

Ayahuasca Healing and Remote Viewing

By Peter Gorman



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WHEN dealing with the medicine ayahuasca, it's important to understand that we are not dealing with a medicine in the conventional sense, but with a spirit capable of opening doors for humans to other levels of reality. And as a spirit, or sentient being if you prefer, you also need to remember that she has a will, needs, likes, dislikes and a complete temperament.

The other levels of reality that I note can best be explained in terms of a dog whistle: you don't hear it but that doesn't mean it's not there. Because if you blow it near a dog the animal will howl. If, on the other hand, you could broaden the band of your hearing just a bit, you too would hear that whistle. And if you could change the speed at which a human vibrates, or the range of colors we normally see, you would see and experience all sorts of things we don't ordinarily see or experience. Ayahuasca is one of the Plant Teacher medicines that temporarily does those things in humans.

It's important to understand that ayahuasca—traditionally made by mixing *Banisteriopsis caapi* vine and *Psychotria viridis* leaves cooked in water all day until they've been reduced from perhaps 20 gallons to an essence of perhaps a quart—is sentient because that's how the curandero, or healer, deals with it. His or her communication with the spirit of ayahuasca is how he or she heals. And the better the relationship the curandero/curandera has with the spirit of the medicine, the more tools for healing he or she will have at their disposal.

One more thing before I get to the specifics of healing with ayahuasca: in the northwest Amazon, where I've been working a few months a year for better than 25 years, illness, bad luck and anything wrong on a physical, emotional, mental or spiritual level in ordinary reality is perceived as the symptom of something out of balance on a higher/different level of reality. Those people suffering bad luck or a bad marriage or physical disease go to the curandero to have them access that other level of reality to see what is out of kilter. Fix that and the symptom—disease or bad luck or whatever—will disappear.

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Given that preamble, there are several ways in which ayahuasca is used in healing. Traditionally, participants in an ayahuasca ceremony do not drink ayahuasca. That is the job of the curandero. The participant comes to the curandero and presents the problem. The curandero then drinks ayahuasca to access a higher level of reality where he or she will search for the disturbance that is causing the problem for the client.

I first witnessed this most basic example of ayahuasca healing years ago at my late teacher Julio's home. A man canoed up the Aucayacu river to Julio's and explained that someone was jealous of him and giving him the evil eye, which was causing him to have accidents every time he sold his plantains. "My legs, my ankles, my back! You need to tell me who is doing this to me," he said.

Julio drank ayahuasca and when he came out of his dream he chuckles. No one was giving the man the evil eye, he said. Rather, he'd seen that every time the man sold his plantains and had money he went to a little cantina in a nearby town, a cantina that had two rickety wooden steps. Julio said he saw that every time the man had money he got drunk and then stumbled on the broken lower step as he left the place, fell and hurt himself. So, Julio said, the man had two choices: Either stop getting drunk at that cantina, or fix the broken step.

It's a simple and funny story, but illustrates a key element in ayahuasca healing: The ability of the curandero to remote view situations, including those in the past.

I saw and shared remote viewing a few years later with another curandero, Juan Tangoa Paima. In that case, a man came to Juan's house while I was there and said that he was certain that his wife was cheating on him and was going to leave him and wanted to know with whom she was cheating. In that case, Juan suggested that the man drink the ayahuasca with us. He did.

During the dream, I had a few moments when I found myself looking at the Plaza 28, a plaza not far from the center of town in Iquitos. The plaza is ringed by good restaurants and a couple of pool halls, so it's always busy at night but I found myself zeroing in on a woman walking with a man. She held his arm tightly. I took it to be the man's wife, but wasn't sure as I didn't know her in real life.

When the dream was over, the man was distraught. "I knew it! I saw her with him on Plaza 28!"

Juan asked the man to close his eyes and revisit the scene and take a closer look. The man did as told and when he opened his eyes a few minutes later he was even more distraught.

"A priest! She's cheating on me with a priest!" he nearly screamed.

Juan nearly started laughing, then told the man to revisit the scene one more time and listen to what his wife and the priest were saying. Again the man closed his eyes. When he opened them he was near tears.

"Yes," said Juan. "She is talking to the priest about a divorce. She says you get drunk and accuse her of cheating on you and then you beat her up."

The man tried to deny it but in a few minutes broke down and admitted it was true. He just thought her so beautiful that he was sure everyone else did as well. He thought everyone must want her the way he did and when he got drunk he just went crazy.

Juan told the man that it was obvious that his wife still loved him but that if he didn't want her to leave he'd have to stop drinking and then beating her.

It was extraordinary that the spirit of ayahuasca would allow all three of us to view the same scene, with none of us having any idea of even where to look for the wife.

