



## **Sacred Sounds Flute Circle™**

### **Using the Native American Flute for Self-Healing**

### **Session 13**

Joana: Hello and welcome, everyone, to Session 13 of your Shift Network inner circle membership *Sacred Sounds Flute Circle* with Christine Stevens. Today's session is titled "Using the Native American Flute for Self-Healing." I'm Joana, your host. Please join me in welcoming Christine Stevens to the session. Welcome, Christine. They're all yours.

Christine: Great to see you. Thanks for sharing your video if you're brave enough. Hi. It helps me see everyone. Great. Let's begin by blessing our flutes. As we hold any one flute, we bless all of our flutes, of course. I just picked the flute to begin today. If you have different flutes. You may just have one flute, that's fine as well. But I just chose a flute that I've used a lot for healing work for myself, not just for others. Today's focus is on self-healing. If you take a moment, if you have a specific flute that is your go-to flute for your own healing. We're all, I think, on a healing journey, and we'll talk more about that. But today, I want you to have a lot of experience playing, because we are a sacred sounds flute circle. Let's point our flutes upward to the sky where we witnessed a powerful lunar eclipse last night, early in the morning today even. Honor the direction of the above, the bird nation, [Foreign Language], the stars, the sky the expanse of air, the vastness. Invite that into your flute. When you're ready, say aho.

We honor the ground that is such a big part of healing, the roots of the trees that are the forest of our flutes, the energy of Pachamama, what is healing in this energy for you. Bring that, invite that into your flute now. When you're ready, say aho. We honor the inner direction of our heart, our soul. This communication method, this bridge of the soul language expressed through the flute, the healing aspect of expression and creativity, of music, of prayer. Taking a deep breath and feeling this connection. When you're ready, say aho. We honor our community. If you get on the gallery view, it's really fun to see all the different flutes and see who's here today. Aho to this community. In a clockwise direction, honoring the Great Mystery, Wakan Tanka, that presence that assists us in our spiritual journey with the flute. Aho.

Raise your flute up if you have had an experience of self-healing with your flute people. I like that. People are doing it really, really high. Okay, you can put it down. Raise your flute if you've had an experience of mood shifting through playing your flute. Okay, thank you. Raise your flute if you have ever had an experience of playing for someone else that was healing. The intention was healing. Or they let you know maybe, wow, that was really healing for me. Okay, great. Lastly, raise your flute if there's something that you're working with in your personal life that you're healing, that's up for you currently in a healing way. Aho. This is a topic that resonates with everyone, I'm feeling. Yes or yes? Yeah. The design for today's class is a tad different, so just bear with us. We really wanted to design it for you to have a deeper experience today. I think it's important to say raise your flute if you're willing to be in the breakout room and have confidentiality to honor whoever shares with you and to respect all that is shared here stays confidential.

Thank you. Aho. I'm going to start with some playing. I want you to play back to me. I want to begin by sharing with you how the flute has been very healing for me in two examples. The first way is playing long tones. Now, I have a personal struggle with hurrying. Raise your hand if you can relate to this. I've tracked the source of this back to my childhood. My father was always in a hurry. We had to be ready for everything ahead of times. He would sometimes leave us if we weren't in the car by exactly the time. It was really traumatic and sort of stressful. I finally understood that for me, slowing down is really hard. Not just the cultural type A stuff or workaholic stuff. I'm talking about like a deep childhood energy of like hurry up. Playing long tones and playing slowly is huge healing for me. Raise your hand if you can relate to this in any way. We are all witnessing the huge increase in speed on our planet with technology, with everything just shifting fast, climate change. Things are speeding up, people will say. In my experience with Lakota Nation, I always felt like I would go into the ceremonies and have to downshift.

How do we do that? We do that with this. The other advantage of playing long tones for me that's healing is I'm not anticipating the next notes. I'm just playing a long tone. I'm going to demonstrate it. Any flute. I'm going to play an E because this is kind of a very healing flute. Interestingly enough, this was a gift. Sometimes I do feel that when you're given a gift, it has a special charge. Anybody know what I mean? I didn't choose it, it chose me kind of feeling. It's good to give gifts and be part of that sacred economy. I'm going to demonstrate a couple of these with my reverb on, and then I'll cue you. You're just going to basically play a couple notes into a long tone. What you're experiencing is two healing benefits to slowing down. We're experiencing the benefit of not thinking what's the next note I'm playing. That's the great thing about a long tone. The last benefit you can feel is if you want to go with your vibrato on the note, I do feel that we can tune into that vibrato of life. That life has a sort of a charge.

