

An ANAMCARA Healer's Manual



THE **Anamcara** PROJECT
The Anamcara Project is a service mark of the Sacred Art of Living Education and Retreat Center.

The Art, Science & Practice of Sacred Relationship

Sacred Art of Living
Center for Spiritual Formation

SOUL PROTECTORS & PRACTICES

EAST= EARTH



Leaders
ᵂᵃᵢᵀᵀᵀᵀᵀᵀᵀᵀ

SOUTH=WATER



Encouragers
ᵂᵃᵢᵀᵀᵀᵀᵀᵀᵀᵀ

MEDICINE WHEEL



Anamcara
LORICA

WEST=AIR



Challengers
ᵂᵃᵢᵀᵀᵀᵀᵀᵀᵀᵀ

NORTH = FIRE



Ancestors
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MAKING A CELTIC PROTECTION SHIELD

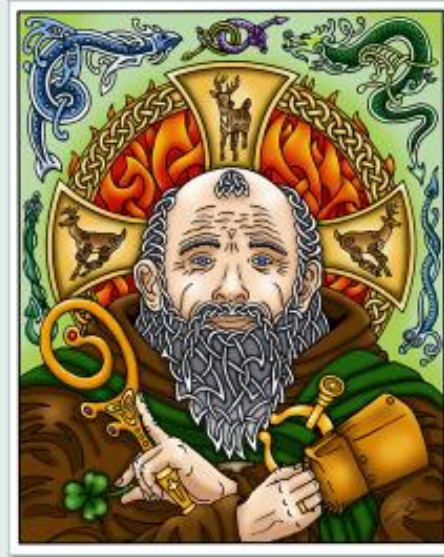
"LORICA"

The tradition of creating a 'death shield' in the second half of life is associated with many ancient spiritual traditions for both women and men. The Celts called their shield of protection a *lorica*. In the Anamcara tradition, it was also associated with the completion of novitiate or apprenticeship. The practice is based on a vision quest experience where persons identify [or have revealed] the special relationships whom they call upon in times of crisis, change and at the end of life. Traditionally, the shield should be created on parchment and is meant to be a sacred circle *mandala* that expresses the unique relationships and needs of each person. It includes symbolic elements, special soul protectors and images or invocations that are called on in times of need. Each direction is also a reminder of the special healing rituals which the Anamcara may employ in the world after the time of formation and apprenticeship. Your shield may evolve over time and can include or exchange elements but the essence of a person's *lorica* tends to remain the same. Regardless, the *lorica* created at an important time in life becomes a valuable 'picture of the soul's journey.' Take time to begin the process of creating your *lorica*; do not rush. You can begin the process of identifying and placing elements on a temporary paper circle. When you are ready, trace your images on the parchment and begin the final composition. You may want to spend time later completing the decorative design details which can be as ornate or simple as you choose. Although shields in ancient times were literally used as armor for protection, your *lorica* can be a piece of sacred art to be displayed in your prayer space or incorporated as part of a drum, should you choose.

<u>Direction</u>	<u>Element</u>	<u>Soul Protectors</u>	<u>Spiritual Practices</u>
Center	Anam	Anamcara	Lorica/Silence/Protection
East	Earth	Leaders	Padirean/Direction/Courage
South	Water	Encouragers	Frith/Dan/Life Discernment
West	Air	Challengers	Caim/Sacred Questions/Healing
North	Fire	Ancestors	Geancannacht/Mortality/Blessing



THE POWER OF LORICA



The ANAMCARA Relationships at the Center of Your LORICA

Begin to create your Lorica by clarifying the names of particular Anamcara (Soul Protectors), past and present, whom you would want to invoke during times of need and for blessing. Though there may be many anamcara in your life experience, and you will be considering several categories of Anamcara relationships as you create your Lorica, name the one or two at most that represent a special eternal presence in your life. These Anamcara could be personal relationships with souls you knew well and who have died, or they could be historical spiritual mentor-guides. Regardless of your particular belief in the afterlife, you can consider Anamcara energy to be a kind of soulful presence that is always available and can be called on during times of special need. Most importantly, your Anamcara cares deeply about the process of Growing Anam in your spiritual development. If you are dealing with a major life change or challenge, you should incorporate those issues when creating your Lorica. Regardless of your life circumstances, the Lorica is an opportunity to focus and name your personal anamcara/soul protectors now, so that you can call on them during special times of need. You can also begin to consider how you might want to artistically represent these Anamcara in the center of your Lorica shield. Allow yourself a special time to connect with each of the five categories of your Anamcara relationships while you engage in the corresponding practices of blessing and protection.

