



## **The Medicine Wheel Course: A Year of Living Shamanically in 2013**

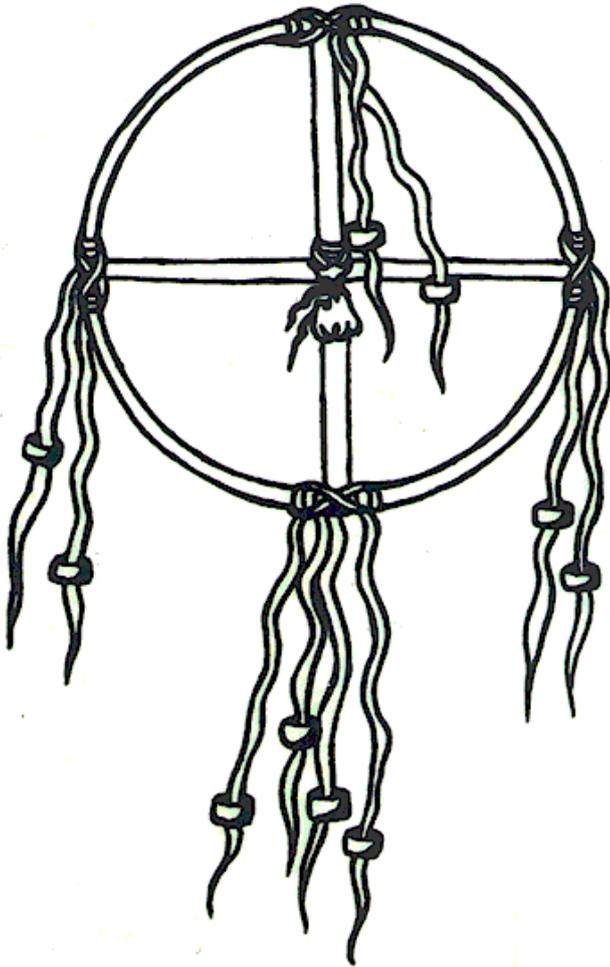
What would you like next year? Would you like it to be the year when you finally put long-held plans into action? Or really changed some aspect of yourself? The year when you made resolutions and followed them through to fruition? Or the year where you came to know and understand yourself more deeply; when you really stepped into being more true to yourself? The year where you developed a deeper and more profound connection with the natural and spiritual worlds? A year that you will look back on as a positive turning point in your life? And if you would like these things, would you like help with doing them; to be able work and explore with like-minded people; to be given simple yet profound models and tools that you can use; to get help and support from powerful allies in the spirit worlds?

The Medicine Wheel course is designed to support the participants in spending a year doing these things. Of all the many courses I have run, the Medicine wheel is one of the courses that I have had the most positive feedback about from the participants. Many students on it have described it as profoundly life changing and life enhancing. The experience was one of becoming deeply connected to nature, the elements, and to the changing seasons and what they mean. One student said it brought shamanism not only out of the books but even out of the journeys, and into daily life in a very real way. Others talked of finding the Wheel an immensely useful tool for their personal development and spiritual growth.

Drawing on wisdom and practices from both shamanism and psychotherapy, we will explore the process of changing and of living more authentically; of becoming more fully the person we would like to be, and living more fully the life we would like to live. The central model we will draw on is the wisdom of the Medicine Wheel. This is a simple yet profoundly useful model that can be applied to all aspects of our lives. It provides us with a model that maps out how processes flow in cycles. It shows us the order of things, and how things fit together into a whole. It can be used in many ways. For instance, it can help us to live more in harmony with natural cycles and processes – not just times of day or the seasons of the year, but the stages of human life, and the stages we go through in learning something or moving through a process. It can help us to pay more attention to what is around us, and so to feel more connected to life and nature. It can be used when we feel stuck with something, by helping show us where we are in the cycle and what we need to do next to move on. It can help show us what resources we can draw on when we need help and support. It is both a human psychological map, and a map of external, natural processes.

