

# **WALKING THE SACRED WHEEL A Year's Journey of Initiation**

**The East Gate: Way of the Visionary**



**FROGS RETURN MOON  
April 20 – May 20**

**Sacred Wisdom Circle Institute  
Salt Lake City, Utah**

# LESSON PLAN

## Month Two:

**WEEK 1:** Continue doing the daily devotions you learned in the introductory lesson throughout this moon. This includes smudging, meditation, and daily journaling of your observations and experiences. Read “Week 1: Balancing the Earth and Sky,” which includes the sections titled “Stability,” “The Web of Power,” and “Walking to Be Still.” Do Exercises 1 and 2 along with your questions for the week. If you are studying for certification of any kind, remember to send your answers to the weekly questions, along with a copy of your journal, to the Institute via your private account. If you are not subscribed for a yearly program. Be sure to submit payment via Pay Pal for Planting Moon (May 21 – June 20).

**WEEK 2:** Read the material for Week 2, Establishing Right Relationship, and do Exercise 3. If you are seeking certification, be sure to send your answers to the weekly questions, along with your journal entries for the week, to the Institute via your private account. You can scan your journal entries and submit those via PDF.

**WEEK 3:** Read the material for Week 3, Nourishing Personal Clarity. Do Exercises 4, 5, and 6 and the weekly questions, and be sure to send your answers and your journal entries for the week to the Institute if you are seeking certification.

**WEEK 4:** Read the Week 4 material on the element of fire, and do Exercise 7 and answer the final questions for Frogs Return Moon. If you are seeking a course completion or teaching certification, be sure to mail your answers and your journal to the Sacred Wisdom Circle Institute. Also include any glossary words that you encountered during this module to the Institute so we can include them for future students.

# **The East Gate: Way of the Visionary**

**FROGS RETURN MOON (April 20 – May 20)**

**Week 1: Balancing Earth and Sky**

## **Invocation Blessing Song**

Behold Great Mystery, Creative Force, Spirit That Moves Through All! We call to the Seven Directions of the Sacred Wheel!

We turn to the Keepers of the East, direction of the new beginnings, of inspirations, of illumination and creativity, of the dawn and spring, new births and childhood. Be with us, teach us, show us your ways!

We call to the Keepers of the South, direction of vitality, of high noon and hot sun, of summer and vigorous growth, of youth and passion. Be with us, teach us, show us your ways!

We invite the Keepers of the West, direction of introspection, of the evening, of autumn and maturity, deepening and ripening. Be with us, teach us, show us your ways!

We respectfully summon the Keepers of the North, direction of the night, of winter, of wisdom and transformation, of dropping inessentials to reveal the core. Be with us, teach us, show us your ways!

We look up to the sky and call to the beings of the sun, the moon, the clouds, the stars, and the endless blue, and we ask that you bring your spaciousness and mystery to this work. Be with us, teach us, show us your ways!

We put our hands on the ground and ask that the great substance of the Earth give grounding to the work, and that the Earth's beauties give us beauty and that the entire world—the animals and plants and rocks, mountains and rivers and seas, the elemental forces of Earth and Air and Fire and Water, and all the human beings, all the elders, children, teachers, all the red, yellow, black, and white—join in this blessing. Be with us, teach us, show us your ways!

We call to the Sweet Mystery that is the Sacred Center! Hold us and cradle us in your divine protection! Be with us, teach us, show us your ways!

We claim this work to serve, to bless, and to share knowledge for wisdom building and for bringing wholeness to our hearts and to our world. Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

*(Note: The beginning prayer and final blessing of this lesson appear at the beginning and end of each lesson. These prayers mark the cycle of energy within that lesson and create a circle of connection.)*

## STABILITY IN THE BALANCE

One of the greatest challenges on our life path is to learn to use our infinite power in gentle, creative ways. Personal clarity is the ingredient of this spiritual awareness. The energies of this time of year offer us a special opportunity to connect and work with clarity because illumination is a part of the East Gate energies. The energies that surround the Frogs Return Moon teach stability and balancing the earth and sky within ourselves. We tune into both the deep well of support that the Earth offers, and we also bring down to Earth the growth-producing energies of the high realms. Frogs Return Moon also reminds us to “get our house in order.” Remember that spring cleaning is done at this time of year, and this cleaning is not just about addressing our physical surroundings!

