



WORKBOOK

DRUM MAKING WORKSHOP



BY SARAH BARKER



INTRODUCTION

Shamanism is a very ancient practice that humans developed as a spiritual tradition for their empowerment and well-being.

One of the most important tools of the shaman is the Shamanic Drum.

The shaman is a technician of ecstasy and its drum serves as an instrument of attunement.

The drumming uses a repetitive rhythm that builds slowly and works up.

After around ten to fifteen minutes of listening to such rhythmic drumming human brain waves change their usual beta state to a more Theta/Alpha brainwave state.

In this brainwave a connection is made to the unseen realms and the human becomes more open receiving psychic impression, imprints and messages from the spirit world as well as being more connected to the human subconscious.

This is also what is known as an ecstatic trance state. In this ecstatic trance state the shaman is able to journey to other worlds to obtain guidance, healing, future divination and shape shifting.

We are beginning to realize now more and more the importance of sound healing and quantum physics, science now tells us that the universe is made up of sound and vibration energy, therefore a person can be positively influenced by the power of shamanic drumming. Indeed the first sound that we hear for nine months of our lives in the womb is the rhythmic beat of our mother's heartbeat. Rhythmic healing is certainly very real and the shaman is able to influence the person they are healing or a particular issue within the community by using the vibration frequency of the shamanic drum.

Shamanic Drumming creates left and right hemisphere synchronisation in your brain, this allows you to access your entire brain actually making you smarter. This synchronisation also connects you with your intuition and inner guidance system bringing forth a better quality of life. In addition to this drumming also activates certain parts of the brain that lead to a greater sense of self-awareness, insight and certainty. Furthermore as mentioned previously Shamanic drumming changes the brainwave state to more a Theta/Alpha State in this brainwave state you feel more calm and relaxed and feel an increased sense of well being. These brainwave states are associated with meditation and other spiritual practices.

At the beginning of a shamanic ritual the drum is usually struck in certain ways to signify calling in of the helping spirits, for example the drum may be struck at its North, East, south and Western points to signify calling in of the directions.

Other factors that play an important role in shamanic ritual performance are rhythm, tempo, volume and timbre.

Different rhythms can transmit different meanings and their contact different helping spirits. The volume and tempo communicate different meaning to the listener, for example the call back from a shamanic journey involves three slow beats then a fast paced call back as well as the beginning of a ritual or journey may have a certain sequence of drumming.

There are many ways to connect with a drum. A drum of your own creation will be imbued with your own uniqueness.

Often an elder is brought in to do a special blessing of your drum. If no elder is available, you can do the ceremony yourselves by sitting in Circle and offering each one in the circle a chance to state their intention from their hearts.

It will become a powerful extension of your essential self. Moreover, the spirit of a drum will pass through your hands into the drum as you make it and then may want to decorate it in ways that infuse their own energy into it.

One of the best ways to connect with a drum is by journeying to meet the spirit of your drum.

Begin by smudging the drum, and then call upon the spirit of the drum and ask it to come to you and become your ally. To support your journey, you can play the drum you are working with or listen to a shamanic journey drumming recording while holding the drum.



How to gather a stick for your beater:

It is great to search for your own beater stick,

especially if you have a preference for a particular tree, or are able to find a stick from somewhere that is special and personal to you.

Practically speaking, it needs to be comfortable in your hand, it needs to be strong, and ideally it would want to be about 1-2cm thick, and 30-40cm long.

When going to gather the stick, it is good to first introduce yourself to the spirits of place, let them know why you are there, and give an offering of herbs to the land, asking to be guided, or for permission from the tree or the spirits before taking anything.

If you don't have anything physical as an offering, you can also sing a song or say a few words of thanks as a gift.



When you meet the spirit of the drum, it may teach you some special ways you can use the drum for your shamanic work that you did not know before. It may have a specific name, purpose or type of energy (for example some feel very grounding, others more ethereal). Your drum may wish to be played, decorated or stored in a particular way.

It may teach you a rhythm for invoking and enlivening it. When a helping spirit is invoked, there is often an accompanying rhythm that comes through. Be open to the possibilities.

If the initial communication with the spirit of the drum is not very clear, that's OK. Journeys like this can be repeated a number of times, in fact it is a good thing to do just to develop an ongoing relationship. You can journey to connect with the spirit of your drum as often as you like.

IMPORTANT NOTE

YOUR DRUM DOES NOT NEED TO BE PERFECT IT IS MORE IMPORTANT TO BE UNIQUE AND PERSONAL TO YOU. SOME DRUMS HAVE HOLES AND FRAMES ARE NOT PERFECT CIRCLES THIS IS CLOSER TO NATURE AND OURSELVES SO PLEASE RELAX AND DO NOT WORRY, ENJOY THIS EXPERIENCE AND YOUR NEWLY BORN DRUM.

KIT FOR MAKING OWN DRUM BEATER

SEWN FAUX LEATHER BEATER HEAD

WOOL STUFFING

TIES

GATHERED STICK

BEGINNING TO CRAFT THE DRUM

The key in making a shamanic drum is to do it when you are in a positive frame of mind, to also add blessings/prayers and healing intentions when making the drum. This transforms the drum from being an "ordinary" drum into being a sacred healing drum also called a medicine drum. Being in a positive mindset while making the drum infuses healing energy into the drum. If you are thinking negative thoughts, then that energy can go into the drum.

