

Shrink Rap Radio #153, May 16th, 2008. Medicine Dance - A Shamanic Journey
(Transcribed by Jason Howard)

Excerpt: *Really, it all comes down to choosing between love and fear. Are we going to live our lives acting from love or are we going to live our lives acting from fear? What are we really afraid of? We're afraid of dying. We're afraid of not being loved. So that's another reason the sweat lodge is so powerful -- putting us against understanding and recognizing our fear.*

Introduction: That was the voice of my guest, Marsha Scarbrough. Marsha Scarbrough is the author of the prize-winning book *Medicine Dance: One Woman's Healing Journey into the World of Native American Sweat Lodges, Drumming Meditations and Dance Fasts*. She's also a freelance journalist with over 75 articles published in a wide variety of national magazines. Beyond this she's a graduate of the Director's Guild of America's prestigious Assistant Directors Training program and she spent 17 years scheduling, planning, and running the sets of major feature films, prime television series, movies of the week, and network sitcoms. She also wrote, produced, and directed an award-winning children's video, *The Magic of Martial Arts*, which was honored with the Gold Award from the National Association of Parenting Publications. Along the way, Marsha traveled with Buddhist teacher Joan Halifax, danced with movement guru Gabrielle Roth, earned a brown belt in karate from martial arts legend Tak Kubota, practiced in healing ceremonies with Native American mystic Beautiful Painted Arrow Joseph Rael, and produced workshops from Nigerian master drummer and ceremonial leader Ayo Adeyemi. Now here's the interview.

Dr. Dave: Marsha Scarbrough, welcome to Shrink Rap Radio.

Scarbrough: Thank you, Dr. Dave. What a pleasure to be here.

Dr. Dave: Well, what a pleasure to have you. I want to tell you how much I enjoyed reading your book, *Medicine Dance*. I interview so many authors that I don't always have time to read the entire book I confess, somewhat abashedly. However, yours was one that I really felt compelled to read every word. It just kind of drew me right along.

Scarbrough: Oh, well, thank you. I do think of myself more as a writer than a healer or any fancy title like that. My training is journalism so really I'm just telling my story.

Dr. Dave: Well it really comes through. You know, in a way it reminded me of Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* in as much as it is sort of a road story. You know, it's a woman's road story. Has anyone ever said that about it before?

Scarbrough: No, but I like that. I was going to use the line it's like *Eat, Pray, Love* but without food or water.

Dr. Dave: (laughter) Well, that's a good one. It would be even better if I had read that.

Scarbrough: (laughter) It's sort of a woman's journey but, you know, she goes to Italy and Bali and all these places. I just go out in the desert and starve.

Dr. Dave: (laughter) One of the things that I really like about the book is that you don't pull any punches. You're quite open about every aspect of the journey from your friends' flaws to your own personal flaws, from pot smoking to sexual liaisons. It all feels very real.

Scarborough: Well, thank you. You know, I tried to keep it really real. I'm really aware that I'm not at all perfect and the journey is exploring that and coming to terms with it.

Dr. Dave: Yeah. You were so open about that. How nice that you're in touch with at least some of your flaws. Often we're not that in touch with them. That was a beautiful aspect of it, I thought. Now your book describes a period of your life where you were drawn into a kind of shamanic journey. Somehow I got the impression that you were, at least initially, somewhat skeptical about that sort of thing.

Scarborough: Well, I was. You know, I think of myself as being really ordinary although open to other ideas. The journey was motivated by a health crisis where I had bad mammogram and a lot of other things were going wrong in my life at that time. My marriage was falling apart, my parents had died, my career was definitely going downhill, and then I had a bad mammogram and it was kind of like, you know, you really need to get it together. You really need to figure out what you can do to make your life better. Right at that moment someone said there's a Native American medicine man in town doing private healings and I was desperate enough -- I think the openness came out desperation -- to say, OK, I'll try it. I'll try it at this point.