### The Web of Power

All things of physical form have a living Spirit, and this Spirit is the source and essence that connects All That Is. It also creates coherence and gives meaning to the world, for without Spirit, there would be only chaos. This connection to source is the spiritual matrix, or grid, that underlies Creation. In Wheel work, it is called the Web of Power or the Cosmic Web. Understanding and working with this Web is the key to clarity and personal empowerment. Spirit is the power that we access when we ground ourselves.

We talked about grounding as the way to make sure we have returned to normal consciousness after doing spiritual work, and being grounded is also an important aspect of daily functioning. It means that you are deeply in touch with your body and you know how you feel while you are carrying out your normal everyday functions, especially repetitive ones. Grounding means that you are fully aware, awake, and “real.” It means that your psyche is “tuned in” and available for spiritual support and that you are clear and are fully engaged in the present moment. Most people’s everyday activities are filled with rushing from one task to the next while they plan for future activities or worry about past experiences. In such a state, it is easy to become ungrounded, “spacy,” and unreal. You know the feeling of being ungrounded. It is when you are looking for your glasses and they are sitting on the top of your head, or when you leave the milk out and put a book in the refrigerator. We all have walked into another room to get something and couldn’t remember what it was we wanted when we got there. Such experiences mean that our physical body is not in good alignment with our Spirit body, and we are out of touch with the natural elements that surround us.

Life requires attention to the now moment for us to truly be connected to spiritual power. We profit by remembering past mistakes and the learnings that keep us from repeating those mistakes; however, we do *not* profit by dwelling on our past or becoming emotionally anchored there; we also do not profit from concentrating only on the future. It is only when we are fully present to the now moment that we can receive spiritual guidance.

The key to being is to acknowledge and tune into the Cosmic Web of spiritual power. For obvious reasons, it is easier to tap into this source when we are outdoors. People of the Old Ways knew this secret and held their spiritual ceremonies outside surrounded by groves of trees, in stone and open-air temples, or at other natural places of power when the “veils between the worlds” were naturally thin. Their goal was to be able to have full access to the tremendous power available at such places and times. As time went on, humankind moved more indoors, although healers and shamans even today prefer to stay outdoors as much as possible. It is

outside that they best recharge and connect to their source. In the study guide to this moon, you will find a walking meditation that teaches a way to ground these teachings.

The Web of Power and the world of Spirit exist everywhere, and it remains hidden from us until we consciously choose to unveil it with intention. That is just the way it works. Spirit does not impose its will upon us. We must choose relationship with Spirit with intention before its realms of wisdom, and therefore power, become available to us.

There is a famous story about a man in Africa who decided that the riches of the earth that others were finding (diamonds) was what he wanted to be a good provider for his family. Being a poor man, he sold the only thing of value that he had, his family home and pasture lands, for money that would allow him to stake a claim to dig for diamonds. As the story goes, the company that he sold his land to, the Kimberly Company, began mining his land and found the largest diamond ever to come out of Africa. Obviously, this story illustrates the desire to first become attuned to the riches that surround us where we are.

For most people, a tree is just a source of shade or a resource for lumber. And if you look at a tree at the atomic level, it is made up of the very same thing that makes up everything else: atoms. Taken to the subatomic level, a tree is mostly space, which is Spirit. It is this Spirit that animates All There Is, and Spirit is the source of the Web of Power. It is this Spirit that makes us one with everything else, and it is this Spirit that we align with to do spiritual work.