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE OF CREATING BEAMNACHT BLESSING & PROTECTION

Modern Celtic mystics say there is an urgent need to retrieve the lost art of blessing in our time. In the Celtic Spiritual Tradition, this 'art' was also a means of honoring our innate capacity for creative and poetic inspiration. In the Celtic Spiritual Tradition, the 'art' of creating a Lorica was a meditation on bringing all three worlds into focus. The center point of the Lorica symbolizes the soul center from which powerful prayers of protection can be made. The language of blessing can be a powerful tool in the midst of special need or danger.

A blessing invokes the powers of the other world and dares to stand at the threshold between worlds to name a need, to ask for protection from harm or to demand an immediate spiritual solution. The Gaelic word *lorica* is adapted from the Latin word for shield. Historically, the name of Brigit literally translated as 'fiery arrow,' meaning, that wherever her powerful intention is directed, results are assured, a spell is broken and healing is possible. Our modern world has lost the imagination for blessing and protecting. While you can use traditional formulas, the most effective *lorica* come from the heart and are tailored to a particular situation and circumstance. Blessings should be clear, immediate and deeply soulful.

Dia annseo isteach! (*Gee-ah áhn-show éesh-tock*)
(May the Divine be revealed in everything that is here)

Súil Dhé mhoir

HOW TO PROTECT ONESELF

- From a harmful influence
- Or how to prevent it from taking hold
- Or how to prevent it from spreading further
- Or if the harm has already been done, how to drive it out



Callia Mitchell

Here is one powerful lorica considered to be a prayer for 'exorcism' (or protection from danger) When a big change, anxiety or fear is imminent. It is also an appropriate blessing before beginning to create your Lorica:

LORICA OF BRIGIT

In the name of Brigit, Loving Mother
Send a shield of protection
To deflect ill will and harm.
Aim an arrow of fiery power
To replace darkness with light.
Wrap me in the arms and strength of Love.

Bríde agus a brat, translated by Sean O'Duinn, OSB



As you begin the sacred process of creating a lorica, ground yourself in silence. Contemplation is the primal anamcara relationship on which the remainder of your work will be expressed. As you move through the Lorica process, return to your 'contemplative center' at the conclusion of each creative stage.

- If you have a trust in and an expectation of your own solitude, everything that you need to know will be revealed to you...

-Caitlin Matthews



the ANAMCARA relationship



SOUL PROTECTORS

“Anamcara”

-Whom would you name to be your special Anam Cara relationships in your life?

-Is there one soul in particular with whom you have an ‘eternal relationship’?

-For whom are you ‘anamcara’ at this time in your life?



ART OF BLESSING

“Anamcara Intercession”

-Where do you need to invite blessing and protection in your life right now?

-For whom do you want to invoke a blessing of ‘exorcism’ (protection from harm)?

-Savor a time of communion and gratitude with a special Anamcara relationship.



