

Practical Animism Online Course: Live Call #1, May 16, 2019

Please excuse any typos and inaccuracies in this transcript.

Daniel: So we're now recording, it's May something, 2019. And this is the first of 14 live sessions that accompany the 14 recorded sessions for this second run of the animism course that I guide.

Daniel: And as I've expressed a moment ago, it's my habit and my preference to let the learning be driven by your questions. That's exciting and more engaging to me as a teacher. Otherwise, I get kind of boring and didactic and you get that in the lessons already and so I like the more relational experience here.

Daniel: I have a few questions that folks have submitted already through other means. And then I'm going to rely on you to bring other questions that you have here in this time.

Daniel: So let me start with the... Do I want to say any preamble? I just assume you probably listened to the lesson. If you haven't, that's okay, but very briefly to recap, the first lesson is a little more teachy in some ways, in that I was trying to sketch a framework for how to think and talk about relationships with the others. Because most people aren't raised with it.

Daniel: And so although it can seem a little intellectual or a little something, a little heady, how we think and talk about these things does matter, because spirituality, which is a funny, mostly useless category is not just internal or interior, it's relational. And that means with other living humans as well and so having a common ground to talk about things, that doesn't recreate misunderstanding or cause harm actually does matter.

Daniel: And it is my bias and we'll talk about this in the last lesson of the course, that these perspectives are actually really normal. And they should be mainstream, politically, legally in our institutions, etc. And so how we think and talk about it matters.

Daniel: And then I mentioned in the recording that it's important for me and it's my encouragement to you, if you don't already do it, to bring a psychological sensibility to these relationships with other kinds of people. Meaning, if you have issues with other living human people, which all of us do, in a sense, in the sense that we have dynamics, habits, cultural, psychological habits, hopefully, most of which serve us well, but some of which are blind spots and problematic, then as soon as we start actually valuing the other than humans as people, as sources of relationship, it's common that we're going to bring those same dynamics to those other relationships.

Daniel: And that's a total hot mess in a really interesting and fruitful way, just like trying to relate with other living humans. And so putting that on the table up front, that all the projections and confusion and neediness and insecurity and all the stuff that we bring to relationships with other than humans is fair game for these other kinds of relationships that we're trying to reclaim.

Daniel: And then the other thing that feels important to name here is holding the work we're doing in, we could call it different things, but in this moment, I'll call it like an anti-oppression lens or a critical read of history that foregrounds the different kinds of historical and ongoing troubles. And that happen interpersonally, that happen internally in a sense and they also happen especially through systems and structures and institutions.

Daniel: And so that includes around racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, exploitative capitalism, etc. And so colonization histories, of occupation of land and all that. Sometimes we'll speak about that head-on, but it's also a fair game to name it at any point, in how we hold what we're doing together. Because in a sense, what we're up to is a kind of decolonization, it's a kind of uprooting of real limiting worldview, that only values certain living humans and trying to replace that, if you will, with a worldview that sees not only other living humans, but the other than humans, the plants, the land, the animals, etc., as people, as folks we are accountable to.

Daniel: So holding it like that. If everyone could just notice, if you're on mute or not, because there's some background noise and... yeah, it's okay. So basically, to name, it's fair game to name any of that along the way and I enjoy as a teacher, not indulgently challenging questions, but don't hold back on where the energy is at in what you're bringing with the work.

Daniel: So I think that's all I need to say by way of preamble and so questions, go ahead and raise your hand if you have a question. I see one person marked as supporter, who's not a supporter, so if somebody other than me could track that situation, that's great.

Daniel: And two of the questions that came in and I see some from Margaret, let's start with Margaret. I'll unmute you and if you don't mind sharing-

Margaret: Thank you, I'm Margaret.

Daniel: Say a word about where you're calling in from, if you would.

Margaret: I'm calling from North Carolina, North Central.

Daniel: Great.

Margaret: So I'm very interested in animism and I signed right up for the course and then I realized there was the ancestral component. And I feel so strongly that I would need to be protected in relationships with my ancestors. Not that I know them, but even my mother, when she died, we were cordial, we were very close, but I asked the universe that we not have more contact for my good.

Margaret: So how far can I go [crosstalk 00:06:16] of the world?

Daniel: It's a great question. My usual progression and it's totally not linear at all, is that ideally folks have some level of ancestral wellness or healing and from which to then approach relationship with the other than humans, with the larger field of relationships that are not our specific ancestors. And it's totally not linear in that way. So you don't have to do it in that way.

Daniel: In this course, because I don't want it to duplicate the ancestral material, which is very narrow and specific, relative to what we're doing here, there's really just one lesson that's explicitly ancestor focused. And that's lesson three in part one. And even that keeps the topic a bit general.

Daniel: So you don't have to focus on work with your blood ancestors, in order to make full benefit of what we're doing here. That's the short answer.

Daniel: Now, the bigger answer is that our ancestors of blood can be helpful allies in remembering that these habits of relationships with the wider field of beings, with the others, are also an ancestral inheritance, are also part of our legacy as specific human beings. And that we are people, whoever they are, even if they're the most amnesiac, settler, colonialist white people you could think of, which include my own ancestors, bless them, they still at some point historically, give deep reverence to the good Earth and to the spirits and to the things we call nature, who are actually the bodies of weird old gods.