We experience a wonderful feeling of exhilaration when we are connected and at one with the Cosmic Web, for we are in tune with the vital energy of the Universe—the flow of life—and this gives us a sense of tremendous strength and power. Unfortunately, people can succumb to the glamour (ego involvement) with the feeling that this connection gives and can miss that the real gem is the connection to Spirit. Succumbing to the glamour can bring about misuse of power. It brings out the shadow aspect of power, which is dictatorial authority that when taken to its extreme can lead to tyranny and even violence. When we move into the energy of “authority over,” which is experienced as both a mindset and a feeling in our body, we are distracted from the real reason for working with the power of Spirit—the reconnection of broken links with Spirit so that *life can flow* through the Universe to nourish our world and on through our world to be replenished. This is another aspect of the Give-away. The abuse of power chokes off the receiving and replenishing of vital life.

People who practice the Old Ways know that spiritual power does not “belong” to anyone. It is freely given to all, and it passes through our being to further replenish and nourish. Connected people laugh at the notion that we can “possess power.” They understand the necessity of flow and not blocking the pathways of Spirit. By manipulating power, rather than working with the Spirit Power, we lose our spiritual authenticity. We cut ourselves off from the reciprocal circuit that is circle or wheel of Spirit.

Other shadow aspects can block Spirit pathways. Loss of connection to Source creates feelings of alienation and fear. Therefore, those who keep their connection open are often feared by those who do not. The loneliness of disconnected people leads them to jealousy, and this jealousy leads to destructive ways of being. Those who are spiritually connected are perceived to be powerful because they are integrated, full of life, and less unbalanced than others. Indeed, they are more open and therefore more resourceful, although in the *short term*—that is, before the result comes into view—the good and giving use of their power is not *necessarily* more

“powerful” than blocking energies. Remember that the Universe is impersonal: power is power, and how you use it what matters. The Cosmic Web is like an electrical grid: disconnections cut off flow, and blockages back up flow. And like a reservoir, a blockage can create a *tremendous* force that can either be harnessed for the common good or that can cause destruction when it is released. Sadly, jealous or envious people will often target those who are spiritually connected. “To whom more is given, more is required,” so do not become disheartened; there is a great equalizer. In writing about Rolling Thunder, Doug Boyd gives a teaching from Mad Bear Anderson, a legendary figure in Amerindian Medicine:

*The principle of cause and effect is at work everywhere, and somebody must receive the results of everybody’s doings. Every sentence or thought or act influences somebody. If someone has a destructive thought or wish, this thought must influence someone. If it doesn’t work on the person who has been targeted, the energy returns to the person who created it. Of course, in the end, everyone gets his own earnings and accounts for his own debts; and just like money, it can go around and around and can involve many people. This process becomes very complicated. The purpose of good medicine is to make life simple. There is no need to create any opposing destructive force; that only makes more negative energy and more results and more problems. If you have a sense of opposition—that is, if you feel contempt for others—you’re in a perfect position to receive their contempt. People have such anger and fear and contempt for the so-called criminals that your crime rate goes up and up. Your society has a high crime rate because it is in a perfect position to receive crime. You could be working with these people, teaching skills not in opposition to them. The idea is to have contempt for crime, not for people. It’s a mistake to think of any group or person as an opponent, because when you do, that’s what the group or person will become. It’s more useful to think of every other person as another you—to think of every individual as a representative of the Universe. Every person is plugged into the whole. Nobody is outside of the effects of divine principles. Each person is a model of life, so the true nature of a person is the nature of life. I don’t care how low you fall or how high you climb, economically or academically or anything else, you still represent the whole. Even the worst criminal in life imprisonment sitting in his cell—the center of him is the same seed, the seed of the whole creation.*

In *Singing the Soul Back Home: Shamanic Wisdom for Every Day*, Caitlin Matthews has this to say about the sources of power and how power can be lost:

*Our power, our vitality, derives from many sources: from light, from food, from a secure environment, from supportive and loving relationships, from culture, and from spiritual engagement with the Universe. When any of these channels of vitality is fractured, we begin to lose power. We may have neglected areas or have unclear motivation, or we may give away our power to others—for example, when we unhealthily abrogate ourselves and our needs. Sometimes, we unwillingly relinquish our share of power to someone who is coercive or dominating, who has discovered how to play with our emotions. We can lose power by being threatened, cajoled, invaded, or overwhelmed, whether by people, accidents, or trauma. In all instances, the natural power cables connecting us with the cosmic web are fractured, and power begins to leak away. The resulting power loss may lead to illness, soul fragmentation, or*

