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We hope you enjoy reading the article. Nicholas Breeze Wood (editor)

JOURNEY WITH PROZAC

Modern Medicines have Spirits too
Luitha K Tamaya



After years of shamanic training and living by my beliefs, I experienced something of a nasty shock – despite all of my efforts at self-healing, I developed sudden and severe post-natal depression that completely cut me off from my sense of spirit and any connection to the spiritual world.

Before this point I had always managed to work through my mental health issues by spiritual means alone, using them as a fuel for my shamanic path. They have led me into deep and transformative places, and were one of the calls that lead me to train professionally. But this was somehow different; it didn't matter what I did, or who I turned to,

the pain I was experiencing just got more and more intense.

Eventually, I woke up one morning and realised that the thought of living for another day was too much for me. It was at this point that I confided in my husband, and we sought more conventional help for what I was going through.

This was an extremely hard decision to make. My husband Gabriel is also a shamanic practitioner who has worked through all his challenges without medical help, and for a while the thought that I was unable to do the same made me feel even more low. How could I be a shaman or help other people, if I couldn't resolve this challenge for myself, I thought.

Did it mean that my spiritual path and all my previous healing work had been for nothing, that it wasn't really real? Or had Spirit deserted me for some reason?

These were the thoughts that ran through my mind as I agreed to begin taking a low dose of Fluoxetine, also known as Prozac, as an emergency measure. In that moment, confused and uncertain as I was, I knew that if I let myself give up on my spiritual beliefs and practices, even though I didn't feel connected to them right then, I may never return to them again; it was clearly a fork in my path.

So I made a decision that has since had surprising and beautiful results, opening up a whole world of possibility for me and changing the direction of my shamanic path forever. I decided to work with Fluoxetine as a spirit ally, bringing all of my shamanic tools and teachings into my healing journey with it.

I had never heard of anyone doing this, or any techniques that I could use, but I knew that it was what I needed so I jumped right in, letting the spirit of the medicine itself guide me.

This process began, as all my spirit relationships begin, with a shamanic journey to meet the spirit of this new medicine that I was going to work with; the spirit of Fluoxetine.

It felt very strange to be making a journey at such a low point, when all my previous journeys to heal the depression had been so muddy and disconnected. And it was even stranger to be journeying to meet a man-made medicine. But I reminded myself of our families beliefs – if we could talk to our house, our car and even our laptop, what was so different about a pill?

The journey itself was very clear and powerful, as though I had finally found where I needed to be in the spirit world after all that struggle. It was a transformative moment in my life as I met with a beautiful spirit of delicate blue, similar to a very intricate, three-dimensional geometric design, but with a face and a voice.

She was amazingly welcoming to me, and said she was really pleased that I had come to see her. And then she explained to me that although she was man-made, she was no less connected to the natural world, as all of her components came from plants and the earth.



What was more, she said, she had been specifically called to this world by the intent of the scientists who had made her, called for a specific purpose – to help people who are working with depression. And she was a very gentle energy, refined to work well with modern people in a gradual way.

I was relieved and amazed to learn all of this, and agreed to work with her in the way she prescribed. She explained that our journey together would be one of very gradual energetic realignment, where she would be a tuning fork for my energy so that I could return to a more harmonious vibration. She would also, in her words, be a 'safety net' for me – holding my energy within a certain range so that I couldn't slip too far off my path again.

And so our work began, very slowly. Every morning I would greet and honour her, then take my pill with very clear intent about why and how we were working together. She began to have an effect within days, much faster than these sorts of medicines are supposed to work, and I was relieved to find that I experienced no side-effects at all from our work together. In fact, I could hardly feel her at all – there was just a gentle hum of energy around me that was calming and supportive.

At the same time, I was still ashamed for having to work in this way. I didn't share what I was doing with anyone other than my husband, who was very supportive and interested, because I worried about how the shamanic community might react. After all, we're supposed to use traditional

tools to resolve our problems, that's why we walk this path, I thought to myself.