EAST DIRECTION: LEADER SOUL PROTECTORS

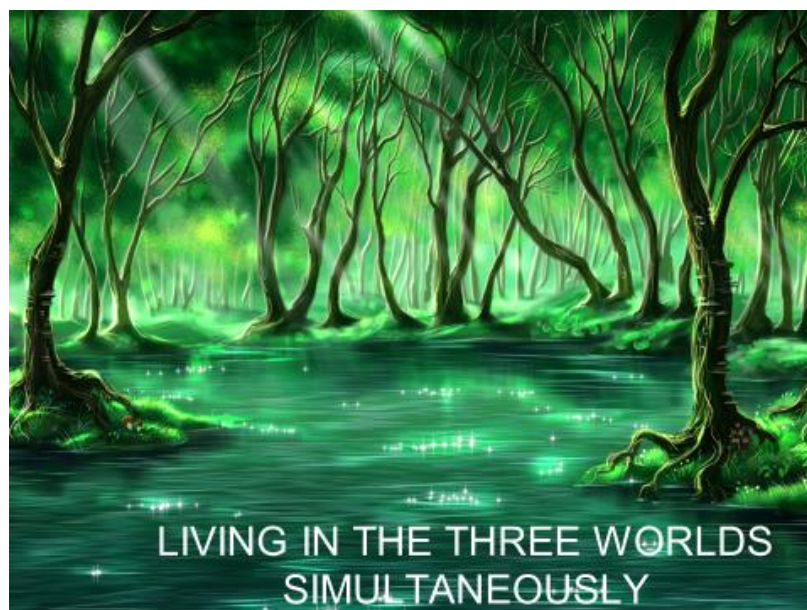
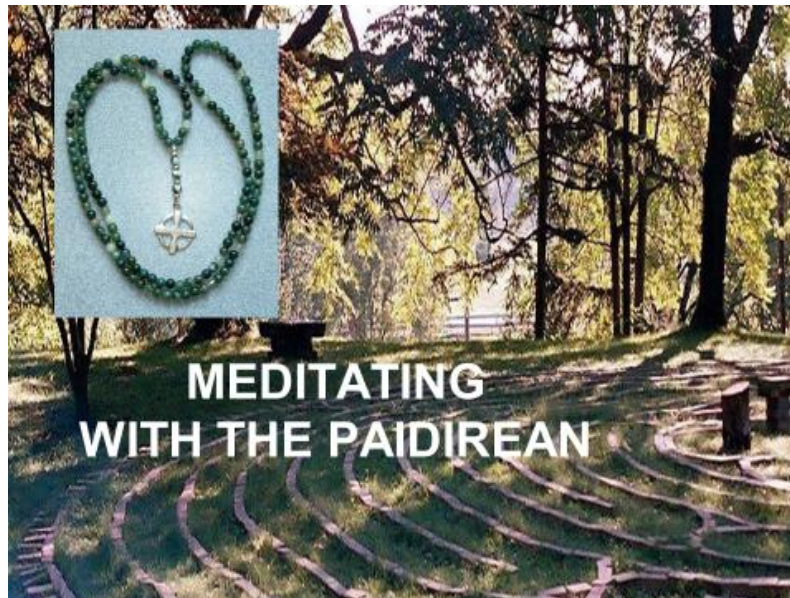


SOUL PROTECTERS = LEADERS



Engaging life ... with grace and courage

Your Leader Anamcara direction represents the gift of grace and courage as you move into and through the rhythms of everyday life. Reflect on the questions below to help identify the Leader energy you admire ... including elements of nature. For this direction, the Paidirean is a powerful practice to help ground yourself during the busyness of life. You can carry a particular concern or joy into all Three Worlds through this simple meditation practice using your sacred word and breath. Just as you would enter a labyrinth with a question or need, consider calling on your Leader Anamcara/Energy to hold the practical needs of your day in all worlds simultaneously.



SOUL PROTECTORS

“Leaders”

-Name/describe a quality or aspect of nature that represents the ability to face life with grace and courage?

-What is an innate quality/power of your soul that you can depend on during uncertain times?

-Who/what would you invite as spiritual ‘leader/mentor’ energy?



Four Element Lorica

Deep peace of the running wave to you.
Deep peace of the flowing air to you.
Deep peace of the quiet earth to you.
Deep peace of the shining stars to you.
Deep peace of Heaven’s infinite peace to you.

Adapted from Ancient Gaelic Runes

How might you symbolically represent your Leader Anamcara energy on your Lorica?

