

MEDICINE MAN

Dr. Alberto Villoldo straddles two worlds – the mysterious realm of ancient shamanism and the methodical realm of modern science. In his world, they both coexist splendidly.

Shaman, Healer, Sage: Alberto Villoldo travels the world teaching spiritual, personal and planetary healing.



Following a lifelong fascination with what he calls the “uncommon realm of consciousness,” at the age of 24 Alberto Villoldo went into the South American jungle to experience that realm first-hand. He found much more than he bargained for. And it changed him forever.

Chronicled in his 1990 book, *The Four Winds: A Shaman's Odyssey into the Amazon*, Villoldo's experiences took him from a chartered course as a Ph.D. candidate at California's Humanistic Psychology Institute, to the uncharted territory of ancient Incan medicine people and their sacred rituals.

“I turned backward in time and tradition, turned my attention from the clinical psychology and neurology of the modern human to the clinical mythology and folklore of the primitive man,” Villoldo recalls.

Befriended and apprenticed by healers who specialize in treating illness even before it manifests in the physical body, he was initiated as a shaman, and embarked on a mind-boggling journey of discovery.

His experiences over the years have spawned a dozen books, including the bestseller, *“Shaman, Healer, Sage,”* and several organizations dealing with spiritual, personal and planetary healing. The Bio-Self Regulation Laboratory at San Francisco State University investigated the effects of energy healing on blood and brain chemistry. The Sanctuary Project provides support and shelter to indigenous master healers as they descend from the Andes to live in Peruvian cities. The Four Winds Society introduces the teachings of these master healers to the West, even as it preserves their ancient knowledge and traditions.

Born in Cuba, Villoldo's interest in what was then called the “paranormal,” but has

since gained increasing scientific acceptance, came at a tender age. “I remember as a little kid watching Afro-Cuban Santería ceremonies in Havana. Seeing my nanny go into a trance and embody the spirit of an old black slave that came and spoke through her was impressive and startling.”

Imbued with a sense of wonder about the ability of the mind to transcend the physical, Villoldo immersed himself in the study of psychology and medical anthropology. He spent the better part of twenty-five years researching indigenous healing techniques and learning the ways of shamans – the native healers of the Americas.

The differences between modern and ancient healing practices are many. In the West, says Villoldo, we have a psychology base that Europeans brought with them when they came to the Americas. Although we have tried to adapt to



that method, he believes it keeps us locked up in issues. “It doesn't lead anywhere, really,” he notes simply. The traditions of the Americas, on the other hand, are empowering, and “do not make you dependent on therapy.”

“Our medicine of the West is a medicine of violence,” he adds. “We have the ‘crusade’ against heart disease, the ‘war’ on cancer.” The shaman, he explains, lives in a different environment, where healing is physical and emotional, but it is spiritual as well.

Villoldo's beliefs share much in common with other modern-day spiritual healers, although they may be taught in vastly different ways. Brian Weiss introduced millions to past life regression therapy; Deepak Chopra advocates meditation tools to access deep states of healing; Joan Borysenko teaches mental exercises to boost the immune system and overcome chronic pain.

Today, in addition to his career as an

author, Villoldo offers programs, courses and expeditions through The Four Winds Society for those seeking to explore and understand shamanism for personal or professional development.

“I was tired of meeting 55-year-olds still dealing with daddy issues,” declares Villoldo. To help lay a foundation for more effective healing, he now trains traditional Western medical practitioners – nurses, doctors and psychologists, as well as laypeople – in how to practice shamanism, the energy medicine of the Americas.

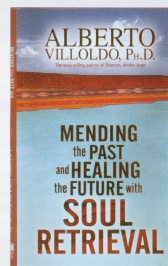
Currently, Villoldo, 56, is finishing up a promotional tour for his latest book, *“Mending the Past and Healing the Future with Soul Retrieval.”* The book outlines practices used by shamans to help readers heal themselves in a matter of hours, versus years, by discovering what derailed them from living their true destiny, dealing with the consequences and moving on. He is also hard at work on his next book, scheduled for delivery to

publisher Hay House in December.

When he has a quiet afternoon to spare, he heads out for his favorite windsurfing spot or kicks back on the fluffy white couch in his light and airy Key Biscayne condo. But those moments are few and far between. In the next month alone, his work schedule will take him to New York, Connecticut, Amsterdam, London, Ireland and India.

It's an aggressive, challenging and exhausting schedule but Villoldo remains exceedingly passionate and enthusiastic about his work.

“I'm excited to be a part of people's growth. I get to see them change and live the life they want to be living.”



Hear Him Speak

Dr. Alberto Villoldo will join other best-selling authors in a series of enriching workshops designed to improve quality of life at the weekend conference, *I Can Do It!* 2005, at the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando, Florida, October 28-30, 2005. Visit www.hayhouse.com or www.thefourwinds.com