

“Fear of knowledge is natural; all of us experience it, and there is nothing we can do about it. But no matter how frightening learning is, it is more terrible to think of a man without knowledge.”

—don Juan Matus

**PRAISE FOR THE GROUNDBREAKING WORK OF
BESTSELLING AUTHOR CARLOS CASTANEDA**

“Extraordinary in every sense of the word.”

—The New York Times

“An unparalleled breakthrough. . . . Remarkable.”

—Los Angeles Times

“Hypnotic reading.”

—Time

“Exquisite. . . . Stunning. . . . Fresh, unexpected visions with the logic of dreams.”

—Detroit Free Press

“It is impossible to view the world in quite the same way.”

—Chicago Tribune

Also by Carlos Castaneda

The Teachings of Don Juan

A Separate Reality

Journey to Ixtlan

Tales of Power

The Second Ring of Power

The Eagle's Gift

The Fire from Within

The Wheel of Time

Available from WASHINGTON SQUARE PRESS

**CARLOS
CASTANEDA**


**THE POWER
OF SILENCE**

Further Lessons of don Juan

W

WASHINGTON SQUARE PRESS

New York London Toronto Sydney

 Washington Square Press
A Division of Simon & Schuster, Inc.
1230 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10020

Copyright © 1987 by Carlos Castaneda

All rights reserved, including the right to reproduce this book or portions thereof in any form whatsoever. For information address Simon & Schuster Subsidiary Rights Department, 1230 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020

First Washington Square Press trade paperback printing June 1991

WASHINGTON SQUARE PRESS and colophon are registered trademarks of Simon & Schuster, Inc.

For information about special discounts for bulk purchases, please contact Simon & Schuster Special Sales at 1-800-456-6798 or business@simonandschuster.com

Manufactured in the United States of America

30 29 28 27 26 25 24 23

ISBN-13: 978-0-671-73248-6

ISBN-10: 0-671-73248-X

Contents

FOREWORD	vii
INTRODUCTION	ix
1. THE MANIFESTATIONS OF THE SPIRIT	1
The First Abstract Core	1
The Impeccability of the Nagual Elías	11
2. THE KNOCK OF THE SPIRIT	25
The Abstract	25
The Last Seduction of the Nagual Julian	39
3. THE TRICKERY OF THE SPIRIT	52
Dusting the Link with the Spirit	52
The Four Moods of <i>Stalking</i>	69
4. THE DESCENT OF THE SPIRIT	87
<i>Seeing</i> the Spirit	87
The Somersault of Thought	106
Moving the Assemblage Point	116
The Place of No Pity	134

CONTENTS

5. THE REQUIREMENTS OF <i>INTENT</i>	155
Breaking the Mirror of Self-Reflection	155
The Ticket to Impeccability	170
6. HANDLING <i>INTENT</i>	196
The Third Point	196
The Two One-Way Bridges	225
<i>Intending</i> Appearances	241

Foreword

My books are a true account of a teaching method that don Juan Matus, a Mexican Indian sorcerer, used in order to help me understand the sorcerers' world. In this sense, my books are the account of an on-going process which becomes more clear to me as time goes by.

It takes years of training to teach us to deal intelligently with the world of everyday life. Our schooling—whether in plain reasoning or formal topics—is rigorous, because the knowledge we are trying to impart is very complex. The same criteria apply to the sorcerers' world: their schooling, which relies on oral instruction and the manipulation of awareness, although different from ours, is just as rigorous, because their knowledge is as, or perhaps *more*, complex.

Introduction

At various times don Juan attempted to name his knowledge for my benefit. He felt that the most appropriate name was *nagualism*, but that the term was too obscure. Calling it simply “knowledge” made it too vague, and to call it “witchcraft” was debasing. “The mastery of *intent*” was too abstract, and “the search for total freedom” too long and metaphorical. Finally, because he was unable to find a more appropriate name, he called it “sorcery,” although he admitted it was not really accurate.

Over the years, he had given me different definitions of sorcery, but he had always maintained that definitions change as knowledge increases. Toward the end of my apprenticeship, I felt I was in a position to appreciate a clearer definition, so I asked him once more.

