

Substance and the Healer

When I began my training in energy healing and shamanism many years ago, my teacher strictly instructed us to not drink at all for twenty-four hours before our three-day intensive weekend workshops. She firmly stated that no alcohol, cannabis or psychedelics were to be consumed. No spirits or herb for twenty-four hours after the training was over, either. Ugh.

I was faithful to this rule (more or less) for the three-year duration of my training on the long intense weekends of class. I'm not much of a rule follower typically, but I was scared enough of being vulnerable to dark entities to abide by the rules and I understood the safety factor when you are working with energy.

Reasons you want to stay clean and sober when working with energy include:

- a) You want your vibration as high as possible to increase high sense perception & intuition, right? If you weren't interested in being finely tuned, you probably wouldn't sign up for an energy healing class.
- b) Substances can blow holes in your auric field and leave you susceptible to entities and lower vibrations (demonic energy).

It made a lot of sense to me to leave wine and beer alone on those weekends at first. As I strengthened my own energy awareness and intuition, energy healing introduced me to an entirely different way of living, which is what I want to discuss here.

In the beginning phase of learning how to work with energy, you might have a linear rule or code of conduct to keep you safe, such as in the "no alcohol or pot within twenty-four hours of working with energy" rule. But what happens the more you raise your vibration is that you have less rules to follow because you are living in right relationship with yourself.

What I mean by this is that there is a new code of conduct, a higher way of being in relationship for the healer who is doing the work every single day to live intuitively, cultivating harmony and respect with their own bodies and with all of life on planet earth. This goes so far beyond being "sober" and I have found only more excitement and texture to my life as I have explored dimensions and energy in a safe way.

But I have not always been safe and I have not always followed all the rules. I teach energy healing now because I have broken every rule and made every mistake and paid some big prices for it along the way, too.

This is not an easy path to walk, but the more in tune you are with how to use your body and energy field as a healing instrument, the better life gets all the way around. When you are living the healer lifestyle: eating, sleeping and breathing well-being, every single thing you put in your body matters. You begin to realize that you are joining forces, synergizing with the elements you take in and merge with. So whether it's coffee, chocolate, beer or sugar, it doesn't really matter. What matters most is, how does this substance affect your vibration?

Questions to ask before partaking in any substance:

Does this food or beverage make you more finely tuned or less bright? Does it enhance your light or make you dull? When you look at what you intake in this sacred way, life gets very different because it's not about rules. That's the easy way out of responsibility, to have these rigid dos and don'ts about what to eat or drink. Think of the level of accountability it brings to be intuitive about what goes in your body all the time. This mindfulness practice will strengthen your intuition faster than anything I know. If you make decisions with the intelligence of your body and spirit and ask yourself what would serve you best to eat in any given moment, the answers will surprise you. It might not be what your head (intellect) thinks you should eat, smoke or drink. This is the process of becoming intuitive and "finely tuned".

Everything changes when you observe your energy

The path of the healer requires so much flexibility, presence and paying attention. What works for you one day will not work for you the next, so try to avoid strict rules and big announcements about what you do and don't consume. There's nothing more humbling than walking the path of consciousness and being intuitive every day, You just can't be lazy and you can't be "right" because honestly, no substance is good or bad. Food, beverages, herbs and mushrooms are like everything else-just energy. It's all in how they make us feel and synergize with us that determines whether they are good partners in our co-creative healing and learning.

The next part of this story I am going to share with you is a bit about my intergenerational healing work I have done for myself and my family around alcohol. Notice there is no "and they lived happily ever after, the end" at the end of this story. My relationship to substance is still unfolding and changing. I am discovering new things about my relationship with food, water, wine, coffee, you name it-all the time. And it won't end as long as I'm here, if I continue to be honest with myself and do the work of self-realization. There's been another layer and level of my healing with substance since I did Kambo frog medicine, so stay tuned for that. Our healing process is a spiral-we will never get it done, we can't get it wrong and substances aren't "bad". Holding space for others as a healer and making a commitment to keep yourself well while doing this kind of work is the highest level of commitment I know because it's about honoring your own highest good, whatever that means in this moment.

My Intergenerational Healing Ceremony

The more I learned about the quantum effect healing work has on future and past generations in our bloodline, the more I knew I was taking one for the team when it comes to the healing patterns of alcoholism and addiction.

I knew I needed to do some deep work and so I sought the support of another powerful medicine woman, Susannah Ravenswing, a shaman in the Northern Tradition.

