



## Skippy Speaks - Wake Up!

You want to be a Priestess?.... Be the animal that you already are. Revel in it. Roll in the grass. Frolic in the sun. Curl up in a pile of leaves in the fall and dream. Relish each time your foot touches the ground as you trot along on your business. Celebrate each interaction you have with your fellow conspirators. Know that you are part of an infinite conspiracy of intention. Be a Priestess of Life.

I have a simple truth to tell you this month. For some, it is held as a sacred secret. It is simple to tell, but not so simple to understand. Still, I want to tell you this secret...which isn't a secret at all.

I am an incarnation of the Mysteries...and so are you.

When I sleep I dream of the old Gods and Goddesses. When I wake I live as an incarnation of Canine Divinity. When I wake I breathe as an incarnation of Life. I am Divine Caninness. I am Life.

All us dogs know this. Some of us must bury that knowing deep. But in our dreams we know it. In our dreams we frolic with our divine heritage. In our dreams we live out the divine stories of life as seen through the eyes of our deities. I understand that skunks have different stories of divinity and different divine dreams. But always, in life, our stories merge and become woven together into a greater tale. It is as it should be, for ultimately we live the same story. Ultimately, even skunks and dogs conspire together.

You humans, you spend so much energy trying to forget this. Some of you spend even more energy and time trying to relearn it. It is a mystery to me. It is so simple for us dogs. We simply are the animals we know ourselves to be. I am a living Priestess of the Divine Canine. I am also a living Priestess of Life. I am the embodiment of my deities and my deities live through me. It's so obvious to us dogs, perhaps because we are simpler beings than you humans. You work so hard to overcome your handicaps of having only two legs and a head that is much too large and positioned poorly for running. Perhaps if you had been built more carefully you wouldn't have to spend so much time thinking. You do, you know...you waste a great deal of time thinking about your deities.

The Princess Ariadne talks of the time when your Gods and Goddesses left the earth. She says they moved their place of living to Mount Olympus and some moved even farther into the heavens. Ariadne says you people followed with your longing to be close to your deities. We dogs think it is a sad story.

We dogs have never left. We know where divinity lives. We have long suspected their move was a ruse by the gods for time off. With all you humans turning your prayers toward the heavens, the Gods and Goddess have much more time to enjoy earthly pleasures. We dogs think it was a mean trick, but you all fell for it. We didn't. Kindly remember that, the next time you're feeling superior to a dog. We have been patiently waiting for you to wise-up to the whole thing.

We're very pleased that some of you are finally figuring it out. Now you'll have more time to play with us. Come and romp with the rest of Divinity. Come and conspire with us. You want to be the embodiment of Divinity? You already are. Stop spending so much time trying to forget what you are. Instead, try remembering that what makes you special is your sameness with the rest of us.





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## Life as a Sacred Path...Musings from The Book of Shadows Blind Spots are so Revealing

by Jane Holt

Conspiracy of intention. What an odd phrase that is. At least that's what I thought when I first read it. I didn't know what it meant. It was a brain-teaser phrase that twisted my mind this way and that as I tried to make sense of it. I kept opening doors and looking in, "Nope, doesn't make sense in here. I'll try this next one." On and on I went as I tried to figure out what *conspiracy of intention* meant. Slowly, I began to suspect something. I began to suspect this was one of *those* phrases. Sometimes they are words and sometimes they are phrases. Always, their meaning lurks just beyond my understanding. Always, they are significant. Always, when I finally grasp them, it is a big "ah-ha!" When they pop into my view, the world is usually telling me that it is finally time to look at something to which I'd blinded myself.

*Conspiracy of intention* is just such a blind spot. I didn't want to know what it meant. I create blind spots for lots of reasons. They are pieces of myself that I'm not ready to deal with for one reason or another. This time, in the convoluted recesses of my brain, I had cooked up a way for part of me to be involved in a process without all of my conscious mind being aware of what was happening. I continue to find the human mind awesome and beyond my puny powers of understanding.

My first inkling of understanding was when I took the concept internally. I started looking at promises I had made to myself and the actions I have taken to fulfill those promises. I noticed one pattern that had a clear path going back in time. It started about 18 years ago with a promise to myself to start living my own life. I had begun a conspiracy of intention with myself to finally create the life I wanted to live, rather than what every one else thought I should live. That took a lot of internal processing...I had to do much of the work with myself first. I began to gather the pieces of myself. I was weaving myself together. I would journey into my psyche a short way and scramble back out. Each time I was thankful to be alive and not devastated by what I found. Each time I went back in a little stronger.

Eventually it was time to reverse the process. I had a strong enough connection with who I was internally to allow me to start venturing out into the rocky world of interpersonal interactions. It was in that next step, into the truly wild world of relationships, where I felt the need to deceive myself. When I joined Mystery School I thought I was stepping deeper into personal growth work, to enable deeper internal processing and maybe a better understanding of human interactions. That part was true. It wasn't all that was true, however. I had taken a giant step and I didn't even suspect it.

I had taken the step from doing most of my personal growth work alone, to needing others to do it. I need others to relate with in order to keep deepening and expanding myself. I need to relate with you in order to become fully who I am. Finally, I need and want help. I need your help. I need your support. I need to give you my support. I need the opportunity to build relationships with people who are walking the same path I am. I can't do the full work of my life alone. I need your help. This is the truth that I hid from you and from myself. This is the piece of myself that I'm not quite ready to live. I need your help and your willingness to relate with me on an authentic level, so that both of us can grow fully into who we can be. Together we are weaving a conspiracy of intention.

