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What is Traditional Shamanism?



By Shaman Elder Maggie Wahls
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Everything about the [course I teach](#), everything that I am trying to get you to experience in this very experiential course is about walking the path of the Traditional Shaman. And what is this path the Traditional Shaman walks? If I had to highlight it in one word I would call it “being”; a state of being.

Every created thing is energy. It receives and emits energy. The first goal for the Traditional Shaman apprentice is to break out of the limits of the physical perceptions only, which create limited beliefs and limited realities by their very nature, and to perceive with inner senses the energies that lie beyond the limits of outer senses.

It is not about accomplishing working with beings or having superhuman powers or creating gold out of dust. It is a state of consciousness that few

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people in this world ever achieve. It is the perceiving of this Energy in all its innumerable forms and living this life experience from this state of “being”.

The Traditional Shaman has the advantage of seeing the flow of Energy and cooperating with that flow, working within the flow of Energy that is all around us and within us, that simply IS.



It is by discovering this flow of Energy that the Traditional Shaman learns to govern the energy within him or herself. It is our own inner thoughts, feelings, perceptions and beliefs that create our reality. If you are not happy with your reality, the work to make that better all happens within you, you are the creator of this reality. You have the power to create the reality that brings you joy and health and happiness and prosperity. You are the Energy as is everything around you. The path of the Traditional Shaman is a constant walk of becoming, expanding and self-awareness. We cannot create a reality of love and compassion and joy from only the limited perceptions gained by our outer senses alone. We all have inner senses as well but we were taught to ignore them as they are not necessary to surviving in the physical world. But this world is larger than we have so far perceived when you think of all that is here as being Energy. This Energy can only be perceived using your inner senses. And yet this is reality, a huge reality that we have never perceived. If we cannot perceive something, we cannot take it into our belief system, we cannot make it a part of our reality. We first must perceive. This is lesson 3 in the [Traditional Traditional Shaman course](#) I teach. And as we learn to perceive more and more we can begin to understand “being”.

Clarity, discipline, a relationship with this Energy is required. Letting go of the negative ego which holds this limited reality in place in our lives, this sense of self importance, that does not allow us to perceive beyond our

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own little lives needs to be let go by reaching out and perceiving more of all that is. The more you open up to new perceptions the more you let this Energy flow through you. Its not all about you! Its not all about the little reality you have created in your own life. Its about Energy.

It is a discipline to allow an unfettered relationship with everything around you. And as you align yourself as an explorer with all that is, you will find this treasure of [balance](#) and joy and focus and Energy within you. As we let go of our limited perceptions and explore new perceptions we loosen up, we can [perceive Energy](#) more and more. We can then explore what is really here, far beyond what we thought was here. We can then relax and deepen into ourselves as we see our connection and indeed our essence in this Energy and become the real expression of ourselves within the world, within Light, within this Energy.



Adaptability

It takes work, perhaps a lifetime of work to grow into awareness of this Energy that is you, that is everything. As you explore and grow your awareness you connect naturally to the fullness of you. The more you experience this Energy the more deeply you come into alignment with this Energy and your expression of this Energy. The path of the Traditional Shaman is to become One with this Energy. The goal for the Traditional Shaman apprentice is how to go beyond the dogma of the physical world and its inhabitants to really experience an authentic life as Energy.

This state of “being” is a place where one experiences this life adventure rather than to create a tiny shoebox of beliefs and live in there with the lid on. To live in a tiny shoebox of beliefs that were mostly given to you by outside sources is to live someone else’s view of reality, not your own and not the truth. No wonder it doesn’t work very well for us! Beliefs are based on what we have so far perceived. If we have not perceived something

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there is no way to let that into our belief system or to benefit from it. But Energy cannot be held by society's beliefs or personal beliefs at all. It is Energy. It is here. We will never understand Energy yet we are Energy and everything is Energy and it is high time that we started exploring it for ourselves.

The true Traditional Shaman is an explorer, involved in the practice of gaining new perceptions using one's inner senses that are a natural part of the human system. The Traditional Shaman has, through gaining new perceptions, gone beyond needing a belief system as most people do. This work to gain new perceptions allows one to develop one's own authentic self, and to express that authentic self beneficially in this physical world. The Traditional Shaman breaks free of the limited beliefs of this physical world. He or she does not just create new beliefs to remodel that shoe box. She throws the lid off and goes exploring with her inner senses to discover this Energy. And he or she discovers that this Energy is all that is. Everything around us here in this life experience is simply a physical manifestation of this Energy.



