

# Spiritual Checklist for attending the summer festivals.

Festivals are huge vortices of spiritual energy, vortices that are intentionally opened up by their organizers. Additionally, many other vortices show up because of the forces and people that attend. Festival goers' excitement, hopes and expectations all contribute to amping the voltage of these temporary weekend (or week long) spheres. Many people with great talent for running energy consider festivals their natural habitat. People who believe in magic, who dabble in magic, who study it deeply and those who have the gift but don't know how to manage it – they all show up to these events. It is a hot zone. It is a fantastic, charged place where great, life-changing transformations can occur, where we can be raised to the heights of ecstasy or fall into a domino of mishaps. So hold your horses; it's the Psychic Wild West.

Spiritual does not inherently mean good. It only refers to another dimension. Everything that we find here in the physical plane: love, passion, violence, allure, camaraderie, mishaps, joy... it's all over there in the spiritual plane as well. So clearly, we need to protect ourselves if we are going to have any fun.

I do understand the desire to open oneself to "anything" but anything means anything. You can invite the Goddess Kali to come into your life and watch her wreak havoc or you can ask the compassionate aspect of Kali to teach you of the energies which she specializes in and how they can bring healing to your life.

When we decide to leave ourselves completely open to any change coming, we can still put an intention out of *who's hands* we are leaving ourselves in. If we do not decide, some other force, spirit or person we meet on the road will decide for us. That might not be fun at all.

You wouldn't get in your car for a long road trip without your wallet, shoes and a warm coat, right? So let's add some things to the list to help tend to your soul.

### **Set Your Intention**

This is a really fun part of the pre-summer for me. Why am I going? Who am I this year? What am I seeking? Am I seeking? Or am I giving? Both? What are the issues in my life that I hope to resolve? The new things I want to explore? If you are into costumes, you can design your accoutrements accordingly to support these missions.

### **Make A Travel Altar**

A travel altar is a small, manageable box of sacred things that bring my medicine to my area where I camp. Because the festivals can really take me out of time and place, I like to bring along things that ground me back to my support system at home. It is what makes my home away from home and becomes my grounding spot when things get wild. Just so I have a lifeline in case I get into trouble. I add a few more items that will hold energies to guide and support me and I'm good to go.

### **Decide Who Your Guide Is**

Even if you don't have a name or clear awareness of who is looking out for you, you probably have a pretty good feeling. Focus on that. Call it a guardian angel if you like. Ask them to watch over you and guide you during your trip. If you have a deity you want to call on, call on the pure compassionate aspect of that deity. Make the connection before you set out and it will be woven into the fiber of your journey.

### **Have A Talisman**

Many of us wear a power necklace or keep a crystal or medicine bag on hand, especially at these events. On one level, it may be a way to wear our colors, to celebrate our path together.. or to have more elven bling. This is all good and fun. At the same time, I suggest that you take some time before you leave home to clear and charge such items so that they are really working for you. Phrases that enhance you as a being of love and light, in knowing who you are and in keeping out unwanted forces can be said as you do this. If you have an animal spirit protector, you could ask them to help you with this.

Remember, the key is to be protected so much that we can relax, have an open heart and embrace the things around us.

### **Before You Leave Home, Intend To Come Back**

Anyone trained in shamanism will tell you that to be a shamanic practitioner means to have the ability to set one's sights, go out into the spiritual realms for a particular purpose and then to come back and incorporate the goodness into the core. To not do that is to leave oneself open to something called Soul Loss.

Year after year, I hear people report on the list serves their experiences of post-festival crash. This can be normal, as the freedom and acceptance experienced in an alternative environment is very unlike the routine world but when I hear words like "I cannot get out of bed." "I left part of my soul at the festival." "I have been sick for weeks.", I get very, very worried. Soul loss is a real thing and we want to prevent that.

Running off to join the circus is a fine fantasy but what part of us do we leave behind? When we go and when we return? The shamanic view of what healthy is, is wholeness. To have all of one's soul in the body and to have things that do not belong there removed. So. We protect and we contain. We fly out and we return.

### **When You Get To The Festival, Cast a Circle**

Set up camp, ground and put out some intention that you are creating a safe, loving home away from home. Don't forget to honor and thank the land you are camped on and the spirits of the land that are hosting you for the weekend. Even if you do not acknowledge them, they are quite aware of you. Love to them will usually earn love right back.

