



Shamanism Beneath the Amulet Tree : pages 36-42



Shamanism and Psychosis : pages 14-19



Shamanism and Suicide : pages 30-34



From Out of the Depts of a Person : pages 26-29

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THE FOUNDING INSPIRATION FOR SACRED HOOP MAGAZINE IN 1993
"Then I was standing on the highest mountain of them all, and around and about me was the whole hoop of the world... I was seeing in a sacred manner the shapes of all things in the spirit and the shapes of all shapes as they must live together like one being. And I saw that the Sacred Hoop of my people was one of many hoops that made one circle, wide as daylight and as starlight and in the centre grew one almighty flowering tree to shelter all the children of one mother and one father, and I saw that it was holy."
 (From the vision of Nicholas Black Elk Lakota Holy Man: 1863 - 1950)



The Power of the Simple Things : pages 6-13

From the Editor



When I grew up, the local psychiatric Hospital was called the 'loony bin.' It was a place you might be sent if you didn't conform to being 'normal,' and the inmates of the 'bin' were not people like us - they had stepped over a threshold, which meant they were a whole other alien life form; 'loonies.' We have come a long way from that view in some ways - but in other ways not very far at all.

We start this issue with an interview with Sandra Ingerman. We had no set direction for the interview, and I didn't expect it to have relevance to mental health, but as you will see, the 'human condition' cropped up. But of course, mental health is not stuck behind a wall somewhere, it's part of us all, as human beings trying to make sense, and come to terms with, our life-walk.

In anthropology - especially in the past - shamans were often considered to be mentally ill, and generally schizophrenic. Alanna Kaivalya looks at the similarities between medicine people and psychotics, and we continue this theme in our next article, where Dick Russell writes about his schizophrenic son, Frank, and the trials and tribulations that eventually took them to working with the African medicine person Malidoma Somé.

Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung undertook pioneering psychoanalytical work in the C19th and C20th. They looked at repressed aspects of the personality - which if they come out sideways, can manifest as neurotic or psychotic behaviour - and this gave birth to modern psychotherapy. Michelle Corrigan introduces one of the most influential psychotherapists of the later C20th, Fritz Perls, the originator of Gestalt Therapy, and later in the issue I write more about Gestalt therapy and how it is applied in change work.

Mental illness often creates deep internal distress and pain, which can result in suicide, and Adele Ryan McDowell looks at suicide from the point of view of shamanism.

Moving away from mental health issues we look at a shaman's ritual apron in the British Museum and then hear the life story of Munkhbat, a Mongolian shaman, written for us by BlueSky Shaman. Munkhbat's own story is one of both joy and suffering, and it underlines both Sandra's interview and our mental health theme.

In our culture, if you talk to 'inanimate things,' such as your car, you still might be thought of a bit odd. But I bet most of you do it. Shân Rose developed a shamanic relationship with her car, and that is perfectly right and normal - because in the 'shamanic world-view' there is no such thing as 'dead matter,' - it's all part of the road trip we call life

Blessings to all Beings
 Nicholas Breeze Wood