

# the SWING

## SHAMANISM



A GAME OF REALITY  
REALITY IN A GAME

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## Introduction

This supplement is not focused on Native American shamanism. Primarily this supplement will handle modern western shamanism, although there will be parallels with Native American and other ancient shamanic practices, many of which have helped shaped modern shamanism.

Modern shamanism is a mixture of New Age beliefs and ancient practices. This in no way invalidates the practices of modern shamans. Shamanism, like any belief system, changes and grows with each generation.

## Shamanism

It is thought that Shamanism is one of the oldest practices known to man. There is evidence of shamanic practices even as far back as the Neolithic period (or 7500 BC). Aspects of shamanism have been encountered in almost every culture since then, from the early Greeks to the Mongols of Asia to Chinese Buddhism to modern New Age.

Even though shamanism is one of the most prevalent practices, it hasn't been one of the most accepted. Since the rise of the Church, shamanism has been one of the most persecuted practices around, mainly because of its prevalence. Even in the New World, Native American shamans have dwindled in numbers and risen in age. Most of what is known comes from oral traditions handed down from one generation to the next and from anthropological studies of aboriginal cultures.

The two major classifications of shamanic practices are ancient and modern shamanism (with tons on minor forms). Each type of practice has its own traditions, cosmology, inheritance and tools. Oddly, both are still practiced in some degree to this day.

### Ancient Shamans

Ancient shamanism is more about the type of practice rather than the date it was practiced. To this day, tribes deep in the jungles

of the Amazon still practice ancient shamanism. However, the term comes from the fact that this form of shamanism has the most in common with that used in ancient times.

Ancient shamans carry with them a great weight, for besides themselves and usually only one assistant/apprentice they are the only spiritual leader/doctor for their whole village/tribe. Shamans served as the head of all religious ceremonies, weddings, births, deaths, etc. It is the shaman who knows which rites, rituals and offerings the society must perform, how they are to perform them and when to perform them.

Shamans act as doctors in both practice and advice. Shamans know which plants to use to make medicines, which spirits to call upon to aid the sick and what must be done to prepare those to far gone for death. Even people in non-modern cultures need to grow, learn and progress as humans and just like in modern societies, they are often not aware of how to achieve this. Spirits are always around us and often see things which even the most astute individuals can not. In addition to this, they are very long lived and as such have an immense wealth of knowledge to draw upon. Shamans consult the spirits and learn from them what a person must do or overcome in order to grow.

Because of his close ties with nature, the shaman is often aware of changes before they happen. This is because both the spirits will simply inform him of the changes and

### Native American Shamans

Native American shamanism is a form of ancient shamanic practice that was and is used by Native Americans. Native American shamans are much like their ancient shamanic cousins, while their animism views give their practices a much deeper religious feel.

### Modern Shamans

Modern shamanism is a combination of New Age ideas, old religions, eastern philosophy, earth centric thought, Native

American and ancient shamanism. Unfortunately, this act of combining multiple practices has led this form to be ostracized by both mainstream and “purer” shamanic cultures.

The main difference between modern and ancient shamans is in why they practice this craft. Ancient shamanism could be classified as a job by today’s standards. Modern shamanism is mainly used for spiritual growth. That’s not to say modern shamans do not act as healers and such, only those functions are more limited especially in today’s society. In more modern cultures this activity is heavily restricted to simple herbal and folk remedies as opposed to full medical treatments.

Unlike their predecessors, modern shamans must balance their craft between the ancient practices they wish to emulate and the current legal system. For instance, most modern shamans employing Native American practices, such as the use of peyote, will find that while its use is legal for religious purposes, they are now often the target of state and federal law enforcement agencies.

Modern shamans mainly practice the craft for spiritual gain. Rather than gaining knowledge from the spirits on how to heal or support the tribe, modern shamans seek information to improve, grow and enlighten.

**Modern shamans and shamanism is the focus of this supplement.**

## ***Gender and sexuality***

Throughout history most shamans have been men, however, this is due mainly to the role women fill in society rather than some chauvinistic rule. The work of a shaman takes many years to learn and a lifetime to master. Until modern times, women were generally caretakers and child raisers, leaving them with very little time to devote to shamanic practices. Some societies, especially those with blended gender roles (such as the Norse) had more women practitioners than men.

Ancient shamans adhere to the role of genders in society, so it would be rare to find a female shaman (although it is not unheard of to see western women practicing ancient shamanism). Native American gender roles have changed a lot in the last 100 years, no longer are the men warriors and the women mothers. However, true Native American shamanism is a dying art; few of the young learn it and even fewer of the elders teach it. Those surviving shamans are likely to be traditionalists and believe in the old gender role structure. Modern western shamans are just as likely to be female as they are male. There is no strict guideline or tradition to follow that applies to gender.

## **Shamanic Practices**

What do shamans do? How do shamans serve as religious leaders, doctors and psychiatrists?

The basic practice known to all shamans is communication with the spirit world. This is achieved most effectively through a state of altered consciousness. Shamans use many methods to achieve this altered state of consciousness, trance, meditation, spirit journey and hallucinogens to name a few.

### ***Spirit Journey***

A shamanic journey is a ritual in and of itself. The shaman enters the spirit world by effecting a change of consciousness by entering into an ecstatic trance

There are two ways for the shaman to enter the spirit world spiritually or medicinally. A spiritual journey allows the shaman’s spirit to leave their body and travel with the spirit world. A medicinal journey allows the shaman to see into spirit world, their spirit never leaving their body.