### **Venture Forth And Have Fun!**

As one friend told me, do whatever you want to do in the moment you want do it. Hydrate, eat, dance, get your face painted..and don't stay too long around people that make you feel like you are not cool enough for them. If someone comes up and wants to give you an 'energy healing' and you don't like their vibe, by all means say no.

If someone starts telling you what you need in your spiritual life, reach for the popcorn and don't forget to put the salt on it. Only you know what you need in your spiritual life. Really.

If someone has you awestruck with their glamour, honor the spirits that have come to pass through them for you and remember that this person is most likely just a person that takes their pants off in the port-a-potty just like everybody else.

Don't forget for one moment that you are divine, that your place in the stream is gorgeous, is as stunning as every gleaming rock you have seen down at the swimming hole and that the world would not be the same without you.

And if someone tells you that they are so spiritual that there is no need to use a condom, throw them out of your sleeping bag and thank yourself in the morning.

## Public Ritual

If you want to tap into the root power of the festival, go to the opening/closing ceremonies and other rituals! Just know that not all public ritual is safe ritual. Public ritual usually can run from awesomely profound to boring and stale, so you are probably going to be fine. Usually the people running the ritual are highly skilled and hold wonderful ethics. Sometimes it is an ego-fest, sexy fire performance that has not much to do with much of anything. Sometimes the healing forces come down so strong that people are blown away for the rest of the weekend.

All of that can happen and more so just know that you get to choose how much you want to engage. If you don't feel comfortable, block the energy or step outside the circle. If you want to have the full experience, go for it but then ground yourself as much as you possibly can in a festival vortex when it's over before heading out to the next adventure. You want your field closed before you cross paths with the next super-activated spiritual kinsfolk high on ...whatever.. with some energy to share. Just so you can make good decisions. There's nothing wrong with navigating.

## Look Out For The Gods And Goddesses

What happens when magical people spend an exorbitant amount of time making costumes for magical events is that the spirit of the character becomes invoked. This often happens unintentionally. It also can be a very intentional practice. This means that when you are walking around at a festival, you're walking amongst great spiritual beings as well as the children and families and fun-seekers. Some people are much better mediums than others. Some are natural at it but don't realize the power of what they are doing. Some have actually trained in it and are bringing down compassionate beings as a service to you and the rest of the community. These folks usually don't talk much, but beam and smile at you from deep inside their mask.

Unfortunately some of the more popular beings to consort with are not necessarily all compassionate. Pan, the Horned God, sacred aspects of the male have been known to be brought down for the purpose of amazing the women and helping the wearer get more dates.

All I am saying is be careful. The wonderful thing about mediumship in this venue is that you can be completely taken away by the sight of the great spirits. Staggeringly amazed, transported to somewhere where you are changed forever and have received gifts to hold for the rest of your life. You can also find yourself falling in love with a person who you know nothing about because the entire time they were at the festival they were being ridden with Great Spirit.

It is helpful to see what is what and make good decisions from there.

### **Coming Home**

Start the coming home process. You knew when you got into this that it wouldn't last forever so try not to hold on too tight. If you do it will only make the separation harder. Ride the gentle wheels of change and know that there is magic all around you in the town you live in. One of the purposes of going to these festivals is to enhance your ability to tap into that Home Magic. The more you see it, the bigger it becomes!

So take some time to thank the spirits of the land as you close your circle and pack your tent. Give the gifts you may have brought as offerings to the tribe. Exchange your phone numbers and know that because these are magical realms, you may not ever hear from these people again. Super big heart connection or no, it is what it is. My hope is that long-term relationships can be built over time so that we can shape and evolve all of our realms together but at first, things may not happen that way.

### **When You Get Home Be Gentle With Yourself**

and the people in your life who do not understand festivals! Recognize that the transition back to home life is as powerful, important and transformative as being at the festival itself. Do try to keep in touch with the people you had heart openings with. They understand what you just went through and can help you out. This is the love you are trying to manifest in the world and it takes courage to reach out!

So, you incorporate this love and the high magic back into your everyday life and anticipate the mysteries of the following year. But don't forget to be present in the Winter! Summer festivals cannot bring you the awesome magics of the other seasons and we need them too!

We need YOU and the wonderful gems you have found in your own practice over the time we have missed you!

# The Shadow Side of the 2012: A Field Guide to the Newest Neo-Spiritual Movement Found in the Summer Festivals

So now I want to talk about some things that are hard to hear.

