

The Magical Path
Conscious Dreaming Exercises
for Healing & Growth

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Introduction

Welcome to The Magical Path! As I write these words I'm filled with excitement for the journey you're about to begin. You'll soon discover that the possibilities on this path are limitless.

My dream in creating this workbook is to design a series of exercises that will rekindle an ancient part of you – a part of you that's filled with wisdom, courage and passion... and longing to have a voice. My wish is to devise a simple and fun way to steer your focus inward so that you can begin to directly experience the totality of *who you really are*. The exercises in The Magical Path Workbook will not only give you access to your innate wisdom, but will also guide you gently through stages of self-discovery, exploration and healing.

This is truly a fascinating time in human history. Over the last several decades tens of thousands of people have shifted away from the dogmatic constraints of conventional religions in order to explore the vast, esoteric worlds of mysticism and earth-based spirituality. This movement is giving birth to a new kind of broad-based spirituality – one that centers on personal freedom, empowerment and responsibility.

The foundation of this spirituality surfaced with the unearthing of ancient, pre-Christian beliefs and practices and continues to evolve as these old philosophies are restructured to fit our contemporary minds and lifestyles. Traditions that were once shrouded in mystery and available only to a fortunate few are now making their way into the mainstream.

The indigenous spiritual practice of the shaman is a perfect example of this phenomenon. Traditionally, a shaman is a gifted visionary who can expand his or her conscious awareness to access non-ordinary reality, also known as the spirit world and dreamtime, for the purpose of healing or divining information. While in this non-ordinary reality, the shaman connects with helping spirits who are willing to be of service to those in need.

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Thanks to anthropologist Michael Harner, who successfully reintroduced core shamanic practices to the Western world, we are witnessing the development of a new kind of shamanism – one that can be incorporated into any spiritual tradition and lifestyle.

Borrowing from ancient shamanic beliefs and the practice of conscious dreaming, this workbook will assist you in learning a safe and easy way to journey to the inner realms of the self to boost your personal power, gain awareness, heal emotional wounds and develop your connection to spirit. The process you'll be learning is akin to daydreaming with intention.

I'll also introduce you to the indigenous concept of the three souls: The Body Soul, the Mental Soul and the Spirit Soul. This idea provides a clear way to conceptualize the entirety of the self, making understanding and the process of your personal evolution more tangible.

To me, wisdom and growth come not from gaining knowledge, but from experiencing life head on. After all, anyone can acquire knowledge from reading a book or attending a lecture, but true wisdom comes when you can speak from experience. The Magical Path is an invitation to experience yourself in a new way.

Have fun!

How To Use This Workbook

When using *The Magical Path Workbook* for the first time, please follow the Dream Journey exercises in the order in which they are presented. The exercises are specifically designed to build on each other, gradually progressing in complexity. Each section's title – Discover, Explore, and Heal – illustrates this progression.

Once you've completed the workbook, any or all of the exercises can be used repeatedly over time. The results will never be the same. You'll find that these dream journey exercises are an endless source of guidance and healing.

Accompanying the workbook is an audio CD. This CD is a tool to help you enter a relaxed conscious dreaming state with ease. There are two tracks: The first one contains a traditional shamanic drumbeat and the second is the relaxing sound of rain embedded with a layer of binaural beats. This popular technology uses two different sound frequencies to create a desired mental state. For the purpose of these exercises, the binaural frequencies used will create a deeply relaxed, visionary state in the listener. This second track is especially helpful for people who have difficulty listening to the drumbeat. My suggestion is to experiment with both tracks to see which works better for you. A more thorough description of how the CD works will be included in a later chapter.

The Magical Path Workbook will also serve as a journal during your journey. There are blank pages after each assignment for you to record what you perceived during the exercise. It's important to write this

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information down immediately after completing the exercise since, like a dream, the memory of your journey experience will quickly fade.

