



Welcome and thank you for your interest in Seashell Divination. This is a subject near and dear to my heart, and I am delighted to share what seashells have taught me over a lifetime of study. It is my honor to introduce you to these amazing seashell master teachers with this gift of the first 6 classes from Module 1 of my Ocean Speake course. In this first class, you will learn more about me, my approach to teaching, and why I feel blessed to serve as an ambassador for my seashell partners. Class 2 will arrive in 3 days, and Classes 3-6 will follow suit 3 days apart.

Many Seashell Blessings!

Shelley

INDEPENDENT STUDY: Module1, Class 1

Please note 1: The pictures and comments in the transcript and recording have been gathered over many years and where possible, I attribute them to their original source. If anyone connected with these photographs or comments would like them removed, please notify me and I will be happy to comply.

Please note 2: The Internet is always in flux, and although I attempt to keep this information current, some of the links in this course may no longer work. If you are unable to open a video or visit a website, all is not lost. Please use your search engine to type in the subject for a link of interest. It may still be available under a different web address. If the site has been taken down, it is possible a new site will contain the information you seek, with additional discoveries on that topic. As a dear friend of mine has taught me, if something is not meant to be, it is meant to be better 😊

ORIENTATION AND GUIDELINES

This new Module 1 class contains people with all different backgrounds and a variety of reasons for attending Ocean Speake. There are readers who will be learning the details of a new system of divination, there are professional counselors who can use these shells as psychological tools for their clients, there are massage therapists and energy workers who wish to use the shells with intention, and many of you are lifelong shell lovers! This course will provide you with a new level of appreciation for these magnificent beings. I want to share everything I know so that you each get what you need from this class. I also want to explain how I became a shell reader, and how Ocean Oracle came to be so that you may see some of the steps in my spiritual growth. Believe me, there was a time thirty years ago when metaphysics was a new concept for me, and I never thought I would be teaching a class in divination. Most of you are not new to metaphysical studies, but this is another step on your path and an exciting journey awaits you!

I want to show you who I am so that you will see if I can do this, you can too. Someone once told me that I would be teaching teachers. I think these classes will provide me the platform to be thorough enough to do that. In fact, if you complete all 4 modules, there is an opportunity for certification. For those of you who wish to take advantage of this, I will need to monitor your progress. I request that you complete all the homework assignments.

There is a lot of territory to cover! Throughout the course, I am sure questions will arise. Let me share my policy on questions: I welcome questions, so please don't hesitate to ask away. You can email me at michelle@oceanoracle.com. In fact, as you progress through the course, these lessons will become quite interactive. I would suggest that you keep a journal to note your responses and for any of your own questions you would like to ask me. I will also provide **prompts in green** with a few questions of my own 😊

As your teacher, it is my job to create a strong foundation for you to take your spiritual growth to the next level. When you witness how shells can broaden your horizons, my hope is you will look at the world a little differently. What else is out there? Perhaps you will discover something that you will eventually share in the same way I am sharing what I learned from the seashell kingdom.

For those who are curious about my name, it does seem odd that a woman named Shelley would be a shell reader. I have often been asked if I made up the name Shelley for that purpose. I understand why people wonder this. After all, I have the perfect name for my profession! Looking back, I can honestly say that my entire life seems to have been in preparation for this. I came by this name honestly, but as my name shows, before I took my first breath, destiny was already at work. My birth name is Michelle, but everyone has always called me Shelley. That name has served me well because I have been performing shell readings for almost 30 years. I love my name because it allows me to be one of the shells. I consider myself to be the Shell with the vocal cords, and I use them as an ambassador on behalf of my seashell partners to give them a voice. The reason *Ocean Oracle* is authored by Michelle Hanson is because my publisher thought the name Shelley for a shell reader would seem made up. It has taken me a while to respond to being called Michelle, but I now answer to both names.

