

The Shamanic Verses

Celebrity journalist turned shaman *Anna Hunt* explains why the ancient art of healing is today's answer to yoga



During recent filming of a remake of *The Lone Ranger* in New Mexico, Johnny Depp accepted an invitation to become an honorary member of a Navajo Indian tribe. It's incredibly rare for tribal elders to extend such an offer and yet the Hollywood star is not alone in his interest in indigenous tribes and their spiritual traditions. Robbie Williams, Owen Wilson, Sheryl Crow, Tori Amos, Sting and Yoko Ono are among a host of celebrities who have referred to the importance of shamanic healers in their lives as a route to emotional stability, inner peace and enhanced physical health. And *the red carpet treatment* before this year's Oscars was 'reconnective healing,' a shamanic technique.

Where celebrities lead, we follow, and shamanism is on the cusp of going mainstream, set to become to the twenies what yoga was to the nineties. Today's global mood (defined by the economic and

environmental crises) leaves everyone on edge, trying to make sense of where we fit. Cue a shift in our definition of success from the aggressive pursuit of wealth and status, to living well, in harmony with the environment and with ourselves. Which is where shamanism comes in.

Einstein's formula $E=mc^2$ confirms what shamans have always known – that everything with mass/form, from a person to a plant to a thought, consists of energy. It follows that if you can move energy, you can alter life. Using a range of techniques including acupuncture, visualisation, herbs, plant medicines (including the mythical

hallucinogens, ayahuasca), crystals and sound, a shaman assists by moving energy, thereby alleviating emotional distress and physical challenges. Europe's indigenous shamanic traditions were stamped out during the Inquisition, but among the Navajo and in South America these arts have been passed down the generations from shaman to chosen apprentice in strict secrecy for 40,000 years.

The Shaman In Stiletto's, the English version of *Eat Pray Love*, describes my experiences having been chosen as such an apprentice. I was a 29-year-old Cambridge graduate, leading a glam but stressful life as a celebrity interviewer for a national newspaper,

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who fled to the untouched wilderness of the Amazon rainforest where I spent months drinking one of the most potent hallucinogenic drugs in a bid to find inner peace and being apprenticed with Maximo Morales, a sexy and sophisticated shaman. Today, though I continue to write for *The Daily Mail*, I spend the majority of my time working as a shaman leading international retreats, workshops and one-on-one consultations, distilling the best of shamanic techniques and making them relevant for 21st-century professionals.

The Shaman In Stiletto's is published by Penguin £8.99; annahunt.com



JOHNNY DEPP, YOKO ONO, OWEN WILSON, SHERYL CROW AND TORI AMOS