

Sacred Art of Discernment Track

MONTH FOUR: NATIVE PERSPECTIVES ON DISCERNMENT

MONTH FOUR

- **SPIRITUAL TRADITION**
– Native Wisdom for Today
- **CLINICAL FOUNDATIONS**
– Psychodynamics in Spiritual Direction
- **DISCERNMENT-IN-PRACTICE**
– Dealing with the mystery of 'evil'



NATIVE SPIRITUALITY



**MOST OF HUMAN HISTORY
PRE-INDUSTRIAL 'THIRD WORLD'**

WISDOM FROM NATIVE SPIRITUALITY

▶ Another Mythology for Discernment

- Mystery and Power of 'Evil'
- Naming Unconscious Resistances
- Potlach and 'Rules' for Discernment



CHARACTERISTICS OF PRIMAL RELIGION

- SPIRITUALITY = Way of Life
- NATURE = Great Teacher
- GOOD = Everything belongs
- EVIL = Denying the darkness
- SHAMAN = Mediator of worlds



"Wankan Tanka Tunkashila"
All things are sacred... everything belongs

ROLE OF THE SHAMAN



Mediator between the human and spirit worlds

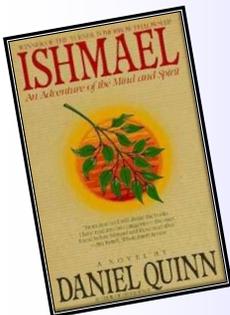


How do we hold the tension that both pain and pleasure, joy and sadness, success and failure can work for or against growth in spirit?

NATIVE INTERMEDIARIES



Reading Recommendation!



“LEAVERS”

Those who live in the hands of the gods

vs.

“TAKERS”

Those who know good and evil

Leavers are the most endangered species in the world



Whenever **Takers** encounter Leavers another tribal perspective is lost forever

Time to re-examine life according to a different mythology or we will destroy creation

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The dragon is not evil itself but *not* to believe in the dragon is the doom of earth people...

Black Elk

THE PROBLEM OF 'EVIL'

"A person cannot fight to overcome evil until s/he believes it is a reality."

"Most patients are cured of neurotic fears by learning to take them very seriously."

Carl Jung,
The Transformation of Spirit



DISCERNMENT OF EVIL

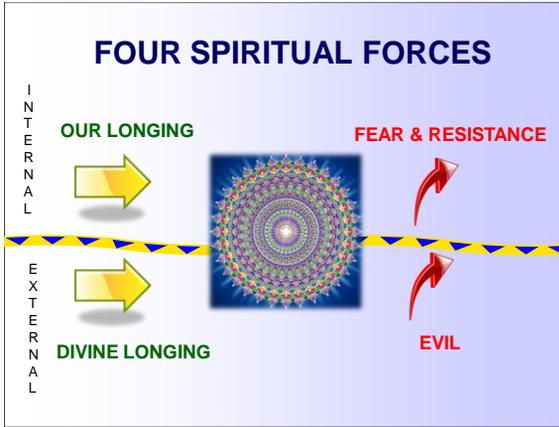
- GOOD APPEARS AS EVIL & VICE VERSA
- THERE IS DANGER IN FACING EVIL— BUT IT IS MORE DANGEROUS IF NOT FACED AT ALL
- WHAT IS NOT FACED CANNOT BE DISCERNED
- MOST PEOPLE CONDEMN THEMSELVES FOR THE WRONG SINS—AND AIM FOR THE WRONG VIRTUES
- CONSEQUENCES OF EVIL AFFECT THE ENTIRE TRIBE



ROLE OF SHAMAN - HEALER



Illness is the opportunity to see the sacred



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THE PROBLEM OF FEAR

“Always in the deep woods when you leave familiar ground and step off alone into a new place, there will be, along with the curiosity and excitement, a little nagging of dread, It is an ancient fear of the unknown.”

Wendell Berry



THE UNCONSCIOUS & PATHOLOGY IN SPIRITUAL DIRECTION



AWARENESSES FOR GROWTH

- ✓ All experiences have some connection with unconscious psycho-dynamics
- ✓ These connections are neither good nor bad in themselves... Their value can be appraised only in terms of their fruit and effects on life experience
- ✓ Even if a given phenomenon is determined to be destructive, it does not exclude the possibility of a deeply graced dimension...

LAKOTA HEYOKA



The 'Other,' whose role becomes an official opposite, feeling, asking, thinking and expressing what others will not.

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIOUSNESS



**Where do I
most find love
and freedom?**

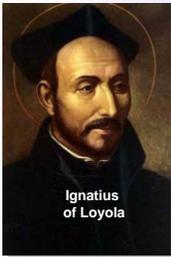
**Where do I
least find love
and freedom?**

Spiritual Exercise of Ignatius of Loyola

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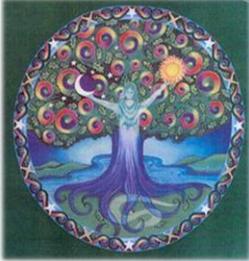
"Whatever is in the darkness should always be brought into the light..."

