

Instructions to prepare for the Vision Quest

To lead you into a process of preparation for your Quest, please read our following instructions:

1. Please write a **letter of purpose or intent**, not longer than two A4 sheets and send it, together with your **Notification and Participant Agreement** to:

G & H. Heiten, Hinter den Höfen 10, 37276 Meinhard, Germany, or as **fax to** +49 5651 952144, or signed and scanned to **e-mail: info@eschwege-institut.de**

This letter should include information about your current life situation and the reasons, why and what for you consider doing this rite of passage. Doing so, will be as important for you, as it will be for us. Your intent might carry the weight of thousands of years of ancestral yearning.

2. An important step into your personal preparation is to do the „ **Medicine Walk**“. It is an important part of the Vision Quest and your story about your experience with it will be heard in the beginning of the group-preparation-time. Take care to find a possible date for it well in advance.

The Medicine Walk

The Medicine Walk is a daylong journey in nature, from sunrise to sunset. This journey is a mirror, in which symbols of your inner journey will appear in the outside. This will bring you indications about your own way and power of the Vision Quest.

We recommend choosing for a silent area, away from people, close to your home, if possible. Don't distract yourself by eating during this day, drink just water that you carry with you. Don't challenge yourself with long and certain routes. This day is yours and about flowing. The only important thing is to be open, to what ever comes up, even sleeping or dreaming. Begin your walk with a little ceremony, by creating a threshold with natural material, such as wood or stones etc.. Imagine entering an unusual and sacred world behind that threshold, in which everything what comes across has a symbolical meaning.

Be open to what attracts your awareness and follow it rather than having plans for this day. Trust beyond wanting to understand, that you will attract beings and forces of nature, to give you symbolical indications about your gifts and ways to live. Look! Hear! Be astonished!

Two tasks to do:

- 1.** In a certain moment you will find an object that feels like having a strong symbolical meaning to you in your current life situation. Please take this object and bring it with you to the group.
- 2.** In a certain moment ask yourself the following question: For whom, beside myself, will I do the Vision Quest, for whom will this be of good benefit?

Come back to your usual daily life by sunset, cross the threshold and take it apart again. You might write down some important details of your story and will not talk about it to others, before the start of the group-preparation.

Do you want to go further with your preparation?

The preparation for a Vision Quest is a good opportunity to tidy up your Life in the inner and the outer. The Vision Quest is a rite of Passage, the passage, from one life phase to another. You will have to die from your old life for this, in order to be able to be born again into your new life.

In the time before this little death, just like before the physical death at the end of life, it makes sense, to tidy up with the things of the life you've lived. Try to make good, what you can make good, forgive, bless and appreciate, where it is needed and possible. Try to enter your new life with as less ballast as possible.

- In tidying up the attic or basement in your house, you can become more conscious about things you still carry with you but not needing them anymore.
- In taking care of some loose ends of old relationships, you might be able, to make it good again.
- You could start to eat more light food, to prepare for the fast.

When and where do we meet:

We will meet on day one of the date mentioned for this years Vision Quest, at 3:00 pm at the „**Woodland Shelter**“ of the nature camp site, in the Pineridge forest. You can easily find it by asking locals or looking for the famous whiskey barrel houses of the Findhorn Community. It's there where the Pineridge forest begins. Find the shelter at the edge of a big square clearing at the seaside edge of that forest. You will live in your own tent and, as the group will provide itself with its own food (please plan some money for it), we either prepare it in its self catering kitchen, or use one of the good restaurants around. The camp site provides two compost toilettes and a cold water shower. Opportunities for warm showers will be organized on certain days.

The idea of the 3:00 pm meeting is to offer a walk through the Findhorn Foundation Community for all who are interested in taking some time to arrive and get to know this fantastic place. For all who are not interested in the walk, the workshop will start with all participants at 8 pm in the woodland Shelter, with a first circle. We will complete the ceremony on the last day mentioned by 7 pm. As we usually celebrate with the group after that, please plan to stay over night until September 1.