“From where the average man stands,” don Juan said, “sorcery is nonsense or an ominous mystery be-

INTRODUCTION

yond his reach. And he is right—not because this is an absolute fact, but because the average man lacks the energy to deal with sorcery.”

He stopped for a moment before he continued. “Human beings are born with a finite amount of energy,” don Juan said, “an energy that is systematically deployed, beginning at the moment of birth, in order that it may be used most advantageously by the modality of the time.”

“What do you mean by the modality of the time?” I asked.

“The modality of the time is the precise bundle of energy fields being perceived,” he answered. “I believe man’s perception has changed through the ages. The actual time decides the mode; the time decides which precise bundle of energy fields, out of an incalculable number, are to be used. And handling the modality of the time—those few, selected energy fields—takes all our available energy, leaving us nothing that would help us use any of the other energy fields.”

He urged me with a subtle movement of his eyebrows to consider all this.

“This is what I mean when I say that the average man lacks the energy needed to deal with sorcery,” he went on. “If he uses only the energy he has, he can’t perceive the worlds sorcerers do. To perceive them, sorcerers need to use a cluster of energy fields not ordinarily used. Naturally, if the average man is to perceive those worlds and understand sorcerers’ perception he must use the same cluster they have used. And this is just not possible, because all his energy is already deployed.”

He paused as if searching for the appropriate words to make his point.

“Think of it this way,” he proceeded. “It isn’t that as time goes by you’re learning sorcery; rather, what

INTRODUCTION

you're learning is to save energy. And this energy will enable you to handle some of the energy fields which are inaccessible to you now. And that is sorcery: the ability to use energy fields that are not employed in perceiving the ordinary world we know. Sorcery is a state of awareness. Sorcery is the ability to perceive something which ordinary perception cannot.

"Everything I've put you through," don Juan went on, "each of the things I've shown you was only a device to convince you that there's more to us than meets the eye. We don't need anyone to teach us sorcery, because there is really nothing to learn. What we need is a teacher to convince us that there is incalculable power at our fingertips. What a strange paradox! Every warrior on the path of knowledge thinks, at one time or another, that he's learning sorcery, but all he's doing is allowing himself to be convinced of the power hidden in his being, and that he can reach it."

"Is that what you're doing, don Juan—convincing me?"

"Exactly. I'm trying to convince you that you can reach that power. I went through the same thing. And I was as hard to convince as you are."

"Once we have reached it, what exactly do we do with it, don Juan?"

"Nothing. Once we have reached it, it will, by itself, make use of energy fields which are available to us but inaccessible. And that, as I have said, is sorcery. We begin then to *see*—that is, to perceive—something else; not as imagination, but as real and concrete. And then we begin to know without having to use words. And what any of us does with that increased perception, with that silent knowledge, depends on our own temperament."

INTRODUCTION

On another occasion, he gave me another kind of explanation. We were discussing an unrelated topic when he abruptly changed the subject and began to tell me a joke. He laughed and, very gently, patted my back between the shoulder blades, as if he were shy and it was too forward of him to touch me. He chuckled at my nervous reaction.

“You’re skittish,” he said teasingly, and slapped my back with greater force.

My ears buzzed. For an instant I lost my breath. It felt as though he had hurt my lungs. Every breath brought me great discomfort. Yet, after I had coughed and choked a few times, my nasal passages opened and I found myself taking deep, soothing breaths. I had such a feeling of well-being that I was not even annoyed at him for his blow, which had been hard as well as unexpected.

Then don Juan began a most remarkable explanation. Clearly and concisely, he gave me a different and more precise definition of sorcery.

I had entered into a wondrous state of awareness! I had such clarity of mind that I was able to comprehend and assimilate everything don Juan was saying. He said that in the universe there is an unmeasurable, indescribable force which sorcerers call *intent*, and that absolutely everything that exists in the entire cosmos is attached to *intent* by a connecting link. Sorcerers, or warriors, as he called them, were concerned with discussing, understanding, and employing that connecting link. They were especially concerned with cleaning it of the numbing effects brought about by the ordinary concerns of their everyday lives. Sorcery at this level could be defined as the procedure of cleaning one’s connecting link to *intent*. Don Juan stressed that this “cleaning procedure” was extremely difficult to understand, or to learn to perform. Sorcerers, there-

INTRODUCTION

fore, divided their instruction into two categories. One was instruction for the everyday-life state of awareness, in which the cleaning process was presented in a disguised fashion. The other was instruction for the states of heightened awareness, such as the one I was presently experiencing, in which sorcerers obtained knowledge directly from *intent*, without the distracting intervention of spoken language.