Daniel: And so those knowings are able to be reactivated by anybody, even if your ancestors were shits to others in recent centuries. And that's useful in what we're doing here, but it's not critical to have that pathway in, necessarily. You can go directly to the oak tree and be like, what's up oak tree? You don't have to be like me and all of my people greet you.

Daniel: And another way and we'll get into this in lesson three, but another way in which ancestry is important is to actually notice where in your own ancestry these understandings broke down. And to be able to feel that, not just conceptually see it, but

to touch it in a heart way. And to see that there's grief there, there's grieving to be done and there's a way in which you know you're holding, like you're holding somebody in a flood and your hand slips.

Daniel: And like for the people in this course, which is almost everybody who didn't get raised with something about how to navigate this, from our ancestors to us, the hand slipped, they lost us. And so that is important to touch on a heart level. It's a way back in.

Daniel: It is like we resurface and then grab their hand. Like hey, I didn't actually disappear and they're like, good, we were worried about you. So thanks Margaret, yeah, don't worry about it, if you have rowdy ghostly ancestors just kind of like, so lovingly be like get out of my space. I'm going to do tree hugging for a bit. I'll get to you.

Daniel: If you want to work with the ancestors you can do that too. You do it [crosstalk 00:10:03].

Margaret: I was going to say, it's not that I know my ancestors, it's that I don't trust them.

Daniel: No, I understand, I believe you.

Margaret: [crosstalk 00:10:11] without knowing them. So I just want to ask, I can do the animism by itself for what it makes sense to try to make an appointment with one of the-

Daniel: If you're open to doing a session of the ancestral healing work, I encourage doing a few sessions of it. Just to get a little traction there and most importantly, perhaps to understand the picture you have of your ancestors is probably dominated by the recent ones.

Margaret: How would we go about doing that?

Daniel: Make a session with one of the practitioners and go to the ancestralmedicine.org and in the directory of practitioners, a lot of them are supporters in the course here. So yeah, thanks, Margaret.

Daniel: I see a question from a number of others, which is great. Let me speak to one of the two that's on my radar from folks who aren't here. So I don't lose track of it.

Daniel: One is, I suggested in a video that we're going to project things onto the other than humans, as soon as we start seeing them as people. And the question, there's

like a two-part question is, how do we know when we're doing that and how do we... and is that actually problematic?

Daniel: And so those are both good and nuanced questions. To the first one, how do we know when we're doing that? Often we don't. When you're in your projections, which to me is, let's take it out of psychological jargon. What I mean is that your own past experiences and your past pain and just your past conditioning is causing you to bring a filter and an expectation set to a present tense encounter, that gives some distortion to that encounter. That doesn't allow for real clarity of contact as much as could be the case.

Daniel: And so in that sense, it really is importing this other stuff that we're bringing to the interaction. How do we know when we're doing that? We probably won't, because it feels normal.

Daniel: And one of the only ways you know when you're doing that is you hire other people or you have friends that you trust and family, human or otherwise, to track you over time and be like what are my habits, what are my tendencies? So maybe I have a tendency to be a little self-reliant. I also have a tendency to worry about what others are thinking, which is useful and not useful for teaching.

Daniel: I have a tendency, if I'm really in a manager kind of mode, almost like, I won't say see people as objects but to like manage a situation in a way that drops the necessary heart for relationality. So if I'm doing that with divination, with the spirits, they'll just kind of pull back and be like, dude, you're planning too much. Hi, look us in the eye. I'm like, oh, sorry, hi.

Daniel: And so there could be a little habit, where you just have a tendency to lose contact or it could be a big habit, where you just forget that you can ask for help. And whatever it is, the place to look is in your relationships with other living humans, assuming you've attempted some of those, that go beyond just survival.

Daniel: And you probably get some feedback from some of those people, about ways that you can become annoying. That's really precious feedback, so you know what that is and you expect that you're probably going to bring it to these new kinds of relationships.

Daniel: And just knowing what your tendencies are can help us, can help you, us, to catch them a little earlier and to slow down. And if there is one thing that is another thing to keep in mind is just to feel for the sense of contact and learn to recognize when you're actually making contact with another being. And how that feels for you.

Daniel: The question is, is projection inherently a bad thing? And no, we can't help it, it's not inherently bad. I mean we can help it, we can work it through, but it's not inherently bad. It is fraught and can be a source of real trouble and distortion and disconnection and all that and harm, but we can't... it's like we can't developmentally skip steps.

Daniel: It's not a problem that our daughter poops her pants, she's one, it's what she does. And it would be weird if I'm like you shouldn't do that, you should just be really mature and not have to do that.

Daniel: And so when we bring a projection of our own past pain into a present tense relationship, the best scenario is that the other, the overall feel, the beings, whatever it is, can hold that enough that we can actually work it through. We can have some different kind of experience, we can have a breakthrough with it.

Daniel: And you know when that's happening, because you'll tend to feel super vulnerable or really ashamed that you just saw a part of yourself that others can see, but you couldn't see yet. Or just cracked open or something.

Daniel: So when that kind of energy moves, then we're in the terrain of having a corrective healing, we call it emotionally corrective experience in psychological jargon. But like a better experience, relationally, than we've had in the past.

Daniel: And when we have enough of those, then that's the norm that we bring into a new relationship. And so that's how psychological healing in general can happen through relationships with the other than humans. And then when that goes well, that actually transfers into how we relate with other living people. So we can get reparented and have other kinds of intimacy as well with the other than humans.

Daniel: So great, we can say that much. Let me go to Luis. You there, Luis? The audio is really strange. I don't know why, unfortunately-

Luis: Is it better now?

