

## **Practical Animism Online Course: Live Call #5, June 27, 2019**

### **Please excuse any typos and inaccuracies in this transcript.**

Daniel Foor: So, we're recording now. It's June something, late June 2019. We are having the fifth live conference for the second iteration of the animism course and this is a really enjoyable lesson for me around the animal people. There's a lot to unpackage here, so there's a few things I want to highlight from our shared time.

Daniel Foor: One is the importance, in the overall course, in trusting your rhythm and knowing that it's not so sequential. As a learner, you got to follow where the energy and the enjoyment's at for you. So if you're skipping around, or just nibbling at the readings or whatever you're doing, trust that. It's fine. The best practice is the one that you'll do. So really have fun with it, enjoy the learning.

Daniel Foor: There's a lot we could say. There's a few things I want to highlight from our time. One is about the importance of deconstructing a little bit or holding in a flexible way who we think of as “the animals” and our animal kin. The concept of animals separate from humans is itself an embedded concept in English that comes with a lot of baggage that I would personally describe as colonialist and in contrast to a more animist or indigenous or earth-honoring frame.

Daniel Foor: The way that that's important to recognize is that if we don't intentionally uproot things and bring awareness to it, we're going to unconsciously assume that humans are somehow positioned in a more superior way than animals, and that's a really problematic stance. It takes the shape of racist policies and demeaning views toward indigenous peoples and indigenous ways of seeing the world. That's happening in 2019. That's happening not just in the Americas but in other parts of the world where indigenous people are being pressed upon by colonialist impositions. The ideas that people who worship, so to speak, which is a problematic frame in and of itself, animals, that those people are less intelligent, less sophisticated, more confused. Something like that. It's bullshit, as a view, because it constructs animals in a certain way and then based on that construction comes to a conclusion that people are less sophisticated or whatever.

Daniel Foor: That's not how most of our ancestors, if we dial it back, viewed things generally. The animals are the face of big, complex powers that were also in the soup or in the mix with these others. Their stories and our stories are very intertwined. Conceptually, there's not this hard break between humans and other-than-humans. That distinction is one that I'm really trying to directly and then gently and then in other ways invite you all to soften and deconstruct through the course of this offering, this animism course.

Daniel Foor: One of the ways is to name it head on. The way we talk about animals makes a lot of assumptions about them that are problematic. Another is to do this thing of toggling back and forth between the relational skills that we value with human-to-human relationships and applying them with the other-than-human relationships, and vice versa.

Daniel Foor: We talked in the recorded lesson, in a sort of funny but also practical way about the five love languages, which is a sort of silly but also useful frame in popular psychology that says not everybody receives or expresses love in the same way. Some people want gifts, or the equivalent of offerings, or they want quality time, or they want praise, or they just want embodied connection, or... You know this if you've ever attempted a meaningful relationship with another human, is that if you just give them what you like that may or may not work. It's a relevant frame if you want to have a meaningful relationship with one of the weird old gods who's, let's say, the bear or the mouse or whatever. We hold the question, "How do I actually feed this relationship? How do I care for this relationship?" And to be curious about that, because what they may wish from you or what may meet them well might not be instinctually what you would think to offer.

Daniel Foor: It's the same with gifting. You can give someone a gift. I can think of gifts that I gave in the past when I was even more self-absorbed than I am now where I... Hopefully it's not too bad now, but in any case. I give someone a gift and it's totally what I wanted and I look back, I'm like, "That wasn't a very good gift." But I have gradually learned that if I want to be skillful in gifting, I want to be like, "What does this person want? Maybe I should get them that instead of what... a communication about me."

Daniel Foor: It's like that when we're tending to the relationships with the animal kin as well. Let me say that. There's one other piece I want to underscore and then I'll look for questions, so do chime in if you have that because I like the interactive space. It's the thing about, not to be too technical, but the something I would describe as archetypal diversity or... When I say archetypes that's a language that comes from Carl Jung. There's a lot of great things about Jung, some less great things as well. One thing that is beneficial from his legacy as a Swiss psychologist is articulating that there are recurrent patterns, or what he called archetypes, essentially deity-like patterns that have a kind of momentum or reality of their own in the collective of the species.