I want to take a closer look at the Shadow side of the 2012 spiritual movement, which to me expresses itself in a unique way by rejecting Shadow.

Before I begin, let me give you some context. I grew up in the 70's, when everyone's family was being torn apart by the cataclysmic forces of civil rights, feminism and the emergence of the importance of 'feeling' brought on by a new psychological movement.

I watched my mother find her power at age 40. I watched the explosive rifts of her past rip through my world as she grasped for understanding and healing. I was gifted with her example of following truth at any cost, rather than staying with the status quo.

Then the Neo-Pagan era blossomed along with the first "New Age", a higher frequency portal of energy. All of these movements were tools used to begin the long recovery from generations of trauma and destructive patterning that we are still in the midst of, brought on by generations of the overuse of power-over and white male oppression.

Back then, it was all about bringing the shadow to light. Each shadow brought forth in the public realm catalyzed personal shadows to come forth in the private realms of millions of people. There was a lot of time spent exploring the shadows so we could understand them and not be ruled by them any longer. Great wisdom was gained in this process which helped bring many people to healing that they couldn't have previously conceived of.

Well things have changed quite a bit since then.

As it goes in our society, if things are not commoditized through the capitalistic market, they become mentally commoditized by our very well trained minds – they become objectified. Meaning that the very deep meanings certain areas of work have held for us become merely symbolic for the next wave of youth. They become catch phrases rather than profound loci of meditation.

The Shadow is quickly becoming a concept.

Before, Paganism was a very intentional path. It was an actual practice, one that most of us came to through suffering and loss of any hope of a rich spiritual life. Many of us, abused by the system of the Catholic church, broke free into the pagan construct to find the beauty, divinity and female wisdom within, rather than the ever-reaching for the big, brother guy in the sky.

All you had to do was ask someone what their favorite books were to know the philosophical base of their pagan path. But now, the self-crafted aspect of the spiritual Pagan path has been brought to an extreme. Paganism has become a social culture more than an intentional path. Many young people call themselves pagans without knowing the first thing about the practice of magic.

This sort of thing follows in many subcultures. Wearing a mohawk no longer represents studied, non-violent anarchist philosophies. It's just ... cool. And the term New Age has no meaning anymore, as things have transformed so fast and so many times that *new* can only mean *now* whereas “New Age” usually refers to before.

### **Now the emphasis is all about Light.**

Young spiritual practitioners carry an incredible light that I have not been able to grasp except through knowing them. This light has affected my state of being, has opened doors for me and enabled me to come out of places I have been trapped in most of my life. These young people are amazing beings and the paradigms they are shaped from are vastly transformative. The art that has come through is stunning and the creativity inspiring beyond words.

**I am very grateful for this new paradigm.**

My entire energetic system has made leaps and bounds to new vibrations and dimensions.

But I hope that we are very careful. I hope that we can learn from what has happened to political and spiritual movements of the past and not make the same mistakes as before. We need to keep our eye on the commoditization machine. In only a few short years I have begun to find the art at the festivals mass-produced and the creativity waning. I have come to discover that the new amazing fashions from the East are actually pre-designed constructs from the fantasies of westerners commissioned to countries where it is cheaper to get them made.

**As I walk the landscape of the newest new age of spiritual awakening, what I notice is a significant lack of Shadow.**

A scary and potentially dangerous lack of Shadow. In some pockets of the forest there is actually a cultural, almost oppressive 'insistence' on light very similar to the insistence on the shiny happyface found in the corporate work culture. There are threads in the fibers of the new clothe that hold great fear to looking into the shadows, so great that some universal spiritual and psychological truths and concepts have become maligned into weapons designed to maintain an ever-cosmic, relentlessly positive and very sexy vision of the 'new age' coming upon us.

**As Shadow does, when it is pushed away, it only grows bigger.**

The other strange and scary thing I notice is the Western "consumer-individualism", the me-me-me, me-get, get-me mindset getting wrapped up in a very seductive spiritual package.

Let me break it down for you.

I will go through some spiritual precepts and then quote the misinterpretations I have heard around enough to identify them as cultural songs in the harmony of the 2012 movement, not just the views of the individuals I have met.

## **We Are All One, Everything Is Connected:**

*"We are all one, so none of the tried and true spiritual constructs really matter anymore."*

*"It's all the same, so I don't need to study anything. I have everything I need right here."*

The oneness of all is a realization that is typically not come to with extreme profoundness until one is pretty far along on one's spiritual path. This is because much has to be cleared before one can be open to the experience.

