly took a turn for the worse the week before she died, so were not able to talk about these things. Needless to say, it was especially meaningful to me to find out that Laurie had had a “practice session” leaving her body, thanks to the help of a shaman and an eagle.



In another situation, I recall a dying man who loved horses. He was particularly attached to one of his horses who had died; in talking together, we came up with the idea that he could visualize riding off on this horse through a particular window of his room to the other side -- when the time was right for him. I strongly believe that our beloved pets and power animals are ready to help us in these ways.

I invite you to look into shamanism for yourself. It is so beautiful and will connect you more deeply to Mother Earth herself. Have a wonderful exploration into new possibilities in life -- and death as well.

Recommended reading:

Cowan, Tom. ***Shamanism as a Spiritual Practice for Daily Life***. The Crossing Press Inc., 1996.

Harner, Michael. . New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1980.

Ingerman, Sandra. . New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1991.

Ingerman, Sandra. . New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1993.

Kharitidi, Olga, M.D. ***Entering the Circle: Ancient Secrets of Siberian Wisdom***

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