### **Spiritual Journey**

A spiritual journey is the most common form of shamanic journeying. It is a process

which allows the shaman to enter the spirit worlds to directly speak to and see the spirits. The shaman's spirit leaves his body and enters one of the spirit worlds to obtain knowledge, healing or power.

Shamans use many different techniques to enable them to enter the spirit world, the most common is music, and a drum beat to be specific. The primal drum beat relaxes the shaman and he is able to focus their WILL with minimum effort. In not so modern cultures, this obviously requires assistance, however, in modern society there is a plethora of music available on CD to use.

While in the spirit worlds the shaman seeks out help from the many spirits that exist there. Which world they journey to depends on which type of help the shaman needs (*see The Worlds*).

If the shaman succeeds at a **Visualization Magick: Shamanism**, they enter the spirit world and meet with the desired spirit. This does not guarantee that the spirit(s) will help only that the shaman gets a chance to talk to them. All normal rules would apply to ask for assistance.

If the shaman fails on their **Visualization Magick: Shamanism** check, they either failed to enter the spirit world or failed to find the desired spirit to help them.

### Spiritual Journey

#### Game Effects:

The shaman's spirit leaves their body and enters the spirit world and finds the desired spirit to talk to.

*The ritual has a duration of 30 minutes (+3 Step Bonus), if the shaman wishes to alter the time required for the ritual, adjust the starting difficulty appropriately. The ritual also assumes the shaman is using some form of music to help them. A shamanic journey can not be personalized.*

**Normal Difficulty:** -3 Step Penalty

**Casting Time:** 30 Minutes

**Per the rules in The Swing: Reality Guide this ritual would actually have a difficulty of -1 Step Penalty and Casting Time of 2 Hours. However included in this supplement are new rules to determine casting time. These rules are located at the end of this supplement.**

### Medicinal Journey

A medicinal journey involves the use of chemicals, drugs or medicines to allow the shaman to see into the spirit world. Most shamans do not employ medicinal journeys as their standard practice, although most have been to use this process once or twice when in a bind.

In the past, shamans used plants like peyote but in modern times synthetic drugs like LSD are more common. These plants and modern drugs have severe side effects and can create long term problems for the shaman. However, these medicines make it easier for the shaman to speak with the spirits. This method is more often used as a shortcut by younger less experienced shamans than by elders.

Which world they may perceive depends on which type of help the shaman needs (*see The Worlds*).

If the shaman succeeds at a **Visualization Magick: Shamanism**, the shaman can see, hear and communicate with the spirit world. The shaman may speak and hear any of the nearby spirits. This does not guarantee that the spirit(s) will help only that the shaman gets a chance to talk to them. All normal rules would apply to ask for assistance.

If the shaman fails on their **Visualization Magick: Shamanism** check, they either failed to perceive the spirit world or failed to find the desired spirit to help them.

### Medicinal Journey, Peyote

#### Game Effects:

The shaman's is able to see, hear and communicate the spirit world. This works much like how the skill Clairvoyance works.

*The ritual has a duration of 30 minutes (+3 Step Bonus), if the shaman wishes to alter the time required for the ritual, adjust the starting difficulty appropriately. The ritual also assumes the shaman is not using some form of music to help them (-2 Step Penalty). A shamanic journey can not be personalized. This journey is also adjusted for a shorter casting time.*

**Base Difficulty:** +0 Step Bonus

**Casting Time:** 5 Minutes

## Medicines

Several preferred "medicines" are used for the purpose of journeying, although many others exist. These medicines also have effects on the shaman outside of the journeying experience. Each medicine grants the shaman some form of benefit but takes its toll as well. The shaman suffers both the benefit and drawbacks of the medicine for 6 hours (each dose varies in amount but is based on a six hour duration period). While the effects of the medicine last for at least 6 hours, the journey will last only as long as the shaman has set the duration for the ritual. After that, consider the shaman too drugged to carry on a meaningful conversation with the spirits.

All medicines are considered to be illegal substances in Western civilizations and their prices listed reflect this.

**IBOGA** - known as black bugbane, produces complex visions and insights. It is thought to be the mythical tree of knowledge from the Garden of Eden. Root bark from the iboga has been used for thousands of years by tribal cultures as an intricate part of their ceremonies.

**Cost:** \$500 per dose (extremely hard to find in the US)

**Benefits:** Raise Intelligence by +1 Die Code

**Drawbacks:** each time the shaman uses Iboga they must make a successful Physical Attribute check or suffer 1S wound due to cardiac complications

**LSD** - commonly known as "acid," LSD comes in tablets, capsules and liquid form. LSD is odorless, colorless, and has a slightly bitter taste. LSD can be added to absorbent paper (such as blotter paper). This allows it to be divided into small squares, with each square representing one dose.

**Cost:** \$10

**Benefits:** Raise Perception by +2 Die Code, shaman does not suffer from any wound effects during the medicines duration

**Drawbacks:** Lower Dexterity by -2 Die Code, each time the shaman uses LSD they must make either a Mental or Physical Attribute check (the shamans choice) or suffer disassociation

**MUSHROOMS** - often called 'magic mushrooms' these hallucinogenic fungi are actually Fly Agaric. They can easily be recognized as a red toadstool with white warts. Mushrooms are either eaten fresh - immediately after picking - or preserved by drying them. A 'tea' can then be brewed or they can be used in cooking.