Now with the popularity of entheogens, it has become a readily purchase-able shamanic experience. So, an enormous amount of people with not a lot of life experience have gone to foreign countries on spiritual quest through the path of ayahuasca or san pedro or other mescaline-based hallucinogens.

After experiencing a mind-blowing oneness with the universe, these deeply moving events have transformed into in an attitude of having 'wisdom' at one's fingertips. Wisdom is no longer something that is earned through life experience anymore. Because of this, a lot of people do not feel that it is necessary to seek spiritual training from others that have come further on in their paths then they have.

Some people have made up entire systems of spirituality from seemingly thin air and formed schools around that. All of these inspired schools have value, I am sure, but I am very wary of systems entirely created by one or two people.

One forgets that the memory of oneness is not the same as the experience of oneness. That to achieve such oneness back at home without entheogens requires a long, long path of spiritual discipline.

Yes, we do have everything we need right before us but do we have the many lifetimes it would take to figure it all out? Or maybe we could learn a little from those around us who have also been doing the work, learning from even others who have passed the knowledge down over long ages of time.

[shadow]

### All Being One does not mean that all is the same.

A parrot is not a cougar and a plate is not a fork. Each religion and spiritual path comes from and leads to the same One Source but the system of energy which drives the vehicle can be very, very different. It does not make sense to change a recipe until one understands how the current ingredients work together so it does not make sense to tinker with a thousand-year old system of energy that one could not possibly understand in one's life time.

I would not blend Reiki or Qi Gong with another practice because I have respect for these systems of energy, which have been tried and true for thousand of years before me. When I practice them, I feel reverberations, frequencies I have never experienced before coming from sources I do not recognize and I do not think I know enough about to mess with or ever fully understand.

Shamanically, I would not diagnose a client without consulting the spirits because I recognize that there are vast forces of all kinds that are much, much bigger than me, with more knowledge than me and far more understanding in the ways of compassion.

There are many of us who have taken years of practice to build the skill and relationship with Spirit so that we can pick up a drum and fully get out of our mental construct in order to converse with the Divine. To avoid the pitfalls of the ego, the temptation to give into primal needs and desires in order to reach a true message.

I am not so arrogant as to isolate myself from the rest of the universe with my specialness.

At the moment I do so, I have separated from the sacred truth that We Are All One.

## We Are All Divine

*"I am God. I am a descended master. I am divine. I am an avatar. I am a gift to the people around me."*

*"I do not need to ask Spirit for guidance, because I am Divine and therefore can access all answers inside of me."*

OK, so there are actually people out there who believe that they are gods. That they are having a bizarre and unique experience because they have come down here to help the rest of us and are not used to being in a human body. And we should laud them for this sacrifice.

These folks are highly seductive and extremely difficult to disentwine from once the first misstep is made. A few of them have been prone to psychological and even physical violence. And are clearly wounded themselves.

This phenomena is coming from the notion that many enlightened souls are coming forth to be part of the big consciousness-raising party at 2012.

**I notice a lack of attention given to the ALL part of the universal truth that "We are All Divine."**

If we are all divine, what makes someone else so much more special than me? If I am divine, then why am I expected to listen to someone talk about their spiritual prowess until I wish I was home with my cats?

I do believe that many of us have soul heritage with the fey, or the angels or with the extra-terrestrials, etc. This does not make us better than everyone else. This gives color to our unique specialness as we contribute to the Great Oneness with the rest of humanity.

Many, many of us have strong sacred callings, as well. Our job is to discover each other's calling and figure out how they fit together. Now, there's the play!

**I will know it when I meet a Descended [or Ascended] Master by the Service and Love that they offer to others.**

By their genuine interest in enhancing the specialness of those around them. Actually, I may not know it when I meet one because those that are truly in service do not toot their own horns. They know that to do so would detract from their calling.

If you are confused about whether or not someone is a super-charged divine gift to humanity, look at the people around them and notice whether they are being enhanced or drained by that person being in their lives. Look at the person in question and notice whether they are being filled with power by those around them or by the well of compassion within them. If you are wrapped up with one of these characters and don't feel that what is happening is good for you, do look up the definition of the narcissistic wound.