south direction: ENCOURAGER ANAMCARA



SOUL PROTECTORS = ENCOURAGERS



Remaining faithful... lest we lose our way

Remaining faithful to your DÁN

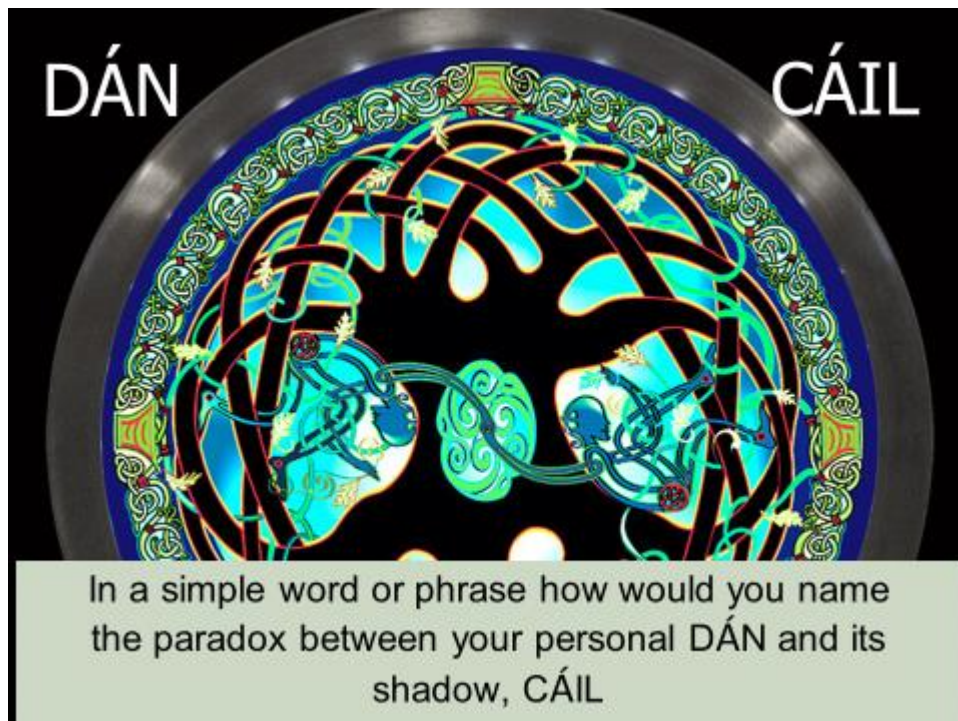
The Anamcara whom we call Encouragers are those who can most support us in remaining true to our essential Dan, or essential soul-self. As we move through life, we make decisions that will support our soul when we act out of our Dan. When we compulsively make choices from our Cail (our false or small self), the results cause suffering for ourselves and others. In order to name your Encourager Anamcara, it may be useful to begin by returning to a reflection on these important bits of wisdom from the Anamcara tradition:



Natural endowments, genius ; energy, ability, temper, nature , one's innate or essential constitution



Blind spot, imperfection, unconscious habit, character flaw, whatever takes one away from their DÁN



In a simple word or phrase how would you name the paradox between your personal DÁN and its shadow, CÁIL

After your reflection on your Dan and Cail you can begin to consider who would be supportive Soul Encouragers for you. How might you eventually incorporate them artistically and symbolically on your Lorica?

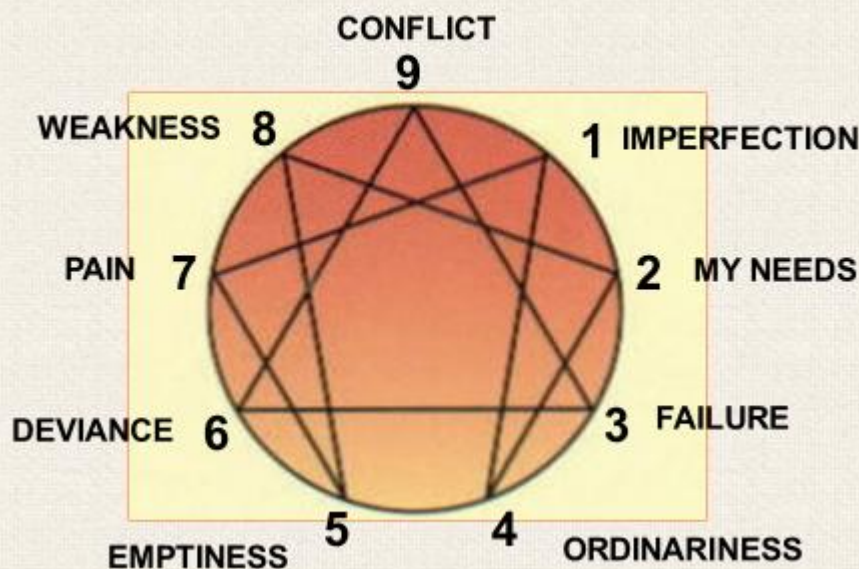
HOW TO ENGAGE WITH MY “Encourager Anamcara”

-What are the things/circumstances that typically cause me to become discouraged or lose sight of my true self?