Dr. Dave: Yeah. I was reminded of Joseph Campbell who talks about the hero's journey and what you described struck me as a kind of hero's journey. He talks about the first stage of the journey as "the call." I was going to ask you to tell us about the call but maybe that's what you just did, really. That initially it was your own cancer or this bad mammogram and the fact that your marriage was falling apart. Another thing that Campbell talks about when he discusses "the call" is that generally the hero or the heroine, they're having kind of an ordinary life, every day life, and then something intrudes to kind of wake them up. Often it's not a welcome thing but it comes along to wake them up. So you were having your own version of the ordinary every day life in Hollywood as it happens, and then something happens to break that frame. Before we get into the journey, tell us a little bit about that backdrop of your ordinary life at that time.

Scarborough: I had a career that I was enjoying on a certain level in Hollywood. I was an assistant director, which is a person who solves logistical and administrative problems for the director. It's very much a behind the scenes kind of thing. It's demanding and fascinating work, working with a lot of big personalities, big egos, and long, long hours. Very physically demanding. I mean, you have time off when you're unemployed for stretches in between and I would always go travel in Asia or something and use up the money I had saved until I got the next job. I liked that aspect of it. But the long, long hours were so physically demanding and I was aging and I had done it for a long time and then a lot of work was going to Canada. There were fewer jobs and younger people who wanted them more than I did. But I think perhaps the thing that really kicked it off was the death of my

mother. You know, we all experience the death of our parents. My mother was very clear that she did not want to die in a hospital or in a nursing home so she insisted that I kidnap her out of the convalescent hospital and take her to her home. So then I was very involved in hospice and her dying process. I think that was really the opening because I was present for her death and I saw her body after she had died. I realized then and there, there was something more. The body was not hers. Something inhabited the body that was now gone. That was a spiritual experience on a very visceral level and it wasn't what I was expecting. It wasn't scary, it wasn't horrible. It was really powerful and majestic. I think that sparked something that perhaps made me more open when Joseph Rael showed up in my life.

Dr. Dave: That's interesting. Yes. That death can be one of those openings. That it can sensitize us to another dimension of being and existence.

Scarborough: And in Native American shamanism they talk about the Great Mystery. There was something mysterious -- there is something mysterious about that. We don't really know what that is.

Dr. Dave: Well, I like that they talk about it as the Great Mystery. I'm so distrustful of people who say they know what it's all about, who have all the answers and can describe in detail everything that happens in the hereafter. I, personally, subscribe to the mystery idea. So that certainly rings true to me.

Scarborough: And, you know, one of the places on the medicine wheel and on the medicine wheel I use that's in the west is the place of not knowing as being a very powerful place. To be able to sit in the place of not knowing.

Dr. Dave: Oh that's where I sit (laughter).

Scarborough: I think in Jungian psychology you talk about tension of opposites, right?

Dr. Dave: Yes.

Scarborough: Being able to hold the place between right and wrong, black and white. Rumi talks about the fields where, you know, I will meet you there.

Dr. Dave: That's really neat. I'm glad to hear that's a place on the medicine wheel because it sounds like a place where I spend a lot of time.

Scarborough: I think we all do. I think it's when we make friends with that place that we increase our power.

Dr. Dave: So you mentioned Joseph Rael which, I guess, is his "real" name. Perhaps the more real name is his Indian name, Beautiful Painted Arrow. So tell us about that initial meeting with him and your first impressions.

Scarborough: The first meeting was when I went for the private healing after I'd had the mammogram. I was in a period of waiting because once you have the bad mammogram they say you have to come back for another one, oh, but, can't get an appointment for two weeks. Then you go for that and they say, "You know what? We can't really tell. We're going to have to have a specialist look at it." But, oh, can't get an appointment for two weeks. Then the specialist looks at it and is like, "Well, I really need an ultrasound but I can't give you an appointment for two weeks." So by then you're so anxious, you feel so powerless. That was when I scheduled this appointment with Joseph Rael. It was something I could do. So I met Joseph and he did what I now recognize as energy healing. At that time I didn't really know what it was. It was scanning the energy body and

looking for where the problem was. As I was doing that I said I saw something lodged in my breast. He did an extraction which is another traditional method. Oh, and then during that I said I felt that the thing that was lodged there had been placed there by my mother. It had something to do with my mother. OK, breasts, mother, all that stuff. He suggested a healing with my mother -- who by that time was dead -- where I could contact her in the spirit world and invite her to be able to support and assist me in this life. Feeling somewhat ridiculous, I did that. Then I went back for the ultrasound and the result was that they couldn't find anything at all. By then I was hooked and really interested. And a synchronistic series of circumstances kept drawing me deeper and deeper into the shamanic work.