Daniel: It is.

Luis: Okay, I changed the mic. I'm calling from Germany and I'm from Spain. I'm very excited to be here. I'm very happy to be here.

Daniel: Great.

Luis: I really enjoyed the lesson and there was one part that, yeah, I have a question regarding one part. You said that animism is a set of values that is learned. And I really like what you said, that the term shaman somehow flattens different set of skills, which is spread across many indigenous cultures, which is very complex.

Luis: And you said that animism is learned and my experience in the last three years is that something has opened very strongly in me, that I've started connected with ancestors and with nature in a way which blew my mind. And when I found you speaking about ancestors, I was like, oh, fuck, somebody that is doing what I... somehow has opened in me.

Luis: So on one hand, I can feel there is something natural and on the other hand, when you say that it's something that we learn from it, so it's more something that I remember.

Daniel: Yeah, that's right, yeah, good, great. There's a couple of things, about the shamanism piece, not to go too intellectual on it, but to speak to it for just a moment. They're very dear to me, awesome high integrity humans, who use the word shamanism to describe their approach to things. So I don't want to add to the dogmatic judginess in the universe by suggesting that I am or others should have judgment toward everybody in a blanket way who uses those words.

Daniel: So I'm not saying it's bad.

Luis: I didn't hear it like that at all. I really liked your nuance on that word. I'm not saying that I heard it like that.

Daniel: Great and shamanism tends to describe a role, more than a value set. And so shamanism is used sometimes by people to describe the very worldview that I would personally tend to characterize as animism. If we're going for accuracy of terms.

Daniel: So in any case, it's a values-based thing, more than... because you can be animist and not being into ritual, per se. It's just the value set that you move from.

Daniel: And so to your other question, it's very tender really is, what's the balance with learning and instinctual knowing and remembering and reactivating of inherent wisdom? When I say, for one, when I say learning, the kind of intellectual cognitive learning that we will do some of in the course, it's just one part of that, like learning, like when I'm in sweat lodge and I make a mistake, I'm just saying, years ago, make a mistake to speak over someone and they're like, nope, not your turn, shut your mouth, young man. Some way or another.

Daniel: Community ritual teaches etiquette and etiquette is very important if we're going to enjoy as much intimacy as we can with the other than humans. It's also like the learning happens in the relational field with the others.

Daniel: And so when I say it's learnable, I'm including the direct experiences with the other than humans. And so the elders in any given community could see, like let's say you wander to the special waterfall and you come back and you're like whoa, like I'm totally lit up by the magical energy of this place.

Daniel: And they're watching, great, like they want to see what happens, because they've been relating with the spirits of that land and doing ritual for years without you knowing it and they're doing rituals that they learned from their elders and so they want to see what happens to you. And so they're honoring your direct experience, but also like a step ahead of you and able to anticipate the kinds of troubles or questions that you might bump into.

Daniel: And so good, so to speak or effective learning is very experiential, but also provides some kind of container and safety and navigation through it. And there is a way in which we are remembering what is innate, in terms of our capacity to relate with the others.

Daniel: And then there are times where tradition is really important. If you're going to approach the spirits of a certain mountain and they're living caretakers of those mountain spirits, then you want to understand what those protocols are as much as possible.

Daniel: So it's a balance of both and you follow your instincts through the process and think of it as like comparing notes with other people who are in these other kinds of relationships too. So yeah. Thank you, Luis, it was good.

Luis: Thank you, I'm happy to be here.

Daniel: Great. I see a question from Jenelle. Oh, good, lots of questions. Oops, go ahead Jenelle, if you would.

Jenelle: Hello, so I'm Jenelle, this is my husband Lindsey and we're just realizing that it would be a side question, it would be good to know that it's okay that we're both in on this call as husband and wife, in the same home.

Daniel: Yes, it's fine, yeah, go for it with your question.

Jenelle: So I'm really grateful, part of your response to Luis' to your question about not wanting to contribute to judgment and so on for people, who have been naming themselves as shamanic practitioners. Those edges really came alive in me when I first listened to the first lesson.

Jenelle: I just want to acknowledge that I am so grateful for the assertive taking on of the importance of reconciliation and mindfulness and restoring relationship, where hurt has happened and wrongdoing has happened. And that is central to my longing.

Jenelle: We're in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada in the province in Canada with the highest First Nations population and it's been really edgy to step out as a shamanic practitioner, because of colonization and the painful past between my ancestors and the ancestors here and the indigenous people. I guess I just want to put that out there, that's really important to me.

Jenelle: And a big question that comes up for me as I've been working with the ancestors of the land, in both Australia and in Canada, the dead ancestors, they've really affirmed to me that it's the color of my heart that they're interested in. And as I've been trying to hold space for myself, someone who did not grow up with the spiritual tradition, orphaned from sacred tradition, it's been a lot of hard work to hold enough space for myself, to have permission to do sacred work.

Daniel: Go to the heart of it, Jenelle. I'm following you, but if you have a question, go to the heart of it.

Jenelle: I think what's come up for me in the question is, there's this observation of the fact that like 96% or 95% of people on this planet are not indigenous and yet, I've been trying to remind myself I'm indigenous to the planet and that I am a sacred part of this planet, as the way of trying to find enough permission to do this work.

Jenelle: So what I'm curious about is like the lens of viewing that 95% of people are transplanted as somehow wrong and is that the paradigm or do we trust the kind of pollination patterns on this planet?