You will find that if you are open, the shells will take you as deep as you are willing to go. I want everyone to know that this is a safe place to share, and there is no time like the present to begin with your honest feelings. If there is one thing the shells have taught me, it is not to judge. Anything you are feeling is appropriate if it is your truth. Some of you may discover thoughts and beliefs you did not know you held. If anything is not serving you, you cannot change it until you acknowledge it is there. I will repeat this as we get into performing readings, but it is important to be aware that the shells are psychological tools, and can take you deep.

Now for a word about your transcripts: Every 3 days, a class will be delivered containing a written transcript and a link to an mp4 video presentation. The great advantage of teaching on the Internet is that you all have a front row seat, and I am not concerned that someone in the back of the room can't see a photo or shell I am holding up. That is a terrific luxury!

The video presentations and transcripts contain photos that will not be in *Ocean Oracle*. These visual aid presentations are designed to enhance your learning experience. In the early stages, I will be referring to information on certain pages in the *Ocean Oracle* book, or pointing out shells on the fold-out sheets. Do not be concerned if you do not have a copy of *Ocean Oracle*. You will not be at a disadvantage because any shell we discuss will be in your video and in the transcript photos. (For those who wish to continue these classes, in Module 4, we use the *Ocean Oracle* card decks to work on readings.) The mp4 video follows the text in the written transcripts quite closely. Some students prefer to listen to the recording, while others prefer to read the transcript. If you rely on the video presentations, please refer back to the written transcripts for any additional links (**in blue text.**) And now, let's begin your journey!

Your Class 1 recording is about 29 minutes long, and is **available as an mp4 in the attachments**. You may be asked to join dropbox, but you can X out of that and click on the recording. If you prefer the written transcript,

it is just below. Please note, even if you opt for the mp4 recording, the transcripts will have other websites and videos you may want to visit. These will start in Class 2, and you will find them [in blue text](#).

Here is the written transcript for Class 1:

INTRODUCTION TO SEASHELL READING

This is a class on Seashell Divination. This term merges two different components...seashells and divination. First, let's take a closer look at seashells, and then we can progress to how they assist in divination (using shells as tools for connecting with our inner self.) The first thing to know about shells is that although they may resemble rocks, **they are not part of the mineral kingdom**. Every shell you ever see **was made by an animal**. The scientific name for the animals that create and inhabit shells is *mollusk*, a term coined by Aristotle from the Latin word for "soft". A clam mollusk makes a Clam shell, and a snail mollusk makes a Snail shell. In your written transcripts, to let you know when I am referring to the animal instead of the shell, I will capitalize the word when I am speaking of the shell. So, if I write Snail, I am talking about the shell, but if I write snail with a lower case "s", I am talking about the animal that makes the shell.

Although a mollusk is an animal, it is an invertebrate meaning it has no internal skeleton. The shell serves as an external source of structure and support. The mollusk living enclosed in the shell can be described as a bag of skin containing all the internal organs. It is therefore quite delicate, and now you can see why Aristotle used a word meaning soft...mollusk. If you have ever examined a seashell, you may notice how smooth the interior lining of the shell is. When you recognize how tender and fragile these animals are, you can understand that any spines or scratches inside the shell would tear their delicate bodies. In fact, if an irritant as small as a grain of sand enters the shell of the oyster, the animal wraps it with their shell lining material, called nacre, to smooth its rough edges. This produces a structure we call a pearl. There is a famous saying "From an irritation, comes a pearl" which means sometimes there is a gift produced from an uncomfortable situation. Now you can understand the source of this saying as it is based upon the behavior of the oyster mollusk.

This is one way shells have made an impact on our lives without realizing it. We have expressions based on mollusk behavior...as in the above example with the oyster.