Don Juan explained that by using heightened awareness over thousands of years of painful struggle, sorcerers had gained specific insights into *intent*; and that they had passed these nuggets of direct knowledge on from generation to generation to the present. He said that the task of sorcery is to take this seemingly incomprehensible knowledge and make it understandable by the standards of awareness of everyday life.

Then he explained the role of the guide in the lives of sorcerers. He said that a guide is called "the nagual," and that the nagual is a man or a woman with extraordinary energy, a teacher who has sobriety, endurance, stability; someone seers *see* as a luminous sphere having four compartments, as if four luminous balls have been compressed together. Because of their extraordinary energy, naguals are intermediaries. Their energy allows them to channel peace, harmony, laughter, and knowledge directly from the source, from *intent*, and transmit them to their companions. Naguals are responsible for supplying what sorcerers call "the minimal chance": the awareness of one's connection with *intent*.

I told him that my mind was grasping everything he was telling me, that the only part of his explanation still unclear to me was why two sets of teachings were needed. I could understand everything he was saying about his world easily, and yet he had described the process of understanding as very difficult.

INTRODUCTION

“You will need a lifetime to remember the insights you’ve had today,” he said, “because most of them were silent knowledge. A few moments from now you will have forgotten them. That’s one of the unfathomable mysteries of awareness.”

Don Juan then made me shift levels of consciousness by striking me on my left side, at the edge of my ribcage.

Instantly I lost my extraordinary clarity of mind and could not remember having ever had it. . . .

Don Juan himself set me the task of writing about the premises of sorcery. Once, very casually in the early stages of my apprenticeship, he suggested that I write a book in order to make use of the notes I had always taken. I had accumulated reams of notes and never considered what to do with them.

I argued that the suggestion was absurd because I was not a writer.

“Of course, you’re not a writer,” he said, “so you will have to use sorcery. First, you must visualize your experiences as if you were reliving them, and then you must *see* the text in your *dreaming*. For you, writing should not be a literary exercise, but rather an exercise in sorcery.”

I have written in that manner about the premises of sorcery just as don Juan explained them to me, within the context of his teaching.

In his teaching scheme, which was developed by sorcerers of ancient times, there were two categories of instruction. One was called “teachings for the right side,” carried out in the ordinary state of awareness. The other was called “teachings for the left side,” put into practice solely in states of heightened awareness.

These two categories allowed teachers to school

INTRODUCTION

their apprentices toward three areas of expertise: the mastery of *awareness*, the art of *stalking*, and the mastery of *intent*.

These three areas of expertise are the three riddles sorcerers encounter in their search for knowledge.

The mastery of awareness is the riddle of the mind; the perplexity sorcerers experience when they recognize the astounding mystery and scope of awareness and perception.

The art of *stalking* is the riddle of the heart; the puzzlement sorcerers feel upon becoming aware of two things: first that the world appears to us to be unalterably objective and factual, because of peculiarities of our awareness and perception; second, that if different peculiarities of perception come into play, the very things about the world that seem so unalterably objective and factual change.

The mastery of *intent* is the riddle of the spirit, or the paradox of the abstract—sorcerers' thoughts and actions projected beyond our human condition.

Don Juan's instruction on the art of *stalking* and the mastery of *intent* depended upon his instruction on the mastery of awareness, which was the cornerstone of his teachings, and which consist of the following basic premises:

1. The universe is an infinite agglomeration of energy fields, resembling threads of light.

2. These energy fields, called the Eagle's emanations, radiate from a source of inconceivable proportions metaphorically called the Eagle.

3. Human beings are also composed of an incalculable number of the same threadlike energy fields. These Eagle's emanations form an encased agglomeration that manifests itself as a ball of light the size of the person's body with the arms extended laterally, like a giant luminous egg.

