

THE WISE WOMAN'S WAY
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In the Native American tradition, a woman is not fully grown until she reaches the age of 52. Many women have gained that honor and some are still looking forward to it. A portion of the current generation of postmenopausal women is consciously aware that they are Wise Women. For many others, the idea is just dawning, just under the surface of awareness and the message of my new book will serve as another push to awaken. I encourage you to claim that honor.

We are the Wise Women.

We can learn from what it meant in ancient times, in societies where women were honored and given important roles as healers and keepers of the words of power of their clans. Shaman believe that women carry the void and that their wisdom comes from the womb. When they stopped having a monthly blood flow, they retained their blood and it made them wise. We can learn to harness that power through visualization and guided meditation, which taps into our deepest source of our wisdom.

Ancient Wisdom

You may be aware that there is a great revival going on, around the globe. People of every ethnic background are reclaiming their spiritual roots and learning from the ancient ways of their ancestors. As women, the cultures of the Great Goddess and their wisdom are our roots. For those of you that are new to the Goddess information, there are cultures that existed for more than 30,000 years, until around 5 to 8000 years ago, that honored the Divine Feminine and were women-centered. There is a worldwide sisterhood of Shaman women who have come forward to teach the ways of the sacred feminine in this new millennium. They are also sharing their knowledge of the powers of wise women. The baton is being passed to our generation of wise women. It is our legacy, and our privilege to carry and enhance this knowledge in this period of transformation.

There is evidence that wise women of the past continued to explore and enjoy the special gift of feminine sexuality. The earth honoring societies understood the awesome creative potential that is inherent in sexuality. In the Ancient Goddess Cultures, women's sexual desire, was considered an active, powerful erotic drive. Their view of sexual energy was far more life affirming than the repressive and distorted patriarchal messages about sex that have prevailed in the last two thousand years. The wisdom of ancient cultures is that *sexual desire is a sacred gift of the Great Mother. In these cultures women were raised to feel plenty of permission to explore their unique pleasure, without judgment, and in a worldview that integrated sexuality with spirituality.*

Ancient Roles

The ancient wise women were the healers of their people—both physical and psychological. They were the midwives for both birth and death. They were the visionaries whose dreams were heeded as important messages for their people. Decisions that would affect the lives of their entire clan were made based upon a consensus

interpretation of these visions. They were the teachers of the sacred traditions and grounded the energy for ceremonies. They called the animals for the hunt. They called on the ancestors and also heard the voices of spirit. Because of their special gifts, Wise Women became the intercessors between those living and the world of spirit—the ancestors, guardians, and all the divine entities (as their people understood them).

I'd like to give you some specific examples.

The ancient wise women were the keepers of the sacred words of their tribes. In pre-dynastic Egypt, the matriarch of the village was called the Heq. The Heq was a wise woman who commanded the hekau or "Words of Power." When the tribe gathered, she would speak the words that formed the intent and protected the gathering. In other words, the wise woman, or Heq, held the sacred space. The name of the ancient goddess Hecate, or Heket in Egypt, is derived from this word for the tribal wise woman.

Native American wise women were called the Grandmothers and they held positions of great power. In the Cherokee Nation, the Grandmothers sat on the war council. It was they who decided whether the tribe would go to war. The tradition evolved from the wisdom that these women knew the sacrifice of giving birth and would not make a rash choice to snuff out lives unless it was absolutely critical to the survival of their people.

Wise women were not simply sweet old ladies dispensing advice to their heirs, but were women of power, passion and action, and they were essential to their communities.

What does it mean to be a wise woman in our time? A very large number of our current generation of wise women have had their attitudes shaped by the women's movement, either directly by having been involved in various women's groups or indirectly by benefiting from the increased opportunities. Never before in the last several thousand years have we had so many competent women with the experience and the resources to make a difference. These are the women who are reaching the final third of their lives, and discovering an awesome power.

