

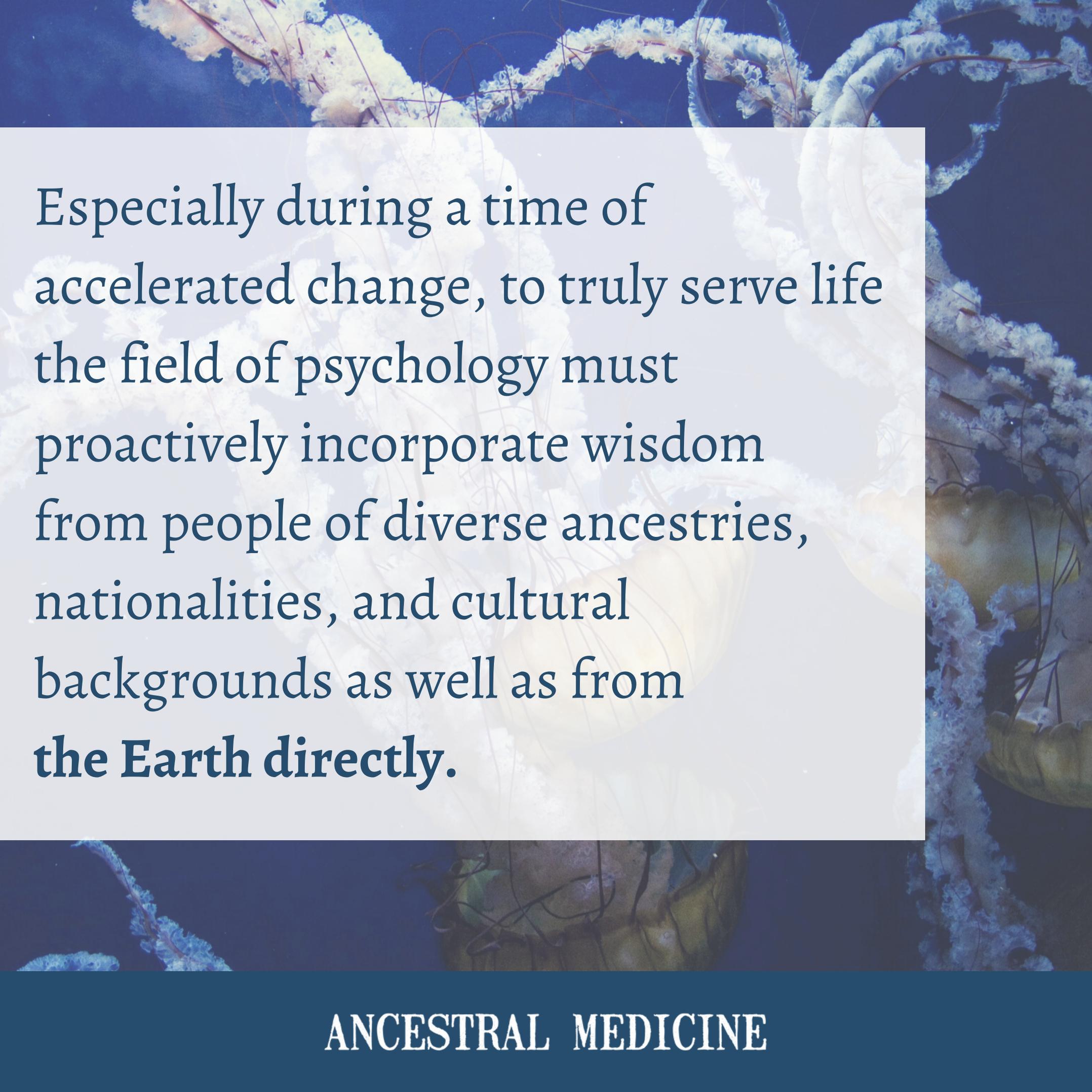
ANIMIST
PSYCHOLOGY
Healing Self and
Culture Through the
Path of Relationship

Dr. Daniel Foor

Amidst deepening ecological catastrophe, international political turbulence, and year one of a global pandemic, the level of human anxiety, disruption, and sorrow is like nothing I have known in my lifetime. The fear and uncertainty, the intergenerational trauma fueled often by systemic oppression, the displacement and pain from lack of connection to land; these troubles and others are the conditions under which we seek to **bring about a more beautiful and just world.**

As a ritualist with depth training in psychology, the intensity of the times leads me to reflect on how badly we still need what's helpful about the field of psychology and clinical mental health, and also how the field struggles to incorporate wisdom from movements for social justice, intact lineages of ritual arts, and diverse animist or **Earth-honoring values.**





Especially during a time of accelerated change, to truly serve life the field of psychology must proactively incorporate wisdom from people of diverse ancestries, nationalities, and cultural backgrounds as well as from **the Earth directly.**

ANCESTRAL MEDICINE

Animism refers to a set of values that recognize that living humans are just one kind of person in a much wider field of relationships. These others include the human dead, mountains and rivers, the big spirits and bodies of plants and animals, deities and divinities, microorganisms, spirits of place, planets and stars. Along with our human kin of diverse ancestries, nationalities, and political persuasions, the others are also our extended family, our kin, **our terrestrial neighbors in the great unfolding.**

This is not a new perspective; it's one that intact Indigenous cultures often maintain along with many of our older lineage ancestors.