**Cost:** \$20

**Benefits:** Raise Perception by +1 Die Code

**Drawbacks:** Lower Dexterity and Intelligence by -1 Die Code each

**PEYOTE** - a small spineless cactus which is commonly found in the southwestern United States and extending down into central Mexico. Peyote can cause deep introspection and insight that have been described as being of a metaphysical or spiritual nature. At times these can be accompanied by rich visual or auditory effects.

**Cost:** \$100 (can purchase through the Native American Church if you are a member for \$30)

**Benefits:** Raise Intelligence and Perception by +1 Die Code each

**Drawbacks:** Lower Dexterity by -2 Die Code, each time the shaman uses Iboga they must make a successful Physical Attribute check or suffer 10F from nausea

**Note: Regardless of the method used, what the spirit(s) pass on to the shaman is up to the Sage. What the shaman feels they need to know may not be what the spirits teach them.**

## The Worlds

To the shaman, the spirit world is divided into three distinct and separate planes: the lower, middle and upper. This distinction has nothing to do with any religious notion of hell, limbo and heaven.

### The Lower World

The first world for shamans to reach is the lower world. Access to this world is done by traversing a tunnel, or traveling down a root, or entering a cave or any other similar fashion that leads subterranean. Power animals are found in the lower world.

Even though the lower world is reached by going underground, the world itself resembles an outdoor nature scene. Buildings, highways or any other semblance of modernization present do not exist here, only nature.

**TOTEM** - A totem is a power animal spirit for a group, usually a whole tribe.

**SPIRIT GUIDE/ SPIRIT TEACHER** - a spirit who influences your life day- to day, teaching and giving messages to the shaman.

### The Middle World

The middle world is the spirit reflection of the ordinary reality. It is inhabited by ghosts, spirits and ancestors. Nature spirits (rock spirits, plant spirits, river spirits, faeries, devas, etc.) are also found in this world. Existing just outside of normal reality, the middle world is the easiest to access. However, because the denizens are not necessarily peaceful (vengeful ghost, other magicians astral projected, etc) it is often the most ignored.

**SPIRIT HELPER** – the spirit of a close friend, family member or other deceased individual who was close to the shaman.

### The Upper World

The upper world is where shamans will find spiritual teachers and other enlightened beings. These spiritual teachers are not necessarily humans who have past on, but are much more archetypal, such as Sandalphon (an angelic being who acts as a guide, assisting in communications with other entities). The upper world can be accessed by traveling upwards as in climbing a tree, or riding an escalator, etc.

The upper world is full of classical style architecture and ancient looking structures. While this will feel familiar to the shaman, this world is not like the physical reality they know. Toilets, sinks, bathtubs, and other common household necessities are not necessary here and will not be found.

**GUARDIAN(S)** - watch your every move in order to assist in protecting you.

**TUTELARY** - a spirit which spirit guides and guardians turn to for help. This "spirit" is often too preoccupied and it is rare for a shaman to actually see or hear from them.

### Vision Quest

In the past, a vision quest was used as a rite of passage for young men in some Native American tribes. It spoke to them about their path in life and what they needed to do to fulfill their destiny. Today though, it is used by some to gain personal insight, guidance and spiritual growth.

Traditionally, the shaman finds a safe, secluded spot, where they can reflect (sometimes for days on end). Once there, the shaman sits and waits for his vision to come to him. During this time, the spirits present the shaman with visions that forced the shaman to look into his soul.

The ability for a shaman to have a vision is not guaranteed. Many shamans take years to have their first (and sometimes only vision). Vision quests are inherently dangerous

and it is not unheard of for a shaman to die or become seriously injured in the process.

If successful, the shaman usually will collect physical representations of their vision and place them in their medicine bag to act as reminders of what they learned.

## How to Obtain a Vision

A vision quest is unlike any other ritual a shaman may perform. The base difficulty for attempting a vision quest is 40 (Impossible). The spirits only grant vision quests to those truly deserving. The only other modifiers for this skill check are from the method used to attempt the vision quest.

The shaman needs determines how many days they wish to attempt the vision quest for. In “real life” the shaman wouldn’t know this a head of time, but in the game this will effectively represent the shaman’s willpower and determination.

Alternatively the Sage may allow the shaman to roll each day (based on the modifiers applied to that point) to determine if the shaman had a vision that day, until they fail their Endurance skill check (see below) or become to injured to continue.

### Game Effects:

The shaman witnesses a vision given to him by the spirits. This vision is relevant to the shaman and their current situation. This should be represented by advice from the Sage (which the shaman is free to interpret on their own). Alternatively the Sage could raise an Attribute Group most relevant to the advice given by +1 Die Code for each attribute and at least a +2 to one relevant skill, permanently.

*Each day the shaman is attempting a vision quest, they must make both a Endurance skill check. The difficulty for this skill check starts at 4(Auto) and increases by one Step each day the shaman attempts the vision quest. Failure causes the shaman to quit the vision quest due to the pain and discomfort.*

Shamans can use one of several methods to attempt a vision quest, fasting, pain and sweat lodges.

## Fasting

Fasting is the most common method used during a vision quest. It is considered the base method for all vision quests (unless the character states otherwise). During the attempt, the shaman will not eat and only drink as necessary.

**Modifier:** Each day the shaman plans to attempt the vision quest lowers the difficulty by a -1 Step Penalty

## Sweat Lodge

One of the most dangerous methods for obtaining a vision is the use of a sweat lodge (or in more modern terms a sauna). This method should not be attempted without assistance. This method is normally attempted during hot summer months in order to compound the effects of the Sweat Lodge.