'RULES' FOR DISCERNING EVIL

"When we are facing something very important in our lives, we often find ourselves up against something equally as great or even greater working against us..."

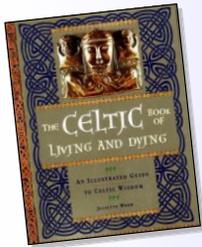


GRATITUDE AS ANTIDOTE



You cannot be simultaneously bitter and grateful...

GRATITUDE AS THERAPY



You will not be the same person after consciously giving thanks each day for the abundance that exists in your life.

And you will have set in motion an ancient spiritual law:

The more you are grateful for, the more will be given back to you.

'RULES' FOR MAKING A PROVISIONAL DECISION

"With the support of another wise and caring soul, make a significant period of time *to live into and with* your provisional decision... unless you are in imminent physical or spiritual danger:

- [1] Live with your decision to test its truth lest you are being deceived.
- [2] Use the provisional period as a time of openness for the 'magis' –or greater good
- [3] Then, revisit your decision with any new insights or guidance before making a final or irreversible decision.



SPIRITUAL EXERCISES

ADVICE WHEN MAKING MAJOR LIFE DECISIONS

- 1) At the level of Will, no hesitation is possible...
'You cannot say NO to your decision'
- 2) When there is freedom, light and peace in spite of all Consolation and Desolation
- 3) Never change a decision in desolation that you made in consolation





MONTHLY DISCERNMENT EXERCISE

- **Identify a significant area in your life where you feel conflicted by significant fear, anxiety or anger**
[Select an issue that may even contain an element of 'evil' influence –from within or without –as you understand such things].
- **Through journaling, prayer and the spiritual direction dynamic, bring the struggle 'from darkness into light.'** Where appropriate, reference aspects from Native wisdom or the Ignatian Rules of Discernment.
- **Encourage the practice of daily gratitude and creating a one time 'potlach' ceremony – in ways that address the specific area of struggle.**

BRINGING AREAS OF DARKNESS INTO LIGHT

- **ANYTHING THAT PREVENTS US FROM EXPLORING OUR LIFE EXPERIENCE DEEPLY**



BRINGING AREAS OF DARKNESS INTO LIGHT

- AREAS OF RESISTANCE OR PSYCHOLOGICAL AND EMOTIONAL BLOCKS

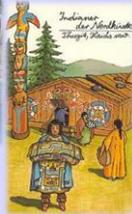


BRINGING AREAS OF DARKNESS INTO LIGHT

- AREAS OF WOUNDEDNESS ... LIFE STRUGGLES AND ADDICTIONS



POTLACH = GIVE AWAY



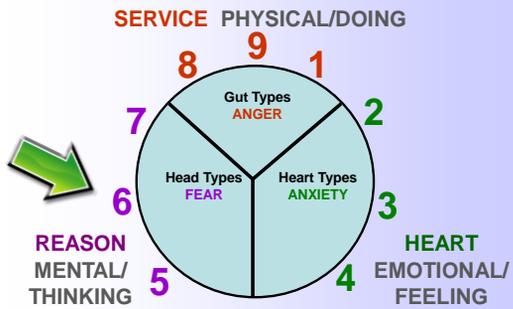
HOPI = TUNATYAVA



"Comes true...being hoped for"

Ways that probabilities
become realities

THE THREE DOORS OF KNOWING

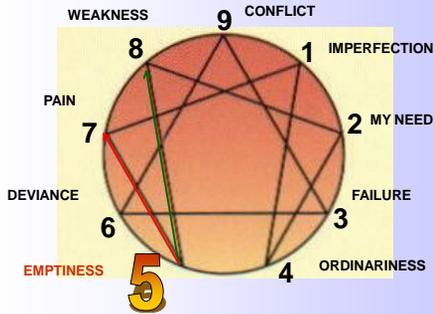


ENNEA-TYPE



THE OBSERVER

PERSONALITY AVOIDANCES



LIFE SCRIPT



The **FIVE** child decides that people threaten something essential to his or her survival. She develops a protective strategy of playing possum, camouflaging her existence and reducing her needs to a minimum so she becomes as unnoticeable as possible. She then discovers she can pursue her own interests undisturbed.

WHAT A 'FIVE' CAN DO...



[1] Lift weights (whether you are a man or woman). Notice that you are organic. That means the more effort you spend, the more strength you have. Learn this truth in your body and apply it to your mind and spirit.



[2] Put this sign on your desk (all Fives have desks): "You have to sing like you don't need the money."



[3] Spend time in nature reflecting on its abundance. Notice how there is always enough—and that it comes effortlessly!