**The emphasis is on living as a
respectful person**
in a network of interpersonal
relationships with both human folk and
the other-than-humans. This is a stance
of respect that supports human survival
and ideally infuses all levels of
government, business, culture,
ritual, and education.

ANCESTRAL MEDICINE

Animist Psychology seeks to identify and build in a generative way on the common ground between therapists, ritualists, and those working for cultural healing. By foregrounding animist ethics in the consideration of both theoretical and clinical aspects of mental health, the intent is to create greater discussion and space for skills-sharing among people and perspectives who have been too often marginalized by **psychology's sexist, racist European colonialist roots.**

Animist psychology also affirms that culture and psyche are not uniquely human but also the domain of the other-than-humans, of the land, and of the ancestors. These others are proactively included not only in the ways that mental health and illness are conceived but also in **the practical work of healing and personal growth.**



Everyone not already relating consciously and directly with the ancestors and the land can reclaim these most fundamental human capacities in ways that also support greater happiness and mental health *through turbulent times.*

We are hard-wired for relationships, and enjoying friendship with the plants and animals, communing with our wise and kind ancestors, moving in partnership with the elements and old powers; these are fundamentals of human culture and a source of great resilience through times of profound change.



A blue jay is perched on a dark branch on the left side of the image. The background is a soft, out-of-focus blue with some light-colored branches. A semi-transparent white rectangular box is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing text.

New relationships
bring increased opportunities
for intimacy, for realization
of our potential,
and for basic survival
through the times.
**Relationships are a necessity,
not a luxury.**

ANCESTRAL MEDICINE

Mental health professionals concerned with what encourages healthy culture and reduces human suffering can experience renewal in their vocation through engagement with animist values and practices. In addition to aligning with ancestrally and culturally diverse human colleagues working around the world to transform the field of psychology, this shift also includes learning to relate with elders who are the land and the ancestors as supervisors, educators, and direct sources of healing and inspiration.

Animist frameworks give rise to inclusive and effective ways to conceptualize, diagnose, and treat human suffering as well as ways to work sustainably and joyfully as a healer without becoming burnt out or depleted.



The Animist Psychology online course considers topics such as colonialism and mental health, ancestral curses, archetypal possession, psychosis and spiritual emergence, belonging and earth-connection in regions with major historical trauma, and the cultivation of resilience and greater intimacy with the many beings. The offering is a fit for those in the field of psychology as well as anyone interested in the intersections of ritual, cultural healing, animist values, and mental health.

The approach to learning is kind and inclusive with lots of space for questions and peer discussion. Participants can expect experiential and interactive learning, invitation to reflect at depth on their own journey, and an increase in their ability to identify and speak to important dynamics in their personal lives and communities of practice.



Extensive resources included with each lesson favor ancestrally diverse voices both within and outside the psychological establishment, and the four weekly calls (times vary for international inclusivity) include options for both Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) and LGBTQI-only small discussion groups.

Robust scholarship options aim to keep the offering accessible to all.

Learn more about Animist Psychology:

<https://bit.ly/3bNbqlr>



ABOUT DR. DANIEL FOOR



Daniel is a teacher and practitioner of practical animism who specializes in ancestral and family healing. His recent ancestors are from England, Germany, and Ireland. He is a doctor of psychology, marriage and family therapist, amateur naturalist, life-long student of earth-honoring traditions, and the author of *Ancestral Medicine: Rituals for Personal and Family Healing*. He lives with his wife and daughter in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Western North Carolina.

ABOUT ANCESTRAL MEDICINE

Ancestral Medicine encourages the embodiment of animist values and practices in ways that are culturally healing, non-dogmatic, and accessible to people of diverse means, ancestries, and geographies. We seek to honor each person's unique goodness and to fulfill our mission in partnership with the ancestors and the old ones who are the Earth. Our organization offers online courses in ancestral healing, ritual arts, and animist psychology; guided ritual support for participants around the world; a directory of practitioners serving international clients; and professional training in ancestral lineage healing. For more information, please visit:

www.ancestralmedicine.org.