*sometimes death. A person lacking power will be dispirited, tired, frustrated, and generally disengaged from daily life. Only by re-sourcing the power of the Universe can she build up her resistance.*

Another story tells about a man who answered his doorbell very late one night to find a gentleman dressed in a tuxedo standing there and a Rolls Royce parked at his curb. The obviously wealthy man told the homeowner that he was participating in a high-stakes scavenger hunt, and the last item he desired to find to win was a piece of wood approximately 4 feet by 8 feet. He had driven to all the lumber stores in the town and they were closed, so he decided to go to some houses and was prepared to pay \$25,000 for such a piece of lumber. The man immediately ran to his garage to see if he had a piece of plywood and found none and sadly reported to the wealthy man that he could not assist him. It was not until the next day, as he reflected over the events of the previous evening, that he realized that his front door—the very door he had opened—was approximately 4 feet by 8 feet.

*"Non-action is a translation of the Chinese Wu wei, which could literally be translated 'doing nothing'....If you are going to learn anything from the Tao Te Ching, make sure it is this you learn. It permeates through all of the Tao Te Ching. The Tao does nothing, yet through it all things are done. The master does nothing, yet nothing remains undone. Clearly there is more to this doing nothing than doing nothing." —Chuck Gullion*

## **Walking in Stillness**

Sometimes, we can become so stimulated by the things that happen in life that we are not present in the moment. In this state, we can easily disconnect from the Source of our wisdom. To be open enough to align with the Web of Power, we must be willing to let go of habitual ways of thinking and processing to find stillness. Oddly enough, we *progress* through moments of stillness. To allow ourselves to connect to Source in our daily lives, we must be willing to allow other modes of information retrieval than just the rational, or we will never grow beyond where we are now. The paradox of the past is that to release, we must totally accept the new by becoming an empty vessel. Our deepest search must be to connect with beauty in all life as we awaken a spiritually centered relationship with ourselves and share the gifts of that relationship with the world.

Through walking meditation, our inner visionary opens us to our creativity. In walking meditation, we consciously choose an issue to focus on, let it go, then observe what is revealed to us while walking. This form of meditation is sometimes called "moving meditation." Whether walking, cooking, running, or swimming, we find ourselves in an altered state of consciousness or a meditative mode. When our body is moving and open, we become vehicles for creative problem solving. This is because moving meditation releases our creative Spirit.

It is important to pay attention to our process, or to the creative problem solving that is occurring, when we are involved in this type of meditation. Some indigenous cultures walk great distances during initiation rites to reclaim the authentic self. These are known as "walkabouts" among the aboriginals of Australia, and these are like the Vision Quests performed by the native people of North America.

The primary purpose of walking meditation is to completely enjoy the experience of walking. We walk all the time, and usually our walking is more like running. Our steps are often burdened with our anxieties and sorrows. When we walk in forgetfulness, we imprint our anxieties and sorrow on Mother Earth and on those around us. And when we walk in mindfulness, each step creates a fresh breeze of peace, joy, and harmony. Our destination is the here and now. As you walk and breathe, the process of softening and nurturing will take place in you, and your heart will begin to open to life and to All That Is. In doing this, you will feel nurtured every time your foot kisses the ground as the solidity of the Earth springs up into your body and heart. There is no way to peace, peace *is* the way. Walking in mindfulness brings us peace and joy and makes our life real. So why rush? Our destination will only be the graveyard. Why not walk in the direction of life, enjoying peace in each moment and joy with every step?