Dr. Dave: The synchronistic series of circumstances. I really resonate to that phrase. To me it's always very exciting, it makes me feel like I'm in some kind of special flow when those synchronicities start happening.

Scarborough: You are. You are in the special flow.

Dr. Dave: Yeah. And so there was that period there when these synchronicities started to cascade all around you and kind of draw you in.

Scarborough: And that was a very scary and exciting time. Part of it involved my very close woman friend from college being diagnosed with very serious cancer right after I had been cleared of the cancer. Both of our mothers had died of cancer and we had made an agreement that, since we were both divorced and didn't have children, we would be there for each other if anything ever happened. So she did have this serious diagnosis. Interestingly, at that time she was living about 15 minutes away from Joseph's home. So I went to be with her and then that created the opportunity for me to really consult with Joseph on a regular basis as I was helping her. That was really an opportunity that I think a lot of people didn't have. I had a lot of one-on-one consultation with Joseph and I became very comfortable asking him questions about how this all worked.

Dr. Dave: Yes. I had an interesting reaction about some of that -- and this is more about me than about you. You had a number of consultations with him over a period in the book. I noticed that he would charge you for these and my initial reaction was funny. Probably rooted in some of my own personal puritanical notions that spiritual guidance should be free and I tend to be distrustful of these gurus and evangelical preachers that rake in lots of money. On the other hand, we expect to pay for therapy and he was providing you with a kind of therapeutic consultation. I guess he wasn't getting rich in the process either.

Scarborough: And didn't Jung say that therapy doesn't work unless you pay for it yourself?

Dr. Dave: Yeah. I don't know if he said it in quite those words but I know that --

Scarborough: That in our culture we don't value it unless we pay for it.

Dr. Dave: Yes. There is that notion out there.

Scarborough: And if we were living in a tribal situation with Joseph or any medicine person in the village, I think the village would be supporting him as far as bringing him the food and things that he needed to survive so that he could be available to them.

Dr. Dave: Sure. That makes sense to me. It was just this little initial jolt and then I had to go through kind of a reasoning process like you just did to kind of say, yeah, well, it's reasonable. He needs to support himself and he has these skills and talents that I'm sure he worked hard to develop.

Scarborough: That I somewhat controversial. I think a lot of people have that kind of reaction to that idea, even within the Native American community. I think there is some controversy about that. But he's dealing with us, who are outside of that community, who value things in a different way.

Dr. Dave: Yeah.

Scarborough: I mean, if you go to church they pass the collection plate.

Dr. Dave: Yes, yes they do. One of the first experiences that you had with Joseph was your first sweat lodge. You describe that so vividly in the book. Maybe you can kind of take us there a bit.

Scarborough: Also let me add that I had a background in talking therapy and going to psychotherapists for myself and for marriage counseling. So I had explored the whole psychological analysis process and I found it very valuable in terms of identifying my issues. I think it's the point when I went to my first sweat lodge I was pretty clear about what my issues were. I knew I was severely co-dependent and didn't know what to do about it. I was feeling frustrated with psychotherapy in that, OK, I understand what's wrong here but how do I change it? That's why the sweat lodge was so powerful for me and still is. I continue to do the sweat lodge whenever I have the opportunity. Once I did it I was like, you know, this is just so practical. This makes so much sense. The sweat lodge is a symbolic womb. You're returning to the womb, and it's the womb of Mother Earth. The fire and the rocks that are heated in the fire represent the male energy entering the womb. So you set an intention before you go in the sweat lodge of how you would like to be reborn. You get the opportunity to actually be born again. So you enter the sweat lodge and here is the ceremony of heat and darkness and steam. You really can concretize being blown apart. Being disassembled. Disassembling your molecules and then reassembling yourself with intention in the way that you want to be. It's in four rounds like the four directions. It usually cools down between those four rounds and heats up again. In the iconography of the medicine wheel where there are the four directions, the levels are mental, physical, emotional and spiritual and we're in balance when those are in balance. So it gives you the opportunity to rebalance that also. And then emerge in the new way that you intend for yourself. The fact that it's so physical, so visceral, as well as on this metaphoric level, to me it just worked.