How to find us:

From the continent you can flight into Inverness (Lufthansa, BA, Flight Be, Easyjet), or into Aberdeen (KLM, BA, Lufthansa). From Inverness take a Bus to Forres or a Taxi straight to Findhorn (you might be able to share with others), or to Inverness Train Station, to get on a train to Forres, a town 6 miles from Findhorn. From Aberdeen take the bus (Stagecoach Bluebird, Service 10, **Aberdeen – Forres – Inverness**) This bus stops directly at the airport only early mornings and later afternoon. During daytime you might want to ask a taxi, to bring you to the next possible bus stop for Service 10.

When you arrive in the little town of **Forres** which is located 30 miles east of Inverness, we recommend taking a taxi (may be you can share it with somebody who is also on the way to Findhorn). Here some possible taxi tel. nr: Country code if calling from the continent 0044 and area code: (0)1309, Tel.: 691516, o. 690253, o. 673305, o. 673168.

The same way you take on your way back.

There are also possibilities to get there by train all the way with an interrail ticket or by bus (see Megabus or Eurobus) and by Ferry with your own car (Amsterdam-Newcastle).

If you come there one day early, you have the following options:

A. You already set up your tent on the camp site mentioned above, where we all will live for the preparation phase anyway. The camp site always tries to save some spaces for participants arriving one day early. If you manage to get a space there, this would be the cheapest and most practical way to stay in Findhorn. Its self catering, but you could also go to a restaurant just around the corner. If you're interested in this option, please call the landmanager Kayedo. The tel. number is: +44 7464890866.

B. Find B&B's in Forres with this link: www.visitforres.com.

In case something during your trip is going wrong, we might be able to help. Simply call +49 174 3295854 to contact us.

Pack up, a ceremony itself

Leave for the wilderness as naked as possible and as save as necessary. For the safety and well being of you and the entire group, your equipment needs to be complete, according to the following equipment-list. What ever you like to add to it is your own decision.

Observe if you are ready to let go of habitual things and expose yourself to the unknown.

To pack up is a severance-ceremony itself, take with you, what might be of use on your way into a new stage of life, and explore the fine balance between safety and freedom.

Equipment list

Small tent that provides enough space for yourself and your luggage.

Backpack. If not worn before, make sure it fits, practice carrying it around when it is fully packed. Straps, webbing, frame, fittings, zippers, and pockets should be in good repair. It should be big enough to contain the equipment according to this list, with sleeping bag, sleeping pad and the tarp, fixed on the outside.

Warm Sleeping Bag. (Comfort tempr. -5 to -10°C) No flannel bags! Down bags are OK, but lose their efficiency when they become wet. Synthetic fibre bags, though slightly heavier than down, make the best „all around bags“. They dry out quickly and do not lose their loft.

1 Tarpaulin (3m x 4m or max. 5m). (alternative, two tarps (2,5m x 3,5m) one to use as a ground cloth and a second one to use as a windshield or rain tent), equipped with eyes to fix it with a rope is ideal. Look for the lightest weight consistent to fabric strength. The wind will eat up a flimsy tarp. Cheap multi-purpose-tarps from the builders marked are good enough, others are expensive.

Foam or Rubber Sleeping Pad. Thermarest sleeping pads are ideal.

Rope. Minimum 30m, it is good to error on the adequate side. Tough, lightweight nylon rope, 2-4mm thin is the best. You will use to fasten your tarp to rocks, trees, etc., to make a shelter.

Small Clasp Knife. This tool is handy to carry in the pocket

Bandana or Neckerchief. An essential, multi- purpose item, of use as sun shield, a sponge, a filter, a rag, a compress, a bandage etc..

Boots, Stout Shoes or Wellingtons. Weatherproofed, waterproofed shoes that covers at least the ankles (wet feet are cold feet). Take precautions to break in new footwear before going into wilderness with it.