Take my hand  
We will walk  
We will only walk  
Without thinking of arriving anywhere  
Walk peacefully  
Walk happily  
Our walk is a peace walk  
Our walk is a happiness walk  
Then we learn  
That there is no peace walk  
That peace is the walk  
That there is no happiness walk  
That happiness is the walk  
We walk for ourselves  
We walk for everyone  
Always hand in hand  
Walk and touch peace every moment  
Walk and touch happiness every moment  
Each step brings a fresh breeze  
Each step makes a flower bloom under our feet  
Kiss the Earth with your feet  
Print on Earth your love and happiness  
Earth will be safe  
When we feel in us enough safety

—Thich Nhat Hanh

We can practice walking meditation by counting steps or by using words. If the rhythm of our breathing is three steps for each in breath and out breath (3-3), we can say silently, for example, “Lotus flower blooms, lotus flower blooms” or “The green planet, the green planet” as we walk. We don’t just say the words; we really see flowers blooming under our feet. Visualize a tiger walking slowly, and you will find that your steps become as majestic as the steps of a tiger.

By coordinating your breathing with every step, you establish yourself fully in the present moment, and your senses become empowered with the energy of mindfulness and the divine. You learn to say hello to what you see, hear, step on, and pass as you walk outside in Nature. You can speak the words quietly in your heart, or you can say them out loud if you feel comfortable doing so. The more you make yourself available to the elements, the more you are refreshed and healed, and you may enjoy the exercise even more. As you walk to the mailbox each morning, or to your car, practice breathing in “Good morning birds” and breathing out “Thank you for singing.”

Walking meditation mends hearts. Life has suffering for all of us, and often our hearts have been broken repeatedly. As we learn to walk mindfully, bringing each foot home to the Earth with each step, we find joy in small moments. Every step you take in this spirit becomes a healing stitch that mends the place in you that is wounded, and the suffering no longer has the same effect.

*We gratefully acknowledge the elders who have contributed to this material, especially Doug Boyd, from Rolling Thunder: A Personal Exploration into the Secret Healing Power of an American Indian Medicine Man; Mad Bear Anderson; Thich Nhat Hanh; Caitlin Matthews, from Singing the Soul Back Home: Shamanic Wisdom for Every Day; and Chuck Gullion for his interpretation of the words of Lao Tzu from the Tao Te Ching (Way of Life).*

**Sweet Mystery that is at the Sacred Center, and all Divine Energies, thank you for holding us and cradling us in your protection as we bring wholeness to our hearts and to our world! Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! It is good.**



## STUDY GUIDE: FROGS RETURN MOON

### Week 1: Exercise 1 The Web of Power

**What you will need:** Your journal, a pen, smudging materials, a candle, and a quiet place

This exercise allows you to recognize your connection to All There Is and is a preparatory exercise for working with your Spirit body. Read all the instructions first and then begin the process.

Before you begin, smudge or use some form of cleansing and state an intention. Consider lighting a candle to be kept burning while you are in this process, and call in the Seven Directions (the study guide to the introductory lesson covers these processes).

There are many relaxation techniques; use one that you have found that puts your body in a quiet, receptive, and centered mode. The exercises in the introductory lesson give some suggestions, such as concentrating on your breathing and checking to make sure that all your muscles are relaxed—especially your jaw, shoulders, and stomach muscles. You could use this as an opportunity to connect to your personal well of wisdom by going inside and asking your Wise Self, “What do I want to do to become relaxed and receptive?” Listen to what you are told, and notice what your body does with the question.

Take a deep relaxing breath, then take a moment to look around at your surroundings. Close your eyes and expand your awareness of your world to include all of those with whom you share experiences: the people, plants, rocks, and animals you encounter daily, and so on. Can you recognize that everyone and everything is composed of the same energy that creates your life? To do this, you want to gaze beyond the diversity into the sameness. Spend as much time as you desire to get a full sense of the ties that connect you and all life. Feel the power of life flowing

through your body as you breathe in and out, and see if you can sense that same energy pulsing through all things and people of “your world.”

As you are reviewing parts of “your world,” notice what things, people, and so on catch your eye and hold your attention. Thank the energies you have encountered, and journal this experience under the heading, “My World in Words.”

As you go about your day, stay conscious of your energy connection with the Universe. Spend at least one day looking for the ways life force energy manifests itself in all you encounter that day. Take this opportunity to experience all forms of life from a new perspective. Be surprised and delighted with what you discover when you make the effort to allow yourself to experience new insights about “old” familiar people, situations, and things. This is the time to both acknowledge your sameness and honor your differences.