INTRODUCTION

4. Only a very small group of the energy fields inside this luminous ball are lit up by a point of intense brilliance located on the ball's surface.

5. Perception occurs when the energy fields in that small group immediately surrounding the point of brilliance extend their light to illuminate identical energy fields outside the ball. Since the only energy fields perceivable are those lit by the point of brilliance, that point is named "the point where perception is assembled" or simply "the assemblage point."

6. The assemblage point can be moved from its usual position on the surface of the luminous ball to another position on the surface, or into the interior. Since the brilliance of the assemblage point can light up whatever energy field it comes in contact with, when it moves to a new position it immediately brightens up new energy fields, making them perceivable. This perception is known as *seeing*.

7. When the assemblage point shifts, it makes possible the perception of an entirely different world—as objective and factual as the one we normally perceive. Sorcerers go into that other world to get energy, power, solutions to general and particular problems, or to face the unimaginable.

8. *Intent* is the pervasive force that causes us to perceive. We do not become aware because we perceive; rather, we perceive as a result of the pressure and intrusion of *intent*.

9. The aim of sorcerers is to reach a state of total awareness in order to experience all the possibilities of perception available to man. This state of awareness even implies an alternative way of dying.

A level of practical knowledge was included as part of teaching the mastery of awareness. On that practical level don Juan taught the procedures necessary to

INTRODUCTION

move the assemblage point. The two great systems devised by the sorcerer seers of ancient times to accomplish this were: *dreaming*, the control and utilization of dreams; and *stalking*, the control of behavior.

Moving one's assemblage point was an essential maneuver that every sorcerer had to learn. Some of them, the naguals, also learned to perform it for others. They were able to dislodge the assemblage point from its customary position by delivering a hard slap directly to the assemblage point. This blow, which was experienced as a smack on the right shoulder blade—although the body was never touched—resulted in a state of heightened awareness.

In compliance with his tradition, it was exclusively in these states of heightened awareness that don Juan carried out the most important and dramatic part of his teachings: the instructions for the left side. Because of the extraordinary quality of these states, don Juan demanded that I not discuss them with others until we had concluded everything in the sorcerers' teaching scheme. That demand was not difficult for me to accept. In those unique states of awareness my capabilities for understanding the instruction were unbelievably enhanced, but at the same time my capabilities for describing or even remembering it were impaired. I could function in those states with proficiency and assuredness, but I could not recollect anything about them once I returned to my normal consciousness.

It took me years to be able to make the crucial conversion of my enhanced awareness into plain memory. My reason and common sense delayed this moment because they were colliding head-on with the preposterous, unthinkable reality of heightened awareness and direct knowledge. For years the result-

INTRODUCTION

ing cognitive disarrangement forced me to avoid the issue by not thinking about it.

Whatever I have written about my sorcery apprenticeship, up to now, has been a recounting of how don Juan taught me the mastery of awareness. I have not yet described the art of *stalking* or the mastery of *intent*.

Don Juan taught me their principles and applications with the help of two of his companions: a sorcerer named Vicente Medrano and another named Silvio Manuel, but whatever I learned from them still remains clouded in what don Juan called the intricacies of heightened awareness. Until now it has been impossible for me to write or even to think coherently about the art of *stalking* and the mastery of *intent*. My mistake has been to regard them as subjects for normal memory and recollection. They are, but at the same time they are not. In order to resolve this contradiction, I have not pursued the subjects directly—a virtual impossibility—but have dealt with them indirectly through the concluding topic of don Juan's instruction: the stories of the sorcerers of the past.

He recounted these stories to make evident what he called the abstract cores of his lessons. But I was incapable of grasping the nature of the abstract cores despite his comprehensive explanations, which, I know now, were intended more to open my mind than to explain anything in a rational manner. His way of talking made me believe for many years that his explanations of the abstract cores were like academic dissertations; and all I was able to do, under these circumstances, was to take his explanations as given. They became part of my tacit acceptance of his teachings, but without the thorough assessment on my part that was essential to understanding them.

