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An Interview With

Robin Tekwelus Youngblood

Co-author of *Path of the White Wolf*



What is a shamanic practitioner?

A shamanic practitioner is one who is trained in the art of the Shaman – one who has the skills to travel to other dimensions of space and time in order to retrieve information; who has the ability to ‘see’ and diagnose soul or ‘essence’ loss in another and then to help the person retrieve the missing parts of their energetic body. A shamanic practitioner uses the tools of the trade – the drum, rattles, feathers, smudge, etc., in ceremony and ritual to assist the client to heal themselves. It takes many years of training to be able to hold protected space for a client, while traveling into another dimension to see and clear energetic blockages, ‘fight’ discarnate and discordant entities, release trapped energy and create an environment in which the client feels safe to do their portion of the work to heal.

*I take the ancient teachings of other cultures, look for the similarities that, taken together, weave the tapestry of observable ‘truth’, seek the ‘unusual’ – the one piece of the common puzzle that is unique to each tribe – weave that ‘spirit bead’ into the weft, discard the extraneous, and then step back to look at the image as a whole. That’s what Sandy and I have done with *Path of the White Wolf* – the book is the embodiment of much that we have learned from indigenous teachers all over the world.*

You describe yourself as a “metis”. What does that mean?

‘Metis’ is a French Canadian word meaning ‘mixed blood’. The Canadian government has recently agreed to recognize the Metis people in Canada as a ‘tribe’. That hasn’t happened here in America. Since I’m actually my own ‘five civilized tribes’ (Okanagan, San Poil, Nez Perce, Haudanosaunee [Iroquois], and Tsalagi [Cherokee]), I definitely qualify as a ‘mixed blood’. I also have French Canadian and Welsh heritage.

It could be said that your unique cultural heritage allows you to walk in two worlds. What has that been like for you?

I think I walk in many more than two worlds! (laughing) And, culturally speaking, I have studied with teachers from many different indigenous nations, so I’ve had to learn several disparate traditions, cosmologies, sets of protocol, etc. . . . and . . . I’m also a good, old-fashioned, liberated American woman. However, I have lived in two worlds.

Nearly twenty years ago, I attended one of my tribe’s Winter Dances. After 4 nights of dancing, the Medicine Man came to me and told me to ‘watch my dreams’ for the

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(author interview cont'd.)

next four nights. My intent in attending the dance was to pray for guidance and a new and deeper direction in my life. Well, I definitely dreamed.

The first night, I saw a huge, golden window frame, empty, except for the night sky on the other side. The second night, I saw the same pulsating, golden window, and on each star there stood an Ancestor – some from my spiritual lineage, and some from my physical heritage. The third night, I saw myself standing on this world's side of the golden frame, watching and conversing with all my Ancestors, asking them what's next in my life. On the fourth night, I saw myself with one side of my body over the window's sill – the side that had climbed into the next world was dressed in my Native regalia (doeskin beaded dress, moccasins, eagle feather fan, braided hair). The side of my body that remained in this dimension was wearing a Nordstrom's suit, high heels and a briefcase in my hand!! Pretty graphic depiction of my choices, eh?

And, yes, I still have one foot on each side of the golden frame . . . as of this moment, I still have a 'day job' - Ms. Corporate America - which I really enjoy. It keeps me grounded both financially and physically. And I do ceremony, shamanic healing work, drum circles, workshops, etc., when I'm away from the day job. So I guess that vision was pretty darn literal . And, at some point in the future – just a few years from now – I want to let my corporate side retire, and allow my shamanic self to emerge fully as the elder and wise-woman that I hope to become.

You and Sandy bring different experiences and perspectives to this project. What did you draw upon most for this book?

Again, nearly all of my studies have been 'hands-on' with the elders. I've read voraciously throughout this lifetime – everything from Shaman's Drum magazine to Shamanic practitioner's case studies – and the things that have taught me the most, increased my respect and validated my own internal experiences, have been the ceremonies, traditions and teachings of my elders.

From the writer's perspective, how did you manage the collaboration process?

Now, THAT was fun!! Sandy and I would each agree to do a chapter and then edit each other's work. What we found during the process is that Sandy and I have worked together so long, taught workshops, etc., and blended so well, that our writing was seamless! After we'd written perhaps half the book, we re-read it and often couldn't tell who had written what!!

To me, it's a fabulous compliment to both of us; a true acknowledgement of how close we are in understanding, wisdom, preference and presentation.

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Why did you feel it was important to write this book?

Each elder who 'saw' me and decided they wanted to share their teachings with me, told me that the day would come when they would want me to share this information with the world ~ because the time would come when we would all need to sift our perspectives, perceptions and actions, in order evolve to a new and higher vibrational level so that we can be what we want to see in our world. That time has come.

*The world as we know it will become totally different over the next few years. To stop global warming, turn the tides on the extinction of thousands of different species, and restore the rainforests, we all need to learn to live in balance and harmony while retaining our cultural diversity. **Path of the White Wolf** incorporates the foundational teachings that will empower each person to create harmonious interactions with others and to work toward healing the Earth and All Our Relations.*

What is the single most important message or lesson you hope the reader will take from this book?

Sandy and I pray that each person who picks up our book will come to understand that the Medicine Wheel is a universal, transcendental, foundational tool for the Self – self-healing; self-actualization; self-reclamation; self-transformation. Because it is universal and doesn't 'belong' to any one culture, the Medicine Wheel transcends religion, and can be used by devotees of any faith.

Are you planning to write more books?

I have at least three in process right now, including a daily meditations book. Sandy and I will plan to co-author a second level book on shamanism, and I am in the process of writing a novel about my people...provided I can find time to write in between all the other fabulous facets of my life!

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