

Looks Within Peyote Ceremony

Peyote, *Lophophora williamsii*, is a spineless cactus that grows in the American Southwest and Mexico. It can only grow in dry soil, and is typically found in the desert. It is a flowering cactus with bluish-green skin and pink flowers. Peyote's natural hallucinogen active ingredient is called mescaline. The Peyote "buttons", or center, is harvested and prepared in a tea or eaten raw and has a bitter taste. After it is chewed or consumed in a tea, Peyote can change one's perceptions, including sense of time and mood. The Peyote Sacrament can greatly assist the Spiritual Journey by producing deep spiritual insights and visions.

Peyote has been used safely for thousands of years by the indigenous peoples of the desert southwest as a medicine and a spiritual sacrament. Numerous scientific studies have shown Peyote to be relatively safe and the majority of all dangers stem from the potential of self-harm while under its effects. Although Peyote is not addictive, the US Government has classified it as a controlled substance. Because of this, the Peyote Sacrament can only be used by members of the New Haven Native American Church in bona fide Native American Religious Ceremonies. These religious settings create a safe, spiritual place to experience the Sacrament.

As a sacred medicine, Peyote has been used for the treatment of depression, alcoholism, as well as wide range of other practical medicinal uses. Though unsubstantiated, it has been said that Peyote can make it difficult to regulate blood pressure. Anyone wishing to partake of the Peyote Sacrament while on any medications, or if you have heart disease or hypertension, you will want to speak with your physician before ingesting this sacrament. Also it is imperative that you tell the Peyote Ceremony Leader of any health concerns you may have so they can be extra watchful for negative effects.

After consuming the sacrament one may experience many different effects that mostly wear off after ten to twelve hours. These effects are outlined, but not limited to, the following in these categories:

Negative Reactions

- Initial nausea
- Vomiting
- Chest Pain (more common in early stages)
- Fear, Paranoia, or Nervousness
- Overwhelming Feelings
- Confusion and Inability to Focus
- Panic/Anxious Sensations
- Scary Visions
- Insomnia
- Loss of Sex Drive

Neutral Reactions

- Loss of Appetite
- Mild Distractibility
- Change in Body Temperature
- Bizarre Speech or Thought
- Dilation of the Pupils
- Loss of Time Perception
- Unusual Sensations (Facial Flushing, Chills, Goose Bumps, and so forth)
- Restlessness

Positive Reactions

Increase in Energy
Increased Sensations of Touch
Happy, Dreamy Feelings
Feelings of Relaxation or Rejuvenation
Out of Body Experiences; Increased Access to Spiritual Ideation
Mood Enhancement or Feelings of Euphoria
Changes in Perception of What is "Reality"

The Looks Within Ceremony is either ran by the President of the New Haven Native American Church or a Medicine Person/Peyote Roadman or Roadwoman that has been trained in the Ceremony. Each Ceremony is unique but generally it lasts all night long and participants mostly sit around the Ceremonial fire. There is meditation, singing, music, and sharing during the Ceremony. It is encouraged and expected that all participants follow the promptings of the Spirit and direction of the Medicine Person leading the Ceremony. Respect for the Sacrament and the sacred nature of the Ceremony is paramount.

If you desire to become a Looks Within Ceremony Facilitator of the New Haven Native American Church, you will need to undergo personal instruction by the Principle Medicine Chief of NHNAC (currently Paul 'Man Found Standing' Dean) or their assigned. The following are the requirements to become Certified:

1. A Medicine Person of NHNAC in good standing, having demonstrated himself/herself to be called by the Great Spirit may make a request to become a Peyote Looks Within Ceremony Facilitator/Roadperson to the Principle Medicine Chief.

The individual may make this request in person or by mail. If this request is by mail, please send a letter stating the request, why the individual feels called by the Spirit to become a Facilitator, and what are the individual's intended goals after they have become a Facilitator.

Mail this request to:

New Haven NAC
P.O. Box 2045
Ava, MO 65608

2. Upon acceptance of the request, the individual will enter into an apprenticeship for the Peyote Sacrament. The apprentice will be required to participate in many Peyote Looks Within Ceremonies to formulate a wide range of personal experiences. The number of Ceremonies will all be under the tutelage of their mentor and the number of Ceremonies they have to experience will be determined by the mentor.

3. At such time as the Principle Chief Medicine Man, or designee, feels that the apprentice is ready, the apprentice will be asked to lead out, and conduct, Peyote Ceremonies under the watchful eye of their mentor.

4. Once the mentor is satisfied and confident in the apprentices ability to conduct the Looks Within Ceremony by themselves, the apprentice will receive a certificate from the Church. This certificate will certifying that they are now a Looks Within Peyote Ceremony Facilitator

and are authorized to perform bona fide Peyote Ceremonies for the New Haven Native American Church.

5. From time to time a Peyote Facilitator may have the opportunity to teach others to become a certified Looks Within Peyote Ceremony Facilitators. All such apprentices must be authorized in writing through the President of the Church.

We desire all to take care of their health and safety during the Looks Within Peyote Ceremony. Alcohol, which can speed up the effects of Peyote, and other plant substances that may interfere with the Peyote Sacrament are prohibited. Also the smoking of non-ceremonial tobacco during the Ceremonies is also discouraged. Any person taking prescription drugs, must check with their doctor to insure the safety of the prescriptions when interacting with the Peyote Sacrament.