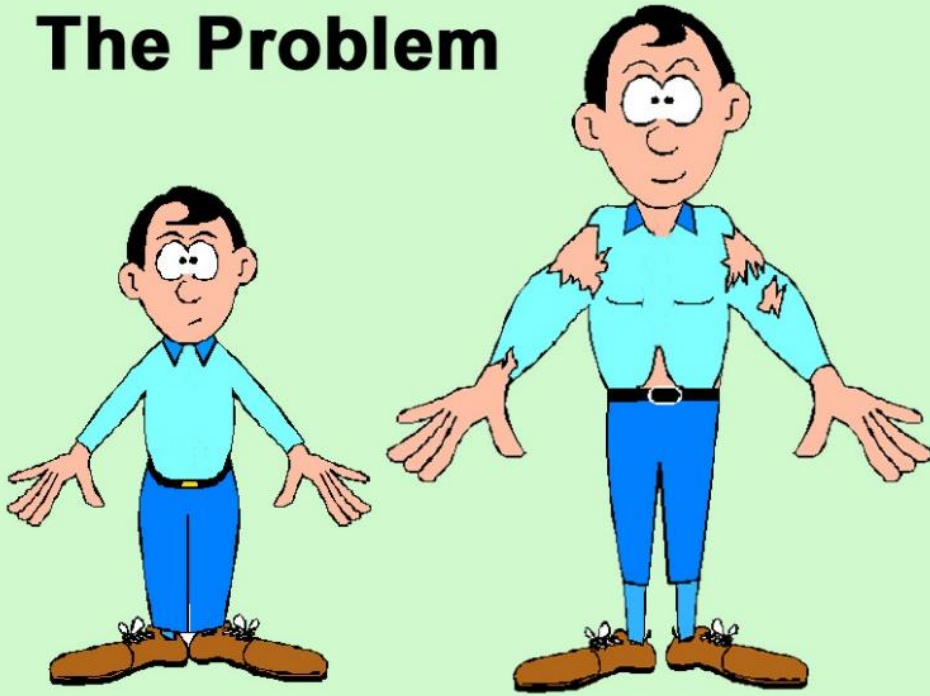
Here is another. Have you ever heard the expression "As happy as a clam"?

[Please pause for a moment and see if you can you tell what that means?](#)

You might have better luck if I told you that this phrase is missing its second half. It is actually "As happy as a clam at high tide." For some reason back in the 1840's this important information was dismissed. With the second half restored, the expression makes sense because clam diggers wait until low tide when the clam is exposed. High tide is the clam's safest time. That is when you would think it would be at peace. Later in this course, I will show you vocabulary words that come directly from seashells and mollusks... words we use every day without realizing they are from the interaction of man with shells.

Let's picture one of the animals when it is born. It has a shell that surrounds its body and fits perfectly. There are other animals with shells that surround their bodies, such as crabs, lobsters, and shrimp. These are crustaceans. **One distinction between mollusks and crustaceans is in how they grow their shell.** To understand this, imagine that shell to be similar to an article of clothing that surrounds your body, such as a shirt. Think back to your younger years, perhaps you had a favorite childhood shirt that fit you perfectly. By now, with your adult size, that shirt is ancient history and no longer fits.

The Problem

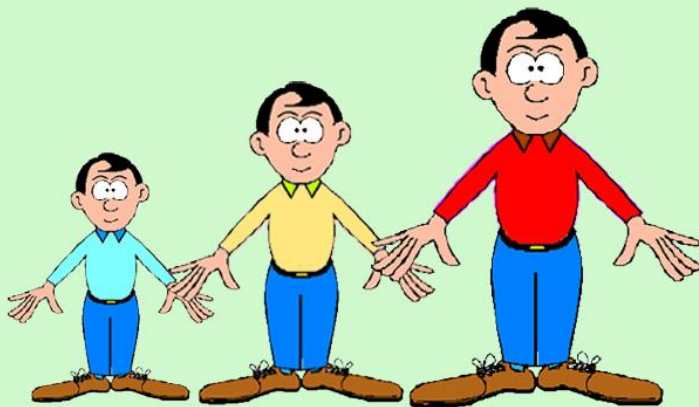


You can see how this situation resembles the Hulk. This is the same dilemma that both the mollusk and crustacean confront. At some point, their bodies grow, and the original shell becomes too confining and then completely useless. **They share the same problem...but have very different solutions.**