-How could I invite my Encourager Anamcara to gently support me in turning away from my false self habits?

-What kind of support do I need in dealing with the Cail of my Enneagram Avoidance?

ENNEAGRAM AVOIDANCES



the practice of frith

A challenge in trying to 'deal with' our Dan and Cail is that we usually consider such things from our rational and conscious self. The tradition of undertaking a Frith [literally an augury or divination] is an ancient Celtic spiritual practice traditionally done to invite our soul's voice from the Unconscious Realms in supporting our choices and decisions. In ancient times, the Frith was done at the beginning of each quarter of the year at sunrise. It had special meaning for people who live close to the land and in harmony with the cycles of nature. Special prayers were said after a day of fasting— including prayers to Brighid for the gift of clear seeing. The seeker would light a candle and walk around the perimeter of the house three times *deosil* [clockwise]. Then, with eyes blindfolded or closed, the seeker stands on the threshold of the house facing outwards and placing hands on the door jamb while humbly praying the request for divinely guided insight. After a period of contemplation, the Frithir [seeker] looks steadfastly ahead, and carefully observes all that she or he sees/perceives... with the eyes of the soul. In the old days, this was done for three successive days and then the patterns in nature were recorded and shared with others as a way of being open to whatever guidance they might offer. The idea behind the Frith is to live with greater intentionality and in harmony with the larger natural world. Today the Frith could be a way of marking the change of seasons both in our outer and inner lives which are easily ignored when we are busy and spend too much time indoors and at work. The Frith ritual could also be used at the beginning of a retreat or period of important discernment. It can be an especially powerful way to invite grace for staying faithful to one's Dan in the next stage of life. Find your own creative way of engaging with the Frithing tradition as a way of supporting your current life journey, especially if you are dealing with fearful life changes or challenges.

At the beginning of the Frith, a traditional blessing is:

invocation for the frithir

Open the door to my inner life
Make clear the past to me.
Open the door to my inner life
That my present way be free.
O Divine Fire,
Light my new path bright clear.
Give me a sign
That is no will of mine
To show your presence here.

Leabhar na hUidhre

At the close of the Frith, consider the following blessing:

May the light of your soul guide you
May the light of your soul protect you
May the light of your soul help you trust and recognize
The path that has been revealed before you.

Traditional Welsh Invocation



west direction: challenger ANAMCARA



SOUL PROTECTORS = CHALLENGERS



Offering support... while aware of our shadow

inviting our better angels

The direction of the West represents an important energy on the Lorica. It is a place of discerning life's most important decisions and when dealing with life crisis—including times of serious illness and distress. The wisdom of the Anamcara Tradition is that the Challenger Anamcara are called upon as a special force to guide and protect us from illusion and darkness. After naming your Challenger Anamcara, consider how you might represent them on your Lorica.

CHALLENGER SOUL PROTECTORS “Courageous Questions”