Dr. Dave: Well, the way you're describing it now is beautiful. In the book you described it very concretely in terms of how hot it was and you weren't sure you were going to survive.

Scarborough: And it is! It's really hot, it's really dark, and it's really scary. I think one of the levels that it works on is it puts you face-to-face with your fear in a very visceral way. You need to sit there and be with it in almost this Buddhist sense of being with the uncomfortable -- the things that scare you -- until you're OK with it. It's not like it goes away and you're not afraid. You're still afraid but you're OK with being afraid.

Dr. Dave: And emotions come up in that experience too.

Scarbrough: Very strongly. I think I cried more tears in the sweat lodge, and it's a safe place to do that. It's a safe arena to allow all of these emotions that we may consider dark or negative to flow through you and be expressed. Then you're giving them away into the rocks. They're being vaporized and returned to the universe to be allowed to go out and work somewhere else.

Dr. Dave: You've made a couple of references to Jung in this conversation so far and I know you mentioned before we got on the call here that you had listened to my interview with the Jungian shaman and you have some ideas about the archetype. So let's talk about that a little bit.

Scarbrough: Besides working with Joseph, I worked with some other Native teachers, although not as deeply as with him. I have worked also very deeply with the West African Babalawo priest where they have this whole system of the Orishas which are all archetypes. In the Native American medicine work you have the archetypes of four directions and four elements and animals and rock people and all these sorts of beings. I find that the indigenous teachers I've worked with are very aware on a sophisticated level that these are archetypes. These are energies that exist outside of us and within us. As we integrate, say, masculine and feminine or on more sophisticated levels, warriors and erotic goddesses and the tides of the ocean and all that -- as we integrate those in ourselves that is our healing process. So I find it kind of amusing when people call these teachers primitive because actually they're working very much with the same kind of thing that Jung was working with and are very aware that they're doing that.

Dr. Dave: That's interesting. Another thought that comes to mind is a lot of times when people are thinking about going to see a traditional psychotherapist they wrestle with the question of how do you find a good therapist? What are the guidelines that would let you know that you're going to find somebody who's going to be ethical and who really knows what they're doing? I would think maybe the same sort of question comes up when one moves towards non-traditional approaches. So let me put that question to you. I assume that there are people out there that are in some ways snake oil salesmen, if you will. Maybe who aren't as ethical or aren't as well trained, et cetera. So how would one find a shamanic practitioner who would be trustworthy?

Scarbrough: What I really appreciated about Joseph was that the emphasis is that you are the one who does the healing. The shaman really doesn't do the healing. He can kind of guide you. He can kind of show you techniques, but it's really you doing the work of healing. So for me an ethical shaman is one that is really training you to trust your own intuition. Training you to recognize what you are resonating with and what's going work for you. I think it's slightly different for different people, as traditional medical things are also. So that's what I look for. Somebody who's working with me to develop my own instincts. I'm less trustful of very dogmatic, you know, that there's one right way to do it and we all have to do it the same way. Joseph says often, "Don't get caught in form." Ceremony is supposed evolve for the current time and the current culture and the people involved. Joseph is very clear that he's not a traditional Native American shaman, that he has adapted the things that he thinks work from that tradition for

people of different ethnicities, the current contemporary culture, what the earth needs at this time. He makes a big point of not saying that he's traditional. He has caught some flack, I think, from the Native American community for teaching people who are not Native. He had a vision early on that that's what he was supposed to do because they were the ones doing the damage. If they didn't learn these ways then the earth was over. So he had that vision and he follows that vision but he is clear. He doesn't call himself traditional in that way.