My teacher Lorin Roche says, "The definition of om, that vibration, is the roar of joy that set the world in motion." You can sometimes feel the vibration of life. Even in the body, you can feel that. I'll play and you'll play back. [Flute playing] Just take a moment and notice your breath right now. Notice your body. Did anything change? What I was doing is a couple of little fun notes into the long note, to make it interesting. It was interesting, relaxed, great. Calmer, yeah. Isn't that important? These are super important benefits. What do we play? Five minutes. And giving yourself that space. Taking that pause is amazing. Not getting in my head what's the next note. No. More grounded is great. My second personal example is many of you have heard me talk about this. When my father was on hospice, I created a grief flute. I wrote his name on the flute. I played it every day in my journey, which took us over a month, maybe six weeks, as he was deteriorating on hospice. He was in California. I'm in Wyoming. When I finished that practice, after he passed and I played still, I did let go of that flute. I destroyed it to the fire. It was a very powerful journey.

Not that I'm saying you should do that, but it was for me what I felt called to do. Because I really believe in the fire as a tool of transformation. I want to invite you to take a moment with your flute on your heart. There might be someone you've lost this year, recently, a while ago. We just had the Day of the Dead, Dia de los Muertos. It was a time to build our altars of our ancestors. What I'm going to do is invite us to play from our heart any feeling of that grief. When I played for my dad every day my journey of grief, some days I was joyful on the flute. I was grateful for it. Suddenly I was back with him at Yellowstone National Park, and I felt all this happiness through my flute. Be open that the grief journey has many, many. It's a whole constellation emotions. We can feel happiness. We can feel laughter. We can feel mournful. We can feel all these emotions through the flute. Take a moment. I'm going to play for you. I'm going to ask you to just tune into your own feeling. Put that in your flute and take the song from me.

I'll pass the song back to you. When you're finished, cue me and I'll take the song back from the whole community and finish it. How does that sound? Sort of an ABA healing composition. Honoring grief. [Flute playing] Let's all honor this community together now. How do you feel? We could do this back and forth for a while. It would be really valuable. Maybe we can do this in the breakout rooms. Who was surprised by what they played? Okay. Who caught some meaning in what you played beyond what you could have planned? I heard some of the birds my father loved in my playing. I didn't think of it ahead of time. So amazing, right? Grief is one of the emotions that we don't do so well at least in the Western culture. Wouldn't you agree? Everyone does it differently. I used to work a lot with hospice, and that was a big theme was don't ever tell anyone how to grieve. Because if you grew up in New Orleans, you're used to that big party line. That's a whole different parade of celebration of life in so many different ways.

Now I'm going to invite you into this breakout room time. Oh, cool. Thanks for sharing in the chat bar. I always read these later too. The question for the breakout room and the reason I'm structuring this a tad differently is we're going to take ten minutes and be in a group of three people. I want to have you share confidentially how has playing the flute been healing for you? This is a very valuable question to think about. I'm going to give you a little moment to think about it before we go into the room. Then I would invite you to share that with your people that are in there with you confidentially. The hardest thing about this practice is going to be being aware of the ten-minute time mark so that every person gets the time they need. What is ten minutes divided by three? It's like three and a half minutes, isn't it? Something like that. You know lasered sharing. We're not going to tell the whole story, but we can be deep and share from our heart and listen from your heart. You might hear something someone else says that really resonates with you. These ahas are really important.

Please repeat the question. No problem. How has playing the Native American flute been healing for you? Take a minute, I'm going to just let you close your eyes and think of it. Let the answer come while I play the flute for you. Because you know it's good to reflect before you share, don't you think? Thank you, Joana. Joana put the question in the chat bar as well for reminder. Just close your eyes. Put your flute down. Just reflecting is amazing. When did you get the flute? How has it been healing for you? That's the question. [Flute playing] Just if you can, pop in the chat bar in a very lasered one word or one short sentence what was your answer to the question. How has the flute been healing for you? I'm not going to really have more time to read these, but it's really helpful to see Yeah. Oh, it makes me so appreciate the flute, doesn't it? Today's session makes me really feel a lot of gratitude. Why that we carry this instrument as an altar. [Participant] says, "Just to breathe and open my heart." Isn't that amazing to breathe and open our hearts? Yes, beautiful, beautiful.