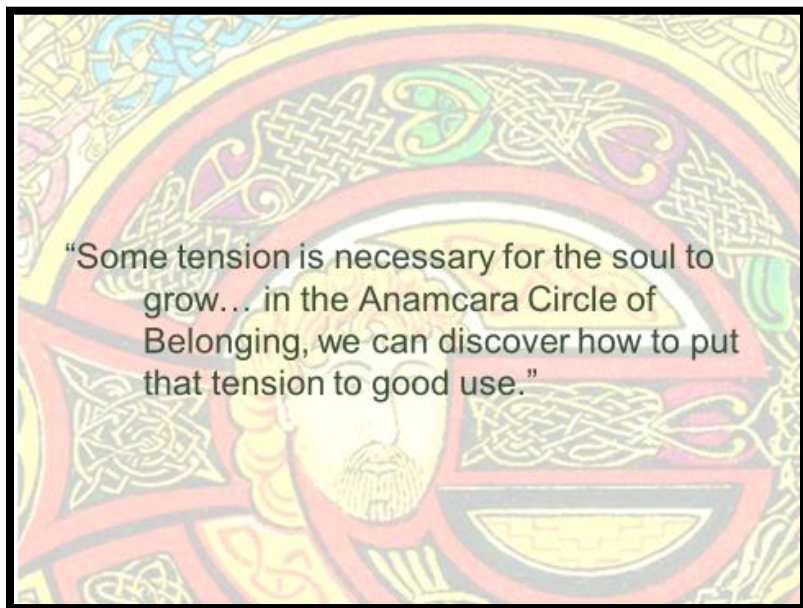


-What areas of your life are hyper-sensitive to challenge and critique?

-What part of your personality do you find shameful or unacceptable and therefore try to hide from others and yourself? (Refer to the Enneagram Avoidances)

-Who could you invite to challenge you in a way that your soul can trust?

“Some tension is necessary for the soul to grow... in the Anamcara Circle of Belonging, we can discover how to put that tension to good use.”



ritual of the healing caim

There are many Celtic traditions for the healing of body, mind and spirit. One simple version is to invite soul friends to create a *caim* [circle of protection] for one who is ill or in need. In this ritual, a candle is lit and the head is encircled with light five times in the direction of protection and five times in the direction of blessing [see the circling prayer below]. There are many variations of the healing *caim* ritual that can be used in times of physical and or emotional illness. Healers should consider using the following prayer for protection and healing which is also known as Brigit's Mantel of Protection. When invoking a healing caim for yourself alone (such as during the time of creating your Lorica, consult the recommendations on the following page),

Using a candle for the circling ritual beginning with the *tuathal* [pronounced: 'too-AH-hul'] or Moonwise/counter clockwise direction.

Circle them, (see below)* keep harm without
Circle them, keep evil without
Circle them, keep strife without
Circle them, keep lies without
Circle them, keep hatred without

Continue the circling ritual in the *deiseal*
[pronounced 'JAY-shul' /Sunwise/clockwise direction:

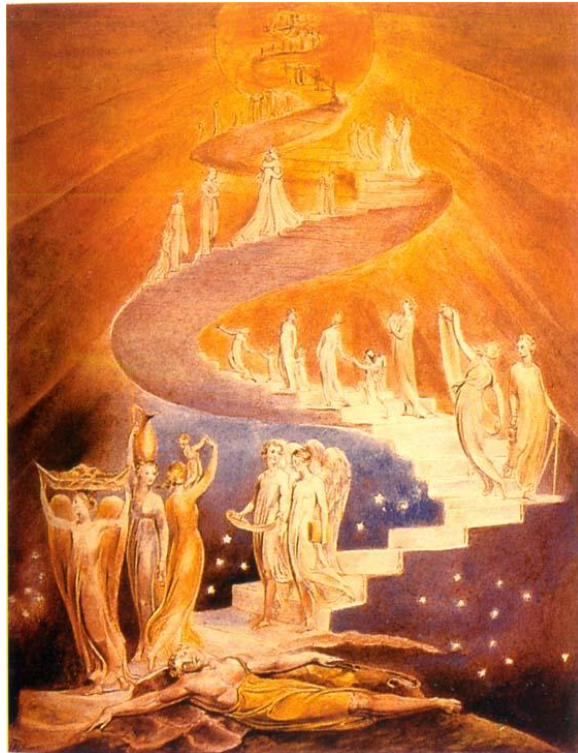
Circle them, keep peace within
Circle them, keep good within
Circle them, keep trust within
Circle them, keep truth within
Circle them, keep love within

From the *Carmina Gadaelica*

*Here you can add a name for the Divine, the Angels, Brigit or other Anamcara Mentors at each invocation



healing caim for visionary discernment



A special healing practice from the Anamcara Tradition supports an individual seeker's when discerning important matters or invites guidance when facing of a Tragic Gap. It is based on the principle of invoking a healing caim of protection and guidance during times of change or challenge. In this exercise it is recommended that, in addition to other Anamcara supporters, you invite Anamcara Challengers as well. These 'angels' are invoked to ensure that a particularly critical (positive or negative) life decision is made or held in a place of soulful awareness rather than influenced by an angel of darkness or our false self. The practice of asking sacred or courageous questions can be a core tool for discernment. Often times, the goal is not to resolve the issue but rather to receive the grace to stand in the Tragic Gap and await soulful guidance.

