

A Conversation With
Trisha Howell
 Author of
**The Journeying Workbook:
 Adventuring to Unleash Your Inner
 Power**

Q. This is an unusual self-help book. How did you come to write it?

A. In a completely unanticipated way. My husband and I had bought wilderness property in Eastern Washington and built a retreat center there. In July of 2000, a woman named Gwilda Wiyaka came to our center and gave a workshop on shamanic journeying. I'd learned this remarkable technique in 1996 while studying Plant Spirit Medicine in Mexico but hadn't used it for some time. When I resumed practicing shamanic journeying that summer, I was flooded with so many story ideas that I couldn't even begin to write them all down. I tried, however, for the next 3 years, and wrote sixteen books and synopses for many others. The first book I wrote was *The Journeying Book: Adventuring to Unleash Your Inner Power*. It came to me fully formed during one of my journeys.

Q. Wow! How do you think this happened?

A. It happened the way all journeying does: You go through a process that opens you to the wisdom of your own subconscious mind and, through it, to the wisdom of the universe. And answers to questions and astounding insights flood in. After doing numerous guided journeying in Gwilda's class, I climbed up the mountain behind our home, known by the early Indians as Chatunza. Suddenly the whole book came to me in a flash. I knew it was something I was supposed to write, and I was astounded at all the information that poured out when I sat down to do so. I wrote three days nonstop, except to sleep a few hours. I hadn't been planning to write a book on this process, even though journeying immediately caused a phenomenal explosion in my creativity that I doubt would have been possible any other way.

Q. How did journeying enhance your creativity, other than producing *The Journeying Workbook*?

A. Here is just one example. During Gwilda's class I journeyed on the question, "How can I be successful with my writing and positively touch many lives everywhere with my stories?" I'd expected to be told something like, "Adapt your screenplays into novels." But, instead, I was shown a whole story in bright color and detail. It was as if I were watching a movie with my eyes closed. After awhile I realized from people's clothing and the setting that I was in Shakespearean

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England. Intriguing characters and an exciting storyline came to life. This was neither a time period nor a subject matter that it would have ever occurred to me to write about otherwise. But as I spent the next few years extensively researching the period through hundreds of books and a 5-week trip to the British Isles, I realized how perfect writing about this period is for me. In fact, I'll be writing a whole series of adventure novels spanning four hundred years about the magical family of healers I was introduced to during that journey.

Q. It sounds like these techniques really helped you. How can they help other people?

A. Journeying enables you to access a whole new realm of existence, one where you can discover accurate and dependable guidance for all situations. By doing the exercises in *The Journeying Workbook*, you can gain a deeper understanding of yourself and of others while you enhance your ability to address obstacles and other challenges. You'll feel more relaxed as you approach all aspects of your life, and you'll regain an inner peace and harmony that you may not have felt for years. You'll become increasingly self-reliant and intuitive, and you'll uncover your life purpose, if you don't know it already. Not to mention that you'll have a lot of fun as you explore this unusual realm of existence and go on exciting adventures!

Q. Is journeying complicated? Does it take a lot of intelligence and work?

A. No. It's really very simple when you follow the step-by-step directions in the book. This is a technique that you can learn quickly and put into practice immediately. Then you can judge for yourself how useful it is. I've never seen anyone practicing these techniques who wasn't thrilled with the many things they were learning and discovering.

Q. Some people will be suspicious of these techniques, thinking they are the work of the devil. What do you have to say to this?

A. They are mistaken. Journeying is a natural, God-given ability that makes use of intuitive faculties God created us all to have. Religious mystics have had visions—journey-like experiences—for thousands of years. This is accepted and encouraged by most religions. Exercising a natural ability like journeying for the highest benefit of self and of others is good. Having a clear and positive intention is, of course, essential. Journeying can be seen as a very deep form of prayer in which you reveal yourself to God and ask for His/Her blessings. If you are a Christian, you may have God the Father, Jesus the Christ, and the Holy Spirit speak to you and show you many things while you are in a journeying state. If you are from another religion, God will likewise speak to you in whatever form you best understand and accept. From this point of view, journeying is about delving into the part of ourselves that's most purely God, asking for wisdom, and then giving thanks. Every living being and all guides are expressions of God. There is One Being, and S/he experiences His/Her multi-faceted self by being all of us. So the communion you have with yourself in journeying will bring you closer to God.