SHELL GROWTH

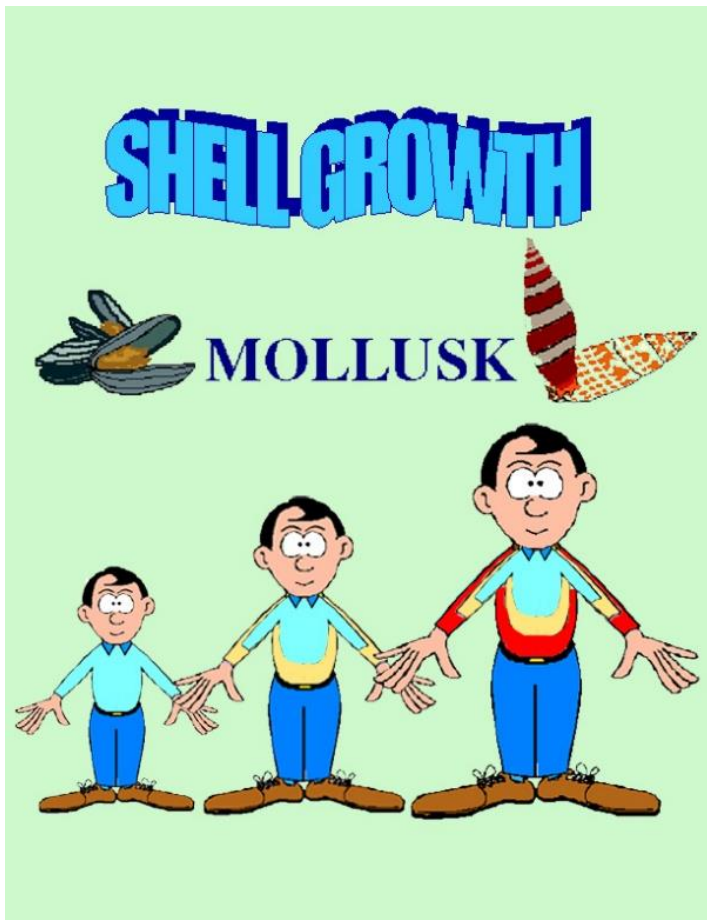


CRUSTACEAN



First, the crustacean approach: **Just like a snake sheds its skin, the crustacean sheds its shell.** Until they reach adult size, as many times as their bodies grow beyond the limits of their shell, they shed it and build an entirely new shell. Using our metaphor of the shirt, you would completely get rid of the early shirt, and get a new and larger one.

As you can see, nothing remains of the original blue shirt/shell.



On the other hand, the mollusks take a different approach. Let's return to that same original shirt. **As the mollusk feels its living quarters closing in, it doesn't shed its shell, but simply adds a little more material.** With the shirt, you would add more to the sleeves, or waistline, or let out the side seams.

The blue shirt is always there. **The mollusk always has the original shell it was born with throughout its life.**

Let's see what that looks like in real life.



Here is a shrimp, a crustacean that has just shed its shell.

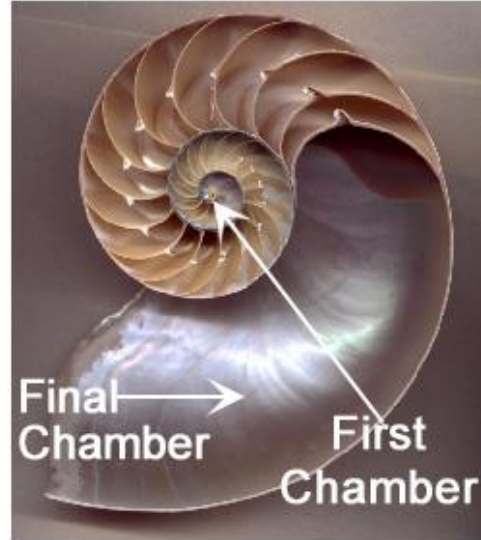
For any of you who may be concerned about the naked shrimp that has to rebuild a shell, I shared that concern. What I learned is that the new shell is already in softened form under the original shell, so when the original shell is shed, the new shell just has to harden. Books vary, but that takes between a few days to a week.