In the back of the workbook you'll find an appendix titled, "Dreams and Synchronicities." In this section I urge you to record any dreams you have while sleeping, or any of the synchronous events that may occur in your daily life while on The Magical Path. Recording dreams and synchronicities will add richness to your entire experience and will be a source of additional wisdom and validation while on this exciting adventure.

I. DISCOVER



One

Inviting Magic Back Into Your Life

Life is bursting with magic when we're young and open to possibilities. We spend our days creating enthralling worlds filled with promise and enchantment. When I was little I had two playmates named Natasha and Friend who were my constant companions. They were invisible to everyone but me. We played in the dirt and talked to ants. We explored the world of lightening bugs and fairies. We had tea parties on rainy days.

And then I turned six. With the advent of elementary school, my attention shifted to learning the skills that we're told we need to know to survive in the external world. I learned how to read, write, add and subtract. Pretty soon Natasha and Friend stopped coming around. So did Santa Claus and the Tooth Fairy. Instead my rational mind began to swell with information – with the exception of algebra – and I gave birth to my logical self, while my magical self withered away.

The Western world doesn't take magic seriously since magic is not logical or based in fact. The conventional view holds that belief in magic is the product of an uneducated mind, or could even be evidence of mental instability. Thus, in our society we're groomed to be skeptics – to doubt anything not backed by empirical evidence or the endorsement of 'experts.' Now, I'm not suggesting that we slip into a drooling state of naiveté. But I do believe our skepticism might be better served by being open to all possibilities – even ones that defy logic. To be a close-minded cynic paralyzes the spirit over time. Plus, believing in a world without magic is simply no fun.

It's my belief that magic is the very medicine that we large-brained Westerners need. Approximately 18 million Americans are taking antidepressant medication, with 2 out of 10 Americans reporting significant symptoms of depression and anxiety. What's missing in our lives? What's at the core of the emptiness that plagues so many people? As a psychotherapist, I've met with hundreds of people over the years and

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listened to thousands of painful stories filled with anguish and fear. Over the last several years I've started asking these folks, "What would make your life magical?" I watch their eyes light up as they begin to talk about possibilities and dreams.

It wasn't until I started asking myself this very question that my life took some interesting turns. Not long after I turned twenty-two, my mom was diagnosed with cancer. At the time I was a devout atheist having rejected Catholicism when I was twelve. When I found out that my young mother wouldn't survive, I found myself filled with dread at the thought that she would cease to exist after she died.

It was at this point that my spiritual journey began. My strong resistance to organized religion led me to explore my Native American ancestry. I soon discovered that Native people believe that everything is alive and has spirit, and that these spirits are ones with whom we can communicate. This is magic ! It wasn't logical, but it felt right.

The more I explored indigenous beliefs and practices, the more I realized how much I longed to be on a magical path. I craved miracles, happy coincidences, and a sense of connection and purpose. I began to study the healing practices and philosophies of the shaman. I learned how to dream consciously so that I could access the spirit world and communicate with the helping spirits who reside there. I met my own team of spirit helpers and happily discovered that my childhood companion Natasha was my spirit teacher, and that Friend was a powerful ancestral spirit. They explained that they had been with me all along and that I was the one who lost my connection to them. This reunion had a profound effect on me and inspired me to write the children's story, *Inside Out*.

My life began to feel right and I began to grow. It was through my connections to the spirit world and my helpers that I found the courage to heal my emotional wounds and the insight to discover my life's purpose.

One of the truly wonderful benefits of doing this work has been my ability to reconnect with my mother in the spirit world. Connecting to my mom in this way has brought tremendous healing for me. I now know that all I have to do is call for her and she'll be there for me.

The Magical Path is available to anyone who desires it. The exercises in this workbook will help you connect with your own team of spirit helpers. You don't need to become a shaman to learn and benefit from these practices. All that's required is a desire to invite magic back into your life . . .

Inviting Magic Back Into Your Life