Daniel Foor: What happens is, in the West generally, I know it's the case for me growing up, is we don't have a common vocabulary for these old patterns, for the gods, for these different qualities and so we have a deficiency in how we think of the sacred. We can think of the sacred as just one thing. Maybe it's just friendly, kind, loving, and peaceful. That's what sacred things are. Or it needs to look one way. It's a bit like working with a

set of three crayons instead of sixty-four. You can get by with that in your life, but you're going to have a real limited vocabulary to appreciate the different kinds of awesome ways that other people are. I'm talking for a moment just human-to-human relationships.

Daniel Foor: If people feel inspired by animist or indigenous ways of being, one of the tasks, if you haven't been raised with any of that kind of framework, is to find any way that works to expand your archetypal vocabulary, to expand your palette, to expand the different ways you think about wisdom and knowledge and the sacred. One way to go about that is to make a study of the animal people. So when people say this person is salmon clan or tribe or they're connected to the salmon people, that's actually different than crow people, is different than badger people, and et cetera et cetera. There are hundreds of different ways to be if you see the animal kin as different facets of the sacred. If we say that salmon medicine or salmon wisdom or salmon spirit teachings, however you frame it, is actually not better or worse than badger teachings and badger medicine, then the underlying principle is that there's not just one right way to be. There are actually many different, complementary expressions of the sacred or of community or of the holy.

Daniel Foor: That's a really diversity-embracing, difference-celebrating stance that I feel leads to better forms of human culture, that really can recognize different people's gifts and capacities. It sets us up to navigate conflict better because we don't rush to dehumanize people who are moving in a different way than we're moving. It encourages the emergence of wisdom because if we can see that we tend to operate from a certain patterns we might actually realize, "I'm actually stuck in those patterns. Those are my usual ways of being." They work often, but if you're a crow-like person and you always show up in crow-like ways and the moment calls for a bit more trance-y, whale medicine and you don't even know how to access that, you're going to be outside the circle where the action's at. Because you don't have the flexibility within yourself to access this other quality or this less-dominant function.

Daniel Foor: Making a study of the diversity of forms in the other-than-human world, let's say the animals in particular because they're so accessible as teachers and wisdom beings, encourages wisdom. It encourages flexibility of form. It is a remedy for this archetypal deficiency that is a symptom of modern Western culture being so human-focused. It's good medicine in that way. It's good for our humanity, a sense of kindness. I hope that's clear.

Daniel Foor: I don't want to monologue the whole time or just repeat what was said under pre-recorded lessons, so let me make some space for questions here. There was a question from Elsa that I want to speak to. That's the only one I have on the backlog of

questions, so otherwise it'll be whatever you all bring here. It relates a bit more to last week's lesson on consent and boundaries. As I understand it, Elsa was saying the topic around consent, for her at least, brings up the rape or strong damaging non-consensual human-to-human ways of relating.

Daniel Foor: I think, if I understand the spirit of the question, that there's... The question is when we're having these smaller, so to speak, interactions with other-than-humans, like around food, so much of what we're doing is non-consensual, and so much of the killing that's required to live is non-consensual, and so how to distinguish that from this really heavy and damaging non-consensual pattern that's playing out for human-to-human ways. It feels really stark and kind of stress-y to frame something as fundamental as eating in terms of this other really damaging human-to-human way of relating.

Daniel Foor: Let me respond to what I think the question is. Yeah, that's the terrain that I want to invite people to wrestle with. I don't have a tidy, resolved answer to that. I am not suggesting that picking a flower impulsively without dropping in and asking permission is on the same level of magnitude as a violation of the boundaries and body space of another human. There is a very instinctual thing around the magnitude of the impact of a thing. And yet we... I feel that it's useful, it's difficult work, but I feel it's useful for everyone to understand within themselves, even you have been the recipient of a lot of harm from others, to understand that we also are capable of harming others. Even if it's on a much smaller scale, that non-consensual interactions are happening all the time.