**Modifier:** Each day the shaman plans to stay in the Sweat Lodge lowers the difficulty by a -2 Step Penalty

*Shamans using a Sweat Lodge to obtain a vision quest must make an additional Endurance skill check at a difficulty of 16 (Normal) each day. Failure causes 1W.*

## Pain

Pain is a powerful tool. Shamans who use pain to obtain a vision are rare but not unheard of. In essence both Fasting and Sweat Lodges are methods of pain also. However, in discussing the method here pain is the actual causing of bodily injury. This method can be the fastest used to obtain a vision but it definitely comes at a price.

Each day the shaman is on a vision quest they choose a wound type to cause themselves. The shaman will then use a ritual knife to inflict the wound onto themselves. The shaman can not apply first aid or attempt to bandage the wound until after the vision quest

is over, for it is the pain of the wound that helps them.

*The shaman should have an idea ahead of time, how much and what type of damage they are willing to inflict upon themselves and plan appropriately for medical help after the ceremony is over.*

**Modifier:** Each wound of damage lowers the difficulty by a -1 Step Penalty; each severe wound of damage lowers the difficulty by a -3 Step Penalty; each deadly wound of damage lowers the difficulty by a -6 Step Penalty

## Healing

Shamans view most illnesses and injuries as both physical and spiritual problems. That is to say, that every injury or illness has both a physical effect and a spiritual effect. A good example would be the child who falls out of a tree and breaks their arm. Modern medicine will only treat the broken bone, while shamanism would also treat the spiritual ailment brought on by the fall.

Shamans use both medicine pouches and herbalism to heal. Shamans do not differentiate between mental and physical ailments. It is not that both would be treated the same by the shaman, only that they do not use one method to heal physical wounds and another method for psychological ones.

Shamans also do not believe it is the physical items themselves that help. When they create these items it is the spirits of the items they are using that help. To them it is not an alchemical formula they are using, but more like a prayer for help.

*Regardless of whether the shaman is using herbalism or a medicine pouch to heal, the shaman will use **Visualization Magick: Shamanism**. Shamans are limited in the types of effects they may attempt to generate. See the Effects chart on page xxx for more details.*

**Truly powerful shamans will be skilled in areas other than just shamanism. For this reason, shamans will be one of the harder types of characters to play.**

## Spiritual Growth

One thing all shamans experience is spiritual growth, albeit some more than others. The spirits are wise with invaluable insights; merely speaking with them over the years is enough to impart even the smallest amount of wisdom onto a shaman.

*No game rules exist to describe spiritual growth; it is experienced through roleplay only.*

## Shamanic Tools

Shamans use many tools to accomplish their goals.

### Music

Shamans use music to help them journey. The music can come from live instruments (this requires someone to play the instruments) or it can come from recordings, such as CDs. There is no set type or style of music, only something that is relaxing and does not distract. Although it is not required that a shaman use music, it is much harder for them to achieve without (*journeying without musical help is at a -2 Step Penalty*).

## Smudging

To smudge is to cleanse and purify both people and objects. Generally smudging is done with burnt sage, either from a pot or a wand (a tightly rapped bundle of sage) and a fan made from feathers. The smoke is gently fanned over the person or object or area needing cleansed. Sometimes a small prayer said to the spirits or song is sung while smudging, but this is completely up to the shaman.

*Smudging requires 5 minutes to perform and grants the following in game effects*

**When smudging an area:**

- **All Visualization Magick: Shamanism** difficulties are at a +1 Step Bonus, either for the area or person being smudged.

**When smudging an object:**

- The difficulty to use any object smudged are at a +1 Step Bonus (this only works on objects used for non-violent means).

**When smudging a person:**

- The person being smudged regains 5 Fatigue. This can not exceed their maximum fatigue.

**Regardless of what is being smudged:**

- These bonuses last for a number of hours equal to the WILL of the shaman performing the smudging.

## Medicine Bag

The medicine bag is one of the most important tools a shaman uses. Usually a medicine bag is all natural and hand made, but some modern shamans have been known to use “modern” bags. In it, the shaman keeps all the things that are sacred to them.

Some of these items are given to them by the spirits either directly or they are lead to them by the spirits. Each of these items is used to help the shaman call upon the spirit for assistance and guidance. Each of these items has some significance or connection to the spirit in which they represent; a creek rock for a river spirit, a feather for an eagle spirit, and so on.

Other items found in the medicine bag are pipes, tobacco and other medicines.

## Medicine Pouches

Medicine pouches are similar to medicine bags, except they are much smaller and often serve a singular purpose. Medicine pouches are charms that the shaman will create to aid or protect themselves or someone.

Generally made from an all natural material, such as hide, the pouch is filled with the appropriate materials and “enchanted” by the shaman. When creating medicine pouches, shamans will consult the spirits to determine what should go into each one.

*Medicine pouches act exactly like Alchemical Formulas and Talismans. In fact, you can use those example listed in the Alchemy section of **The Reality Guide** (giving them a different, more natural sounding name, such as renaming Jinx Incense to Eagles Sight) or use the rules for creating your own Alchemical Formulas and Talismans. The shaman will use **Visualization Magick: Shamanism, however.** Shamans are limited in the types of effects they may attempt to generate. See the Effects chart on page xxx for more details.*

## Pipes and Tobacco

Although it is mainly borrowed from the Native American traditions, the peace pipe also has its roots in other cultures. Smoke is often seen as both the physical representation of a man’s word and the spirit world. When a person smokes from the pipe, their words are carried to the spirit worlds and thus only truth can be spoken.

Thanks to modern science, we now know that the tobacco and other plants used in the pipes have a calming effect on the smoker, much like music does.