Don Juan presented three sets of six abstract cores

INTRODUCTION

each, arranged in an increasing level of complexity. I have dealt here with the first set, which is composed of the following: the manifestations of the spirit, the knock of the spirit, the trickery of the spirit, the descent of the spirit, the requirements of *intent*, and handling *intent*.

THE POWER OF SILENCE

1

The Manifestations of the Spirit

THE FIRST ABSTRACT CORE

Don Juan, whenever it was pertinent, used to tell me brief stories about the sorcerers of his lineage, especially his teacher, the nagual Julian. They were not really stories, but rather descriptions of the way those sorcerers behaved and of aspects of their personalities. These accounts were each designed to shed light on a specific topic in my apprenticeship.

I had heard the same stories from the other fifteen members of don Juan's group of sorcerers, but none of these accounts had been able to give me a clear picture of the people they described. Since I had no way of persuading don Juan to give me more details about those sorcerers, I had resigned myself to the idea of never knowing about them in any depth.

One afternoon, in the mountains of southern Mexico, don Juan, after having explained to me more about the intricacies of the mastery of awareness, made a statement that completely baffled me.

CARLOS CASTANEDA

"I think it's time for us to talk about the sorcerers of our past," he said.

Don Juan explained that it was necessary that I begin drawing conclusions based on a systematic view of the past, conclusions about both the world of daily affairs and the sorcerers' world.

"Sorcerers are vitally concerned with their past," he said. "But I don't mean their personal past. For sorcerers their past is what other sorcerers in bygone days have done. And what we are now going to do is examine that past.

"The average man also examines the past. But it's mostly his personal past he examines, and he does so for personal reasons. Sorcerers do quite the opposite; they consult their past in order to obtain a point of reference."

"But isn't that what everyone does? Look at the past to get a point of reference?"

"No!" he answered emphatically. "The average man measures himself against the past, whether his personal past or the past knowledge of his time, in order to find justifications for his present or future behavior, or to establish a model for himself. Only sorcerers genuinely seek a point of reference in their past."

"Perhaps, don Juan, things would be clear to me if you tell me what a point of reference for a sorcerer is."

"For sorcerers, establishing a point of reference means getting a chance to examine *intent*," he replied. "Which is exactly the aim of this final topic of instruction. And nothing can give sorcerers a better view of *intent* than examining stories of other sorcerers battling to understand the same force."

He explained that as they examined their past, the sorcerers of his lineage took careful notice of the basic abstract order of their knowledge.

"In sorcery there are twenty-one abstract cores,"

THE POWER OF SILENCE

don Juan went on. "And then, based on those abstract cores, there are scores of sorcery stories about the naguals of our lineage battling to understand the spirit. It's time to tell you the abstract cores and the sorcery stories."

I waited for don Juan to begin telling me the stories, but he changed the subject and went back to explaining awareness.

"Wait a minute," I protested. "What about the sorcery stories? Aren't you going to tell them to me?"

"Of course I am," he said. "But they are not stories that one can tell as if they were tales. You've got to think your way through them and then rethink them—relive them, so to speak."

There was a long silence. I became very cautious and was afraid that if I persisted in asking him again to tell me the stories, I could be committing myself to something I might later regret. But my curiosity was greater than my good sense.

"Well, let's get on with them," I croaked.

Don Juan, obviously catching the gist of my thoughts, smiled maliciously. He stood and signaled me to follow. We had been sitting on some dry rocks at the bottom of a gully. It was midafternoon. The sky was dark and cloudy. Low, almost-black rain clouds hovered above the peaks to the east. In comparison, the high clouds made the sky seem clear to the south. Earlier it had rained heavily, but then the rain seemed to have retreated to a hiding place, leaving behind only a threat.

I should have been chilled to the bone, for it was very cold. But I was warm. As I clutched a rock don Juan had given me to hold, I realized that this sensation of being warm in nearly freezing weather was familiar to me, yet it amazed me each time. Whenever I seemed about to freeze, don Juan would give me a branch to hold, or a stone, or he would put a bunch of

CARLOS CASTANEDA

leaves under my shirt, on the tip of my sternum, and that would be sufficient to raise my body temperature.

I had tried unsuccessfully to recreate, by myself, the effect of his ministrations. He told me it was not the ministrations but his inner silence that kept me warm, and the branches or stones or leaves were merely devices to trap my attention and maintain it in focus.