### **There is a difference between Power and Wisdom.**

We all know this, but it is harder to see in the seduction of the super-seductive spiritual subcultures. There are a lot of live wire type of folks who can pull amps of power into the room but that does not mean that they have any skill in modulating such power or *awareness of the repercussions of their actions*.

A person like this, paired with an attitude of knowing all and therefore not needing to seek training is the perfect recipe for a charismatic power abuser. Someone too susceptible to falling into an ego pattern of putting people in awe in order to enjoy and be enlivened by their admiration.

A vampire.

### **It is not Wisdom that the Wisdom-Keepers were trying to hold secret when secret societies were formed.**

Any spiritual teacher will tell you that wisdom cannot be taught because what we don't understand only passes us by. It was the methods to invoke spiritual power that were protected. To prevent arrogant people from harming those around them. Well, we now live in a time where all but the greater methods of invoking power are readily available at any metaphysical bookstore. What with the ramp up to 2012, it's getting a little crazy out there.

It is well known that spiritual books are the great stepping stones to crafting our magical tools. It is also known that the great sources of wisdom are not found in any book. We must go to the compassionate spirits themselves. The nice thing about practicing a Pagan craft or Shamanism is that we are encouraged to get in touch with the Divine on our own. We find deep connection between the Great Divine and the Divinity of Ourselves. We are One and we are not the Same. The condition of being human, of having individual souls makes it so. We can tap in. We don't have to pay one thousand bucks or ask Mary to talk to Jesus who can talk to God to deliver our message.

### **When we forget to balance our Personal Divinity with the Oneness of All, we create a dangerous misrouting of energy.**

When we forget to respect the Power part of power, we become irresponsible (unable to respond) to the affects of our power moving upon others.

Sometimes when I meet people who are supposedly seeking wisdom, if I look closely, they are actually seeking power. I have to be careful and not join them on their path. I need to consciously delineate in my mind the difference between their path and mine so I do not get pulled into theirs.

**Sadly, some people become so attached to the notion of their own Divinity that they do not deem it necessary to approach the Great Powers of the Divine for assistance or guidance.**

Sad, because their access to knowledge is limited to their own system. The trap a lot of people fall into is the old, “over-developed reliance on the mind” trap and not much so from other channels of information. Accessing answers within oneself becomes a fast mental flash. Instant gratification.

Each portal we have lends different types of information, the mind, the emotions, the third eye.. very importantly, the body. These portals function in different ways and gleaning from them often takes some teasing. It takes some listening. It takes investment. It takes time.

The Divine cannot be accessed through the mind. It is the mind that gets in the way.

**I still believe that Mystery is Mysterious.**

That there are huge pockets of knowledge that can only be accessed through the body,

Or energetic transmission from a teacher

Or deep wisdom writings designed to lead us to indescribable portals

Or the surviving of long, confusing and difficult life events.

**What becomes neglected (at the height of talk about embracing the feminine) is the Wisdom of the Cycles of Mother Earth.**

The cycles of life and death deem perfection a broken system. We are ALL Divine and being born into human bodies, filled with Divine Imperfection. There is no such thing as perfection. We are all perfectly, gorgeously, Divinely Imperfect. Each part of the curve on the Wheel of Life is sacred, each holding Mysteries, each time around the Wheel more to be revealed for us.

There is a reason why there is word out there called Mystery. We do not know it all and hence there are very, very good reasons to want to study.

## The Power Of Vision

*“Why don’t you just imagine where you want to be and then you will be there.”*

*“Follow your bliss and the money will follow.”*

It is completely possible to transport oneself into a more positive dimension through positive visualization. We can visualize a better job, a better living situation...all easily within the construct of the society within we live in.

To manifest the stuff outside the normal rules of the accepted paradigm is a whole other animal. For example, it may be a lot harder to manifest a fantastic job as a woman of color in a white dominated society.

**In order to achieve the state of mind to manifest unlikely things, one must have cleared or made friends with the Shadow.**

The Shadow of doubt, of disbelief in oneself, the Shadow of self-hatred.

You cannot wish the Shadow away. You cannot push it beneath the surface. It is generally not possible to spend thirty minutes in fantastic meditation to make it go away. It is still there. All you can do to avoid Shadow is to stay in the shallows and never delve too deep. To stay shallow.

An idealized life of artistry and magic and self-sufficiency on this planet is not a magic trick. It takes money and money must come from somewhere. When I meet someone who seems to be an amazing examples of ‘living one’s dream’, I always ask myself, “Where is the money coming from?”. Rarely was the person able to make it on just what they are currently doing. They left a corporate job and used their stock options to get started.