Daniel: Let me try to speak to it a little bit, yeah, good, thank you and I'm glad that you hear that there's not a spirit of judgment around the discernment between the terms animism and shamanism. I feel personally that it's very important to not equate the term indigenous with a certain value set or worldview necessarily, because it's used in two very different ways.

Daniel: One is to refer to the 5% or so of people who are considered legally indigenous and then there are people like me and most but not all people in the course,

who are not legally indigenous people. And it's messy in places like Africa, how that term is used. The Yoruba people are not considered indigenous, but there's not like a prior group before them.

Daniel: And so the term indigenous is inseparable legally in how it's defined from histories of colonialism. And so what I've tried to find is a way of talking about underlying values, that don't have to derive legitimacy from saying I'm indigenous or how do I find my own indigeneity? I follow what you mean in that conversation.

Daniel: But it has to do with permission and being of the land and in a place. My people have lived in South Central Pennsylvania at times for six, seven generations. When I go there, I can feel a resonance with the land, I'm not Shawnee, I'm not any other of the tribal nations, so I'm not going to be an indigenous person.

Daniel: It doesn't matter whether or not, like that's not the standard of Earth connectedness. I do feel it's possible to ritually give respect to the living and ancestral custodians of a place and to be in conscious relationship with them. And from that place, to tend really deeply with the spirits of that land.

Daniel: And you can go directly to the spirits of land and bypass the custodians as well and the degree to which the human, living and ancestral custodians had presence in any given place will vary. But it's better, it's ritually better and culturally better if you can, to try to really respectfully engage the presence of the earlier humans on the land. Because ritually speaking, if you're not well with them, they can interfere with or even block your relationship with some of the mysteries of place.

Daniel: And so there are ritual reasons it's good to do it, there is cultural reasons it's good to do it and look, we're belonging is a really intimate and important question, which is sort of the subtext of what you're asking about, I think. And that doesn't come about all at once. I think the spirit of belonging in part comes about through remembering specifically what we're here to do and inhabiting that.

Daniel: And it's a messy, complicated question. And so being in the heart space and the pain, that it's still circulating is a good place to sit with that question. And it's welcomed here in this space, so thanks Jenelle and Lindsay, it's good.

Daniel: Let me go to, I think I saw, she has good questions. Elanne, let's say.

Elanne: Oh, hi.

Daniel: Hey.

Elanne: So really enjoying the week so far and-

Daniel: Where are you calling in from?

Elanne: From Berkeley.

Daniel: And then same, just with everybody, to be able to get to as many people, if you have a question go to the heart of it, sorry to be all rushy like that.

Elanne: No worries, time is short.

Elanne: Just wondering, like a kind of a new piece for me, this is relating to more other than human, you mentioned the image of the house, which was kind of like a step further I think than I had considered before. And I'm someone who likes to engage with ideas and concepts and like to look at different ideologies and I have found myself listening to a lecture on like the roots of neoliberalism, suddenly relating to that concept as a spirit or an entity or a being.

Daniel: You're wondering how far does the personhood extend to things that-

Elanne: Yeah, just curious what your thoughts are on that.

Daniel: It doesn't matter what's true. I'm not encouraging a certain belief set. The focus on belief is itself a Protestant way of thinking about the world.

Daniel: What matters is what gets results. If it gets better results to see corporations as people, which I think it does, actually. Having organized conferences on corporate accountability and having a great disdain for exploitative capitalism, I actually think that the animism implied in seeing corporations as people is not inherently problematic. It's just patchwork and incomplete.

Daniel: If we see mountains and rivers and yarrow and the ancestors as people and those people go to bat with a corporation who's a person, then the other people I just mentioned should have greater weight. To extend it in a controversial way, geez, am I going to say this? I guess I started.

Daniel: Some people, there's a debate around women's reproductive rights around... it's framed sometimes in a way that evokes the animist thing of, is a child who has not been born yet legally a person?

Daniel: And so it's my own stance, speaking as a guy here, of course, yes and women should absolutely, women and other units who have children, it's not just

women, people of diverse genders who carry children, should totally have the choice of whether or not to kill that person that is in their body.

Daniel: And so it is... I know that's an edgy thing to say, so respect, if you don't see it in that way. But there's a couple hundred other people that are going to listen to what I just said and be like, whoa.

Daniel: But my point is about, sometimes we will see someone as not a full person to avoid the intimacy of killing. We do that around food and we're going to talk about it next lesson. And it's a cop out. Animism, insofar as it's an approach to life that places a lot of emphasis on relationships, then, is saying that one of the first implications is like, whoa, we're killing and eating our kin. Yeah, absolutely, even vegans are eating their relatives.

Daniel: And so that is intimate and so seeing others as persons really foregrounds our accountability to one another. But more specifically, it doesn't matter what's true, it matters what gets more loving and wise and kind results.

Daniel: So the belief system is subject to whether or not it's serving life. And if it isn't, adjust your beliefs, even in the moment. So thank you Elanne, that's good, yeah.

Daniel: Let me go to, I think, John Jr., it looks like. Are you off mute?

Jesse: That's Jesse from Virginia.

Daniel: Jesse, great, yeah.

Jesse: So it's a simple question. There's words that have multiple meanings, context, everything. I hear people talk about ceremonies, I hear people talk about rituals, can you give some context to what the word ritual means? Can put some fence around it somehow?