Daniel Foor: I don't find that collapsing into shame or feeling guilty about it is usually so helpful as a response, so the challenge as I see it is to be transparent, to know ourselves, about what is motivating us and where we're acting from, and to, if we can, be transparent about that, to be expressive and to... We kind of get back to the lesson too, stuff about how to face directly the harm and the killing that's required to live. And respect also to the ways that just naming these dynamics can be activating or stir up things that are still remembered by the body, or harms that are still ongoing culturally and personally that are in need of healing and care and tending. As I've said before, it's important when we talk about healing to also talk about, we could say, justice or structural change. You can be personally healed up from a past harm, but if you're still living in a culture that's very sexist or misogynist and harmful, then there's a need for both structural change and personal healing both.

Daniel Foor: I don't think Elsa's on the call, so it's more of a dialogue, but let me say just that much. That there is a degree of magnitude and it's useful to know within ourselves that all the trouble in the world, in the whole world, all the most horrible, horrible

troubles live within us. Period. If you think that they're outside of you, you're participating in the split. So there's that. It's a good antidote to righteousness to remember that the things that we condemn, appropriately, also live within us.

Daniel Foor: On that happy note, let's talk about bonding with animals. I see Tom... And thank you, Elsa, for your question. Keep speaking up if I didn't get to part of it. I'm going to go to Tom and then Luis.

Tom: Hi, it's Tom in Weaverville. How's everyone today?

Daniel Foor: Good.

Tom: This question is not about animals. This is a more broad, historical question for you, Daniel. I've done a lot of reading about colonialism myself. It's always been a interest of mine, as well as ancient civilizations. I'm wondering if you have any take on, maybe this is an esoteric question somewhat, but I'm curious about your ideas about when in the historical record do you feel that colonialism really began to emerge. Do you have any reflections on that which you would care to share?

Daniel Foor: I get asked that question a fair amount. I think humans require a lot of maintenance to turn out well. I don't think that there's one starting point that's easy to point to. I don't have the view that agriculture's bad or mining is bad or lizard people descended on what's now Iraq and made the Middle East a bad lizard people place, or some of the weird esoteric ideas about bad aliens hijacking things. They don't speak to me that much as a explanatory thing. Of course many cultures on earth continue along in a relatively functional and healthy way, despite all the trouble that's emerged. So the weird energy that underlies colonialism has not infected all people in all places still. And there are really conscious folks in really obnoxious countries like the United States or other places. It's important to not generalize too much.

Daniel Foor: I think that we need a lot of care as Christos, who's on the call, that's where I remember hearing it from. That we're empathic predators, so we... That's a tricky combo, that we have to kill to eat but we also have a lot of mirror neurons and so we are able to love others and empathize with them. When culture breaks down and it doesn't get put back on track, it can be generationally tough to put it back on track. I think that the view that humans are morally above the rest of the other-than-human people is a really hazardous view. We could track the history of certain perceptions... That perception's problematic. People have been demeaning their neighbors in order to justify greedy, bad behavior toward them for a long time. Indigenous tribal peoples can still be shits to each other and still be like, "Hey, those people over there from that clan, they're not as good as us, so let's go take their stuff." That kind of behavior happens even among tribal people.

Daniel Foor: What I think is interesting is, what have been the antidotes that have prevented that type of behavior over time? And how can they be applied in a modern context? One example, I'm not saying it's easy or straightforward to do it, is inter-tribal marriage. Sex is a common, sex and family-making, both different topics, is one very ancient antidote to tribal warfare. So when you enjoy intimacy with other people, consensual enjoyable intimacy, you're less likely to kill them. When you develop bonds of community and friendship and et cetera, that's one old strategy for mitigating the human impulse toward conquering and gathering up stuff.