They are bartering their services. They have a trust fund. They have benefactors (by will or by charm). Their parents send them money. They are living at other people’s places for free. They are selling drugs. The people who are able to do it well worked really, really hard for many years and it shows.

We cannot escape the world we live in. If manifesting the utopia through visualization was so easy we would be there by now. The hard road, the true road is the one of love. Learning to hold love for the ‘other’, for ‘the muggles’, embracing the oneness with the humanity all around us as the highways pass overhead and the rivers are poisoned by the manufacturing companies upstram. This is the real love, the Big Love. It is not until we can come to terms with the whole world, not just the utopian world we want to be in that we can really get some traction in making some changes.

[shadow]

*“You are bringing me down with your energy, therefore I am not going to engage with you anymore.”*

The shadow is our friend. It is insistent. It does not react well to being beaten, ostracized or neglected. It wants to be loved.

I have noticed a cultural pattern that encourages people to dismiss their friend's struggles in getting to where they want to go. There is no more holding space for one another through difficult times because of the view that if the other was in the spiritually correct frame of mind, then they would not be having the struggle they are in. Therefore they are an annoying drain to be around.

It is true that there are people who have learned to pull on others around them to nurse their despair but time and time again, I have seen people treated as if they are doing this when they are not.

To live in the Light one must embrace all things with arms of Light. It is not mind over matter. It is courage to have heart in all situations. This, too, is not an easy thing but only the consumer mindset said that any of this was going to be easy.

We can love bigger.

**We do not create our own realities.  
We co-create them.**

What the person does down the street affects my realm and I cannot change that. Whether I watch the news or not, the president's decisions impact my life, the multi-national corporate CEO's consciences ...my life, so yes, we are all connected. I can create my own world up unto the boundary where it meets the other. After that, everything starts mixing in.

I can generate a field of groundedness and compassion but I cannot stop someone from creating the field they create. It is a lifelong practice to learn to not be affected by the destructive forces around me. It takes the same fortitude you yearn for when my struggles trigger your own and "bring you down".

If we find ourselves brought down by someone else's experience, it is important to protect ourselves. It is also important to reflect. What am I being shown by this person's insights? Why am I so easily affected by them?

True strength, the kind of strength to strive for, is one that allows us to feel protected enough to keep our hearts open in the midst of crisis. To relax, respect, listen and embrace.

So yes, paint your world. But don't forget that everyone else is painting theirs, too and that we are all in this together. Together we create the world we live in.

## The Power Of Words

*“You should not talk about negative things or express shadow emotions or you are participating in manifesting dark things.”*

The Power of Words is one of my favorites from the Laws of Energy. What we say shapes and changes the world around us. It is entirely true. The course of our lives can be altered by consciously shifting the words that we use. Learning to cease negative self-talk can work miracles in our state of well-being.

### But what is forgotten is the Power in Naming.

This is the notion that if we know something's name, we then have power over it. If we did not have words like *sexual harassment*, it would be very hard to put our finger on what is wrong with the way that one person treats another. I am referring the Clarence Thomas hearings of 1991, when every female friend I had was having flashbacks to times when they had been sexually harrassed because something had been finally, publically named.

Pain. Process. And then healing. One of the uses of the Power of Words is to pull terrible things out of the shadows so they can be looked at, listened to and dealt with. If we are not allowed to talk about the things that are going wrong, how are we to solve them? How is the energy inside us to be released?

Naming also has its paradox. To name is to constrain. To call someone a name is to limit who they are to that vibration and not allow them to change. It is not loving. But it can be unloving to self to never come to any conclusions about anything and therefore not be able to move on.

The power of words is hot and real. The reality of the impotency of words to describe reality is real as well. So, though the energy signature of a word can be a jam-packed weapon, its other component is Intention. The same words used with different Intention create different manifestations. There is a difference between someone professing to all their friends that they are a failure and someone confessing to a friend that they feel like a failure.

### The Power of Words has been combined with consumer mentality in the latest spiritual movement.

We have learned the power to invoke just about any emotion or sensation. Much of this has been inherently picked up by countless hours of watching finely crafted corporate advertising – magic used with the worst of motivations. *Entrance, open, insert logo here.*

We think we are so powerful in the trick of invoking happiness, bliss, togetherness, family feelings..but how long does it last? A day? 15 minutes? Where is it felt? In the mind or fully, deeply in the body? Are we happy? Has the spiritual experience become the next best drug? Invoke and reinvoke but do not trust the fibers to change unless much deeper work is played.