But I couldn't hide or deny that my work with Fluoxetine was having a huge impact on my life. My mood stabilised so quickly that within a month I was back to normal, but it didn't stop there. As our work went on, deep woundings that I'd struggled with for years began to gently unfold. Feeling very supported by Fluoxetine's energy, I was able to sit and work with these wounds until they cleared for good.

Soon, I was feeling clearer and more bright in myself than I ever had before. The huge amounts of creative energy that I've always experienced, as well as my very vivid encounters with spirit, became much more stable, and an underlying fear and doubt that I'd always had began to melt away. This was so much more than I had ever expected or hoped for when I agreed to take this medicine, and I started to realise that I was being given a powerful teaching.

Over the next few years, I worked with Fluoxetine on and off, always with clear intent and a sense of respect for her spiritual essence. I came to understand that she is simply a modern spirit medicine, like many other plant allies that shamans all over the world work with, and that by coming to our relationship with consciousness and intent, I was able to access the most clear channel to her healing power.

More recently, she has been supporting my work towards a goal that I had long given up on – working with and integrating the wild feminine energy within the universe into my energy field in a

harmonious way. For the first time in my life, I feel like I can be my true self without any danger of losing connection with the human world and my everyday life.

This work has been such a blessing for me, and has truly opened my eyes to the possibilities for modern shamanism. She explained to me recently that I've been given the gift of this experience so that I can work with others who are walking their paths alongside modern medicines, both for their mental and physical health.

I now understand that shamanism can encompass and enrich all of our modern sciences, instead of standing apart from them. When we honour the spirits that live within all things, both natural and man-made, we free ourselves up to experience the whole range of spiritual medicine that is available to us as a gift from Source.

Looking back now, I feel empowered by my journey with this special modern medicine, and we have become firm friends. I feel that I will always be able to work with her as an ally, even if I'm not taking the medicine physically, and that through my relationship with her I have a way to connect with and understand all the modern medicines that my clients may be working with.

She has taught me that our prejudices can even effect our experience of the spirit world, and that when we have the vision to honour the actual experiences we've been given, rather than those we think we should have, we are given unexpected medicine that can help the entire shamanic community to evolve and grow, meeting the needs of the wider community in a more whole and accessible way.

Luitha K Tamaya is an author and contemporary shaman with over 15 years of experience in working directly with Spirit. She lives in Suffolk, UK, with her husband, artist and contemporary shaman Gabriel and their young family. Together, they run 'The Living Sacred,' a social enterprise that works to bring traditional and contemporary shamanic wisdom to people all over the world in personally relevant ways. www.lktamaya.co.uk www.thelivingsacred.org luitha@thelivingsacred.org



SUGGESTED WAYS TO WORK SHAMANICALLY WITH MEDICATIONS

If you are on a medication of any sort, whether to reduce blood pressure, ease the pain of a bad back, help stop rejection after an organ transplant, or prevent an unwanted pregnancy, it is possible to work with the spirits of these medications using your shamanic skills.

If you are able to shamanically journey, try making a journey to a spirit helper you know and trust well, and ask them for either a teaching about the medication you need at this time, or better still ask to visit the spirit of the medication so you can talk with it. Once

this relationship with the medication spirit has begun, it is possible to ask the spirit how you can work in harmony with it, have help to reduce any side effects, and give appropriate honour and thanks to the spirit for the help it is giving you.

Always work with the aid of your most trusted spirit helper, and with their blessing, do as the spirit of the medication asks you to do.

This can take many forms, maybe you will be asked to make a spirit fetish or ongon of the medication, keep the medication on your altar, make offerings

of some kind to the medication - or even be asked to paint your front door a certain colour - the ways of working with these spirits are myriad.

By working consciously with the spirit of your medication you will be coming into alignment with it. It may or may not be of great benefit to you, in terms of the way the medication works with you physically, but many people who undertake this work report that it has helped turn the medication from an often unwanted invading energy into a helpful and instructive spirit ally.