

Feathers and Bones-Gifts from Spirit



Shamans tend to get more excited about finding animal remains than most people. I'll never forget on my birthday one year, an owl had just been hit by a tractor trailer and I found him on the side of the road.

I quickly told my husband to pull over and the adventure began. To my surprise, the owl's body was in perfect condition even though the eighteen-wheeler had hit him head on. We carefully wrapped him up in trash bags and placed him in the cooler we had packed for my birthday trip. We kept him on ice over the fun birthday weekend celebration in Asheville, NC. As we checked in to the hotel, we chuckled as the bellman put our cooler on the luggage cart thinking, "if he only knew what was in there."

Expanding Sacred

This might seem like bizarre behavior to anyone not in the shamanic realm. For me, I knew that owl was a birthday gift to me and that I had permission to use the feathers and wings for healing purposes. How did I know that? I felt it deep within my heart and shaman center (sacral chakra or dantien).

The photo of the bones above was taken at Georgia O'Keeffe's Ghost Ranch. There was a completely different energy and feel about these bones as opposed to the ease of receiving the owl medicine into my life. I asked with respect and was allowed to take two bones and nothing more from that land. The skull of this animal was meant to stay on this rock and not be touched. I respectfully honored the messages that were received there and I left an offering to the animal spirit. I ended up burying the two bones many years later after using them as tools in healing work and sacred ceremony.

It's funny how these animals tell us when they want to be returned home to the earth for their final resting place. Medicine objects are not meant to last forever. There is something so sweet and special about finding a gift from an animal spirit and yet something just as precious about returning them to Mother Earth when the time has come.

Feathers are a huge part of my ceremonial work. I use wings, tails or single feathers for smudging during sessions, ceremonies, house blessings and clearings. I also wear feathers frequently when I do healing work, facilitate ceremony or just when I feel like I need a little extra power.

Feathers are gifts from Spirit. Pay attention when a feather comes into your life and give thanks. It's very easy to preserve a wing or tail to use in ceremonial work or healing sessions. If you find the body of a bird and you would like to preserve a wing or tail for sacred ritual, here's what to do.

- 1)-You can store the bird in your freezer until you have time to offer respect and prayer through ceremony.**
- 2)-Offer thanks for the medicine tool and respect to the Animal Spirit in prayer. With strong pliers, cut off the wing or tail and give the remains of the animal a proper burial.**
- 3)-Store the wing or tail in a shoebox full of Borax Mule Team detergent for one to two weeks. Fully immerse the wing in the Borax crystals in order to disinfect and dry the tissue.**
- 4)-You now have a medicine tool and ritual object to use on your altar, in meditations and ceremony. Enjoy!**



Feathers add a special something to my energy and make me feel powerful. What special adornments give you an extra boost? Think of how you want to adorn yourself in a sacred way for ceremony. Set aside sacred time to honor yourself. Remember, there is a performance aspect to sacred ceremony. You are creating an experience for yourself that is quite magical.

What type of adornments make you feel sacred and special? Spend some time reflecting on this.