How many people had something in common with people in your group? Okay, great. Well, let's let the journey of today's session continue then because we're heading towards a practice that incorporates the three sounds of creation as we learn from Guillermo Martinez in our last session. You can keep writing. I'm just going to ask Joana to put up a couple of slides I created for the topic today. Thank you, Anastasia, for helping me prepare today's session. This sentence came through me like the pentatonic scale, which has no wrong notes. The flute holds the depth of our feeling without judgment. Yes or yes? It's such a parallel to that aspect. Now, healing, what does that mean? We now understand holistic healing. That it could be physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, and social. Notice in your answers what realm that was in. Is your healing more in the spiritual? As Dr. Bittman always defined healing for me, he said it's bringing back what's missing in your life. Bringing back what's missing. Wellness is defined as the act of pursuit of health. It's that act of playing.

It's that act of pursuing, being of sound mind, body, and spirit. Actually, in the medical dictionary, the medical definition of healing they have, being of sound mind, body and spirit. I wanted to just explain too what I feel is important with the flute journey is it's not just expressive. It's also receptive. How many of you have noticed listening to other flute players has a powerful effect on you? Raise your hand if you know what I mean. I always call that the sonic alchemy or the reciprocity. I don't want to just play, play, play. I want to also be someone who listens to different players and brings that into my home in my space when I need that energy. We did the long tone practice. I just came up with these four to share today. The second one is improvising. Isn't improvising healing? Just discovering, just self-awareness, like just by playing without thought. Play first, think later. Noticing what flute calls to you if you have a few different choices. Third is mood shifting. You can drive that through your flute. You can play to a backing track that has a different energy than where you're at when you're wanting to change.

A lot of times people use the Native American flute before they get on stage, before they do a shamanic session with someone. It's kind of in the space but not. It's background because it's part of your preparation. Or picking an Oracle card. I have these little angel decks. The other day I got Patience, which I thought was so perfect for today as I was sharing about slowing down. I can just pick an angel card, the oracle cards, any oracle card deck you have, and then play off of that. It will shift my mood because it gets me out of my self-absorbed thinking. Past, future, worry, doubt fear. Then the last thing I want to share, probably my personal favorite, is using the flute in a meditation practice, which is to play the flute to center, to ground, all the benefits you all said. Then sit in silence. Sit in that vibrating silence. The silence that comes after music has a quality that invites us in. Then connecting to that breath. Because playing the flute really deepens our breathing. We know that this is part of breathwork. These will all be in your handout from the deepening practices.

Let's do a practice now together. We all know how important it is to bless our flutes, the way we begin all our calls. It really shifts me. It shifts our community because we're all on rhythm. We're all doing something together. Setting intention because how you begin is half the experience. Taking that moment with the flute. What am I playing for? I'm playing for fill in the blank. Or I'm just playing. I'm playing to connect with spirit. I'm playing to explore embellishments. I've playing to improve my playing. It's powerful to do an intentional improvisation, which is what we're going to do now. I'm going to invite Anastasia to come here with me. We're going to bring in the drum and the rattle as Guillermo taught us, the sounds, the three sounds of creation, the drum, the rattle, and the four kinds of rattles as he taught us. The plants, the animals and then the insects and the trees. We're going to bring in then you on the flute.

This is a healing experience for self-healing. You know what's up for you to be healed today, what's in your journey. Take that and work with it with the flute. Set your intention. I'm playing for fill in the blank. Actually, the first step is choosing the flute. You don't have to know. I think I can't say enough about not knowing. The journey of self-healing with sound has a lot of I don't know why. I just felt called to bring this flute out. I don't play this flute a lot. But I felt really called to play it today. As I was sharing with you all, I remembered this was a gift for have a mentor of mine. It means a lot to me to play it. It has a supercharge because it came in a gift. It's a gift that's been given, which, I think, got a power. What key is my flute? That one is in E, and this one is in G. This is the first flute I ever got from Chris ti Coom Flutes. It's heartwood and it's in G, five hole. Sorry, I've really been meaning to make sure I say those things when I play for everyone. Are we ready to do a healing improvisation now? Give me some feedback. Okay, thank you. All right.