## Scraps Left Over From The Pop Psychology In The 70's

*"Your problem is not my problem. I am not responsible for how you feel. You are projecting onto me."*

*"You are being a victim. I do not need to listen to this."*

*"You create the world you live in, so therefore only you are responsible for what happens in it."*

The dirty words of the new paradigm are projecting, victim, attachment and expectation. Too often, if someone does not want to deal with issues someone else is presenting, the person speaking gets to hear some of the above statements. But what love is about, muchly, is *active* listening. Responding, not deflecting. Engagement, not silence.

So if someone is telling you that you are projecting and you are really clear that you are actually having issue with a present-time situation, ponder on the reflection of your reflection onto their fragile psyche. Have compassion. That person may be making you feel disrespected and brushed off but my guess is that they are in a whole lot more pain than you are.

The notion that we are all powerful, that we create our own realities is brought to another level when there is no such thing as a victim anymore. The experience of victim becomes rewritten as an experience of choice.

This is part of the backlash onto feminism. When women were breaking out of abusive relationships with their men, words like co-

dependant were helpful naming words. Now they are weapons used to put people down. Personally, I think that co-dependency is an obsolete thought form, as we have expanded our consciousness to understand such situations much more broadly.

But I digress.

I have asked people who don't believe in the existence of victims if they think that the citizens of Rwanda chose their fate. To my shock and dismay, I actually got responses to the affirmative.

If there is no such thing as a victim anymore, does that mean there is no such thing as an abuser? Should we happily release the murderers, rapists, thieves and con artists from jail and tell them that their crimes were just manifestations of their victims' personal choice?

**People do bad things to other people. It happens all the time. We do need each other because we are interconnected. When we are not in the state of One, we are dying.**

This notion that none of us truly needs anyone else because we are all powerful divine creatures is the Western individualism brought to a spiritual extreme. Again, the separation of the Divine Self from Oneness.

The neo-gypsy free living-in-the-wind mindset is not any different than the Jack Kerouac, James Dean, Don Quixote, Aragorn archetype. It is a sacred, powerful Rite of Passage. It is a youth running from society in order to define self. It can also be a livid fear of intimacy and the respons-ability that comes with it. This character inevitably either dies, goes mad, is killed or returns home to resolve and incorporate what he or she has learned into an even broader life. A regrounded life, combined with new skills: fire, worldly wisdom gained on the road, the ability to take great risks, high passion for the creative process in building the kind of power that is only possible through long term investment.

**Because we co-create our realities, we are truly affected by one another.**

How one person acts does make a difference to another. Humans are social creatures and until very, very recently, the human interpretation of self has been greatly entwined with concept of social group: 'With Other'.

What we are looking at when someone who is in pain is being shunned, really, is either the fear of seeing oneself or the fear of dealing with someone who chooses the victim role over another stance. But even this notion is flawed because I believe that everyone wants to be happy and that also, everyone is doing their best.

If someone knew what joy was, truly, they would fight for it. For most of us, though, we wind up in the same situations over and over because we don't know the thing we are looking for. We know the word for it but haven't really ever experienced it.

[shadow]

There is a powerful and real transition in life from being a victim to becoming a survivor. Then there is another one from survivor to living freely. The two transitions to putting on the weapons of the warrior and then to taking them off again are very big rites of passage, not things that one just walks into. They are things that one grows into.

With the help of our friends.  
Because we are all connected.

But to put someone down for 'being a victim' – as we said in the 70's 'to blame the victim' – just causes more traumatization for that person.

If you want to see someone in their highest light, see them in their highest light! Lend a hand. Say nice things. Lift them up. Help them to see the beauty that you see without negating their experience. Don't decide that they are not evolved enough for be worth your time.

Don't the 'unenlightened' get to join in the oneness party?

[shadow]

## Glamour

The corporate controlled sex machine that disgusts so many people in the alternative cultures has just as much power in the festival circuit as it does on MTV. I have heard some people use the terms “Elven Bling” and “Faerie Barbie” to make the point. The glamour of the skinny, (and therefore deemed sexier-then-you) expensively costumed, spiritually under-developed has gotten ridiculously out of control. When you go to websites of these festivals and check out the pictures to see what they are like, who do you see?