This practice was especially employed by musicians, poets, and writers before beginning a new work. The memory of Brigit is also associated as the mother of creative inspiration. In this exercise, begin your creative process with a time of meditation after you have identified and journaled about a particular problem or issue for discernment. After reaching the point where there is no more rational solution, the seeker, enters into a period of contemplative silence: Close your eyes, begin breathing more intentionally and rhythmically, slowing thoughts and quieting your mind. Become aware of any images or sensations that might be revealed during this sacred time. Do not rush the spaciousness of this time. When your meditation is complete, follow with another period of journaling to discern the subtle movements that the other worlds may be revealing to you. Then allow a blessing (however short or simple) to emerge from your experience regarding your particular discernment issue. The following beannacht/invocation can be used before, during and after the process of creating a blessing for discernment; it is traditionally said three times:

beannacht for visionary discernment

I call upon—
The Strength of the Heavens
Light of Sun, Brilliance of Moon
Splendor of Fire, Speed of Lightning
Swiftness of Wind, Depth of Sea
Stability of Earth and Old Eternal Rocks
Shield me now, protect me now, guide me now!

From The Deer Cry, St. Patrick's *Lorica*

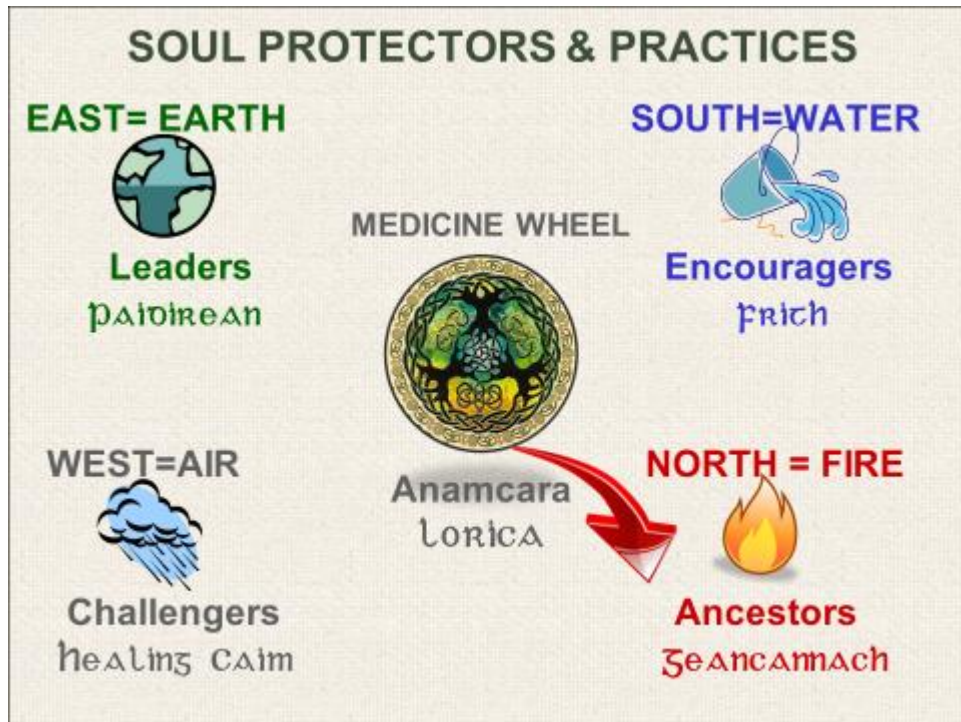


blessing after a healing meditation

Healer of my soul,
Keep me at even,
Keep me at morn,
Keep me at noon.
When the course fares rough
Help and safeguard this night
Even when I stumble, stray and fail
Be the Healer of my soul.