The best example of shell growth for the mollusk is the **Chambered Nautilus**. We will be spending a great deal of time learning about this animal, but for now let's focus on its shell growth. First, allow me to show you a picture of the Chambered Nautilus.

Shell Growth: Crustacean vs. Mollusk



Chambered Nautilus mollusk inside its shell



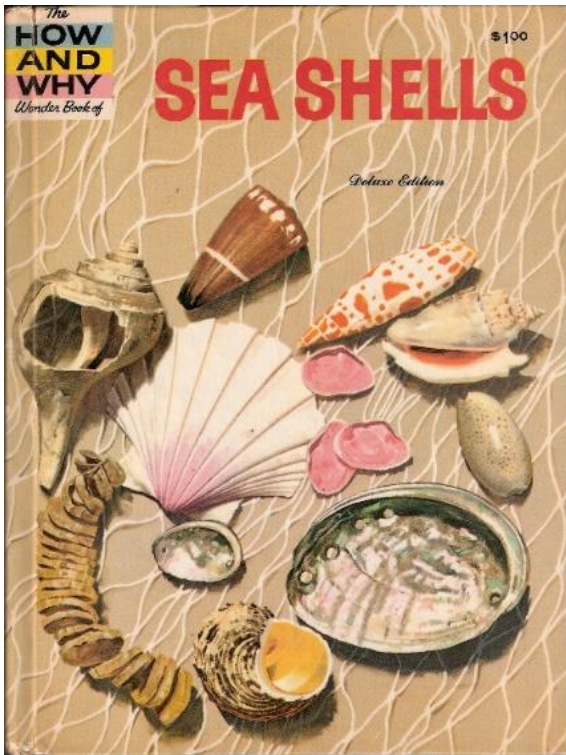
Chambered Nautilus shell cut in half to show interior

The picture on the left shows the Nautilus at home in its shell. On the right, is a picture of the shell cut in half. You will see why it is named Chambered Nautilus. When the Nautilus was born, all that existed was just one tiny area in the center of the shell. As the animal grew, it sealed off a section at the start of the shell creating the first empty chamber, and lived in the larger second chamber. When the nautilus increased in size, it sealed off a section toward the back end of the second chamber, and added more shell material to the front end creating a new, larger third chamber to fit its new dimensions. Each time it outgrows its shell, it seals off the innermost area of the chamber and then extends the outer most edge to fit its new size. Soon, the sealed off sections are stacked together creating the chambers of the Chambered Nautilus shell. Now you can see that the larger shell continued growing in a clockwise spiral pattern by creating new chambers every time the animal increased in size. Keep in mind that for the shell in this picture, although the Nautilus has the original chamber it was born in, (I labeled that the First chamber) and every chamber it lived in since then, the animal would be living only in the outer-most chamber (I labeled that the Final chamber). We will get to the reason for those chambers in a later lesson, but for now this is the best example to demonstrate the principle of mollusk shell growth. All mollusks increase the size of their shell as needed, but no others make these chambers in the process.

Now that you know the difference between mollusks and crustaceans, keep in mind that there are still over 100,000 different species of mollusks, and counting! *Ocean Oracle* only covers 200. You can see that this is merely a drop in the bucket, but I wanted you to have perspective.

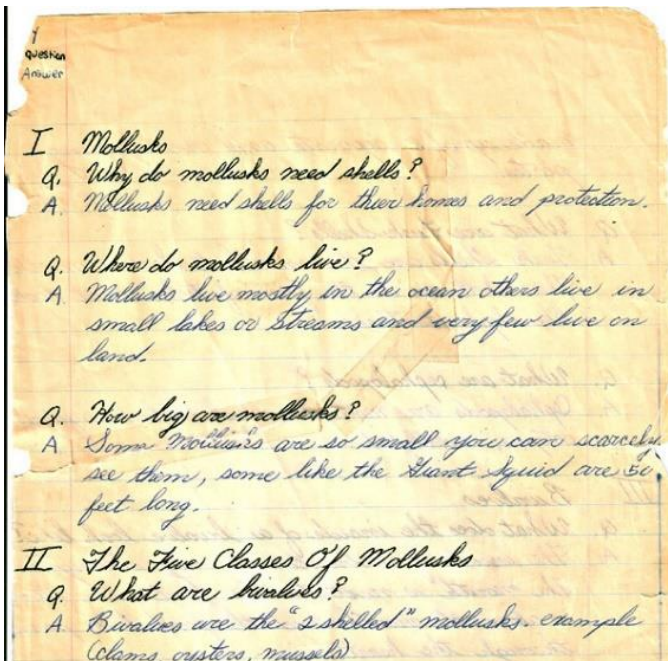
The reason I am concentrating on this, is because I wanted you to have an understanding of the mollusks who create shells since they make a tremendous contribution to the language of the shells. **Seashell divination is based upon the language of seashells.**