*After smoking from a shaman’s pipe, the character’s Attitude and Charisma are raised +1 Die Code for one hour.*

## Animism

Animism is the belief that everything in nature has a spirit (or soul), the rivers, rocks, trees, sky, earth, animals, and such. These spirits are intelligent beings, endowed with reason and volition.

Animism is not technically a religion. It has no prescribed doctrine or moral structure which its practitioners adhere to. It also gives no explanation as to why things are, only to explain how things are.

Mankind is not superior to but is rather a mere denizen of nature. As such, shamans, and other practitioners of Animism, treat everything with the respect that any human (or other sentient creature) deserves. That includes asking permission to use them, to kill them, to eat them and if necessary destroy them. A wronged nature spirit is the same as a wronged human spirit (ghost).

The spirits in many ways are very much like man, they can be wise, ignorant, greedy, selfless, vain, arrogant, demanding, almost any human quality can also be assigned to nature spirits.

But in the end, it is the spirits that understand more that the relationship between all of nature is a symbiotic one. Seeds do not get planted without the wind, rain and sun for instance. This is the basic principle behind all interactions with nature spirits. The deer spirit may give up its life so you may eat, however, you must tend to the forest so that other deer may live.

## **Power Animals**

One of the key practices of modern shamanism is communicating with your personal power animal. Power animals (or spirit guides, totems, guardian spirits, etc.) act as teachers, guides, confidants, friends and family. Power animals protect and watch over a person, providing support, wisdom and energy.

Some people will have only one power animal, others will have multiple power animals. Which ones and how many depend on what the person needs help with or which ones can help the person grow.

Power animals don't find a person after they become a shaman; they have always been with the person. For that matter, power animals are not limited to shamans, everyone has power animals. Power animals present themselves as they are needed. Sometimes they will go away for awhile, but eventually they will come back. Sometimes you may need assistance from one; sometimes you will need help from another.

**When speaking of a particular power animal they are referred to by what they are rather than a given name. If your power animal is a lion and you are speaking to someone about him, you would call him lion. Some power animals, especially ones really close to you, will tell you their name. It is then ok to call them by the name they have given you.**

## **Finding Your Power Animal**

Although everyone has power animals, shamans are the only ones really attuned to this fact. Shamans generally learn of their power animal on their first shamanic journey. But sometimes this knowledge can come from other sources (such as multiple sightings of an animal during periods of crisis) or on a latter journey.

Which power animal(s) will make themselves known to the shaman is not a matter of choice for the shaman. Sometimes it will be obvious which animal is a person's spirit guide (such as the lady with 10 *cats* or the big burly *bear* of a man). More times than not though it is something more inward they share rather than something in their outward appearance. Power animals are there for specific reasons and are often more perceptive about what a person needs than the person themselves. For instance, a person may feel that they need help in the romance department and be looking for Dog to help them out; however it is Bat who shows up trying to get the person to change their ways.

Two methods can be used to determine a shaman's first power animal:

**Method #1:** Have the player choose 9 Power Animals they would like to have as their power animal and 1 they would not. Number them 1 through 10, roll a D10 to determine which one the character will receive.

*A smaller die can be used, have the player choose a number of choices they would like equal to one less than the die type and 1 that they would not.*

**Method #2:** Alternatively, the Sage could let the players choose their own Power Animal. For experienced players this system may work very well. The only thing to consider is an abuse of the system.

Shamans may have more than one power animal at a time. Power animals will come and go for the shaman. Some are with them for only a short time. Some will stay with them their whole life. Their first power animal though will never leave them. They may drift into the background while another power animal helps the shaman, but they will return.

Each time the shaman needs assistance in an area their first power animal does not cover they may attempt to find a power animal that does. To accomplish this, the shaman journeys, a successful journey indicate they have found one who will help. This power animal will stay with the shaman, guiding him and giving him advice. The shaman must journey at least once a week and speak with them to keep them as a power animal. During that time the shaman may use their abilities just like the first power animal.

## Power Animals

Shamans share a deep connection with their power animal. This connection is not simply a mentor to student type of relationship. It is as if the shaman and their power animals share the same spirit or at least are connected at the spiritual level.

As such the shaman shares with their power animal many of their qualities and characteristics. Shamans, whose power animal is Wolf, are pack like, meaning they prefer social groups rather than solitary. Shamans, whose power animal is Bear, tend to be big, burly types.

While a shaman honors their power animal, these common characteristics will manifest themselves through the shaman. A shaman can honor their power animal through simple actions, such as keeping their squirrel feeder with food (if squirrel is their power animal), or by mimicking their power animals

mannerisms and movement, or by giving one of them a place to live (as opposed to keeping one as a pet). It is up to the Sage and the player to determine the appropriate gestures the character must perform in order to keep the connection to their power animal.

Each animal lists both the areas with which it is most helpful and the benefits which they grant the shaman, so long as their connection remains.