Daniel Foor: But I think the troubles, the poisons, they just come with the package, I think, in terms of humanity. So we either work with those and temper them or not. But it's the responsibility of elders and healthy culture to anticipate those troubles and equip people with antidotes for them. We're scrambling to do that now, to put healthy culture back on track. It's tough because the times are really pressured and healthy culture takes some spaciousness to really work.

Tom: So what I hear you saying, really it's just a matter of looking in the historical record where cultures may have "broken down" in some degree and that that is a breeding ground for potential colonialism to develop, in other words.

Daniel Foor: I think so. And also to not create a monolithic view of any given culture. Like, I tend to be hard on the Roman Empire just because my specific ancestors received a lot of harm from mean, expanding Romans. And yet I've no doubt there were awesome, really loving, wholesome people in the Roman Empire. It's more interesting to me to ask what worked and what continues to work and how do we embody those strategies now, personally and systemically. It's a trickier question because condemning what isn't working is sort of a lazy strategy at a certain point. It's more challenging to actually do something than to just tear down what isn't working. As soon as you start to do something, the other people will try to tear you down for doing it. Then you're really in the business of culture making, or trying to apply antidotes.

Tom: Thanks. To tie it into the animals, I think of the bonobo chimpanzee as a good model for this, whatever you want to say, making love, or making strong connections which mitigate warfare or hostilities.

Daniel Foor: I'll say a thing about it. It's a great example, in a sense, because the bonobos are, along with chimps, those two, especially bonobos, are our most close primate relative as humans. But the historical understanding of pre-history from humans has overly emphasized chimpanzees, which tend to be a little more aggro in how they relate with conflict, rather than bonobos, which tend to discharge conflictual energy through sex and getting themselves and others off. It's a very, I don't know if

we'd say sex-positive, but the erotic is very present in bonobo culture. It's a moment to notice the impact of colonialism because which stories we favor about how to navigate conflict, and what's natural and whatnot, are connected to what stories we tell about ourselves. Implicit in that is what ways of dealing with conflict are acceptable. I'm not going totally bonobo on everything, but it's good to understand the history there. So thank you, Tom. Yes, the book *Sex at Dawn* is good about that [suggested in chat: <https://www.amazon.com/Sex-Dawn-Stray-Modern-Relationships-ebook/dp/B007679QTG>. And critique of this, link also shared in chat: [https://www.goodreads.com/author\\_blog\\_posts/4153801-sex-and-science](https://www.goodreads.com/author_blog_posts/4153801-sex-and-science).]

Daniel Foor: Let me go to Luis. Now that we're talking about bonobos. How did we get there? That was you, Daniel. Go ahead.

Luis: Hi, Daniel. This is Luis from Switzerland. I was super inspired by the last two lessons. So many things became clear for me that I have been experience... that I have no reference anywhere else, like feeling boundaries from trees or mountains, that I would experience and I was like, "I can feel that here there's a limit." I have never anybody told me that a mountain could have a limit, and so for me it was extremely nourishing to hear about all this. It was like, "Finally, somebody explain to me what I'm experiencing." The other part which needs some clarification is that, when I work in a energetically with myself or with others, I have experienced contact with certain animal energies that would appear in a very loving aspect. I would be working with somebody and, for example, the spirit of the whale would appear as a loving, inviting presence that would help the person open up. I was like, "Why are they appearing?" When I saw the video I could almost understand that there are certain energies which are in support for us.

Luis: Now, my question is, when you, for example, speak of the crow people or the bear people, what I'm starting to realize is that we can learn to integrate these energies, but I'm not clear what you mean by the bear people or the crow people. How many of those can we integrate? How is our relation to one of them concretely? Because for me, the last three years many species have appeared. Some appear more repeatedly, some have appear only once. They might appear for to bring something very concrete or might appear repeatedly. What part of it is what I integrate, what part is them? It would be great to hear a bit from you.