Moving quickly, we climbed the steep west side of a mountain until we reached a rock ledge at the very top. We were in the foothills of a higher range of mountains. From the rock ledge I could see that fog had begun to move onto the south end of the valley floor below us. Low, wispy clouds seemed to be closing in on us, too, sliding down from the black-green, high mountain peaks to the west. After the rain, under the dark cloudy sky the valley and the mountains to the east and south appeared covered in a mantle of black-green silence.

“This is the ideal place to have a talk,” don Juan said, sitting on the rock floor of a concealed shallow cave.

The cave was perfect for the two of us to sit side by side. Our heads were nearly touching the roof and our backs fitted snugly against the curved surface of the rock wall. It was as if the cave had been carved deliberately to accommodate two persons of our size.

I noticed another strange feature of the cave: when I stood on the ledge, I could see the entire valley and the mountain ranges to the east and south, but when I sat down, I was boxed in by the rocks. Yet the ledge was at the level of the cave floor, and flat.

I was about to point this strange effect out to don Juan, but he anticipated me.

“This cave is man-made,” he said. “The ledge is slanted but the eye doesn’t register the incline.”

“Who made this cave, don Juan?”

THE POWER OF SILENCE

“The ancient sorcerers. Perhaps thousands of years ago. And one of the peculiarities of this cave is that animals and insects and even people stay away from it. The ancient sorcerers seem to have infused it with an ominous charge that makes every living thing feel ill at ease.”

But strangely I felt irrationally secure and happy there. A sensation of physical contentment made my entire body tingle. I actually felt the most agreeable, the most delectable, sensation in my stomach. It was as if my nerves were being tickled.

“I don’t feel ill at ease,” I commented.

“Neither do I,” he said. “Which only means that you and I aren’t that far temperamentally from those old sorcerers of the past; something which worries me no end.”

I was afraid to pursue that subject any further, so I waited for him to talk.

“The first sorcery story I am going to tell you is called ‘The Manifestations of the Spirit,’ ” don Juan began, “but don’t let the title mystify you. The manifestations of the spirit is only the first abstract core around which the first sorcery story is built.

“That first abstract core is a story in itself,” he went on. “The story says that once upon a time there was a man, an average man without any special attributes. He was, like everyone else, a conduit for the spirit. And by virtue of that, like everyone else, he was part of the spirit, part of the abstract. But he didn’t know it. The world kept him so busy that he had neither the time nor the inclination really to examine the matter.

“The spirit tried, uselessly, to reveal their connection. Using an inner voice, the spirit disclosed its secrets, but the man was incapable of understanding the revelations. Naturally, he heard the inner voice, but he believed it to be his own feelings he was feeling and his own thoughts he was thinking.

CARLOS CASTANEDA

“The spirit, in order to shake him out of his slumber, gave him three signs, three successive manifestations. The spirit physically crossed the man’s path in the most obvious manner. But the man was oblivious to anything but his self-concern.”

Don Juan stopped and looked at me as he did whenever he was waiting for my comments and questions. I had nothing to say. I did not understand the point he was trying to make.

“I’ve just told you the first abstract core,” he continued. “The only other thing I could add is that because of the man’s absolute unwillingness to understand, the spirit was forced to use trickery. And trickery became the essence of the sorcerers’ path. But that is another story.”

Don Juan explained that sorcerers understood this abstract core to be a blueprint for events, or a recurrent pattern that appeared every time *intent* was giving an indication of something meaningful. Abstract cores, then, were blueprints of complete chains of events.

He assured me that by means beyond comprehension, every detail of every abstract core reoccurred to every apprentice nagual. He further assured me that he had helped *intent* to involve me in all the abstract cores of sorcery in the same manner that his benefactor, the nagual Julian and all the naguals before him, had involved their apprentices. The process by which each apprentice nagual encountered the abstract cores created a series of accounts woven around those abstract cores incorporating the particular details of each apprentice’s personality and circumstances.

He said, for example, that I had my own story about the manifestations of the spirit, he had his, his benefactor had his own, so had the nagual that preceded him, and so on, and so forth.