Let me pause here to give you more insight into how I created this system. You are welcome to read my background in *Ocean Oracle*, but let me share what I could not include in the book.



Since I never lived near the ocean, I don't know why I have been fascinated with shells all my life. Perhaps this stems from a previous life? But in this lifetime, my interest began at the age of 4 with my very first shells gifted to me by my grandparents. My parents noticed my love of shells, and when I was 8 years old, they bought me *The How and Why Wonder Book of Seashells*.

This book is in question/answer format, and immediately I felt compelled to memorize the information. At this early age, I started a journal to collect every piece of information I could find on shells and mollusks. I thought you might want to see a little of my childhood journal to understand the type of child I was. My journal began by my need to write down each question in the How and Why book, and follow it with my memorized answers.

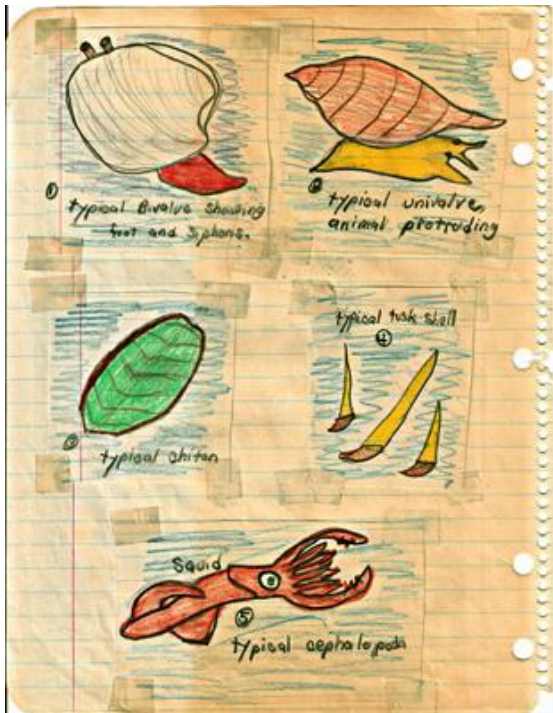


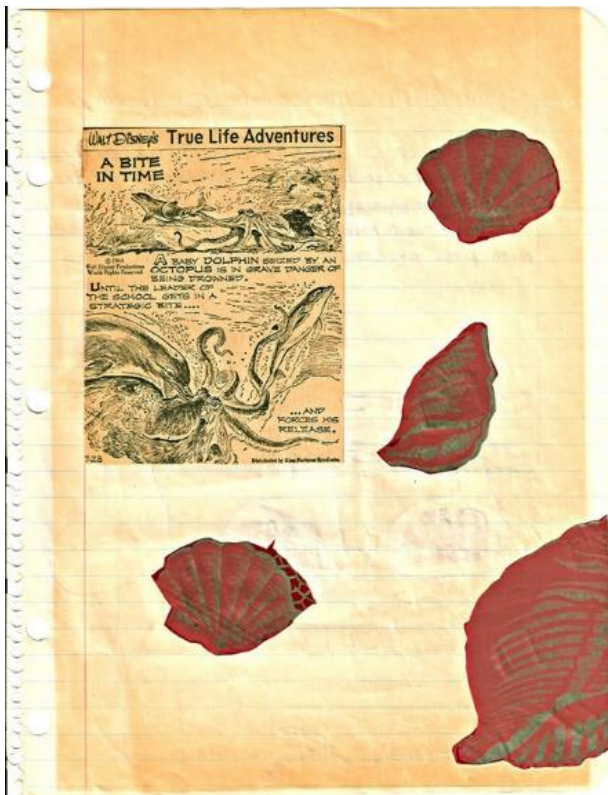
This is a portion of the first page of my journal.