**Sages should feel free to add/adjust/modify these as they like.**

**APE** – Strength, patience, clarity of vision, family

**Benefit:** *Strength*, Enhanced Strength, Roar, Tough (Physical)

**BAT** - Rebirth, transition, moon Magick.

**Benefit:** *Perception*, Radar/Sonar, Teamwork

**BEAR** - Strength, grounding, inner energy of the soul, earth Magick.

**Benefit:** *Strength*, Claws, Roar, Tough (Physical)

**BOAR** – Life giving, fire Magick

**Benefit:** *Attitude*, Berserker, Tough (Physical)

**CAT** - Independence, cleverness, a balancing of energies, moon Magick.

**Benefit:** *Intuition*, Claws, Balance, Jump, Self Sufficient

**CHIMPANZEE** – Living in harmony, simple lifestyles, curiosity, playfulness

**Benefit:** *Dexterity*, Acrobatic, Ambidextrous, Balance

**CROCODILE** – Life-Death-Rebirth cycle, the past, water Magick

**Benefit:** *Intuition*, Aquatic, Brave, Enhanced Strength

**DOG** - Companionship, faithfulness, warnings, loyalty, earth and moon Magick.

**Benefit:** *Perception*, Brave, Roar, Scent

**DONKEY** – Dedication, faith, perseverance

**Benefit:** *Strength*, Common Sense, Endurance, Enhanced Strength, Scent

**EAGLE** - Divine Spirit and connection to creator.

**Benefit:** *Attitude*, Brave, Claws, Enhanced Vision, Speed

**ELEPHANT** - Strength, power, memory, moon Magick.

**Benefit:** *Intelligence*, Strong, Roar, Tough (Physical)

**FERRET** – Focus, balance, hidden truths

**Benefit:** *Dexterity*, Acrobatic, Brave, Lucky

**HAWK** – Observant, attentiveness, intuition

**Benefit:** *Intuition*, Claws, Common Sense, Enhanced Vision

**HORSE** - Power, strength, travel, clairvoyance, freedom, stability, courage, earth and moon Magick.

**Benefit:** *Dexterity*, Scent, Enhanced Strength, Speed

**LIZARD** – Dreams, respect, memory, conservation

**Benefit:** *Intuition*, Balance, Night Vision, Speed

**OWL** - Wisdom, farseeing, air Magick.

**Benefit:** *Wits*, Enhanced Vision, Night Vision, Self Sufficient

**RAT** - Shrewdness, adaptability, success, social, restlessness, earth Magick.

**Benefit:** *Attitude*, Lucky, Scent, Teamwork

**RAVEN** - Inner journeys, dreams, destiny, air Magick.

**Benefit:** *Charisma*, Enhanced Vision, Self Sufficient

**SCORPIAN** – Defense, self protection, success

**Benefit:** *Attitude*, Brave, Enhanced Strength, Resistance to poison, Tough (Physical)

**SHARK** – Hunting, survival, adaptability

**Benefit:** *Strength*, Aquatic, Enhanced Strength, Radar/Sonar, Scent

**SNAKE** - Health, fertility, faith, Magickal power, sun and water Magick.

**Benefit:** *Charisma*, Hide, Resistance to poison, Speed

**TOAD** - Water energy, cleansing both the physical and emotional.

**Benefit:** *Attitude*, Aquatic, Hide, Jump

**TIGER** - Power, strength, courage, skillfulness, stealth, tactfulness, loyalty, passion, adventures, fire Magick.

**Benefit:** *Dexterity*, Jump, Roar, Scent

**WOLF** - Spirit, freedom, intelligence, social, guardianship, protection, wisdom, earth and moon Magick.

**Benefit:** *Charisma*, Scent, Speed, Teamwork

## ***Shapeshifting***

Shamans possess the ability to shapeshift into the form of their power animal(s).

**Astral Shapeshifting** - Astral shapeshifting is when the shaman shape shifts and can change how they appear to others while in spirit form. While on a spiritual journey the shaman may appear as any animal they wish to (no roll is necessary, the shaman may perform this at will). A shaman should take care as to not offend the animal spirits to which they shapeshift into.

**Spiritual Shapeshifting** – The shaman draws upon the ability of their power animal and is able to see, hear, or act as the animal does. The shaman may elect to gain only one aspect of the animal but does not physically shapeshift.

When a person with Visualization Magick: Clairsentience sees a shaman while they are spiritually shapeshifted, they are able to see aspects of the animal when they look at the shaman. No roll is necessary. Examples would be if the shaman gains the vision of an eagle, then the clairsentient person sees the shaman appears to have the eyes of an eagle. Not without saying this can be uneasy for the viewing person.

**Physical Shapeshifting** – Actual physical Shapeshifting of the body. This ability is available only to True Magicians.

## How to Spiritually Shapeshift

The act of shapeshifting is an odd one to witness. In order to shapeshift into their power animal, the shaman must first begin to act like their power animal. People not accustomed to this can find this experience disconcerting and awkward. It takes approximately 5 minutes for a shaman to transform and during that time he must act like their power animal. If their power animal is Chimpanzee, then they should start climbing things, or for Cat, the shaman should start prancing around, copping an attitude, etc.

On a successful **Visualization Magick: Shamanism**, the shaman can gain one aspect (benefit) of the animal they are shapeshifting into. The act of shapeshifting is very similar to the act of performing a ritual. In fact, use the same rules as generating a ritual for shapeshifting. The only restriction is that the Time to Cast must be modified down to 5 minutes. An appropriate focus would be either a piece of jewelry or clothing representing the shaman's power animal.

While shapeshifting, a shaman may choose any one of the benefits listed for their power animal (-1 Step Penalty) or attempt a complete spiritual transformation (-3 Step Penalty).

**Example:** *A shaman, whose power animal is Bear, wishes to completely spiritually shapeshift (-3 Step Penalty). The shaman needs to be shapeshifted at least an hour (+2 Step Bonus) and is using a bear claw necklace as a focus (+1 Step Bonus). Normally this would take 1 hour to cast (net +0), however, shapeshifting is modified to be cast in 5 minutes. The normal difficulty then becomes a -2 Step Penalty.*

## Aspects of the Animal

These stack with any abilities the shaman might already possess.