Daniel: I'm in the process of developing a most like foundational course to actually address that, because I realize a lot of what I'm teaching starts at like this intermediate stage.

Daniel: Ritual, it's an almost meaningless word to me at this point, because I guess as an animist, what I find is that the kinds of rituals that are most important or most predominant in my own experience are ones that focus on facilitating a connection between myself and something else or someone else.

Daniel: And so when I sat down and like offered orogbo to Shango this morning, so I'm offering a bitter kola nut to a certain deity that we have a shrine for in our home, is that a ritual? Sure, but it's no more spiritual than our conversation right now, which is being facilitated through plastic, electricity and petroleum and all the different things that are happening for this human to human ritual, that are happening.

Daniel: So ritual it does conjure the association for me of an intentional dedicated space or maybe even zone of consciousness, that is conducive to some kind of connection or relationship with another being. And that's driven by some kind of intent, even if that intent is just to commune and greet one another, etc.

Daniel: And so there tends to be a relating thing, there tends to be a little bit of form, which can be spontaneous or inhabited over time. And there tends to be some kind of intentionality brought to it.

Daniel: And so at a certain point though, once relationship including with the others becomes lifestyle, then the category of ritual as opposed to not ritual starts to get suspicious. I kind of want to say you only get to drop that category once you spend a bunch of years doing ritual, to actually learn how it's a little bit different than not doing ritual.

Daniel: So it's good to know, like people doing years and years of ritual, it's not different than everyday life, it is just kind of like you're focusing on something else, but it's not more or less spiritual. How's that for a muddy answer?

Jesse: It's as good as any.

Daniel: Thanks, Jesse, glad you're with us.

Daniel: I'm going to take another five minutes or so and just touch on some questions and then because there are folks who want to speak, what I'll do today, after we have a half an hour and small breakout groups, is give it an extra 15 minutes after for some other questions if you want to hang out. But I also want to honor people's time and what we said in the start of it.

Daniel: There is another question, I'll go to Renee next, but then a question that was sent in, encouraged in the homework for one, just speaking aloud to the other than humans. Starting to shake it up by speaking aloud to them and to start to invite their support.

Daniel: So the question was and we're going to get into this in future lessons, is there an etiquette about just asking for things and making sure you're not like, hey, oak

tree, give me a new car and like \$100,000. And so it doesn't get too weird in title or something like that.

Daniel: Don't do it like I just said, because that sounds silly and when I say it like that, obviously don't do that. So you want to be attentive to the attunement and the actual connection to make sure you're in connection.

Daniel: But having said that, if the spirit of the oak, let's say you sit down with the oak tree because you're practicing the exercise, you're like hello and you feel a sense of hello back and the oak is like, why don't you sit down and let me take some of the heaviness and stress that you're carrying out of your energy body? Just lean back, let me help. You don't want to be like, no, I don't deserve, it's rude, I shouldn't ask for your help, whatever.

Daniel: So if the others want to extend a gift in kindness to you, it's rude to not receive it, provided it feels safe and good to you and all that. So be open to receiving the love and kindness from the others and be open to asking for what you need. Like when that moment arises and it's a moment... when it's your turn in the sweat lodge or whatever the ceremony is to pray, you want to go for it with your prayers.

Daniel: I see this in Yoruba culture, when it's like pray. When it's time to pray is like bring me longevity, bring me money, bring me like victory over people who would stand in the way of my destiny. Help my family to be protected, help this course to go well, help me to be a successful human being, ashe.

Daniel: Like whatever it is, there's a sense of like I want it and if you don't, if you're not willing to claim what you want for your life, then the spirits are like, yeah, yeah, you're not invested, like you're not here enough. So when we're really here and it's time to be like your microphone is on, it's your turn, pray, it is good to be able to know what to ask for. And you may or may not get it, but it's good to be in touch with our desire. That's honest.

Daniel: Be humble, be attuned, be open to asking for what you want and to supporting others and we'll talk more about that dance over time. But we need to speak to it that much now.

Daniel: I'll go to Renee and maybe one other and then we're going to go to the small groups from about half an hour. Go ahead, Renee.

Renee: Okay, Daniel, my question ties into projection. With projection, over time you get an awareness to it and that's very different I think from when you actually have problematic relationships with humans, which are very difficult to resolve for whatever

reason. And I want to know if these problematic relationships in some way cast a shadow on your relationships with other than humans.

Renee: Is there a ripple effect, do we need to get all about act together with our human relatives... or it's a big task, all right. So I'm trying to understand, sometimes some of us are totally incompatible and we want to avoid another person. Does that create a problem if you are pursuing... this is really important to animism and connecting with the other than humans.

Daniel: That's a big question. The best thing you can do for your intuition is to be an ethical person with your life, have a congruent life with your life cleaned up. When I say cleaned up, I don't mean you become uptight and purist or something. I just mean like you're congruent, you're not lying to people, you're being honest about who you are and what you need. If you have things to address with people, you address them.

Daniel: So you reckon with the choices you've made now and that'll help with the intuition and with your ability, because not all of them, but a lot of spirits, a lot of the other beings, like if you're not congruent, it's like they smell it. You look distorted through the translucent glass in a bathroom or something, like you're there, but there's distortion.

Daniel: And it signals to the others, this person is not congruent or they don't even know who their ancestors are, there's no one to vouch for them, they're fronting wellness, which is different than being actually well. And I don't mean it to trigger people to feel self-conscious, but I'm saying that being ethical and kind in your living human relationships will help the other than humans to respond more favorably to you. Because it creates a kind of sweetness and congruency in your energy field or something that they can sense.