Daniel Foor: That's a great set of questions. Kim, could you post the link to the Tallbear... I forget the first name of the person, the podcast you shared with me. Kim, a supporter, will share a link in the chat that's relevant to what I'm about to say. [<https://player.fm/series/all-my-relations-podcast/ep-5-decolonizing-sex>]

Daniel Foor: For one, we can enjoy relationships with many different kinds of people, human and otherwise. Some of those relationships may last a day and some may last a lifetime. It's important to notice how our human conditioning about what relationships we are allowed to enjoy can inform our relationships with the other-than-humans. What I mean is, let's say there's a strong conditioning around monogamy and marriage, and that you need to just have one partner. And let's say you have a lifelong connection with the crow and you're like, "I am Luis and I'm of the crow people and this is my ancestral clan and I'm really connected to the crows." And then the whale shows up in a visioning and you worry that, "Well, is crow going to be jealous? I can't do both." Or there's like, "How many can I do?" There is a risk of saying we can't have multiple meaningful relationships at once.

Daniel Foor: Some of that is a colonialist imposition, because the idea that you have to choose one or another is not how it goes. I see that in Orisha tradition, in the Yoruba traditions as they came and adapted in the Americas. The tendency is to say, "What is my head Orisha? What is my main guiding divinity, singular?" I'm not saying that's bad, but that's not how we tend to think of it in West African practice. Like, I'm an initiate in several different priesthoods and that's really normal. So when people ask me, "What's your main deity?" I'm like, "It's kind of a group. It depends on the day." So there's an invitation to allow for fluidity and change and some to come into your life and some to come out of your life with respect to the other kinds of people.

Daniel Foor: Another question I heard is a great one of when we come into relationship with another, you notice this activates a part of yourself as well.

Luis: Exactly.

Daniel Foor: So the whale-like part of Luis is suddenly also present. How do you make sure that you're not saying, "This is just a part of me." There's a risk that we could say, "You're just..." We hold both things to be true. Another way of saying it is, if whale comes into your world and some part of you is activated that's very expansive and dreamy and that could be most accurately depicted as you being merged a bit, the whale spirit-

Luis: Exactly, exactly.

Daniel Foor: ... and then the whale spirit recedes, and then it's just you, but there's still the part of you that just got activated. That's still accessible to you now. It's like what was compressed is now expanded. You're like, "I can access this now more." And then there's the whale still being separate from you. Both are true. What I would suggest is that there's another, let's say, I don't have a name for it, let's say Olokun in Yoruba tradition because that's the tradition I know the most about. Olokun, "olo" is owner,



"okun" is the ocean, so it's the deity, the god, goddess of the open sea, of the ocean. This would be the deity that would also dream up whales. The whale as a creature is a manifestation of Olokun. Yet, there are human initiates of Olokun. So if you went and you say, "We're going to take it to the next level with the whale. I'm going to initiate to Olokun priesthood." And now you're Luis, initiate of Olokun. In that moment, the whale and you as a living human are both a manifestation... It's like you're both Olokun.

Daniel Foor: So there's a third answer. Both things are true. You want to honor your separateness. You want to honor that that other-than-human can speak through you and also be sharing your space in an intimate way and that that activates in you qualities that are like that other. All that is true and all that happens in human-to-human relationships too. We learn from each other. You work with a teacher, I've seen this in myself, and eventually I internalize what they have to share with me. Then the dynamic feels different. Then it's like there's less charge in the field, but I can just hang out with them because I've learned, I've gotten the transmission or something.

Daniel Foor: But there's a third way or a map that we don't tend to have very much in the West that basically says the whale and you and other things and the plankton and the other creatures that the whale eats are part of this same specific kind of dreaming, or this same specific neighborhood of energies and powers. We'll get into that in part two when we're talking about deities, but one of the ways that the gods, the deities, the old powers can be constructed in some cultures is that they're made up of humans and animals and plants and colors and certain bandwidths of energy. That's one way to hold the reality that they're separate and also you're participating in this current of energy that includes both you and the whale. Yeah?