Their numbers are part of their strength but there is so much more: the powerful potential is caused by physiological (menopausal zest), social (women gathering) and Crone Stage developmental factors. Their wisdom and fearless zest are resources badly needed in this time of global economic, environmental and social problems. In this stage of life these women are *empowered* by a state of **awareness of their internal strengths of emotional capacity, strong will, and an acknowledgement of the wisdom gained from their lives.**

However, many women carry vestiges of a broken vessel, the result of several thousand years of fear and repression and we often don't acknowledge just how powerful we can be, and it feels dangerous. In the height of patriarchal times it was dangerous, (roughly from about 500 years BCE to the late 20th century). Especially during the dark ages and Renaissance, there was an active campaign to demonize any of the powers that were special to women, such as divination, astrology, herbal healing, midwives, mediumship (communicating to loved ones or guides in the unseen worlds), oracle predictions, soul travel and anything else associated with women's intuition.

Until we make a shift from within, the legacy of women and their role as protectors of our planet and its children are at risk. Collectively, we have a job to do—to protect our Mother Earth and to reclaim the honor of the Divine Feminine. Individually, each of you has a path of power, which will revitalize your energy in this third stage of life.

So let's look at some ways that we can make that shift from within and tap into our awesome womb power, the power of the void. A central question is, how do we gain and maintain the vision for our path of power?

Jamie Sams, author of *Medicine Cards*, offers a glimpse into the traditional Healing Quest that a Native American woman would take when seeking her vision.

According to Sams, women did not need to fast and deprive themselves out in the wilderness as men did to seek their Vision Quest. In her book, *The 13 Original Clan Mothers*, she explains that it was necessary for men to suffer such deprivations to get out of their intellect and reach their inner feminine, from where their visions emerge. Visions come naturally for women, from their wombspace and they must nurture themselves during their Quest to protect their bodies as nurturers of others. They don't even have to be still and sit for hours trying to quiet the mind because that is the way of men.

Jamie Sams is of Wolf Clan Teaching Lodge. She has spent over 20 years learning from her female elders and she has gone on 17 such quests herself. She tells us the Woman's Way has been taught in the Black Lodges of women and in Women's Medicine Circles for hundreds of years.

Women seeking spiritual inspiration would set up a sacred space to spend the required three-days for a Healing Quest. After finding a safe and secluded spot out in nature, the woman formed a wide circle of stones that become the perimeter of her sacred space and build a lean to, or pitch a tent in which she would sleep during the day. The woman would bring plenty of pure fresh water and simple food, such as whole grain cakes or bread so that she would have plenty of nourishment. Water was especially important because it hydrated her womb and supported her body so it would be fertile for her dreams.

During the three nights of the Healing Quest, the woman would feed the flames of the fire, burning in an inner sacred circle of stones. She would stay up all night, visualizing the opening of her womb to visions and dreams. She would also chant, sing, create simple crafts or artwork, anything that utilized the right brain and helped her tap into her intuitive sense. During the day she would sleep and dream. [For modern women, I would add a notebook and pen to her side, in order to record her visions and dreams, or a sketching pad with colored pencils]. Meanwhile, back at camp (in the Native tradition) the women of her circle would chant, sending her energy for her Quest to be successful. The support of other women was an integral component for this experience.

All of the preparation, support and intention represent a major commitment to Self that the woman makes that would ensure a powerful outcome. I tell you this story not to imply that we all need to go out and set up such a Healing Quest but to make three important points that will help you think about empowering your Self as Wise Woman.

1) Go within, 2) Nourish the self and 3) Give birth your visions through action.

First: Go Within

The Goddess cultures of the past viewed the divine as immanent, which means that spirit was within and all around us. The Native American tradition believed that women held their visions inside of themselves in this womb space. I have a guided meditation, called Womb Wisdom that I will be happy to email you if you contact me at lindasavagephd@goddesstherapy.com

Second: Nourish the Self

Body Wisdom

Body wisdom, has its origins in the special experience of women: the three blood mysteries. Listening to your body wisdom is a powerful source of what is called “women’s intuition.” Women’s intuition is anchored in internal, physical, embodied awareness. The initiations of first blood, childbirth, and menopause focus women on their body sensations. They are uniquely feminine encounters. So also is the monthly ebb and flow of the powerful mix of female hormones. When women attend to the messages of their bodies, as they must with these natural processes, they develop a connection to their body wisdom. The more we pay attention, the more we learn. We have been taught to ignore it most of the time, but every woman has physical signs that compel her to pay attention to the process within.

