

Prioritizing Relationships with Lower and Upper World Helping Spirits

Daniel Prechtel, DMin

What are helping spirits?

In core shamanism we are able to shift our consciousness to non-ordinary reality and make intentional journeys to the realms of spirits in the lower, upper, and middle worlds. Shamanic practitioners cultivate relationships with some of the spirits in these realms as “helping spirits” or guardians and allies. In this article I strongly encourage building relationships with spirits from the lower and upper worlds as the first priority.

Why helping spirits from the lower and upper worlds as first priority?

The middle world is conditional with varying contending interests and given to dominant use of power over others. Middle world spirits reflect that conditionality, and we need to carefully negotiate relationships with them that satisfy mutual interests.

In contrast, shamanic practitioners discover that spirits in the lower and upper worlds that want to work with us are highly evolved, compassionate, and powerful. They are capable of providing us with deep wisdom and healing in an unconditional way we only get glimpses of in the middle world. We can acquire helping spirits from the lower or upper world (and these worlds have multiple levels) either by a shamanic practitioner making a spirit retrieval on our behalf, or we can journey to those worlds ourselves and seek out spirits that want to be in relationship with us.

In the lower world, which is a world of pristine nature, we can look for a Power Animal to serve as a trusted guide. This animal can communicate with us and provide us with a depth of knowledge and healing that no middle world being is able to do. A shamanic practitioner may over time cultivate a team of power animals, each with its own unique powers, to assist the practitioner. There are other helping spirits including teachers and ancestors in the lower world that can also offer trustworthy, compassionate, and powerful service and friendship.

Likewise, the upper world contains many potential powerful allies. We may seek out a teacher there, and discover other powerful, wise, helping spirits that wish to work with us. None of these helping spirits are ego-centered or agenda-driven. They want to assist us in our middle world existence with healing and

wisdom, but they do not force anything upon you. They seek a right relationship with you that is built by mutual invitation, respect, and care.

So, these realms of lower and upper worlds are the primary focus of shamanic journeys for seeking out helping spirits that are able to provide us with the best guidance, perspective, and dedication to our growth in wholeness and maturity. Middle world spirits are less capable of providing this level of care, even if they are loved and cherished and able to be a healing and wise presence for us.

Differentiating the source of the helping spirit.

If we, or another shamanic practitioner on our behalf, goes to the upper or lower world and engages a helping spirit there it is clear the source where that spirit originates. But sometimes it is less clear where the spirit originates. For example, a figure might appear in a dream, or series of dreams, and we don't know where we are in the dream or from what world the spirit-image belongs. Or we may be on a shamanic journey but are unsure which world we are in and encounter a potential helping spirit. Or we may know we are in the middle world but find a powerful spirit that offers help, and we may associate it with the upper or lower world. Perhaps we encounter an ancestor, divine being, angelic being, or saint from one of the religious traditions that is in the middle world. Are they middle world spirits or have journeyed from the other worlds? There are various things we can consider in discerning their origin:

- Does the spirit seem needy, demanding, or require help from us? (middle world)
- We can ask the spirit its purpose in being with us.
- Does the spirit seem to draw power away from us? (middle world)
- Does the spirit feel like it is direct, clear, compassionate, and free of a hidden agenda? (possibly from lower or upper world)
- We can ask the spirit to tell us to which world it belongs. If the spirit is confused by the question, it is more likely to be from the middle world.
- We can ask the spirit where it can be found if we make a journey to the lower or upper world. If we make that journey and find the spirit there, does it confirm the previous middle world meeting?
- Some powerful helping spirits may be ubiquitous, but we may assume that their primary place is the upper or lower world. For example, those with a traditional Christian background may associate Jesus Christ with being in the upper world (or a heavenly realm) but capable of being in any of the worlds as "author/lord of all creation."

Building the relationship.

It is beneficial, and increases our spiritual power, to build strong relationships with our helping spirits. There are a number of ways to build the relationship, similar to building a healthy and strong friendship in our ordinary reality. First and foremost, we can regularly meet them in non-ordinary reality and get to know them. Here are a few pointers:

- Take time to learn how to communicate with your helping spirit.
- Be careful to carefully listen to what your helping spirit says to you.
- Ask them why they want to work with you?
- Ask what will help us grow in our relationship?
- Ask what would the helping spirit like from me?
- Explore how can we enjoy each other together? Sing? Dance?
- Visit where the spirit normally calls home.
- Ask your helping spirit to take you places it wants to show you.
- Learn about what powers and gifts the spirit wants to give you or do with and through you.
- Inquire if there are things, activities, and places in ordinary reality that helps you remember, respect, and please the spirit?