

"The oldest musical instrument used for soul retrieval work among native peoples is the rattle, humankind's imitation of rain"... "Most shamanic societies attribute three functions to the rattle: (1) soul retrieval work, (2) cleansing and purifying, and (3) assisting visionary work." (excerpts from "The Four Fold Way" Angeles Arrien pg. 25-26).

Below I offer some possible ways to use your rattle that I learned from beloved teacher and cultural anthropologist Angeles Arrien (1940-2014). She found these same patterns used cross culturally all over the world. They are meant only as suggestions to assist you and not to be understood as the "only" way. The rattle is one of the oldest instruments known to mankind and each of us has a deep ancestral and intuitive knowledge of it. There are many ways to use your rattle and you will find what feels right for you and the situation.

- 1) Cleansing – a simple, even steady beat, rhythmic up and down motion to your side at waist level (at a comfortable height for your arm and hand), switching hands now and again to balance right and left sides. This pattern is also used to cleanse the space before and after performing the rituals below.
- 2) Pattern breaker – Take a moment while cleansing and think of the pattern that you wish to break. You might speak it aloud or hold it in your mind. Hold the rattle about forehead level out in front of you. Move the rattle forward in quick successive motions (much like a woodpecker), with the intention to break up the pattern with each strike. Switch hands when needed. When you feel finished or need a break go back to the cleansing motion.
- 3) Petitionary question - Take a moment and think of your question. Sometimes I find it helpful to write it down in order to get clear about what I am asking. Begin with the cleansing movement. Bring your question forward either in your mind or out loud. At about eye level begin moving the rattle in a side-to-side arching motion (somewhat like a windshield wiper). Ask your question and then let it go. This movement will be faster than the cleansing motion, and slower than the pattern breaking motion. Switch hands when needed. Listen deeply... when you have received your answer and feel finished go back to the cleansing motion.
- 4) Sealing sides- Cross-culturally it is often believed that illness can enter from the sides of the body. Therefore importance is placed on "closing" or "sealing" both sides of the body. It is a way to create an energetic boundary and find it particularly helpful when engaging in group or one-on-one work where having a good boundary is beneficial. Use a clear downward strike on the right side of your body with a count to four (1 – 2 – 3 – 4)... switch to left side (1 – 2 – 3 – 4). Do this 3 times. This will be a slower pulse than cleansing. Go back to cleansing motion to end.

May your rattle assist and bless you in your work.

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