Luis: Yeah. Thank you very much. It makes a-

Daniel Foor: Good.

Luis: Yeah. It makes a lot of sense. It's good to hear because I had no reference for these things so it's very good to hear.

Daniel Foor: Yeah, me neither. I mean, part of what I'm doing is trying to share with people what I didn't get growing up. I had to piece it together.

Luis: No, but the fact that there's another human being that has a similar experience for me it's like, "I'm not alone in this sense of experiencing the world."

Daniel Foor: Totally. Good.

Luis: Could I ask one more thing?

Daniel Foor: Yeah, okay.

Luis: It came as you were speaking. In one interaction with my girlfriend, at one point a lot of aggression came. When I checked it, I connected with the energy of the orca. I could see that I could not fully take the intensity of that energy. I looked at it several times and I saw could not take it. So there was a connection with the orcas. This might not be true, but I had the feeling that part of that energy wanted to be integrated in me. Or-

Daniel Foor: Great.

Luis: I'm still working on that, I still cannot fully take that. Because when-

Daniel Foor: Here's one way... Let me tie it in to... It's great, it's perfect-

Luis: It's amazing that you can relate to this, because to all the people I tell something like this and they would look at me like, "What?"

Daniel Foor: No, es normal. Yeah, for real. I'm going to see you in Portugal like in-

Luis: Yes, yes, yes.

Daniel Foor: What I was saying earlier about wisdom, one way, one quality I associate with actual wisdom, which takes a while, and I'm very much still working on, it's not something you arrive at, is the quality of neutrality. Neutrality is that you can have access to different patterns of energy and consciousness because you know them in yourself, but also you can dis-identify from them. You can step back from them. When we don't feel able to see something within ourselves, then I see that as a red flag, because we're participating in the split.

Daniel Foor: This happens, for example, like "I can't believe these people did this." Or, "I don't understand how someone could do that." I'm like, "I see that you don't understand how violence lives within you." Good to know, because if you don't understand that it means you're going to tend to judge it, and you're going to exile that energy from the sacred space of what is and to say, "You don't exist. You are not a person. You are not real. You are so reprehensible, you are not allowed in the circle of life and what is. I judge you." That's not how healing comes about.

Daniel Foor: If you, or anyone, are able to see within yourself the energies of violence and bigotry and meanness and toxicity and manipulation, I think it's a great thing to be able to know where those live in ourselves. I see it a little bit like having little homeopathic jars of poison. You want to know the poison, know it in yourself. Of course

you don't want to act from those energies, but if you don't know where they are in you then you're susceptible to unconsciously acting them out and being possessed by them. You think it's foreign to you and so those things therefore can just move through you without any consciousness or awareness.

Daniel Foor: So the cultivation of wisdom is learning how to try on different energies and to not be identified with them. That's one aspect of it, at least.

Luis: Thank you.

Daniel Foor: Yeah, thanks Luis. I see there's a question from... Sorry, looking at the sheet. From Ana Maria. How do you know when you're having an actual encounter? That's a great question. Appreciate the depth of it, because what you're talking about is self-other recognition. How do you know when you're encountering another living human? Now, we tend to rely heavily on our sensory channels. How do you know that you're actually interacting with me even through the computer right now? Well, you can hear me, you can see me, and those factors contribute to this other quality of contact.

Daniel Foor: One of the things is you don't know what I'm going to say next and I don't know what you're going to say or what anybody's going to do next. There's a little bit of a quality of unpredictability when in the presence of something that isn't you. Like the way that others have this kind of interior space, this space which is hidden from you, and if you can sense, "There's agency over there. There's something over there and I don't know what it's going to do next." Like when you are in the presence of a bear... I saw a bear two days ago. I was out walking, may have been the morning. I had to remember to be safety minded. I'm like, "What's up, bear? Oh, I have a daughter and a stroller. Okay, back up." I felt excited, but then I felt aware of "I don't know what bear is going to do next." I'm also in dad mode.

