

Being Present to Observe  
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In this New Year our attention has been drawn to the recent earth shift that caused one of the most devastating natural disasters on the planet in our time. This has caused many of us to reflect and question what our priorities and focus have become. Some are wondering why our mother earth sent this catastrophe to us, what do we have to learn from this, what aren't we paying attention to?

News stories in late December and early January reported ominously rising death tolls in the South Pacific that made my heart sink. Then I came across the courageous stories of the survivors of the tsunami. Two women were saved by trees; one woman with broken ribs held onto a tree for eight hours until she was rescued while another drifted on the ocean supported by a palm tree, surviving on it's fruit afloat in the vast ocean for eight days.

The other tsunami survival stories that eased this painful situation a little and didn't surprise me were about warnings that came from the animal kingdom. According to National Geographic, there have been a significant number of reports documenting animals that seemed to sense the tsunami before it hit. Sri Lanka's Yala National Park suffered many human casualties, but park managers said the wildlife suffered almost no casualties. "The elephants, wild boar, deer, monkeys and others had moved inland to avoid the killer waves." In Thailand, it was reported that the elephants seemed insane as they broke their chains and fled inland before the waves hit. Authorities in India reported that "the indigenous tribes of the Andaman and Nicobar islands escaped the effects of the tsunami because they heeded warning signals from birds and animals." Scientists are just discovering what indigenous peoples have known through the original spiritual practice on the earth, the practice of the shaman, which paying closer attention to a wide range of warnings from the animal kingdom with regards to natural disasters and the environments safety serves to protect us. Most of us are aware that animals have highly developed instincts they feel vibrations of energy and sense when another animal or person is in close proximity, they feel and hear the vibrations of the earth shifting. They also relate danger signs of the impact on animals and human health from environmental pollution, such as frog mutation and the drops in mammalian population and the American eagle population, these signals from the animals can help us learn to survive. In New Jersey the eagle is nearly extinct due to their eating fish from the polluted river waters. The toxins make their eggs very fragile causing them to brake when the eagle perches on it. I visited Niagara Falls after the neighborhood called Love Canal, which represents one of our Countries largest environmental disasters, was evacuated. What was remarkable of the highly polluted community was the absence of wildlife.

Many people in South East Asia have lost their loved ones, homes and all that they possessed in the world, although help is coming from many countries they are feeling very alone right now just as we do after a traumatic experience in our lives occur. The original spiritual practice on the planet, that of the Shaman, Sámi, medicine women and men helps us to understand that all that exists has spirit therefore we are never alone. We utilize the spirits of animals and trees, which has through this spiritual work become known as the universal tree or tree of life, to help us live in harmony with all sentient beings on the planet. The tree has been known from time immemorial as the symbolic ladder to the highest heaven, the portal or antennae to the spiritual worlds of the shaman, the universal. The indigenous peoples look at the tree as a higher life form, a tree can survive without us. However, we cannot survive without the tree and all it gives to us; spiritual help, food, clothing, shelter, medicinal herbs, material for musical instruments, furnishings and so on. The tree fulfills a myriad of our practical needs, more than we can imagine. It is honored, respected and communicated with by the original peoples of the planet.

During the first three years of my shamanic training I leaned against a very old tree on the California coast at Esalen and was immediately transported to another lifetime when I had been sacrificed. Through the spirit of this old tree and the aid of my animal spirit guide, animals are the primary tutelary spirit helpers of the original peoples. Through experience of merging with this agency of our soul we learn to see and observe our spiritual life, what our physical life reflects, with our compassionate, objective heart, I was able to see that this sacrifice wasn't something to be upset about. The sacrifice was an opportunity to become an

individual, an opportunity to observe who I was outside the influences of others. If we hold onto the memory or feeling of being outcaste we become stuck in a roll that may reflect the point of view of others or the desires of others thus disabling ourselves from moving forward to become a compassionate, enlightened, observing and fully present being able to flow with the currents of change in life as we were meant to.

With our attention being drawn to the South Pacific, I will relate the story of a woman who came to me for help with creating a loving relationship in her life. She has been on her own for nearly thirty years and has never had a child. Her loneliness had caused a deep depression. During Soul Retrieval work we discovered that her father had fragmented a large part of his soul in the South Pacific while serving in the military during the Korean War. When he came back from war to three very young children and a wife he was incapable of handling everyday life. He didn't have the capacity to make a living or guide and protect his children. He was one of those who fell through the cracks of our system, he wasn't declared incompetent by a recognized authority so the family couldn't receive assistance, they lived impoverished. The father's mental capacity after the war made him the subject of ridicule by many children in the small town. According to the second child, the daughter who came to me, the son went on to make what seemed like a fortune; he is well known and socializes in the most affluent groups. His sister is not invited into these groups, which has been very upsetting for her; she has focused on becoming a very smart woman, a tenured professor. The two oldest children focused on becoming what their father was not, monetarily wealthy and intelligent. The youngest sister on the other hand married a man who is a dreamer and artist who has not been able to make a living in the world, they live in poverty yet she has been married for over twenty years and is in love with her husband with whom she has raised two beautiful and confident children. She saw something in her childhood that the two oldest children did not see.

Although my client lives within a two-hour drive from her younger sister she had not seen her in fifteen years. She couldn't handle seeing her sister live in poverty with an incompetent man, neither she nor her brother would help the youngest out monetarily if she chose to keep this incompetent man in her life.

While guiding my client through the shamanic realms to merge with her animal spirit guide she was learning to see with her heart and trust her spirit guide, her soul. After performing a Soul Retrieval on her behalf I guided her through integration of the retrieved soul parts and with the trust she had developed in her animal spirit guide she was able to return with it's presence to those times in childhood and understand what happened to parts of herself lost to the humiliation her father's condition, after the war, had caused his family.

Finally, we worked our way into a Past-Life situation where her outward and primary relationship was with a powerful wealthy man, a controlling man of war conquering for material gain. Her father's spirit in this past-life was someone she was in a hidden love relationship with. At first she shunned the offspring that they created. I asked her to see what would happen if she decided to keep the child and take care of it and get to know the father. She began to see a different man in her father's spirit, a competent, whole man, a leader and an artist whom she could respect. She could feel in her heart and soul from this shamanic journey experience what she had been focusing on and how it would be to focus on something very different. She was able to step outside of herself and become an observer. The conditions set forth for loving have been changed and so has her depression. She has since contacted her younger sister and is thrilled to be in relationship with her and her family.

The indigenous people on the planet understand that as human beings we are here as caretakers of the earth and each other. Now is the opportunity to become caretakers of those in need. The Foundation for Core-Level Healing is hosting a Tsunami Relief Benefit and raffle at the Seaside Church in Encinitas March 18th at 6pm please join us. Kathleen Downey, Shamanic Counselor and Past-Life Therapist is working in Encinitas, CA and will be holding workshops throughout the year. Please see [www.corelevelhealing.com](http://www.corelevelhealing.com) or for private sessions call 858. 646.9808, email [katdowney@aol.com](mailto:katdowney@aol.com)

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