Well, I have been to the festivals and I don't see much representation of who was actually there. I see Elven Pixie Barbies. Watch everyone try to be that. The vendors cater their wares to it. You cannot buy women's clothes at a festival larger than size 12. Tell me this is not painful for the girls who cannot fit into the new fashions.

[dragon]

**Why have we not listened to Mother Earth and redefined yet for ourselves what sexy is?**

**What is taking us so long?**

The glamour offered in alternative spiritual cultures is much, much more destructive than that offered on the regular airwaves because it is all wrapped up in a mystical package. People are drawn to the festivals greatly because they are seeking something outside themselves.. or to bring themselves outside the dominant paradigm into a place where more things, if not anything is possible. Many come hoping to be changed. So naturally, they open themselves to the experience. They come unguarded, hoping, seeking. Often they become preyed on by the same forces they were trying to avoid by their coming.

## **The Dominant Paradigm Wears The Alternative Cloak**

Every spiritual movement thinks that they are the last one, the key one, the one that will save the world. This is beautiful, as passion is most passionate when living in the moment. What comes with it, though, is a perceived immunity to the normal human tendencies that run across all lines no matter where we come from: the need to be liked, fear of abandonment, greed, power, lust, enchantment.

When a whole bunch of young spiritual power houses are not interested in social or political awareness (which was not the case in the 60's), there is left a massive gap open where the old dominant paradigm comes marching in and takes a powerful back seat to all that is developing.

It whispers notions of glamour over beauty, the quest for power of the individual rather than power-with, and the incessant drive to find a destination, dropping all wisdom of the endless sacred cycles that Mother Earth governs with. Life, Death, Rebirth. Never perfect, never 'there', always in process. Always beautiful.

In marches insensitivity to the imbalance of gender and race represented in powerful positions. Spiritual positions, artistic positions, promoters, movers, shakers. We still unconsciously give most credence and consideration to young, good-looking, educated white men. And as for women, we prefer the pixie chicks over the vast diversity of talent that is out there. It is what runs the world, still.

The civil rights movement is not dead. No one wants to hear it, but look around. Who holds these positions? Why? Who is filling the festival slots? Who is holding the key positions? All I ask is that you just take a look.

## Wise Are We

Well, not so fast. Things are much, much better than they look.

**There have been wonderful changes since the time my mother was growing up.**

Women can hold careers in a plethora of fields. The music industry domination has been broken by the internet. People coming up have grown in loving, supportive families. We are becoming more open to the inherent graceful beauty of the male. You can get a degree in whole systems or permaculture, wow!

There is so much fun work to play in together! With the gifts of the new paradigm combined with the gifts of the paradigm spawned in the 60's we can do it.

[love]

**With the Wisdom of the Shadow combined with the Wisdom of the Light, we can do it.**

With joy, laughter and love, rather than by following a few big leaders around with our anger ignited.

The dominant culture has done a good number on our perceptions of what it means to be an activist but we are Powerful, Divine Creatures Co-creating our Reality Together!

Even the 13 Indigenous Grandmothers have pointed out that the time of the charismatic leader is over. We feel it. We know this to be true. There is room for everyone.

Let's storm out the scary stuff together. Let's make rockin' sacred theater in a power-sharing way. Let's step out of the old patterns and play. Let's hold fast to each other in the fast river. Let's find each other, teach each other, hold space for each other's wounds and embrace the Earth we live on with all of it's cycles from Life unto Death and then back to Life again.

[you]

## Gems In The Forest

I see gems across the way  
Sparkling lights and glints of Fey  
I am drawn so close, so near  
Treasures to find, I hope, I fear.

More gems! They move across the field  
My heart it shakes, such luck I wield  
Giggles pass from rock to stone  
This merry home away from home.

Then I come upon the rise  
To find the warmth within your eyes  
The gleams, the smiles and open hands  
Music struck from other lands.

Let's dance and dance until we're high  
Then fall back down, kissed by the night sky.  
Let's feast and write and sing our songs.  
Let's share our souls and right our wrongs.

The gems are you  
and you and you  
each light  
so fair  
so kind  
so true.

The Will O Wisp led those to fates  
of slow demise, unhappy gates.  
but we have brought the magic down  
to share with all and pass around.

Tree and bone,  
whisper,  
tone  
the forest breathes  
*you're never alone.*

[shadow]

*namaste*