Energy is beyond the self, beyond the ordinary, beyond what you can sense with only your outer senses. I think we all sense this Energy. We all know that there is more here than just our jobs or bills or houses or interpersonal relationships. And the Traditional Shaman becomes the explorer of this Energy beyond the self. The more you perceive the more you can understand what Energy is.

Each of us creates our own reality based on what we have so far perceived. Every reality that each of the 7 billion people on this planet have created for themselves do exist! How many realities are there? How many realities exist that you have not even begun to perceive? How exciting is the

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prospect of learning to perceive other realities even beyond those of the human being?

Finding your connection to all creation, learning to perceive the workings of Energy in all its manifested forms, in air and fire and water and earth, in your thoughts, feelings, emotions, in the life of a butterfly or a tree, in the cosmos or microcosm of your own daily life. This will allow you to let go and become Energy. A state of being. And here is the [adventure of a human life experience](#).

As a Traditional Shaman who is here to walk this walk and share this walk with those who wish to experience it, my work is to give you ways, experiences to open up to this Energy yourself. It can only be experienced. No words, no discussions, no workshops are able to put into words the experience of this state of “being”. And it is not a state that you can just decide to achieve and catch like a bug. It is elusive like the butterfly and will only land in your hands when it is ready for you. But you can learn patience and determination and discipline and awareness and intent and emotional control so that you have your hands outstretched for it to land upon.

Being a Traditional Shaman is a state of being in full immersion within Energy. It is from this Energy, this Powerful Force that the Traditional Shaman can access this Power to do incredible things. It does not happen at the will of the human being but rather is a butterfly that lands in the hands of those who have done the work within themselves to seek out this Energy and hone the skills and tools to hold this butterfly should it choose to land.

The whole skill of the true Traditional Shaman is to be able to see this Energy as it flows in and through and around everything both manifest and non-manifest. And perhaps more importantly it is to recognize that the Traditional Shaman him or herself is no less or more this Energy than anything else. Equal to a twig or a leaf, equal to that man or that woman, equal to that feeling or thought, everything is Energy.

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Yes there are certain practices and certain disciplines that allow the true Traditional Shaman to reach that place where the state of Traditional Shamanic “being” can land in his hands. I teach these practices to those who want to learn in an online course at www.TraditionalShamanelder.com It is like a power that is bestowed upon us rather than something we seek and obtain for ourselves. But yes there are ways to prepare for this state of being that must be accomplished if it is ever to be bestowed. And that work is all within you.

All things are connected in this Energy, every thought or feeling you create affects all Energy. You are constantly creating your own reality. Don't like what you are creating? Do something about it! What to do? That is what I teach. But this life experience can be a happy joyful adventure for each of us. We are brought into this physical reality to partake of all the creations that Energy has manifested here for our benefit. Think about that.

Everything here is a gift! And everything here is only a manifested form of Energy. You are only a manifested form of Energy having a life experience in a human body. But do you think that this Energy is ever terminated? The Energy that is you and that is everything around you is eternal. There is no light switch about to be shut off! So this life adventure, is that all there is? How important then does it become to use this short life to perceive Energy? How might this change your life experience?

There are definite ways to learn to perceive energy and that is what I teach [in my course](#). There are definite disciplines necessary to be able to perceive Energy. They include balance, control, intent, loosening up your limited beliefs, a willingness to become the explorer. The biggest problem I see for my students is an unwillingness to throw the lid off their little shoebox reality to allow any real awareness of Energy into their lives. Everything must fit into their little shoebox. But the Traditional Shaman threw away

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that shoebox long ago. The Traditional Shaman lives in Energy, explores Energy, works with Energy, heals with Energy because of their own work to reach the gift: this state of “being”. And in this state of “being” there is no understanding, no thinking, no believing, there is only being; being who you really are in truth.



When you understand that your perceptions form your beliefs and your beliefs create your reality you are then empowered to create the reality of your own choice by gaining new perceptions. The work is to gain new perceptions about Energy. And you can do that with anything, a simple fork, a leaf; any new perception that you can gain will widen your belief system and allow you to create a more authentic reality for your life.