The next day, without using words, draw, paint, or color a representation of your connection to the world around you. Don’t think about what you are going to draw, just let your hand move and create whatever your body wants to depict. Concentrate only on the feeling of the experience of being connected with All There Is. Be accepting of the process and see what happens. This is not about drawing a “pretty picture” for someone else to see. In fact, you should not show the drawing to anyone now. However, make sure that it is included in your journal, for you will be using it again for another process.

## **Week 1: Exercise 2** **Walking Meditation**

***What you will need:*** Your journal and a pen

Meditation is one way you can become mindful. Meditation increases the effectiveness of all other processes because when you meditate, you are in silence. You are in thought awareness. Then the growth of awareness takes place, and you connect to the Divine Power that created you; now that you know you *are* that Power, you can commune with it intimately.

Walking meditation is a way to open yourself to the Numinous while moving. The reality here is that sometimes our consciousness is most easily awakened when we are doing something: washing the dishes, chopping wood, ironing, mowing the lawn, driving the car, or simply walking with attention and intention. Like beating a drum or shaking a rattle, the movement alters our consciousness and puts us in a space to receive insights and information quite easily. The movement grounds us and opens us up at the same time.

For this exercise, the next time that you are engaged in any ordinary daily activity—washing your hands, brushing your teeth, hanging up your clothes, or going from room to room in your home—simply be still inside and observe. Open your awareness to what’s around you: the smell of the soap, how patterns of light or certain shapes affect you, and so on. For a real treat, take a walk in a favorite park, in the woods, or by a stream, lake, or beach and just notice. Let your mind wander or be still, and simply pay attention to what you are naturally drawn to

and what you see, feel, or smell. Practice shifting your attention ever so slightly to different objects: trees, clouds, movement in the bushes, and so on. Notice what you observe.

In her wonderful book *Gifts from the Sea*, Anne Morrow Lindbergh speaks of regularly refreshing herself at the seashore by noticing patterns in the sand, by allowing herself to be taken “out to sea” by the movement of the water and by seeing the different intricacies and forms in seashells. What do you see, feel, smell, or notice when you move alone in your home or outdoors? Do you glide or are you in a hurry? What happens when you change your walking pace, accelerating the pace into a run or slowing it down to a snail’s pace? And what do you notice when you walk barefoot or when you close your eyes and trust your other senses? Have you ever run fast down a deserted beach with your eyes closed or walked with your eyes closed and felt the shadows of light and dark playing across your face, seeing with your “other eyes” and hearing with your “other ears”? Journal about these experiences.

During your time in the East, take some time to walk and notice, inside and outside. Experiment, play with different forms of stillness in movement, and write some of your awareness’s in your journal. It has been said that master shamans and mystics “See” out of all parts of their bodies. How, and what, do *you* see?

When you do this exercise, ground until you are calm, present, and aware with a connection to the Earth firmly established. We want to practice being able to move while staying rooted to the Earth, so if you use a tree image to ground, imagine that the roots are long and flexible like a rubber band; they can stretch as far as they want to. As you pick up each foot, notice how that connection remains.

## QUESTIONS FOR FROGS RETURN MOON: WEEK 1

*If you are studying for any kind of certification, you must submit your answers to these questions, along with a copy of this week's journal entries, to the Institute via your private account.*

1. Describe your understanding of the Cosmic Web and how it supports you in your life.
2. What do we mean when we speak of clarity, and why is clarity so important?
3. How can you tell when you are ungrounded, and what are some dangers in this?
4. What are some of the benefits, including health benefits, of being connected to Source?
5. Write about Mad Bear Anderson's idea of not being a receiver of negative energy and how that applies to your life.
6. Why do shamans prefer to spend time outdoors?
7. Why is being glamorous not necessarily a good thing?
8. Discuss our modern society's desire to manipulate power and how we might transform this energy.
9. What does being powerful mean to you?
10. Name all the things you can think of that can cause your power to be lost.