**ATTRIBUTE** – Each animal has an attribute they govern (listed in italics). Shamans may gain benefit of +2 Dice Codes for the listed attribute.

**ACROBATIC** – All rolls involving Acrobatics are at a +2 Step Bonus

**AMBIDEXTROUS** – Same as Primary Gift

**AQUATIC** - All rolls involving Athletics: Swimming are at a +2 Step Bonus

**BALANCE** – Same as Primary Gift

**BERSERKER** - Same as Primary Gift

**BRAVE** – Same as Primary Gift

**CLAWS** – Add +1W to HTH damage and Climb +2.

**COMMON SENSE** – Same as Primary Gift

**ENDURANCE** – All rolls involving Endurance are at a +2 Step Bonus

**ENHANCED HEARING** – All Sensory Attribute or skill checks involving hearing are at a +2 Step Bonus (lock picking, negotiation, scan/search, etc.)

**ENHANCED STRENGTH**- All Sensory Attribute or skill checks involving strength are

at a +2 Step Bonus (brawl, martial arts, escape, etc.)

**ENHANCED VISION** - All Sensory Attribute or skill checks involving sight are at a +2 Step Bonus (scan/search, track, etc.)

**HIDE** - All rolls involving Stealth are at a +2 Step Bonus

**JUMP** - Adjust the distance jumped by 5 meters in either direction and lower the CP cost by 2

**LUCKY** - Same as Primary Gift

**NIGHT VISION** - Same as Primary Gift

**RADAR/SONAR** - Suffer no penalty from visibility conditions including total darkness or blind fighting and all Scan/Search attempts are at a +2

**RESISTANCE TO POISON** - Same as Primary Gift (for poison)

**ROAR** - All rolls involving Intimidation are at a +2 Step Bonus

**SCENT** - All Sensory Attribute or skill checks involving smell are at a +2 Step Bonus (tracking, intimidation, seduction, etc.)

**SELF SUFFICIENT** - Same as Primary Gift

**SPEED** - All movement distances are doubled (the CP and fatigue costs do not change; run remains 1 CP and 2 Fatigue, for instance)

**TEAMWORK** - Add your total roll to any combined skill use attempt regardless of the result of the Leadership check

**TOUGH (PHYSICAL)** - Same as Primary Gift

## Shamanic Ritual

Part of their spiritual belief is a belief in Magick. Shamanism is very much a ceremonial type of Magick, filled with elaborate dance, music and etiquette.

**Shamanic Rituals include:**

- Welcoming of a spirits/ancestors/etc.
- The main ritual, which may involve Magick, spell casting, a feast, song & dance, readings, etc.
- Releasing of spirits/ancestors/etc.

## Ritual Components

### Welcoming the Spirits

Shamans are never truly alone. They have with them a multitude of friends, family and voyeurs even when no one is physically near. Shamanism is not about the channeling of divine/spiritual power; it is about companionship and respect. Shamans will often spend as much time showing respect and courtesy to the spirits as they will be performing the actual ritual. This part of the ritual takes at least 10 minutes to perform but can last up to half as long as they intend the ritual to last.

### Ritual

After the area has been properly prepared and all attendees are present (both physically and spiritually), the main begins. This is when the actual Magick is performed. Shamanic Rituals almost always involve music in one form or another. Many times the Shaman will have assistant beat drums or play the flute for them. But sometimes the Shaman may do this themselves; either with a small drum or rattle. The majority of rituals transpire at night and around a huge fire.

First the Shaman determines the problem and asks the spirits for its solution. This is done through some form of shamanic journey or divination. Then the shaman will

create powerful Magick to assist in that solution.

For these reasons, Shamanic Magick is a three step process – journey, medicine pouch and imparting of wisdom.

**Shamans cast rituals using the same rules as Hermetic, Vodun or Wiccan magicians.**

## Divination/Journey

Either the Shaman will journey for both the problem and solution, or they will seek them in signs, omens and such. Each problem, though it may appear to be identical to one already encountered by the shaman, is unique and has their own solutions. Even simple appearing sicknesses may have “odd” cures and often relating to something that happened years before the sickness appeared.

## Medicine Pouch

The Shaman then creates a Medicine Pouch to assist in the solution or character. These medicine pouches will either directly affect the problem (as in the case of healing pouches) or assist the character is actualizing the solution themselves (as in a charm to help them see clearly).

## Impart Wisdom

The Shaman understands that Magick is only a crutch and not cure of all of mans problems. Therefore, whatever insight they have gained through journeying, signs and experience is imparted on to those it deals with.

When the spirits tell the shaman which medicines to use, they are not simply giving him the answers. They will show him why in this case, this particular medicine will work. They will help him to understand how the problem came to be and what must be done to avoid it in the future.

## Releasing the Spirits

After all is said and done, the Shaman thanks those who have shown up and bids them well. He shows respect and gratitude for their assistance.

There is no in game effect for closing a circle, except that it takes just as long as the opening did.

## Ritual Effects

### Effect

Shamans believe in harmony both within and without. With that believe, shamans have limitations on the type of effects that they can generate with shamanism. This is not due to some higher moral cosmic structure but is the result of the strict nature of their beliefs.

