

Frequently Asked Questions

This version of frequently asked questions has been created for those new to the #ShamansCave on the Internet Relay Chat (IRC) network. The purpose here is to explain what the channel is about, its history, etiquette policies and answer in advance some of the more common questions heard in the channel over the years.

The chat channel #ShamansCave appears on the Undernet IRC network (irc.undernet.org). The channel is open twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. Although the channel is open all the time, not all the people there are available at all times of the day. Please be patient. The best time to find the most people present for discussion is during evenings, Eastern Standard Time. The channel was established for people who are seriously interested in the subject of shamanism. Discussions are open and topics are not limited. Join us and join in the discussions.

What is this channel about?

This channel is about shamanism, its practice and its study.

Okay, so what kinds of things do you talk about on Shamanscave?

While many of the discussions on the channel are far ranging in both subject matter and content, visitors are encouraged to ask any questions they may have about shamanic practice or traditions. We certainly don't have all the answers, but we will answer honestly what we can and steer you towards other sources for what we can not. Please keep in mind, however, that many of the regular denizens of ShamansCave have known each other for many years and discussions can range from soul retrievals to the latest movies. Don't be discouraged if you feel "left out" of the discussion or that the topic you are interested in isn't the topic of the evening. Relax, wait for a lull in the conversation and ask your question. For more information we would encourage you to look over the ShamansCave FAQ below, it answers many of the most often asked questions about the channel.

Do you talk a lot about Native American practices?

Not at all actually. Native Americans are very sensitive about the usurping of their native heritage

by non-native Americans and justifiably so. Beyond that, very few Native American traditions had anything to do with shamanism as it is currently defined. We do often discuss practices, however, from a cultural or historical perspective. The channel is not about Native American practices.

Who owns this channel and who are the operators?

The #shamanscave channel is owned by Niteshad, who also owns the website you are currently reading. Those people designated by him as capable of answering questions about the website are channel operators. The channel ops also provide the service of enforcing channel policies in the absence of Niteshad. If you are new to IRC, a channel operator can be identified by the symbol @ which appears next to their nickname in your channel nickname list. Introduce yourself to them and if you have any questions they will do their best to help you find the answers.

Are there any rules or channel policies of which I should be aware?

Yes, a few rules and policies exist for the channel, which if adhered to keep it a good place for people to come and ask questions, for help, or just to chat.

Idling: We do not allow people we do not know to idle in the channel. This is the same as eavesdropping. We strongly discourage it and, in fact, will kick people off the channel for excessive idling. 'Excessive' is at the judgment of the channel operators, but even folks they know will be kicked after about 4 hours maximum idling time. We feel this is a generous allowance of time in case people are busy or waiting to talk. But we will not tolerate folks just indefinitely idling in the channel, logging other people's personal conversations. That is the equivalent of setting up a tape recorder in someone's home, then going away and simply recording their conversations.

Please don't be offended if you get kicked for doing this - we anticipate a learning curve time period and have initiated this policy at the request of several people who do not feel comfortable talking openly while silent nicks observe and do not participate in the channel. A few of the ops are logged on 24/7 to help maintain channel policies and give people coming from the web pages, an indication of who can answer their questions about the information on the website.

Once you get there say hello, you don't have to give a life history, but we like to know who is visiting the channel. **Abusive behavior** will not be tolerated. If you come into the channel for purposes of stalking, harassing, or otherwise annoying others in the channel, you will be kicked and/or banned. If you are on several channels and join #shamanscave, please consider that

many of our members have dealt with issues of abuse and prejudice for most of their lives. If you are concurrently in channels which promote racism, hate or pornography of any kind, when you join the channel you will be asked to either leave those channels in order to stay in the shamanscave channel, or asked to leave. **No pornography** is allowed in the channel. Although most of the members are adults and certainly not prudish in their conversations, if they ask you to change the subject, please be courteous enough to abide by their request or take it private. If not, you will be kicked/banned. These are simple rules and if followed allow the channel to continue its record as a place where people can safely come for answers, help and companionship in a difficult personal journey.

Are all operators here shamans?

No, not all are shamans, although they are all people who can answer questions regarding the web site material. Most of the people who come to #shamanscave share a common interest in shamanism and bring to the discussion wide ranging experiences. Some people come to the channel and end up staying simply because it is a friendly environment. While discussions may become spirited at times we ask that you remember that those are real people with real feelings on the other side of your computer screen. We believe very much in respect. While you may not agree with another's viewpoint you can at least respect their right to hold it and behave in an appropriate manner.

So aren't there any shamans here?

Yes, hence the name shamanscave, some have only just started on their journey, others have been practicing for decades. Experience ranges from just a few months to over forty-five years. But please don't expect the older practicing members to have to prove anything to you, they don't need to and won't.

Should I refrain from asking questions?

No, not at all. We encourage people to ask any questions they might have. Usually someone can answer, or at least point the way to other sources where you might find an answer to your question. Join the channel, introduce yourself and say hello. Think of it as entering someone's living room where people are conversing. You will be greeted and probably asked a few questions just as you would in any social setting. When comfortable, or if the subject you are interested in comes up, ask your question.

Many of the people who gather in the cave have known each other for years. Many have met in "real" life and have formed friendships. Beyond that there is the common bond of the shamanic. Be patient. Hang around the channel over a period of a few days or weeks until people can get to know you better, you'll find this group to be supportive and friendly once they know you aren't just passing through.

How old is #ShamansCave?

Shamanscave was first formed on America Online in 1991 or 92, an exact date is hazy. It then moved to the EFNet IRC network where it existed until March of 1996 when it was registered and moved to the Dalnet IRC network, and in 2003 became a registered channel on the Undernet. In terms of the Internet that makes #shamanscave ancient.