In keeping with her Germanic tradition of ancestral healing, she gave me my assignments to prepare for the ceremony. I was told to find a rock that represents the family issue I was focusing on healing. For me personally, the issue I was requesting support for was generations of alcoholism and continued alcohol abuse on both sides of my family.

I found a large river rock that represented the weight I felt from carrying around these karmic burdens. The rock was beautiful and burdensome at the same time, the same way karmic family ties can feel. Susannah also requested I find organic cotton dyed in many colors and bring the cotton thread to the ceremony.

My next assignment was to write letters to everyone who was linked to healing my relationship with alcohol. I poured my heart out to my father, my grandfathers, my brother and cousins. The letters seemed to write themselves as my tears poured on to the pages. This action step took time and focus and reminded me what ritual and ceremony are for. Shamanic acts of power make us step out of our normal patterns and habitual behavior. We are called to action and shook awake by the physical steps we take in ceremony.

Susannah told me to wrap my letters around the river rock and then wrap the cotton string around the letters and rock, completely covering the stone with the cotton thread. I took my time with this, praying and singing over the rock and the letters. She said when I had almost completely used up the string to leave a little open tail of cotton thread untied. Below is a picture of my ritual object upon completion.

These action steps are usually uncomfortable because spiritual growth pushes us out of stagnation and makes us look at things honestly.



The stone and the cotton thread held so many years of emotions and experiences. I put my heart into creating this and I was ready to release the heaviness and the karmic ties that bind.

My dear friend decided she would join me and work on healing her own family lineage in this ceremony as well. We chose the powerful time of the Summer Solstice to do this important work.

Generational healing can be done for many different issues, not just addiction. We can make a huge difference for our family lineage when we break patterns of abuse, poverty, racism and so much more.

I was such a party girl in my early days, everyone loved it when I was drinking with them. I didn't realize how I shapeshifted to meet their energetic state and how substance helped me to not feel the emotions of so many around me. My family had always bonded and celebrated over alcohol-it was our "fun". This made the lines between wellness and good times with family blurry for me in my younger years. Addiction had landed my father in jail, squandered his fortune and ruined his health. Thankfully, my father enjoyed his last seven years in sobriety but he was just one in a long lineage of family members who suffered from alcohol addiction.

Our ceremony on the Solstice was powerful. It was so comforting to fully place myself in Susannah's loving care and embrace her traditions. I highly recommend participating in

ceremonies with medicine people who embody traditions that are different from your lineage and training. This will refine your awareness of cross-cultural shamanism and enhance your own skills. Above and beyond the education you receive from participating in ceremonies with competent medicine men and women, there is an important aspect of receiving support and allowing someone else to hold space for you. This is essential for your health, if you are doing shamanic work.

I loved observing how she calls in the Four Directions and how she sings and chants. We made sacred offerings of flowers and berries to the nature spirits. She had me hold my rock as she wrapped the open end of my string to a tree. She literally tied me to a tree to represent the karmic ties and burdens I had been carrying for my family. Then, she empowered me by offering me a knife to cut myself away from the ties that bind.

This ritual act was so liberating and impactful for my subconscious mind. When I had freed myself from the tree, she invited me to throw my burdensome stone into the river. I gave it a great heave and a scream as it landed in a deep part of the water.

We gave flowers and berries to the river spirits, sang songs and gave prayers of thanksgiving for all the good healing work that had been done. This ceremony was a catalyst, a spark of something new for my family. These action steps set something in motion that would take a few years to manifest change. Ceremony is not a “one and done” kind of act. Ritual implements a change and then that change must ripple out and create new imprints. Patience is key when it comes to ceremony and desired effect. It might take many years before you start to see a difference when you work on intergenerational healing. Remember, you are introducing a new pattern and there are ancient imprints of dysfunction that must be cleared. Be patient with yourself and your family. Put love at the forefront of your work.

No matter how much training and spiritual healing we do, even the most advanced healers and shamans need someone to hold space for them from time to time. This is a human necessity and it is very overlooked in the spiritual healing community.

Check in with yourself often and ask if you need someone to hold you so you can go deeply into your own process. If you have been holding space for others a lot, find a medicine healer to be your well, your source of strength and refreshment. There is no competition when it comes to shamanic practice. If you ever feel competitive with another healer, you have lost your way. Come back to your heart and put your ego in check.

Never be too proud to sit in someone else's circle and partake of their medicine. Your life will be rich when you know how to fully receive and be humble. We have so much to learn from one another and so much to gain from each person's unique healing gifts. The world is ours if we just wake up to our own abundance. If you feel called to do an intergenerational ancestral healing ceremony, do not embark on this by yourself. Call out for the right shaman to help you and they will show up.