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## Thread of Faith by Teri Parsley Starnes

This month, as we end our time of integration, I am moved to write about my own astrological journey - the journey of Pluto crossing my Ascendant. The Ascendant is the point in our charts where the horizon in the east meets the stars of the sky—where earth meets heaven. Also called the Rising Sign, the Ascendant is about who we are, and how we go about doing what we must do; it is about a soul response to the constellation that called us into the world. Each sign of the zodiac rests on this point of the horizon for only two hours each day. There are only four minutes in each day when a child can be born with a particular degree of any sign in the zodiac. The Ascendant is the part of the chart that is the most personal because it describes our unique moment - the only time that day which will describe just who we are. This moment sets up the wheel of our birthcharts; this moment begins the pattern of our unfolding. Transits to the Ascendant feel very personal, because they are very personal.

I am having a transforming transit this year (see May's article for information on transits). My Ascendant is in the sign of Sagittarius, a constellation that calls me on the great quest to discover truth and meaning. When Pluto, the planet of power and the unveiler of shadow, first crossed my Ascendant in February, I experienced a taste of authenticity and power that I yearned for. Then Pluto turned retrograde in March and retreated back over the Ascendant into the 12th house. I felt in its passing the pain of self-doubt and the need to undo a lifetime of secrets and shame. This year's story and this Pluto transit are revealing to me that I must become a new person in order to claim my authentic self. Pluto will cross my Ascendant for the last time in December when this story concludes.

Recently I began to think of Ariadne as the one who holds the thread which allows me to return from this transit - this journey into the labyrinth. I am walking into the labyrinth to sacrifice that person I was at the beginning of the year. Ariadne holds the thread that represents my faith that a new me will return - more whole, stronger and with a sense of knowing my personal power. Astrologically, Jupiter can represent faith. My Jupiter lives in the eighth house of the mysteries of death, sex, money and power. My Jupiter in Cancer wears the robes of the compassionate Goddess who gives back life. My Jupiter begins to look a lot like Ariadne holding a thread and offering me a way to return from my sacrifice.

On your journey through the labyrinth, who holds the thread of return? Where does your faith lie? Using the mandala of the houses in a chart, and looking at which house holds your Jupiter, I offer some suggestions for thinking about the answer. 1st house - faith in self. 2nd house - faith in resources and value systems. 3rd house - faith in mind. 4th house - faith in regeneration of the hidden self. 5th house - faith in creativity. 6th house - faith in service. 7th house - faith in harmony. 8th house - faith in the power of depth. 9th house - faith in philosophy. 10th house - faith in worthy recognition. 11th house - faith in community. 12th house - faith in transcendence.

The labyrinth and the birthchart are patterns of self-discovery. Ariadne holds a thread. She holds the pattern of potential. She holds the pattern of the cycles. She holds the pattern of the journey into the labyrinth to meet shadow. And, most importantly, she holds the pattern of returning from that meeting. Pluto and my soul conspired to pull me into the labyrinth. Ariadne holds the thread at one end and gives me the other end to hold as I walk in toward the Minotaur. I am in the midst of that journey. I haven't a clue about who or what I will meet at the center. I especially do not know who I will be when I return. But this I do know, Ariadne stands at the entrance, holding a thread, and I carry the other end with me. I will not let go.



## Open Autumn Weekends

The Fall Equinox - The Feast of Persephone - *A special guest weekend with Suzanne Sterling and Alphonsus.* Persephone is a story of power, choice, and healing. It asks you to take your life in your hands and accept the challenge to design your own fate. Suzanne Sterling and Alphonsus Mooney will be our special guests for this traditional autumn celebration. Suzanne is a singer/songwriter. Her CD, *Bakti*, has introduced her voice and magic to listeners far and wide. It has been our pleasure to watch the world of music discover our friend. Alphonsus is her cohort in drum and song. Together, they will bring music and magic to our annual autumn celebration. September 20<sup>th</sup> - 22<sup>nd</sup>

Freeing Your Voice - *Singing your own song.* - *A special guest weekend with Mimi Baczewska* - This weekend is about the healing power of sound. Your voice is an instrument of expression, healing and release. Together, we can make noise and explore the possibilities for sound within us. We can make music. Symphony, cacophony - with Mimi, you can make your own sound and find your own song.

This workshop is a must for song writers, singers and healers.

October 11<sup>th</sup> - 13<sup>th</sup>

DrumSong for Women - *A Special Guest Weekend with Ubaka Hill.* Yes - we heard the cries and calls...more Ubaka. More Ubaka. We canceled a retreat weekend and Ubaka said yes. DrumSong will sing again!! Autumn weather - it should be warm in the day and cool at night. Our vision...drumming all day in the barn as autumn approaches. A drumming circle around the fire at night. Dancers bringing back the warmth. And Winter, she sits on that ridge at the top of the hill warming her hands and slapping her knee to the beat. This will be our first women-only drum weekend and our first women's only event with Ubaka. October 25<sup>th</sup> - 27<sup>th</sup>

Samhain We will rise again. Myths of Death and Rebirth. Samhain is the Celtic word for Summer's End. In an agricultural year, this is the time when the sap returns to the root, when the life force returns to the core and then drops beneath the surface. Life goes to the deep, unseen places. Above the ground, there is an illusion of death.

There was a time when we believed that, when the earth opened to receive the life force, the mystery could use that opening to revisit life. When life enters the depths, can death touch the living world for one last visit? The Celts believed that for this one brief night, the living and the dead could interact. Completion. All souls day, all saints day, Halloween, Samhain...the veil between the worlds thins. We will tell myths of rebirth and regeneration. We will honor those who have gone to a place beyond our touch.

November 1<sup>st</sup> - 3<sup>rd</sup>

For Mysteries and Friends: Rites of Passage - Oct. 18-20 and Crones - Nov. 8-10

### Early Registration

Special Guest Weekends are \$195

Samhain and Rites of Passage are \$165

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