Dr. Dave: Seems like there's a real groundswell of interest in this to match that vision. That there's a real groundswell of interest in shamanic practices among -- how do I refer to us -- gringos, whites, whatever.

Scarborough: Yeah. And more teachers who are willing to teach them which is a great blessing for us. I don't want to make any of the Native people who feel it's wrong for others to teach us wrong, either. I think, you know, there's value in both points of view. And, you know, we be in that holding of the tension of opposites between them.

Dr. Dave: Yes. At a later point in your journey, drumming and dancing became really important transformative tools. You describe a wonderful experience that involved several days of fasting and dancing and eventually hurling yourself against a tree. Can you take us through that?

Scarborough: Well, Joseph does these medicine dances. These healing marathon dance fasts that are adaptations of Native American traditions like the sun dance. In groups you go out and you set a clear intention -- the global intention is always for world peace in his case -- and then you can also have personal intentions for healing underneath that. The idea being to go back to the basic metaphysics behind the whole thing. That everything is simply vibration at more and less density and faster and slower vibration. This is a very basic traditional belief to Native people. It is what quantum physics is now confirming with string theory and these basic things.

Dr. Dave: Yes.

Scarborough: Atoms are all just vibrating at different rates. So with that background the idea is that things can be changed through vibration. So drumming, singing, dancing are all ways of realigning vibrations in a positive and healing way. Joseph has several books. You can go on Amazon and look them up. One of his is Being and Vibration -- one of his older ones -- where he goes into this in a very technical way, explaining how it works. He's going to have another book coming out this fall called Sound, Peace, Power. It's going to have a CD included of him chanting some of these traditional -- or I guess some of the chants that he was sent by spirit so you can actually hear it. So these marathon dances are a way of healing at the very most basic cellular, atomic level. So you go out in groups and for three or four days on various dances. No food, no water, constant dancing to the drums. I mean, there's some rest breaks in there but pretty much for the whole time. So you are put into a deep trance. It's a meditation for the dancer. It's not any kind of performance or, you know, anything like that. It's a deep enforced trance for the dancer. You really get in touch with your deep quiet, with all your issues which are going to come up in your face because there's nowhere else to go, and with death. That's enough time of not having water, in particular,

to give you an experience of what it feels like to be getting close to that edge. That's very powerful because one of the underlying teachings of Joseph's work -- and I think we're seeing this now in more and more of our spiritual and metaphysical teachers -- is that really it all comes down to choosing between love and fear. Are we going to live our lives acting from love or are we going to live our lives acting from fear? What are we really afraid of? We're afraid of dying. We're afraid of not being loved. So that's another reason the sweat lodge is so powerful -- putting us against understanding and recognizing our fear. Once you get close enough to death -- and for me the experience was that it was simple and peaceful and quiet and like I could've just stepped across -- that huge fear of that, then, is not so big anymore.

Dr. Dave: The fear of dying.

Scarborough: The fear of dying. So once that isn't such a big thing, all the other little things that happen in your life that you don't control are kind of like, you know, no big deal.

Dr. Dave: Well that really leads into a question that I wanted to ask you. Looking at this sort of whole journey that you've been on, what did you learn on this journey? How has it changed you or the way that you approach life?

Scarborough: I think that love-fear question is the heart of it. I now am really able to recognize when I am acting from fear or making a decision from fear and how to just stop and not do that. It's not always easy to act from love and know that you're doing that but I have a much better sense of that now. Another thing that Joseph taught is the teaching of the hollow bone so that our ultimate goal is to simply be a hollow bone. All kinds of emotions travel through that bone. Everything that we feel -- our joy, our sadness, our anger, our fear -- and to not judge any of those as positive or negative, good or bad, right or wrong. But to allow them to flow through us, to fully experience whatever we're feeling. But then let it go through so that other energies can also run through us and know that we're the bone. We're always there in wholeness. Which is actually a very Buddhist kind of idea.