Oran Dia na nDúl

north direction: ANAMCARA ANAMCARA



SOUL PROTECTERS = ANCESTORS



Facing our mortality... with unconditional love

The direction of the North is a particularly powerful energy on the Loriga. It is the place of the Ancestors—in the Celtic Tradition): Tir na nOg or Land of Eternal Youth. From this direction we meditate on mortality, eternity and what it means to die before we die. The invitation of the North direction is to befriend the unknown. There is a special intimacy with our Ancestor Anamcara. After we have identified those ancestors, we can choose one with whom we will engage in the Geancannach (Soul Flight) Mediation. How will you represent your special Ancestor Anamcara on your Loriga?

BEFRIENDING THE UNKNOWN

“Die before you die...”



ANCESTOR SOUL PROTECTORS

“Courageous Questions”



- What in my life is calling for release?**
- Which natural skills and blocks to change am I inclined to encounter at this time?**
- How might the ‘small death’ of release provide an opening to something new?**
- Among my deceased relatives (blood or spiritual), with whom might I like to engage in ‘soul flight’ conversation?**

GEANCANNACH

"Love Talking" with our ANAM CARA

One of the most powerful 'medicines' for grief from the Celtic Tradition is a spiritual practice called 'Geancannach.' It is also a practice that can support us in the soul's work of Befriending the Unknown. The 'soul flight' meditation from the Celtic tradition can also be translated as 'love talking.' Geancannach is based on two deeply held beliefs: that the veil between worlds is always transparent and that the pain of grief associated with memory can be transformed into the consolation of Real Presence. For those who have lost an Anamcara or beloved friend, memory is a powerful force that can rekindle the sadness and loss of the past. With a slight shift in the soul's attention, memory can be transformed into presence. Geancannach is a deep state of meditation wherein one settles into the energetic presence of a person who has died. After a period of clearing the mind and focusing on the essential qualities of a person's loving spirit, there is often a perceptible shift from memory to presence. As you stand between worlds, speak with your beloved or Anamcara as you would have when they were incarnate. You might quite naturally bring issues of concern to your Anamcara here... where, for example, are you facing one of many small 'deaths' in your life? Or, the practice of Geancannacht during times of illness and when facing the end of life, can be powerfully transformative.

At the end of your visit, create a time for leave taking and promise to return again. You might journal afterwards about the experience and pay attention to any perceived messages, no matter how subtle.



PRAYER on beginning soul flight meditation:
"ZEANANNACH"

May this Soul Flight
Open the doors to the Eternal Threshold
To a Gateway Presence and Communion
With the beloved who dwell there
In eternal light and love.
I close my eyes and open my heart
To meet you in that land
Where there is no more separation
And where I will never lose you again.

Inspired by William Butler Yeats

Afterwards, close with the following blessing as a way of honoring
the eternal Anamcara relationship.

May you be consoled about your own death.
May you live to transform everything
That is negative in your heart and soul.
When the time of your passing arrives,
May your soul smile
In the warm embrace of your beloved Anam Cara.

**Original Gaelic quote attributed to Blessed Fintan of Rheinau, 11th c.
As found in the 19th c Irish Ecclesiastical Record**





NAMING OUR “SOUL PROTECTORS” OR SPIRITUAL ALLIES

-SPIRITUAL ALLIES ABOVE US = ANAMCARA... Soul friends and unique spiritual mentors without whose example and teaching we would not survive... and whose wisdom keeps us on the path.

-SPIRITUAL ALLIES WHO ARE ON OUR RIGHT = LEADERS ... Path clearers and forerunners who can show us the way forward in the face of change.

-SPIRITUAL ALLIES WHO ARE ON OUR LEFT = CHALLENGERS... these are the questioners and caution-givers who help us by questioning our motives and supporting us into right action

-SPIRITUAL ALLIES WHO ARE BEHIND US = ENCOURAGERS special friends who give us unfailing and unconditional support

-SPIRITUAL ALLIES WHO ARE AHEAD OF US = ANCESTORS... our parents, grandparents and special relatives or teachers who have prepared us to go forth in life.

A practice for creating your own Celtic Circle: It can be a powerful practice to turn to each direction and invite a more intentional relationship with your own spiritual allies. This shift of attention will invite their gifts and presence into your life especially during times of challenge and change.