This is the source of body wisdom. It is our wise inner guidance, connected to the universal pulse of life. The physical initiations of the blood mysteries represent gateways leading to new spiritual awareness. The message of the traditional Native American Women’s Way is to nourish the self and the body.

Sexuality—Spiritual Sex

One of the most important ways to nourish the self is one we often neglect, that is replenishing our body/mind with sexual energy. According to Toltec Teachings, our feminine sexual energy is essential to healing (self and others) and renewing our creativity. When our sexuality is dormant and we are not orgasmic, our serpent energy ceases to move upwards through our bodies. Marilyn Tunneshende, in *Don Juan and the Art of Sexual Energy*, tells us that her teachers refer to this as a “broken vessel.”

Modern wise women can become inspired to reclaim the sexual fires within even if they seem to have gone dormant. You may want to build the creative fires of your sexuality and celebrate its creative expression throughout your life. The following meditation was adapted from several sources, including Marilyn Tunneshende’s book and *The Magdalene Manuscripts*.

Serpent Energy Meditation

A simple way to begin moving this serpent energy (Kundalini) is to practice the fire breath, which is taught in every major spiritual sex tradition that I have researched. Begin by breathing slowly and deeply, allowing your body to completely relax. Once again, move your awareness to the area behind your eyes, down to the throat, to the heart,

the belly and finally into your pelvis. As you move your awareness into your pelvic area, focus on your breathing and become more and more deeply relaxed.

As you continue to breathe deeply, imagine the energy of your breath filling every part of your pelvis, stirring the life force energy that is cradled in this area. As you inhale, feel the energy build and intensify as you continue to focus in your pelvic area. Now, as you inhale, squeeze your thighs and the Kegel/PC muscles and feel the energy moving up the back of your spine. As you exhale, imagine a fountain of energy flowing down your front and sides.

So as you inhale, feel the energy build in the pelvis and as you exhale, move the energy up your spine. Allow yourself to focus on the inhalation and exhalation for a few moments. Building the energy with your inhale and moving it up with your exhale.

Now, imagine that you are sending two streams of energy up either side of your body with each exhalation. Imagine the color gold streaming up the right side of your body and imagine the color black streaming up the left side of your body. The Black stream is your feminine energy that follows the lunar path on the left. It is connected with the darkness of the void.

The Gold stream is your male energy that rises through the solar path on the right. It is connected with the light of the sun. Begin to imagine that at each of your energy centers, these two streams, the Gold and the Black, will cross, creating a powerful alchemy in your body.

Now breathe deeply, focusing on the energy building in your pelvis. With your next exhalation, begin with visualizing the two streams of energy crossing in your pelvis, at area behind your pubic bone. Simply imagine two energy streams crossing through the generative energy center as you exhale.

Next, take a deep breath in, building the energy deep in your pelvis and with your next exhalation, focus your energy in your belly. Imagine the Black energy stream crossing the Gold energy just below your belly. With each inhale build the energy in your pelvis and with each exhale, move the energy up and visualize it crossing just below the belly.

Now with your next exhalation, focus your energy on your heart and imagine the black energy stream crossing over the gold energy stream in your heart center. Continue to breathe and relax, feeling this wonderful energy pulsing through your body, crossing at the heart.

And now, as you exhale, focus your energy on your throat and again imagine the black energy stream crossing the gold energy stream in the throat center. So as you inhale, build the energy in your pelvis and as you exhale, send the energy streams, Black and Gold, crossing in the throat chakra.

With your next exhalation, focus your energy on the area behind your eyes and see the energy streams crossing in your third eye center. Just breathe and stay completely relaxed as you visualize the Black and the Gold pulsing through your body, crossing behind your eyes.

Finally, on your next exhalation, imagine the two energies merging at the top of your head. For the next few moments, just allow yourself to sense this movement of the two energy streams, Black and Gold, running up the body and crossing at each energy center with your exhaled breath. Breathing in and building energy, breathing out and crossing: behind the pubic bone, in the belly, the heart, the throat, behind the eyes, and

finally merging at the top of your head. Just allow yourself to enjoy the sensation of the Black and Gold energies streaming and writhing like gentle serpents, energizing each energy center as they cross.

When you are ready, begin to bring your awareness to the room and feel your body supported by the chair and please open your eyes.

Spiritual Sex

It is my commitment to offer this special wisdom that all too often is hidden, glossed over or simply deleted when we talk about consciousness and spiritual work.