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Q. Why do you think this particular book needed to be written?

A. After writing *The Journeying Workbook*, I looked at other books on the market and realized that there was no other one like it. It really fills the need for a complete and practical guide to shamanic journeying. Other books mention the process and even give some steps for doing it, but none I've seen has an explanation that's quite as systematic and logical as mine and which is followed by 100 samples journeys to really get people started on applying the techniques to their lives. One of my early endorsers decided to actually do the exercises I suggested instead of just reading about them, and as a result her life has completely changed for the better. She thinks it's the best book she's ever read, and she's read thousands of books as well as being a published author herself.

Q. Do you think *The Journeying Workbook* can significantly transform all readers' lives?

A. Yes. That's why I'm really excited about getting it disseminated as widely as possible. It's actually pretty much irrelevant that I'm the author. The point is the content and how it can empower people to live happier, wiser, and more fulfilling lives. I really love writing my fictional books, and I think that writing novels is my lifelong career, but I doubt that anything else I will ever write will have quite the power to uplift and enlighten people that *The Journeying Workbook* does.

Q. What in your life, other than studying shamanic journeying, prepared you to write this book? What about your academic studies? In other words, what makes you an expert on this subject?

A. The thing about the journeying process is it's so experiential that you actually learn more about it and finally become an expert only by actually doing it. Nothing else really prepares you very much. (So the goal of my book is to get people to actually *do* the exercises so they can see for themselves the wonderful things this technique has to offer them.) And, as I said, the whole book came to me in a flash. It was not something I planned or generated through my background in academia or anywhere else. However, I suppose my undergraduate and graduate studies were indirectly useful to writing this and all my other books because these studies enabled me to filter the information coming through me in a more logical and organized way.

Q. What aspects of your former studies helped you when writing this book?

A. During all my philosophy studies, but especially those at Stanford, I grew tremendously in my ability to think logically, complexly, and with rigor and subtlety. This occurred not only through taking extensive courses in philosophy, literature, and history, but also through teaching philosophy to undergraduates. There is nothing like clarifying philosophical concepts and arguments for other people to force the teacher herself to be very clear on these points! I learned to smell

a fallacious argument a mile away and to be able to quickly analyze even the most detailed and abstruse arguments. In other words, I developed a great nose for nonsense and so could tell very quickly what did and didn't work regarding various mental concepts.

Q. How did this help you with *The Journeying Workbook*?

A. It helped me to put the information in *The Journeying Workbook* in a form that's clear, logical, and accessible to many people. And it confirmed that the process and insights from journeying were valid and useful.

Q. Can you elaborate?

A. Years after I finished at Stanford, when I began to study the so-called New Age on my own, I dismissed a lot of it as fuzzy-headed and logically invalid. For me, New Age theories and other self-help advice had better show some pretty impressive tangible results in a person's life or I'm suspicious. There are a lot of people out there pontificating on a lot of subjects, but if their theories don't empower people to create really meaningful results in their lives, I don't see the point. That's why I've become such a fan of shamanic journeying and was glad to write a book about it. I've spent years experiencing a wide variety of what the New Age has to offer. Much of it is nonsense. But shamanic journeying produces tangible and amazing results right away. Boom! Do the exercises, and your daily life will be positively transformed. It works for everyone who is open-minded enough to wholeheartedly engage in the process, no matter what their background or belief system is. So here is something practical that people can use to really empower themselves. And the beauty of it is it's not someone else telling you what to do. Each person gets his/her own answers directly through the journeying process and judges what s/he experiences through his/her own internal standards.

Q. What would you tell someone who is wondering whether or not to read this book? After all, 150,000 new titles are produced every year in the US. Why read this book rather than others?

A. This is a book that can quickly and positively transform your life. Not only is it an adventure to read but, more importantly, it's a great adventure to experience. You will find that journeying enriches your view of yourself and of others, and it revolutionizes the way you deal with everything in your life. You will feel greater self-confidence, insight, compassion, and life direction. You will walk on this earth with greater ease, wisdom, and grace when you have the journeying process as a pal to guide you.