But that wasn't the only time that happened. A friend of mine, Alan Shoemaker, moved to Peru in 1993 and within a year or two learned that his mother, who lived in Kentucky, was dying of liver cancer. She had been given just a few weeks to live. In desperation, Alan asked me to drink with him at Juan's and try to see his mother and see what she might need to get healed.

It was a crazy request: I wasn't a curandero; I didn't know his mother; I had no chance of finding anything that might help her. Nonetheless, because he asked, I agreed to try.

During that dream, I thought of Alan's mother and when I did found myself hurtling through space and winding up on a street in a small town in what felt like the United States. I imagined Alan's mother must live nearby and wondered in which house she lived. Instantly I was moving again, but surprisingly didn't come out into a kitchen or living room. Instead I sort of wound up in someone's insides. I guessed it was Alan's mother's insides. I'd never seen a human liver before but was looking at one the moment I thought of it. On top of the dark brown mass was a twisted clump of some sort of tubing. I thought it must be the cancer and lifted it to see what it was made of. I realized it didn't seem like cancer—whatever that would seem like—but rather that the tubes bringing things to the liver for cleaning were all tangled and nothing could get through them and so were sort of killing the liver. I thought that if those tubes could get untangled somehow then the junk in them could pass into the liver to be eliminated. I silently asked if there was

anything that could do that. In a moment I thought of uña de gato, cat's claw, now well known as a medicine but hardly known at all 15 years ago.

When I came out of the dream I wrote the words "cat's claw" down on a piece of paper.

In the morning Alan asked me what I'd seen. I was embarrassed to tell him for fear of misguiding him with the uña de gato. When I relented I showed him the paper. He laughed. "Yes. I saw uña de gato and I also saw sachajeron," another Amazonian medicine.

That day or the next he made up a good batch of the two medicines and sent it off to his mom. She drank it religiously and within a few weeks or months the cancer was in total remission. She wound up living several good cancer free years after that before it came raging back and took her.

I was and am still amazed that the spirit of ayahuasca was not just capable of something like that, but that she was so generous in sharing the plants needed to effect the remission.

For me, that was a fairly isolated event. For someone like Julio it was fairly ordinary. I once had someone get in touch who told me she had late stage incurable cancer and would be dying in a couple of weeks. She wanted to die in the Amazon jungle and wanted me to take her there for the big event. I was taking people out into the jungle occasionally at that time but not to die, so I told her I couldn't do it.

She insisted and insisted and I finally relented when she promised to drink ayahuasca with Julio and attempt to get healed rather than to simply die. I even set a target of having one more Christmas and birthday with her teenaged daughter before she died.

She came with a friend and I took them both out to Julio's. Julio said that ayahuasca would not directly cure cancer, but that he would talk with the plants and see if they suggested anything that might help my client.

The night the woman drank I did as well, and Julio drank a little as well. Julio spent nearly the entire night working on my client. Not physically. He never left his little stool. But he sang and chanted for her and shook his chacapa, a leaf-bundle rattle, in her direction all night. Ayahuasca invited me to see what he was doing: From the ends of the chacapa leaves white lights, like lasers, shot out and into the woman's middle. They moved things around, cleaned out areas of her body, forced her to vomit up the bile of her life over and over.

In the morning, Julio's chacapa was burned to a crisp, despite no fire having actually touched it. Julio laughed when I mentioned it, then called his son Jairo and told him to go collect a lot of medio renaco bark. He said his spirit helpers told him it

would help the woman.

The bark from an ancient tree was cut with a machete and then boiled down in Julio's ayahuasca pot for hours. When there was just about a quart of essence left, Julio mixed it with cane liquor so that the total nearly filled a two-liter bottle. He told her to drink a couple of ounces daily till it was finished.

The woman hated the jungle, the ayahuasca experience and most of all, me.

But she made it out of the jungle alive.

And six months later she called me to let me know she was in Italy, driving around the mountains on a moped but still hated me. And then she called six months later. And then six months after that.

At this time I haven't heard from her in about two or three years. I don't know if she's alive or not. But I know she got at least a few extra Christmases' and birthdays with her daughter.

What Julio had done that night—apart from having plant spirit helpers tell him what medicine my client needed—is a standard healing technique with ayahuasca. It involves looking at a person who is ill and seeing where the illness is and then eliminating it. Essentially the curandero looks for clusters of energy that don't fit in with the rest of the body. They're generally seen as dark spots or splotches, sometimes on the surface, sometimes inside the body. They are visible through clothes. Some curanderos work on the physical body with their hands to feel those spots, some use the ubiquitous black tobacco cigarette smoke of the region to help them see the spots. Others, like Julio, used to sing at the body to make them visible, and then use his chacapa like a scalpel to cut those negative energy clumps out. And once cut out, they need to be eliminated because they've got their own sentience and don't want to die anymore than anything else does. For that, each curandero has his or her own method: Some wrap them in invisible light and put them in ethereal fires or send them to cold distant planets. •

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