How many of you have had any experience with something you might have called sexual ecstasy or spiritual sex? You are in good company. Sex researcher and therapist Gina Ogden launched a study in cooperation with New Woman Magazine in 1999. More than 1,400 women responded. She found that 91% of women over 40 said that they had experienced sexual ecstasy or spiritual sex.

They described experiences such as “feelings of oneness with the universe during orgasm,” having out of body travel while making love, weeping with the joy of sexual bliss, being enveloped with a loving light, and touching souls with the partner. My own spiritual sex experience was a most compelling direct encounter with universal healing energy, and there were moments of boundless, timeless existence in “light/energy.”

Clearly, many women are having such experiences and are willing to talk about them. The descriptions of sexual ecstasy sound quite similar to near death experiences in some ways. There are many pathways of spiritual discovery and sexuality is one.

It is an ancient knowledge.

The ancient Goddess cultures held the view that sexuality was both a healing energy and a pathway to raising the consciousness. The ancients believed that ecstatic union with the Source of the Life Force was the ultimate expression of sexuality.

There were priestesses who were initiated into the truth about this mystery of sexual energy. These women were able to use sex for sacred purposes in the temples of the Goddess. How many of you have heard of so-called “temple Prostitutes?” The temple priestesses were called the sacred virgins. Those who served the Great Mother were “women unto themselves” free of marital bonds. These women were practicing healing and initiating others into the sexual pathway towards a more expanded consciousness.

The Sacred Virgins practiced Sexual Mastery, which is the conscious development of the spiritual sex as a sacred path. Spiritual sex may be experienced as extraordinary light, luminous colors, and feeling a loss of the sense of a physical body and even described the sense of merging with universal energy.

Clearly spiritual sex encompasses sexual energy that goes beyond physical sensations of pleasure. It incorporates the deeply loving connection of sexual communion and it also includes additional aspects of sexuality. Such experiences as:

Healing the body-mind-spirit,

Projecting visual imagery,

Divining visions and

Balancing the genders through joining with universal energy.

Third: Give birth to your visions through action

This is the action step

How you apply this life force energy impacts what you do, how you connect with others, and the impeccability of your spirit. That is why I have chosen to write about sexuality in the Wise Woman Stage of life. It is that vital.

When we take action and nurture our sexuality, we have the energy to pursue our Path of Power. It is the power that fuels your life's work, whether it is as a healer, seer, prayer intercessor, mentor, or planetary change maker.

CHOOSE YOUR PATH OF POWER

The time comes in our lives when we turn from our previous paths of care taking, of simply doing our jobs, and of searching for ourselves. It is clear that the manner in which we live our lives, especially this last third of our lives, affects everything, including the way we pass on. It is not that we are completely done with the past or with the roles that we played, but we are now able to turn our life experience (both the wounds and the triumphs) into wisdom. We are ready to make our contribution, our special calling. This is the path of power. This is the true purpose of the Wise Woman Stage. It is this time that we can master the powerful force of our intention. The ancient practice of shaping our lives through intention is returning as a deep understanding sometimes called the Noetic sciences, thought field therapy, or energy psychology. It is very similar to ancient practices.

According to Dr. Christiane Northrup, in *The Wisdom of Menopause*, the gonadotrophin releasing hormones, FSH and LSH, which are actually brain stimulants, elevate at menopause and remain elevated for the rest of a woman's life. This is the hallmark of the stage of the wise woman. The elevated releasing hormones offer a physiological explanation of the increase of "psychic" abilities that arises in many older women. For several millennia, women's powers were forced to go underground, where it became extremely dangerous to even meet together in a circle. The traditional Shamanic ways to access wisdom were replaced by the worship of laws (made by those in power) and the written word, (which could be controlled). The legacy of women's wisdom was all but lost. Our generation of Wise Women is returning to the old ways. Our interest in methods of tuning into Divine Source such as Tarot, Astrology, Palmistry, Mediumship, Healing Touch, Creative Song, Dance. The miracle is that we have come nearly full circle and the ancient arts are back with many men as well as women practicing, studying and even proving the efficacy of these traditions with western ways of experimental methods.

So it is time for us to pursue our path and nourish it and ourselves every day.

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