One 5-Liter Plastic Water Containers. Three one-gallon containers will also do, to provide you with 12-15 Litres of drinking water. Cooking oil bottles, with screw-top lids, plastic milk or juice containers will be adequate. There will be stashed extra containers at locations away from base camp, to refill yours, if needed. (can all be bought also, in preparation time in Findhorn)

Water bottle. To carry with you in your daypack. Could be an empty plastic-bottle, like Cola....

Your own Laxative in order to prepare yourself for the fast; and **Toilet Paper.**

Small Plastic- or Paper Bag. To carry out toilet paper and other trash.

Two Large, Plastic Garbage Sacks. They make valuable „raincoats“ for packs, sleeping bags.

Journal and Pencil. Pencils can always be sharpened, pens are not trustworthy. Hopefully, the journal is on the smaller side and can be conveniently carried.

Small Day Pack. To carry the emergency kit (see below), your journal, and other items you might want to take with you on any excursion away from your power place.

Clothing. Be prepared for warm and cold weather, so think of shorts etc., but most important are the following, because it can be very cold and rainy out there too: Warm wool sweater, wool cap, mittens, another pair of wool socks (you're wearing the other pair), a pair of long johns, warm underwear, an adequate winter jacket, if not water- and windproof, you need an additional raincoat, a pair of waterproof trousers, good trousers.... Wool clothes will keep you warm even when wet, fleece clothes are also good and light. You may want to change into clean clothes when you return from the threshold. This can be kept at base camp.

Whistle. To signal in case of emergency and a **Rattle** for your own ceremonies

Optional Items:

Toothbrush, tampax, sunscreen, chapstick, insect repellent, sun hat, sun glasses (no drums or other very loud instruments).

Emergency Kit

As you will be alone in the threshold-time, you will be required to treat either yourself or an other quester, should an accident occur to either. This emergency kit has to be carried with you in your daypack, on any excursion away from your tarp. In case an accident occurs to you, you have to be able to stay warm and dry for up to 36 hours.

Some of these items are already a part of the equipment list.

Bandanna

Water bottle

Flashlight (for emergency use, with new batteries)

Small clasp knife

A few hard candies or small tube of honey ore grape-sugar (quick energy in case of emergency)

Wool cap

Warm wool sweater

Raincoat or waterproofed jacket

Whistle

Pencil and paper

Ana kit (required for persons with known allergic reactions)

A small medicine kit, including: Plaster and Sterile bandage

We send this equipment list to you early, so that you will have enough time to procure it bit by bit. Perhaps it is also possible to lend some from friends or relatives.

If you want to read before hand, we recommend the following books

THE BOOK OF THE VISION QUEST: PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION IN THE WILDERNESS

Steven Foster with Meredith Little
Revised and expanded edition. New York: Prentice Hall, 1988. 230 pages.

THE FOUR SHIELDS: THE INITIATORY SEASONS OF HUMAN NATURE

Steven Foster with Meredith Little. Diagrams and drawings by James Wright.
Lost Borders Press: Big Pine, 1999. 340 pages

LOST BORDERS: COMING OF AGE IN THE WILDERNESS

A documentary film by Kim Shelton, Two Shoes Productions. Bullfrog Films - 55 minutes

LOST BORDERS: A VISION FAST HANDBOOK FOR YOUTH COMING OF AGE IN THE WILDERNESS

Steven Foster and Meredith Little, Illustrations by Win Bock and Jennifer Massey
Lost Borders Press: Big Pine, 1998. Revised edition. 80 pages.

THE ROARING OF THE SACRED RIVER: THE WILDERNESS QUEST FOR VISION AND SELF-HEALING

Steven Foster and Meredith Little. Illustrations by Emerald North.
Lost Borders Press: Big Pine, 1998. Revised Edition. 230 pages

THE SACRED MOUNTAIN: A VISION FAST HANDBOOK FOR ADULTS

Steven Foster and Meredith Little. Illustrations by Jennifer Massey and Carla Simmons.
Lost Borders Press: Big Pine, 1996. Revised and Expanded. 68 pages.