Daniel: And the same if you're dangerous. If you have a lot of split, compartmentalizing and splits and your personality, the others will sense it. They'll be like, not so good. Thanks.

Daniel: I know we should head to small groups soon. I said I'd take one more question, so let me do that. I saw Kim, you had a question early on.

Kim: Good morning Daniel. I'm Australian and I Aboriginal ancestors and I live in California in Millbrae and I've been here 30 years and I'm a therapist and shamanic practitioner.

Daniel: Great.

Kim: My question is, thank you. Yes, I did all the homework from your last class. I'm now talking to the plants and animals out loud and they hear me, they welcome me even more.

Kim: My question is, I've done so much work on myself, in terms of in healing and parts, as a therapist, etc., inner child. With my direct ancestors, I have not done healing with ancestors further on. I've got your book, I'm a little overwhelmed but I'm willing to do this. How should I proceed?

Daniel: With the ancestral work?

Kim: Correct.

Daniel: Go to the website and schedule a session with one of the people in the practitioner directory. That's the most efficient way to do it, truly.

Kim: I can't do it with my own therapist? Sorry to interrupt.

Daniel: I mean you can do the work, the book is written as a how-to book, so you could do the work on your own and then bring what's happening psychologically to your therapist. But I wouldn't assume your therapist has the skills to guide ancestral repair work, necessarily.

Kim: She doesn't.

Daniel: So there are some practitioners who are also therapists, if that's helpful, but if you already have a therapist, it could be redundant. But just doing a few sessions with one of the practitioners is useful. Look, I develop the stuff and I do sessions with people, because it's harder for me to drop in on my own. I can, but man, I'm like adjusting still to being a dad. And I'm a little bit like attention all over the map as it is.

Daniel: And so I'm a little bit under slept and all that, so it helps to have somebody else holding space for us individually. That's been my experience and so that's one of the more selfish reasons I train people in the work is so somebody could hold the space for me.

Daniel: So make a little space for it is, is what I'd do.

Kim: Namaste. And also I have a nonprofit for men, woman and children who've been horrifically abused. How can I move out and expand more in that regard? Or should I start doing my first work with one of your practitioners?

Daniel: I would start there and then the other question about the organization, maybe follow up directly. I don't know if it's group relevant as a conversation, but yeah, so I'm going to... connect with a practitioner around the ancestor work is what I'd say.

Daniel: And if you have any troubles with that, reach out personally Kim and I'm glad to greet you and glad you're with us.

Kim: I say ta and ta-ta. Thank you and I love this work, thank you. I'm excited and thank you for including me with this question, that's what I'm going to do with the practitioner.

Daniel: Thanks Kim.

Kim: Righty-ho.

Daniel: So what's going to happen now everybody as Lindsey is going to sort the folks being in a small group and hopefully that goes smooth at a tech level and hang out after a little, if your questions didn't get answered or you just want to be in connection a bit longer. So I'll turn it over to you, Lindsey.

Lindsey: I have everybody put into groups, so that's already done and we hope that a lot of you will stay for these 30-minute groups. But if you have to bump off, this is the time to do it. We don't want you leaving the groups after the groups have already started, because that will just make the groups smaller. We want to make them as even as possible, so we're just going to give a minute or so here for people who can't stay, to actually leave.

Lindsey: Let me show you how to leave the meeting. If you're on a computer or a laptop, you'll want to just... you might need to move your cursor to open the menu or you may not. You want to look in the lower right-hand corner, where it says end meeting and click on that.

Lindsey: So if you just moved to a different browser, you'll still be connected to the meeting. So you actually need to click on leave meeting, is what you need. If you're on an iPad or a mobile app, you'll want to tap on your screen and look in the upper left-hand corner. And you'll see a leave meeting.

Lindsey: So again, we help a lot of you will stay, these groups are really wonderful, but if you're not able to stay this is the time to leave.

Seyta: Lindsey-

Lindsey: Once you're in the group, you will have the option to turn your camera on and off or to turn your mic on and off. And once you're in the group, you'll want to look in the lower, in the menu, which will be on the bottom, the first icon is a microphone and that allows you to turn your sound off and on. The second is a video camera, so you can start and stop your video.

Lindsey: You can ask a question, but there's 100 people here and I'm the only one who can go into ask questions, please be judicious about that and know that other people might have also clicked that same thing. And so be patient, as we wait to get around to you.

Lindsey: So again, if you need to leave meeting, look on the lower left and click on leave meeting in red letters. If you're on an iPad or a mobile app, click on leave meeting up there.

Lindsey: So I'm going to take a look at these groups and try to even them up a little bit, we won't be perfect, just a little bit, as we see who stays and who goes.

Seyta: Lindsey, can you clarify if the small groups are ending at our original time or extending?

Daniel: Let's do 25 minutes, instead of 30, just to-

Daniel: Sounds good. I do feel willing still to hang out and respond to a few folks if there are questions that haven't been responded to. There's actually one, you can hear me okay, people can hear me?

Lindsey: Yeah.

Daniel: There's one that... and if people need to peel off, we're already over time, which I'll try not to make a habit of, but of course, just go if you need to, it's fine. And there's a question that you sent me, Seyta and I think it revolves around a really common question of what do I do with killing a mouse in my house, now that I'm an animist? That's kind of the gist of it.