As we transition into this experience, if you want to come on up. We'll get the drum and the rattle. You're going to want to start and take the time you need, flute to heart, set your intention. Pick something that's up for you. Now, healing topics, they have a different charge. Some things are like level one. Things are like a level 100. You know what I mean? As we're warming up today, maybe pick something that's responsible that you can handle in this moment if you're alone. Be thinking about that. But don't be afraid to go into something that you need to step into with your expression. We'll begin with intention. Show us your flute when you feel complete. I know we need to go at least four minutes because I believe in the four-minute rule that some of you have heard me talk about this. That four minutes is a level of entrainment we achieve. We get impatient. Why can't I get it right away? It takes time to land in that. So be in that experience. Oh, perfect. We have 15 minutes. We're in good shape.

If you are interested, you can record yourself on a voice memo on a cell phone, if you're curious what you might be playing, just for your own personal. Because this is again that circle of receptive and expression. A lot of times, when I've played healing pieces, I record them, and I listen back and I still get the charge of the blessing of that. But this is for you. This is focused on your healing topic today. Does everybody feel clear about that? Any questions? Okay. We're invoking these three sounds of creation with the drum and the rattle, which is so wonderful. Go ahead and set your intention, and we'll give you a rumble beat. [Drumming and Rattling] Thank you. Maybe you don't know, this is Anastasia Andreas, my assistant. Thank you, Anastasia, for stepping in. When you all were in the breakout rooms, Anastasia and I filmed a four-minute clip of the drum and the rattle. That will be provided in the deepening practices. These next two weeks, we just invite you to do an intentional improvisation. We want to be the rhythm track that holds you. You don't need to use us. You might have not wanted rhythm.

But sometimes rhythm is a container that helps hold our emotions. The rattle Anastasia was playing. I learned so much about this two weeks ago with Guillermo Martinez. It has fox hair, so it has the animals. It has also animal hide. But inside it is anthill pebbles, which are usually the traditional. At least in the Lakota Nation, traditionally, we use the insect of the ants because they have pushed all those little ant pebbles out. You've seen those ant circles, right? They do it in a circle. They clean them. We just gather those little anthill pebbles, and those are often in these rattles. Like he showed us, I can play in the two ways, the shaking and then the rhythm. Okay, let's hear about that experience. Is there anybody who wants to open their mike and share? What was challenging? What was good? Where can you get that rattle? Well, this one I can share where I got this rattle. My friend Laurie Boaz made it. She does sell these rattles, and they're quite exquisite. I love her work. I'll put that in the handout, the deepening practices handout. Her website is called Medicine Dog. Very emotional. Come on, let's hear some comments, because we can all learn from hearing from each other. It is interesting for me just playing the drum and the rattle, holding that space for you all, I also tuned into something that I want to do some healing with after this. [Participant], good.

Participant: I started with the intention of communicating with my ancestors, because it's a new thought for me. But I ended up communicating with, I live on some property where Native American people used to live. We have grinding stones and big rocks in the pond. I really felt their spirits. I felt communication. I learned a lot about their lives while I had this experience of playing for them. It was pretty cool.

Christine: How long have you lived there?

Participant: A couple of years. I've pretty much been here since I've been taking your classes. It's all very much the same time.

Christine: Thank you, [Participant], but may I ask a follow-up question?

Participant: Sure.

Christine: Can you now say how you played on the flute? Like be specific. We're a flute community. What did you notice? Like trills, long tones. Just give us a little picture of anything you notice musically.

Participant: It's more melodic. There was a lot of variety in it, but it wasn't overexcited. I have to hear back and really hear what I did. I'm really not sure. I'm not big into trills and all that anyway. I tend to go to the center of it. I'm just sort of just starting to discover the ornamentation and that sort of thing.

Christine: That was a great answer. I'm not even sure what I played. I'll have to listen later. Who can relate to that? Exactly. Thank you for your sharing.