Shamans may not harm others with their Magick, not may they use the spirits to assist them in harming others. The simple fact is that shamans understand that man has plenty of very effective means in which to harm others. Ancient shamans did use their Magicks to assist themselves and their village with finding meat and other animal products, but modern shamans no longer need these abilities and have thus removed them from their repertoire.

| Example Effects               | Modifier        |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Spirit Journey</b>         | -4 Step Penalty |
| <b>Iboga Journey</b>          | -3 Step Penalty |
| <b>LSD Journey</b>            | -1 Step Penalty |
| <b>Mushroom Journey</b>       | -2 Step Penalty |
| <b>Peyote Journey</b>         | +0              |
| <b>Vision Quest</b>           | Special *       |
| <b>Shapeshift, one aspect</b> | -1 Step Penalty |

|                                                        |                 |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Shapeshift, complete transformation                    | -3 Step Penalty |
| Increase Attribute by +1 Die Code                      | +0              |
| Increase Attribute by +2 Die Code                      | -1 Step Penalty |
| WILL or FEAR +1                                        | +0              |
| WILL or FEAR +2                                        | -1 Step Penalty |
| Any one Magick Skill +1                                | +0              |
| Any one Magick Skill +2                                | -1 Step Penalty |
| All Magick Skills +1                                   | -2 Step Penalty |
| All Magick Skills +2                                   | -4 Step Penalty |
| Any one Skill +1                                       | +0              |
| Any one Skill +2                                       | -1 Step Penalty |
| All Skills +1                                          | -2 Step Penalty |
| All Skills +2                                          | -4 Step Penalty |
| Heal 1W                                                | -2 Step Penalty |
| Heal 1S                                                | -4 Step Penalty |
| Heal 1D                                                | -6 Step Penalty |
| -1W of Damage received per successful attack           | +0              |
| -1S of Damage received per successful attack           | -2 Step Penalty |
| -1D of Damage received per successful attack           | -4 Step Penalty |
| Opponents Difficulty -1 Step Penalty Against Character | +0              |
| Opponents Difficulty -2 Step Penalty Against Character | -2 Step Penalty |
| Reduce Healing by 1/2                                  | +0              |
| Reduce Healing by 1/4                                  | -1 Step Penalty |

*\* See text description for more details.*

## Duration

Two new durations have been added to the list for duration modifiers – instantaneous and 30 minutes.

Instantaneous duration is a ritual that goes into effect immediately and lasts only until the end of the current combat turn or 30 seconds (when not in combat). Healing effects would be permanent not instantaneous. Although you could cast them as instantaneous effects, but after the duration ran out the wounds would return.

| Duration      | Modifier                                                 |
|---------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| Instantaneous | +0                                                       |
| 30 Minutes    | +3 Step Bonus                                            |
| 1 hr          | +2 Step Bonus                                            |
| 4 hr          | +1 Step Bonus                                            |
| 8 hr          | +0                                                       |
| 24 hr         | -1 Step Penalty                                          |
| 30 Days       | -2 Step Penalty                                          |
| Permanent     | -3 Step Penalty                                          |
| Single Use    | +0 Step Penalty                                          |
| Multiple Uses | -1 Step Penalty for each additional one beyond the first |

## Focus

Shamans rely heavily on foci to speak with the spirits. Most of the items found in their medicine bag are nothing but foci for specific spirits. A shamans dependence upon the appropriate foci is so strong that they may not attempt any type of Journey without an appropriate focus for the spirit they seek to speak to (they gain no bonus from their spirit focus). They may still use other types of foci and gain the normal benefit from using one.

Shamans have two types of foci – specific and generic. Specific foci are those which are used for individual spirits, often ones who have given the shaman their name (to contact Smoke (a wolf power animal) the shaman might use particular incense). Generic

foci are used for contacting a specific type of spirit but not a specific one (to contact any river spirit the shaman might use a creek rock as its focus).

| Spirit Type | Generic Focus                 |
|-------------|-------------------------------|
| River       | Pebble, fresh water           |
| Lake        | Stone, lily, fresh water      |
| Tree        | Leaf, stick, ground up root   |
| Mountain    | Rock, dirt                    |
| Sky         | Incense, rain water           |
| Moon        | Bowl of water, round object   |
| Sun         | Sunflower, candle             |
| Rock        | Rock, stone, moss, statue     |
| Urban       | Polished metal, plastic, keys |

## Time Required

There is now an option to alter the time required to cast the ritual. After applying the modifiers for effect, duration and focus, determine the time required per normal rules. The time required to cast can be changed by adjusting the difficulty of the ritual by one step for each adjustment.

**Example:** *After determining the effect, duration and focus of the ritual, the final difficulty modifiers end up being -3 Step Penalty. This would equal 30 days to cast. This can be adjusted to 2 hours to cast, by applying an additional -2 Step Penalty or a final modifier of -5 Step Penalty. This could also be modified to only 5 minutes to cast by applying an additional -5 Step Penalty or final modifier of -8 Step Penalty.*

| Modifier              | Time Required |
|-----------------------|---------------|
| +2 or Greater Bonus   | 5 Minutes     |
| +1 Step Bonus         | 30 Minutes    |
| +0                    | 1 Hour        |
| -1 Step Penalty       | 2 Hours       |
| -2 Step Penalty       | 1 Day         |
| -3 or Greater Penalty | 30 Days       |

## Additional Resources

### Animal Totems

<http://www.sayahda.com/cycle.htm>

### Shamanism FAQ

<http://deoxy.org/shaman.htm>

### Foundation for Shamanic Studies

<http://www.shamanism.org/>

### Dance of the Deer Foundation

<http://www.shamanism.com/>

### Shamanism – Wiki Encyclopedia

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shamanism>

### Sacred Texts – Shamanism

<http://www.sacred-texts.com/sha/>