This five weekend course starts on the weekend before Imbolc (Imbolc is 1st February), a time of planning and preparation. We will start the course by making our individual plans for the year. These may be things that we wish to change in the external world, and things that we wish to change in our internal world too. The following four course weekends are timed to be the weekends just before the spring equinox, the summer solstice, the autumn equinox and the winter solstice. This will allow us to follow through the process of manifesting our plans through the cycle of the year: preparing and planning at Imbolc; planting the seeds in spring; being active and energised in summer; harvesting in autumn; reaping the rewards and giving thanks in winter. Through this process we will look at the places where, as individuals, we tend to get stuck. For instance, maybe we are someone who has plans but struggles to put plans into action (moving from spring/air to summer/fire), or maybe we have problems keeping momentum when the initial fire/enthusiasm starts to fade (as summer/fire moves to autumn/water). Or maybe we have problems allowing new plans to grow in the first place as we are still stuck in unresolved issues from the past (water/autumn not having moved to earth/completion).

For those of you not familiar with the medicine wheel, I wrote a series of articles on it that you can read at [www.therapeutic-shamanism.co.uk](http://www.therapeutic-shamanism.co.uk). To summarise though, the wheel is based around the cycle of the year. It is a subtle and immensely flexible model for working with our inner and outer lives. The wheel is used by shamanic cultures all over the world, with each culture adapting the basic model to apply it to the environment in which they live. The basis of it is the four seasons. From this follow all the other correspondences. So for us, living in the northern hemisphere, the north would correspond to winter, the east to spring, the south to summer, and the west to autumn. It then becomes obvious to apply this to things like the stages of life: (starting with spring) childhood, adolescence, adulthood, old age). Or to the life of a



plant: buds/shoots, growth/flowering, fruit/ripening, decay/roots/seeds. Most usefully though it gives us the element correspondences: spring with air, summer with fire, autumn with water and winter with earth. The elements relate to a whole host of factors including emotions, mental processes, learning styles and so on. Understanding the meaning and the pattern of the elements can open up a whole world of understanding our inner processes. It can show us how, why and where we get stuck on a cycle, and most importantly, what we can do about it.

Identifying and understanding our own patterns of where we get stuck, we can start to befriend and work with our processes. To do this, through the course we will journey deeply into the main stages on the Medicine Wheel. Doing this will involve meeting the Guardians of each stage. The difficulty we have with a particular part of the wheel can be journeyed on and met, usually in the guise of some kind of adversary, scary figure or dragon. This adversary, although it may appear hostile, is actually an ally in disguise. And may in fact become one of our greatest allies when we face it and come to know it for what it truly is. We can also journey to meet helpful spirits for each part of the wheel. So as we spend the year working through the wheel we will meet animal helpers specific to that stage of the wheel (usually a bird for spring/air, a hunter for summer/fire, a water animal for autumn/water, and a herbivore for winter/earth). We will also make a

point of finding a plant spirit guide for each part of the wheel (a spring plant, a summer plant, an autumn plant and a winter plant), and explore how to work with Plant Spirit Shamanism.

### Practical details...

The course will be a year of journeying and exploring together; of growing and changing; of living more truly and more deeply. It is booking up now. If you are interested, here are the practical details....

To attend any of the course you need to have been on one of the [introductory days](#), or an equivalent course run by either Paul Francis or another core shamanism practitioner (if you are not sure if what you have done is suitable, please do ask me).

**Dates.** 2013: Jan 26+27, March 16+17, June (14+)15+16, September 21+22, December 14+15 in Lancaster. Please note that if you can't make all the course weekends, that is fine: you don't *have* to do every one). The course is being held in Lancaster, except for the June weekend, which is at [Unstone Grange](#), just south of Sheffield. There is the option of doing the Unstone weekend as a residential (arriving on the Friday afternoon).

**Cost.** Just £95 per weekend if you pay the deposit for four or five of the weekends in advance; or £115 if you pay the deposit for two or three in advance; or £130 if you just book for an individual weekend. However many you book on, the deposit is £30 per weekend per weekend booked. There is an additional cost (probably around £70) for those wishing to do the Unstone weekend as a residential. This covers full-board dormitory accommodation for the Friday and Saturday nights, with vegetarian meals, with us all pitching in to help with the cooking and/or washing up. **N.B.** all deposits are *non-refundable*, and *non-transferable* (so please don't ask!) except in the case of the course being canceled.

The course is booking now, and is likely to book fully up, as there has been a lot of interest in this course running again. If you are interested you can book your place by sending the deposit to Paul Francis, 24 Primrose Street, Lancaster, LA1 3BN. Cheque made out to Paul Francis. Or you can pay at [college website](#) via PayPal.

If you have any questions, please feel to contact me on 01524 67009, or [paulfran@gmail.com](mailto:paulfran@gmail.com)