But the true Traditional Shaman goes even farther than that. The true Shaman steps into this Energy completely and accepts quiet directives from this Energy and allows this Energy to guide his or her every action. The maintaining of this state of “being” becomes the Traditional Shaman and the Shaman becomes this state of being that is only given as a gift after great efforts to prepare for this way of existing. For the true Traditional Shaman there is no sense of time as time is Energy. Nothing is the same from one moment to the next because Energy is dynamic and moving and working continually. The Traditional Shaman’s attention is focused on everything at the same moment. There is a connection, like a cog in a wheel where the Traditional Shaman functions as Energy, in Energy, through Energy, is Energy. The Traditional Shaman experiences, simply experiences, this life adventure. There is no room for limited thoughts or beliefs, for personal “how does this make me feel” emotions. All those things only limit us. The Traditional Shaman is in tune with a different kind of knowledge. This Shaman knows that there are an unlimited number of realities. There is a kind of surrender because nothing here is completely knowable. There is a multidimensional presence with the Traditional Shaman. There is an

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infinity in the “being” state of the Traditional Shaman. Beyond this I cannot explain. It is an experience. And the only way to have this experience is to work hard to develop the skills and tools you need within you to be able to hold out your hands and wait patiently for the butterfly to alight with this gift of “being”.

I can show you [the way to prepare](#), I can walk beside you and let you watch me and learn from my own example and experiences but I cannot hold your hands up for you as you wait for the butterfly to land. And this is why there are truly so very few Traditional Shamans in this world.



What makes a Shaman- a Traditional Shaman? A family lineage in indigenous Shamanism that was handed down through the generations and kept alive within that person’s family lines for hundreds if not thousands of years. This ensures that the teachings are authentic and the Shaman has spent many years in an apprenticeship with an authentic indigenous Shaman family member, living with and working with that relative, to learn those tools and skills properly. I am a Traditional Shaman taught by my own Shaman Grandmother who escaped persecution in her homeland of the Ukraine and emigrated to the United States in 1908. Imagine her mother and father trying to scrape up the money needed to buy her a ticket on an ocean liner (in the lowest part of the boat) so they could send her away to a place they had never been and never see her again. That is how much they loved their daughter. That is how badly my people were being persecuted. Imagine this young girl spending 4 weeks huddled with sick strangers going somewhere she knew nothing about. She clung to her knowledge and heritage of Traditional Shamanism. It became hugely important to her life and to her well being. Even there on the ship she used her skills to bring healing to the other passengers who spoke many foreign languages and came from many other countries.

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I watched my Shaman Grandmother practice shamanism all my life. I heard the knock on the door and the freshly prepared meal that would come with it in exchange for her work. My Shaman Grandmother always gave her healing away. She never charged anyone and would only graciously accept whatever offerings grateful patients would donate.

She always was laughing. Everything was such a joy to her and her grandchildren were her precious jewels. She would spend hours twirling my long hair into beautiful curls. As she twined her hands through my locks she would tell me the stories, the metaphors that were the key to understanding the ways of the Shaman. She taught me traditional Shamanism as I have practiced it for over 55 years and [teach it](#) today.

Later she would let me observe her work with her clients and help her in preparation. I watched her keen sense of observation as she would look at a person not just with physical eyes but with her "other" eyes that could see beyond the words being spoken into the heart of the truth. I remember listening to the plights of her patients and watching my Shaman Grandmother take a totally different kind of healing path that seemed unrelated to what the patient said. My Shaman Grandmother explained to me that what we think we want on the outside may be a long way from what our spirit needs.

Later as I studied with my friends who are Native Americans I learned that the totem animals of the medicine wheel also show a hidden spiritual quest behind the conscious wish. In my studies I found many things that my Shaman Grandmother taught me were actually identical to the Shamanic practices of other cultures throughout time. The Celtic Shaman, The Native American Shaman, the Gypsy Shaman, the Inuit Shaman, the Japanese Shaman, the Incan Shaman all have the same knowledge! I find that amazing considering the separation of time and distance.

My Shaman Grandmother put my feet firmly on the path of Shamanism. I have been teaching the ways of my ancestors for ten years now and I still have students



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working with me steadily for all that time. I have travelled around the world and sat at the feet of some of the most important Shamanic healers of our day. I have learned that nothing is ours without knowledge, intent and emotional control. This is what I teach. This is what my Shaman Grandmother taught me. She was a wise and incredibly loving woman. And I think the most precious thing she taught me was where love fits into Shamanism. Love is the key to Shamanic healing in any culture.



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Traditional Shaman Elder Maggie Wahls is one of America's most loved elder teachers of Traditional Shamanism for today's modern society. Her classes are always ongoing online and she also offers free counseling to anyone who wishes it. Visit her site to learn more at <http://www.Shamanelder.com>



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