Dr. Dave: Yeah, I was just thinking that because the interview before this is someone on the topic of mindfulness meditation. Which is just stated in a different way the idea of watching the thoughts and the emotions run through us without getting hooked by them.

Scarborough: So I think he would say, OK, you're feeling depressed. Why are you depressed? Is it appropriate for what's going on in your life? And then enter it. Go into that depression instead of taking an antidepressant to not feel it. Go into it and feel it really deeply. Let it flow through you as the bone. Then it can go. The more that you take the antidepressants and you say, "Oh, I shouldn't be depressed. I need to get over this and push it down," the more it's going to come back bigger.

Dr. Dave: Mhm. Right. Right.

Scarborough: So I think I have that tool. I mean, a lot of this for me was tools to work with the issues that I knew I already had.

Dr. Dave: Yes. Yes. In the book you describe that one major dance. I know there were many different times that you danced, but there was this one that you focus

on in the book that ends up with you hurling yourself against that tree. You made reference to the sun dance where there's really a physical trial and I think in some settings they actually put hooks in their skin.

Scarborough: They pierce under the pectoral muscles with a bone and then they pull against the tree. That, I believe, is the Lakota tradition. I am not an expert on the Lakota tradition and I can't speak for them at all. But Joseph is half Southern Ute and half Keres Pueblo and as I understand it he's adapted the Southern Ute way of doing it which is this hitting the tree. So in the course of the four day dance, no food, no water, you're inside a corral which is a sort of cauldron or container for the energies. You're dancing back and forth to a tree in the center like spokes of a wheel. The dancers are like spokes of a wheel. There's a community sense in here. You're working with a community energy. So if the individual dancer feels called by the tree -- and this is the part where you're getting in touch with your own intuition -- then they run and they hit the tree. They actually collide with the tree. That's a reassembling of molecules also. Castaneda talks about assemblage point quite a bit so what this is, is like an actual reconfiguring of your assemblage point, a moving of the assemblage point.

Dr. Dave: OK.

Scarborough: The hitting of the tree. Since that first dance which I described in the book and the first sun-moon dance, which Joseph calls it because he includes women in it because he felt the masculine and feminine energies need to be balance in the dance. Again, I feel very privileged that I was able to find a dance that included women. He recommends you so at least a series of four dances. So I have danced since then several times. I have noticed over the years that the hitting of the tree by the experienced dancers has become more gentle. Perhaps in our evolution we know that we don't need to hit the tree as hard as we did early on. That we've found more gentle ways to evolve and shift. Yeah, that first time was, you know. I really did it at full commitment (laughter).

Dr. Dave: (laughter) You knocked yourself out, I believe. I was shocked as maybe you were at the time when at the end of that ceremony Joseph more or less announced his retirement and he charges you and the others who were taking part in that dance to carry on the teaching. What was the impact on you at the time? You must have felt shocked as well.

Scarborough: It was very shocking. That was 1997 that Joseph retired. For one thing we were just coming out of the four days. It was at the end of the four days of dancing so we were in a highly altered state. Then he announced his retirement and that those of us who had been studying with him were now in power to carry on the work. We were just so shocked and everyone was just really emotional about it. Also at that time he announced that he had been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and was going off to heal himself, which he has. That was 11 years ago and he's fine. He's living as a recluse now. He no longer interacts publicly or teaches publicly. But his health is good. So we were emotional and my reaction was, "What? Me? Teach? I don't know anything!" Joseph has a whole lifetime of training and studying and he can't hand this over to me! I think maybe just now as the book is coming out I'm really becoming comfortable with the idea of teaching.

Dr. Dave: Mhm. Well your book describes what feels like may have been a magical period during your life. Would you say that the magic kept happening at that same level down to the present moment or what that a special period in your life with an eventual return to what might be called “normalcy.”

Scarborough: I think there’s no normalcy for me ever again (laughter).

Dr. Dave: (laughter) OK.