Participant: Thank you.

Christine: Give her some appreciation. Thank you.

Joana: Okay, [Participant], we're going to pass it over to you.

Participant: Okay. I played some long tones. I did some rhythmic beat and some chirps. I found the music in the background like it just holds you. It just holds you. You can play along to the beat, or you can just take a break and do long tones. That's what I did. I found that at the very end I just got very emotional. I don't know why. But I guess that feeling was inside, and that music just all brought it out. It was wonderful. I enjoyed it.

Christine: Thank you. Give her some appreciation. [Participant], thank you for putting in the chat bar, is today a Full Moon? Wow, we're really charged up for this topic today. I want to also give some appreciation to [Participant]. [Participant], where are you? Because [Participant] is going to go tonight and offer a sound healing with his flutes for his community. Give some appreciation to [Participant] and give him some support. Because, [Participant], we want you to carry our whole community with you, feeling us supporting you that you're bringing this healing energy into your next step of how we offer this, so wow. [Participant], that's a very important sharing. When we get feelings or sadness, we don't need to know why. There's a very powerful theory called reunion grief. What it means is when you bring back into your life what's been lost, you feel tears. That is a good tear. Dr. Emoto studied that tear, the water of that tear when you cry of reunion. Like you think you miss someone, you pick them up at the airport, you cry when you embrace them. Not when they're gone, which would be logical.

But it's when you embrace that person, when they come back, you cry. That's called reunion grief. Dr. Emoto studied that teardrop, and it looks completely different, of course, than sad teardrop waters. These are good tears. When I would do drum circles 25 years ago, people would walk up to me at the end of the circle crying, and they'd say, I don't know why I'm crying. I'm happy. I'm actually happy, but I'm crying. Then I finally saw a presenter explain reunion grief. I was like, oh, you've missed the drum and now you're reunited. You've missed that feeling. I think the flute and the drum and the rattle, which we've understood from Guillermo's teaching, that is why we're accessing something great. We're accessing those three sounds of creation together. I also think there's something to be said of being in a community. I know we're on Zoom, but we all know we're doing this thing together. I think that might contribute to the healing energy being generated.



Is there anybody else who would wish to share about their experience? Maybe we have time for one more? Oh, we're almost out of time. You know you're in a healing space when you lose time. Well, is there anybody here who is working on healing something specific that would be willing to share it? It's all confidential. I am wrapping up, but I do want to ask one last thing. Has anybody got something that's on their heart today? My idea was to see if there's someone else who would have a suggestion with their flute how to help with that. Let's see if anybody would like to share. Great, I'm seeing some people. Physical illness, yeah, GI distress. Okay, that's a great example. How would I heal that with the flute? I would play a note and I'd hold my hand on my belly. We don't always need to have both hands on the flute. I'd probably use my lower pitch. I noticed some of you were copying what I was doing. When I was doing the COVID sound healing project with my flute for a whole year, I saw Mark doing this, I would often use my hand to send the energy places in the person's body. You can do that with yourself. Let's all try this.

You're just using one hand, but then you're taking your other hand. In Reiki they call this fluffing. You're just kind of fluffing over your GI distress, tummy. Our stomachs feel a lot of anxiety and emotions. It might look like this. That felt good? If I was sitting with you and you told me that, I would play my flute facing you slowly down the body, and then hang out in that stomach area, which to me would be the lower kind of notes. The other thing that's going to help GI distress is playing and breathing, because you're breathing deeply, so sitting back. Sometimes we have to change our posture with the flute. Sitting a little bit back, relaxing in your chair. It already feels good. Feeling the tummy support your sound. Okay, let's close with this. I know we're cranking into the time here. Everyone who's ever felt any tummy pain, GI distress, put your hand on your stomach. It can move while I play. It can just be solid. But I'd like to play some healing for everyone's stomach today. May we all have good digestion, physically and metaphorically. May we continue to be tuned by our sacred flutes.

Your homework is to practice. We made you a video to practice to where you can use rhythm music you love or use no rhythm music, but to practice this intention-based improvisation for self-healing, for self-care. Thank you all. I look forward to our session in two weeks where we're going to continue this and go a little deeper into, how do we then do healing for others.

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