

SKYGAZING

into our future

There's nothing like a vast, moody sky to induce deep reflection. And there's no time like the end of the year to make us think back on the events of the preceding 12 months and look ahead to the next dozen.

I spent two weeks this past fall in the stark, stunning SoCal desert surrounding Joshua Tree, CA, where large predatory birds circled overhead, roadrunners speed-raced across the desert-scape, and coyotes serenaded the night sky.

In ghostly places like Joshua Tree National Park, time seems to stand still. Which fits in perfectly with the beliefs of the millennia-old shamanic practices I was studying in Joshua Tree. These original natural healers work in a state beyond death and time and *believe in humans' ability to will their dreams into being*.

So many of us, the author Henry David Thoreau said,

“lead lives of quiet desperation.” *But we do not have to be prisoners of unfulfilling lives.* There have always been bold and creative people who craft their lives by gaining mastery of their thoughts, which we know from neuroscience are what trigger behavior. We have trillions of neurons, and they have the ability to communicate with trillions of other brain cells, meaning there is literally an infinite number of possible actions we could take *every second of our lives*. Long before science coined the term epigenetics, shamans knew that we are not our genes; “we are our dreams,” they say.

Humans have always gazed up at the sky — for information *and* inspiration. The dawn of a new year is a good reminder to look up and be spurred to new heights. Shamans say we're all healers and, if we dare to, we can dream *our* destiny into being.

—Suzanne Gerber