Scarborough: That was certainly a heightened and exciting time. But the next book is sort of semi-simultaneous and after that. Well, still, that period really isn’t over because I still do work with Joseph although at a greater distance. But I also worked with this West African teacher. So the next book will be about the West African teaching, flaws and all in there. But still, this informs my life. I journey when I have a question that I need answered. I go into one of the non-ordinary realities looking for answers. I still dance, I still do sweat lodges, and I still follow those synchronistic coincidences which continue to occur. I think once you start doing it, that’s how you live.

Dr. Dave: Interesting. I had intended to ask you how you kept the magic alive in your life and I guess that’s what you just described.

Scarborough: I think once you kind of get comfortable with being out there in the world of the unknown and knowing that spirit will step in and lift you up, that it’s ever present, you kind of go out in this world of not knowing. There was a period for five years where I sold my house in Los Angeles because I couldn’t afford to keep it anymore with the work in the movie business not being there not knowing what I would do. As soon as it went into escrow friends who live in Mexico called me and said they wanted to go to Italy and would I house sit? So I went to Mexico for six months and met an anthropologist and was able to go up and spend some time with the Huichols. Then it just continued that I did five years of basically house sitting and moving around and traveling and not having a home. One of the things is “the true warrior has no home.” I got quite comfortable with that. Then ultimately through another series of synchronistic coincidences, I ended up settling in Santa Fe for now which I’m really enjoying.

Dr. Dave: Well that’s great. I tell you all that magic really comes through in the book and in your writing. As a result of our correspondence I learned about an upcoming conference of shamanic practitioners in New Mexico. For a time I thought I might be able to go but the timing doesn’t work for me. I was surprised -- I shouldn’t have been but I was surprised -- to see that you’re both one of the founding members and also that you’re going to be conducting a workshop on dance.

Scarborough: I wouldn’t say that I’m a founding member. I’m a member. This is their fourth annual conference and it’ll be the first one I’ve attended. Yes, I am presenting a workshop on medicine dancing which I do when I’m invited in different locations. I do sort of an abbreviated mini version of the trance dance. It’s not the no food, no water because it’s only for a short period of time but people do experience the trance and experience some results from the setting of intention. I just kind of give them an experience of what the deep trance is like. It’s fun. It’s interesting.

Dr. Dave: OK. Other than your own book which I highly recommend -- and you've also mentioned Joseph Rael and I will maybe put a link to Amazon in the show notes somewhere -- is there another book or two that you'd recommend to our listeners?

Scarborough: Well, I like Brooke Medicine Eagle's books. The Last Ghost Dance is her most recent one and she talks about the trance dance in there. Then her previous one, Buffalo Woman Comes Singing. Also the Michael Harner book The Way of the Shaman where he describes his cross-cultural studies of the drum journey trance. I think that's a really basic shamanic text for everyone.

Dr. Dave: I think he lives quite close to me. I heard about him when I was off doing the shaman workshops that I went to in Utah with my friend Alberto Villoldo. I ran into people there who were referring to Michael Harner so I should probably think of interview him.

Scarborough: Yes. He has the Foundation for Shamanic Studies which is up in the Bay area. I think they're actually trying to do a map of alternate realities cross-culturally.

Dr. Dave: Interesting.

Scarborough: It is quite an interesting project.

Dr. Dave: Yes. Yes. So as we wind down here, what's your advice to those of us who perhaps don't have a Joseph, a Beautiful Painted Arrow in our life?

Scarborough: Follow your intuition because you will find the right teacher for you. If you are interested in these marathon dances they are going on with followers of Joseph including his brother Benito Rael. You will find them if you research it and it really speaks to you. Like you have found your teacher that you're studying with, and I'm sure that that's the right teacher for you. Trust your intuition, follow and go through what doors open for you, follow your own path, and follow your inspiration. If it calls to you, explore it.

Dr. Dave: Right. Well, Marsha Scarborough, thanks so much for being my guest today on Shrink Rap Radio.

Scarborough: Thanks, Dr. Dave. It was great talking to you.