The journal covers several years of my life, and here is a page that reveals my age. You can see that it is from a child's coloring book, and that I created my own colorful snail shell. I can tell you now that there is no snail shell that looks like this.



Here are a few random samplings of pages I drew as I continued to learn about shells. Suffice it to say that anything that had shells on it was fair game.





And this page is eloquent testimony to the level of my obsession with anything seashell related. You are looking at the remnants from my aunt's brand-new shower curtain. It was pink plastic, but it had shells on it that were crying out to me to be included in my journal.

I did ask for permission to cut up her new shower curtain.

Not only was it granted, but my aunt even assisted me in pasting the plastic shells onto the pages of my journal. Whenever I look at these shells now, it reflects the gift I was given of such a supportive family. As you can see, I was learning without realizing that I was studying for my future as a shell reader. Fortunately, I became less destructive in my passion, but that obsession for knowledge about shells never left me.



I want to explain that although I studied shells all my life, I never heard of shell reading until I was in my thirties. Someone named Robert (to whom I will be eternally grateful) saw my shell collection and told me that he heard of a shell reader. I was eager to go for a reading, but unfortunately, he never found the contact information to make that possible. Just to salvage something from this, he suggested I use my own shells to do readings. Up until that moment, I never realized that they had a language, but as I replied to his suggestion, I thought everyone would already know that one mollusk was deadly, one built a raft, one was the inspiration for the principle of the submarine, etc. Since I studied them all my life, I thought this was all common knowledge. When he assured me it wasn't, I set about to figure out how to do shell readings. I was amazed that it only took me one week to discover the meanings for over 200 shells, but I had been studying them for thirty years. As time passed, my collection expanded to its

current state of over 500 shells. As you can see, the full collection requires two display cabinets.

From these, I carefully selected 200 representatives to appear in *Ocean Oracle*. The shells you see in the card deck are all sitting in these cabinets.

Here are close-up views of the separate cabinets.



One last thought regarding *Ocean Oracle*....From the time I was young, whenever I looked in any book of shells, I felt as if I were looking at a family photo album. My reaction was similar to what you might experience when you open someone else's photo album and suddenly see a snapshot of your favorite aunt. I would think to myself, "There is the volute shell! What a great photo it took that day" with a pride akin to thinking "Isn't that a great picture of my Aunt." Needless to say, when it became my turn to photograph the shells for the deck, I felt a huge responsibility to show them to their best advantage. I was keenly aware that this one picture may be the only contact some people ever have with some of these shells. Using my computer software and scanner, it would take me all day just to decide on the best position, lighting, and background for two shells. You can imagine how long it took to get all 200 done, but it was a labor of love.

As time went by, the shells continued to teach leading to another book and guided meditations. When they provided even more guidance to help navigate through life as a human being, I created this online course...just to keep up! There is so much wisdom that I am eager to share with you from these master teachers. But, in an effort to avoid shell shock--my students' term for information overload--I will end here.

As mentioned, you will receive 5 more classes from Module 1 as my gift. In future classes, we will begin the process of decoding the language of the shells. By exploring the anatomy and behavior of the mollusks, as well as their interactions with humans throughout history, we encounter the source of their individual contributions to this seashell language. In the next class, you will see the remarkable diversity among these animals and why finding a unique contribution is not a daunting task.

Each class builds upon the next. As you gain proficiency with this seashell vocabulary, the shells will take you to new and exciting places on your spiritual path. As one student said, "I think I met myself for the first time in this course." I can think of no better goal to strive for, and that journey begins with Class 2 😊.

I hope you enjoy these 6 classes exploring the wisdom from your new seashell partners.