Daniel Foor: So the quality of contact, we sometimes will feel that in a dream where another presence is there. We'll sometimes feel it when we're out in the natural world, like Luis was speaking to about mountains having, or places in the natural world having, a sense of boundary or like, "You're not allowed here. Back up." And you're like, "There's something other than me. I'm not sure if it's a spirit thing or a physical thing, but I seem to be hitting a boundary." Now, I could dismiss that, but if I trust my animal instinct, the animal instinct says, "There's a boundary here. I need to move slowly or even back up."

Daniel Foor: A thing to look for intuitively is this quality of contact. When you're tuning in and trying to have an encounter with a spirit or deity or soul, if you will, of an animal, because it's not necessarily happening on a physical level per se, then even in the visioning state it's possible to think, it's possible to encounter a genuine other spirit thing. There's a whole spectrum between that. It's possible to be in contact with the

spirits and then just start thinking. Same like when you're talking to somebody and then you're thinking about your day, but you're still talking to them. It's possible to start thinking, and you start off and it's just you, but then through your thinking about hummingbird, then hummingbird is present and shows up. So it's possible you start thinking and it becomes contact.

Daniel Foor: That's how invocation works, partly. It's like, "Hummingbird, I'm thinking about you. What's up, hummingbird?" And then the quality of actual contact with hummingbird comes online. You're like, "A-ha! That's what I was looking for." So the thing to start to notice around this quality of "How do I know I'm not making shit up and am actually in connection?" is be curious how you know that with other humans and start to be curious how you know that with physical incarnate animals or plants. Really track what tells you you're in the presence of another kind of feeling, and be curious about that as a way in.

Daniel Foor: That's a good question. It's an important question, so thanks for that. Let me see if there's anything else I want to name because we're going to go into small groups soon.

Daniel Foor: I do want to say one thing. Don't make animals into symbols. It's a rude, shitty, colonialist thing to do. Let me say why. If I said, look whoever, any one of you, I won't pick somebody. But if I say you're just a... If I say to my daughter like, "You're a symbol of my inner child," that's a weird thing to do to another human. Sure, relating with her could bring out the younger aspects of myself in a beneficial way or a healing way, but if I reduce her to just a part of myself... We have mean technical terms in psychology for that. It's not an indicator of a really well relational stance, to make someone else a part object or to make them into just a symbol in your world.

Daniel Foor: So when we're like, "What does crow mean?" Well, the crow could be like, "What does human mean?" It means danger, it means potential treats, or what does a... We don't want to be related with like that. Look at a lot of our cultural troubles, like what does white person mean? What does man mean? What does Arab person mean? What does American mean? When we collapse a whole group into a symbol, it says more about us than about them. We're participating in this dehumanizing, or de-personifying if you will, because we're speaking of people as the bar here. We're taking someone out of relational personhood status and into a symbol of something for me status. That's rude. It's not very relational. It leads to more loneliness and bad behavior, so try to notice that.

Daniel Foor: That doesn't mean there isn't still... It's still legitimate to say, "What have the other humans who have been in relationship with crow noticed about crow?" That's

still relational. It's like, "Other people in their relating with crow person have noticed that crow seems to be like this. Good to know." It's like hearing about someone before you meet them. It can bias you, but it could also be helpful knowledge. It can go either way.

Daniel Foor: Let's do some small groups. Thanks everybody. I'm glad you're with us. Glad for your presence. Then I'll hang out a little bit after as well if you want to still chat. Lindsey, you want to work your small group magic?