Daniel: We had a carpenter bee burrowing into our porch and I couldn't quite get into the hole where it was, but I could plug up the hole, but I'm like, man, that's like a starvation death. I didn't want to use poison. I also don't want the bees to like rot out the porch.

Daniel: And so these sharing of space interactions happen a lot and killing a mosquito is a common example. And like I kill mosquitoes when they get up in my space

and we even sprayed for them a year or two ago, because there are some not encephalitis, but things like it, that have been happening in North Carolina a little bit.

Daniel: And so I'm not a purist about those things. The main thing I would encourage is, if you're going to kill a mouse or a carpenter bee or mosquitoes or a poisonous snake in your yard or something, zoom out, be like do I need to kill this creature or can I relocate them?

Daniel: But if the discernment really is I don't want my daughter to be bitten by a poisonous snake, I'm not going to go outside our basic space, but I'm going to protect our basic space, acknowledge them, be like hey friend, like with all respect, I'm going to cut your head off now. And it's kind of like nothing personal, we're one body. I'll have my term as well, in this moment, it's your turn, love you, offerings maybe, maybe you make offerings, maybe you see what's needed to face what you're doing and to be at peace.

Daniel: I remember years ago, didn't anticipate telling this story, but when I used to do like shamanic healing, per se, I was doing an extraction on someone's third chakra, who as I was seeing it in spirit, looked like they had a weird spidery thing there and they actually had a fear of spiders, which resolved after the thing we did.

Daniel: But I tuned in, I'm like this is a weird sort of intelligent spidery thing. So I asked the, what I was experiencing, a spider mother, like the overseer spirit of spiders. And she called it out, but it wouldn't leave from the person it was creating disruption with and tried several times.

Daniel: And when it didn't respond, she's like you can do what you want, like that one's gone rogue. And so we did the equivalent of killing the thing and then it resolved.

Daniel: But there was a relational moment, that's why it comes to mind, of saying what needs to happen here before we proceed? Is there another way? And so if you need to kill a copperhead snake, then you tune into the spirit of copperhead and be like, you got to either not be in my property because of the safety my child or it's going to go like this, you understand? The bigger spirit might be like, we understand and then you do your thing.

Daniel: So face it, that's the main thing I'd say about that question.

Daniel: I see, Cintain, I'll hang out for a little bit, just because it feels connected to me also in this first meeting, until our child needs a moment. So go ahead, if you would.

Cintain: Hi, sorry, I couldn't hear you because I was changing speakers.

Daniel: That's okay.

Cintain: It's good to be back and sorry to... I kind of disappeared for the one last year. I was a little overwhelmed with things going on.

Daniel: That's okay, it's good to see you and you're in the UK, you're in England?

Cintain: Yes, still here, still trying to talk to all of these spirits that nobody seems to have talked to in a while.

Cintain: And anyway, my question for today was, I heard the first lecture on the topic of the indigenous people, like between indigenous people and non-indigenous people. I have some experience working with the shamans of the [inaudible 00:54:41] tribe in Mexico.

Cintain: And recently, it's come up for me, like the since doing the work with you and sort of entering into this space of relationship where I don't feel I need like a mediator or learning from another culture, how to approach these relationships. I've sort of grown more distant from my relationships with those people and now, it's coming to the point where it's getting complicated.

Cintain: Because I'm beginning to see other aspects of the relationship that I don't really like, like the ways in which the dominant culture is coming into their life and the way that it manifests, like this sort of implicit exchange, like the only thing they see... I see that they see people who are not indigenous, who are not part of their tribe as sort of just touring around and trying to appropriate the culture.

Cintain: And the relationship has become a lot about money.

Daniel: Sure. I understand.

Cintain: We come into your space and we want to do this ceremony and we want all this money and recently, after months of not talking to me, they called me and they asked me if I was going to come, because they're in England right now doing ceremony and stuff like that. And very quickly in the conversation, it became very obvious that the interest in me coming was about how much money they thought they could get from me.

Daniel: I understand.

Cintain: And I don't know-

Daniel: I can speak to it a little.

Cintain: Would you, please? Because I'm really confused. I don't know what to do with it.

Daniel: Look, the more general, the bigger general thing is it's really important and I'm not saying you're doing this, so my response isn't focused to you in particular. It's really important to not in any way idealize indigenous people. It's its own kind of and we could call it racism, which it is in a sense, the conversation becomes immediately non-constructively charged, once we call it that usually.

Daniel: But it's a kind of more subtle, to idealize someone is still objectifying. But it happens a lot, I see it happen a lot when people especially of let's say European ancestries, who weren't raised with intact wisdom traditions, approach people from systems, whether they're indigenous or Tibetan Buddhists or whatever it is, who have intact traditions that they have grown up in.

Daniel: And there's a tendency to idealize those folks as being, like having something that you don't, which they kind of do in a sense. And yet, everybody's human and people are quite capable of leveraging that perception in a way that's exploitative.

Daniel: I see it a lot in Yoruba culture. I don't accept friend requests from most Yoruba people I know, just because Yoruba people are generally speaking very assertive and willing to ask for what they want. If we can make a cultural generalization.

Daniel: And from people that I know, it's great and when my teacher is like, yo, baba, we need some money. I'll be like, all right, we'll work it out, like because we're in relationship and there's a sense that we're family. And I share what I have with them, because I'm family.