Meditation

thank you spirit (of the deer or skin if making from skin) products to make and for infusing this drum with healing energy to heal all illnesses for humanity, animals, plants, and the environment, to restore balance, to cleanse negative energy and to strengthen protection from all negativity and negative influences for healing all for the highest good for all. In full faith, so be it.

ITEMS TO CRAFT THE DRUM

THE CIRCULAR FRAM

THE LACING

THE ANIMAL HIDE / VEGAN HIDE

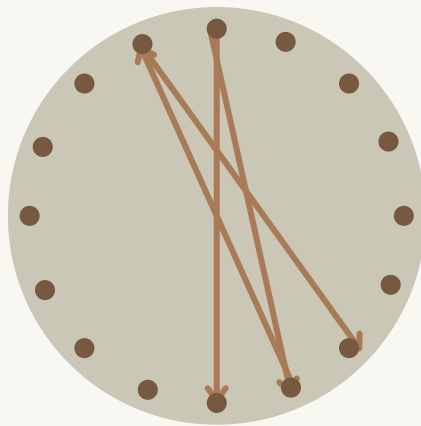
PREPARING THE HIDE

THE HIDE CAN BE SOAKED BEFORE HAND IN WATER TO MAKE IT SOFTER TO WORK WITH AND CAN INCLUDE PETALS AND CRYSTALS OF YOUR CHOICE TO ENHANCE THE SPIRITS OF THE DRUM.

1. PLACE THE HIDE ON A NON SLIP SURFACE
2. MAKE 16 SPACED HOLES ALL AROUND THE DRUM LIKE THE NUMBERS ON A CLOCK
3. PLACE THE FRAME ONTO THE HIDE
4. TAKE THE LACES

THE LACING

When lacing the drum, it's best to lace it up stringing the lace from one set of holes at the top of the drum and then going to the set of holes directly opposite at the bottom of the drum. Then once you lace that set of holes, then you go back to the top of the drum to lace the set of holes there.



When lacing the drum, it's important to pull the skin tight as you work. This is a fine balance because you don't want to pull too tight because it can SNAP OR produce a high pitched SOUND.

Lacing the drum too loose, then the skin becomes a little too slack and when beating the drum it can produce a sound that sounds lifeless and muted.

If the symmetry of the lacing is a bit off, don't worry because when the handle of the drum is made, it will bring it all into balance. If the symmetry is way off, then you can loosen the lacing, readjust it and then tighten it back up again. the drum DOES not NEED TO BE entirely symmetrical - it's what gives it character and makes it one-of-a-kind and unique.



The Handle

WHEN THE HANDLE IS BEING MADE, THIS IS WHERE YOU CAN PULL THE LACING INTO MORE SYMMETRY.

THERE ARE 12 STRINGS.

BUNDLE THEM INTO 4 SETS OF THREE STRINGS.

Get two pieces of lace and with one of the pieces, tie a knot in the centre and then with the ends, wrap it around one set of 3 strings and then weaving it over and under the strings from the knot in the centre outwards.

Then using a needle or pliers, tuck the end of the lace into the weaving so that it doesn't show and so it holds the lace in place without unraveling.

BEGINNING TO PLAY YOUR NEWLY BORN DRUM

Allow the rhythm of the drum to become as natural as your breath, your heartbeat. Allow the drum spirit to merge with you so that the speed and rhythm of your drumming will be controlled by it

As you continue to drum, you will become more ecstatic and the spirits will create new rhythms and perhaps cause you to sing.

You are now stepping into a higher level of shamanic consciousness and skill.

At some point in your journey, you - like other shamans of the past - will realise that all your helper spirits and power animals are traveling at your side and rejoicing that you have merged with the spirit of the drum.

Now you have obtained the power to do much greater things than you were able to do before. You will not realize the full magnitude of this change until a few days or even a couple of weeks afterward.

This kind of initiatory ceremony is called shanar (best translated as increase in ability) and it is a time of great celebration!

When this is performed as a ritual with many participants, the ceremony is followed by a festive meal in which the shaman or shamans are honoured and the people rejoice that the spirits have brought the blessing of greater power to the shamans for the benefit of the community and of mankind.

Final Drum Making workshop Words of wisdom

"If you deal with anger and frustration here just 10% better than normally, you'll show up differently in the world. You'll learn to face uncertainty and do something anyway. To take responsibility, even if you feel like there's no way you could possibly make an informed choice. To respect the animals and plants that died so that you can live. These skills will stay with you in every day life."

Shaman Word Glossary

A shamanic journey - an altered state of consciousness where the shaman's spirit leaves their body in order to fly to other worlds in the shaman's cosmology.

Ezen - the spirits of a place or of an object.

Ongod orood - an altered state of consciousness where a shaman's spirit helper takes possession of a shaman's body.

The udha - shamans' chief helper spirits who will generally assist shamans as well as teaching and instructing them.

Thank you

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Price List

Complete Drums

Novelty Picture Drums £15

Buffalo hide Drum, with beater 12 inch £65

Buffalo hide Drum, with beater 16 inch £85

Buffalo hide Drum, with beater 20 inch £110

Frames Red oak, Ash or Mulberry.

Drum frame, round 12 inch From £30

Drum frame, round 14 inch From £35

Drum frame, round 20 inch From £60

Other

Skins Goat, Buffalo, Deer from £30

10mm wide 5m Rawhide thong £10

Rawhide Rattle £35

Drum bags from £30