Lindsey: All right. If you are not able to stay for the small groups, this is the time to click on "leave meeting." If you're on a computer, you'll want to look in the lower right where in red letters it says "leave meeting" and click on that. If you're on an iPad or a mobile app, you'll want to tap on the screen and look for "leave meeting" in red in the upper left. So if you're not able to stay for small groups, this is the time to please click on "leave meeting." We'll give that a minute or two and I will reshuffle the groups to even them up, so just give a minute or two for that.

Daniel Foor: Thanks Lindsey. There's one other thing that I mentioned in the lesson which feels important to underscore here, which is the etiquette of bringing vulnerability to our interactions with the spirits and also being in a contained, not totally self-centering way, and that we can find the middle way between those two. One place I've seen this modeled is being a participant in sweat lodges or Inipi ceremonies. That's a Lakota word for the purification lodge. When people are praying... I mean, people hold with different ways but when there's really dynamic flow in the purification lodge, one thing I've seen is when it's your time to pray you speak directly to the spirits and you bring vulnerability and heart and there's not a lot of posturing and your heart is on your sleeve. You bring your vulnerability and when you're done, you're done with your prayer. And then it goes to the next person, to the next person.

Daniel Foor: So when we come to the other-than-humans, when we come to the deities, to the spirits, it's nice to... When they're like, "What do you need? What are you doing here?" It's not like, "You want me to be open? Is now the moment?" They're like, "Yeah. Now's the moment." "Okay." Then you bring what's in your heart. You bring the reality of the messiness of that and the vulnerability of it to allow in support.

Daniel Foor: That's different than just showing up with no etiquette and being like, "I have ten thousand needs and everything," and all that without even saying hello. It's also different than the other extreme of being like, "No, no, I'm fine. I just am doing my homework from the animism course. I'm fine. I'm good. No opening here." Because if you come with that "I don't need anything" stance, it's boring to the others and it's likely

to cause them to see you as less trustworthy because you seem to be all set. No need to relate.

Lindsey: All right. Well, we are all set.

Daniel Foor: Thanks, Lindsey. Thanks everybody.

Lindsey: Okay, moving you into your groups. They will last for thirty minutes. Let's see if anybody else is coming. Nope. We are all set. Okay. Opening the rooms now. Be sure to hit the "join" button. Thanks. (silence)

Daniel Foor: [birds singing] We were talking in our small group about specificity, so if anyone knows specifically what kind of bird that is, that's great. I am not playing some recorded bird song, I'm pretty sure that's an actual bird. Unless some-

Lindsey: This is from Flora and I. Do you want to tell us about the birds, Flora?

Daniel Foor: Austrian birds.

Lindsey: She's actually in Sweden.

Daniel Foor: Oh, Sweden, okay. You can just speak if you want, Flora.

Flora Schanda: Yeah?

Daniel Foor: Yeah, sure, we can hear you.

Lindsey: We're all enjoying the birds.

Daniel Foor: And the Swedish birds.

Flora Schanda: Yes, well, I mean, the birds have more to say than I do. But I'm in Sweden, one hour outside of Stockholm, near a lake with friends, at this amazing place. The birds are wonderful. There's lots of them. I don't know, there's wild doves and blackbirds and all kinds. I don't know all of them.

Daniel Foor: That's good. Well, they're going international. They're seizing the opportunity, so it's good.

Flora Schanda: Yeah. They start the dawn chorus around 2:00 a.m. because it's getting light again.

Daniel Foor: Uh-huh (affirmative). Good. Thanks. Anybody else want to say a thing before we wrap up? Yeah. Just appreciate you all, appreciation for the supporters for your service and for speaking up for what you need, including for all the folks who listen to this after, who listen to this in two months or whatever it is. Speaking up for what you need. Me and the other support people care about you being met well, so yeah. That's it. Okay. I think we're good and we're all well. We'll meet again real soon. Thank you Lindsey for your support. Thanks everybody for your presence.

Flora Schanda: Okay. I'm unmuting all the lines so we can all say goodbye.  
[crosstalk 00:50:15]