Daniel: And so if there's actually a family relationship established over time, it's important to expect that there will be sharing with it. And so it's important to not... like I'll say to people, if you step into the tradition and speaking about Yoruba tradition here, like expect to get hit up for money and you have to just hold your center.

Daniel: If my teacher is like, hey, baba, give me a car, I'd be like no. He's like I want you to give me 10,000 bucks. I'm like no. He's like how about 1,000? I'm like no. How about 100? I'm like, yeah, okay, he's like, great, thanks. And it's fine, like he's totally in his lane to just ask for what he wants. It's my job to be like, no, I just can't do that. So if I couldn't give anything, he'd be like, ashe, no worries. How's the family? If I'm like here's a car, he'd be like ashe, all good, thanks for the car, how's the family?

Daniel: And so my cultural conditioning says it's impolite to ask for what you want and I think it's actually a problematic kind of conditioning. Hanging out with Yoruba

people has helped me to address. So it's important to notice what's cultural etiquette and what's actually getting into like seeing you as a source of money only.

Daniel: And one of the best things you could do, if you have the level of intimacy is bring it up with them, be like, hey, we have relationship. I want to talk with you. Are you open to understanding how it lands over here, when you call me up because we haven't been in connection and it seems like you just want money? I care about this connection.

Daniel: So if it's not like that, I want to understand how it is, because I don't want to just walk away from something that's been meaningful, based on a conclusion of how I experience that. So if it matters enough to you, ask these folks you are in relationship with.

Daniel: Because they might be out of integrity, but they also might be just asking for what they need and not realizing it lands as impolite.

Cintain: Okay, yeah, that's helpful, thank you so much.

Daniel: Thanks, yeah, good. All right, let me just take one more question and then we'll finish up and Elsa, how you doing? That's who I see. Good to see your name here, you're off mute, go for it.

Elsa: Hi.

Daniel: Hey. You're calling from Ontario?

Elsa: New York.

Daniel: New York, yeah, good.

Elsa: I'll share maybe some frustration.

Daniel: Okay.

Elsa: Or confusion, whatever, the whole thing. So I've been sharing my grief before, but I'm talking about the lesson. I talk out loud to mostly trees right now or beings and the frustration is coming from your sharing of hearing back. And so it puts me, I don't hear back anything ever. I feel a lot. I feel very strongly sometimes in relationships. I don't hear anything from any beings, including my ancestors, ever.

Elsa: I'm sharing that because I'm sure I'm not the only one. And suddenly, it comes back to me as, what are you doing wrong?

Daniel: I can speak to that.

Elsa: You're not in relationship and there's part of me that's like tensing.

Daniel: Good, let me speak to it, thanks Else, for bringing that and I'm happy to see you with us. There are times in the recordings or even here, where there are many kinds of privilege. And one of... you could say it is privilege, it's also just assuming that the world as we experience it, is how others experience the world and the sort of privilege/assumption.

Daniel: And one of the kinds of privileges that I enjoy as being... I mean I see it as a privilege, I guess, is a hearing and seeing person. And so it's come to my attention that people who are deaf or hard of hearing or blind or otherwise not... have differently-abled, in a body way, might not feel met by the languaging around stuff.

Daniel: And so when I say can you listen for something back, that can imply it's through an audio channel. And it also can imply that it's coming in a language. And that's not how it is for everybody.

Daniel: And so the more accurate languaging would probably be something of, seek a quality of contact or connection. Notice how that connection is experienced by you. Honor what those channels of connection and experiencing are for you.

Daniel: They may not be visual and they may not be audio, they may be hard to describe because we don't have good language in English for it. But what is at the heart of it is that quality of contact.

Daniel: And so that's important also, because it has to do with, as we reclaim in a very specific way, the pathways for connection and relationship that are, as I think it was Luis said, a kind of birth right, an inherent thing, the way they show up is going to be a little bit different for everybody. And it can change over time and we can develop more than one pathway for connection.

Daniel: But you notice how that is for you and honor what that is, but if there's a common thing, it's the quality of the actual contact.

Elsa: That's very helpful, because it feels to me that there is some colonization in my experience of language, like that mind thing, language thing that is all over us all the time. It's hard to keep centered and trust that we have other ways to relate.

Elsa: So it's important to name it, because otherwise you feel thrown off the bus, like you know what I mean?

Daniel: Oh, sure and there's not... it's important, I'm not saying you're doing this, but it's important for everybody to not compare your experiences to others. The way that things are going to move for you, it's really specifically precious and going to happen just how it is for you. So that's the same to everybody. Bring a lot of kindness, kindness, curiosity, receptivity to what we're about in the course.

Daniel: So we're a half an hour over time, so we'll go ahead and finish for today. But I'm glad for you to trust everybody and keep leaning in and there's another lesson out on Monday, I think it is. And it's a lively one about eating and killing and all that. So we'll get right into it.

Daniel: Is there anything Lindsey, by way of completion? We're good, yeah?

Lindsey: No, just would you like to unmute the lines and have everybody say goodbye?

Daniel: We could, there's so many people, but sure, why not?

Lindsey: I'm unmuting everybody. Goodbye everybody.

Group: Thank you.

Chi Youn Kim: Bye.

Group: Bye.

Group: Bye.

Group: Thank you.

Group: Bye.

Jeanell I.: Bye.

Group: Bye.

Group: Okay.

Lindsey: All right, we'll see you next time.

Group: Thank you.

Group: Thank you, Daniel.

