Soul Retrieval

The shamanic practice known as soul retrieval is perhaps the most important level of healing in spirit medicine because once the spiritual-energetic nature of an illness-causing intrusion has been addressed, the cause is still unresolved, namely the tears in the fabric of the sufferer's soul cluster that allowed the intrusions to enter in the first place.

As long as these empty spaces remain unfilled, there is no guarantee that the intrusions will not reinvade given an opportunity to do so because those holes are like open invitations. But how does the process of soul retrieval actually work?

Working with a Spiritual Team

All of us, in every culture everywhere, had ancestors who were hunters if we go back far enough. In doing soul retrieval work, the shamanic practitioner teams up with the spirits who assist them, then they go to work together, tracking the lost soul parts much like hunters.

And this is where spirit medicine has something important to offer the psychotherapeutic paradigm. Psychologists and psychiatrists know about dissociation, but where do the dissociated parts go? In doing soul retrieval, the shamanic healer and their spiritual assistants locate the lost soul parts in the Lower, Middle, or Upper Worlds of the Spirit World.

Bringing Back the Soul Parts

Then with the assistance of their helping spirits, the shamanic practitioner enters into relationship with them, convincing them to return and bringing them back to their original owner. In this process, the person's soul cluster is restored, and their energetic matrix may return to its former undistorted state.

Interestingly, a soul part that has taken refuge in the Lower Worlds may often be found in the company of an animal spirit who is caring for it. When this soul part is brought back, the animal spirit may return with it, resulting in what is called a power animal retrieval.

A soul part located in the Middle World of dream may be found in the company of an ancestor, perhaps a revered grandparent who has already crossed over. A soul part in the Upper World may be seeking reconnection with its oversoul, a guardian angel, or even with its "soul family."

As the soul cluster is restored, the shaman instructs the client in how to take an active role in reintegrating these lost self-aspects, assuring a successful reunion and ensuring that the extracted illness intrusions will not
Soul Catchers

In traditional societies like those of the Pacific Northwest, soul retrieval specialists were often known as soul catchers. The traditionals used to say that real soul catchers only come in every hundred years or so, implying that not all shamanic practitioners are proficient at soul retrieval.

I discovered quite by accident that I am a soul catcher. Originally I was trained as a physical therapist, and for the past 25 years or so, I have worked in acute care rehabilitation as well as home health. I am now in private practice, specializing almost entirely in soul retrieval work, guided by my spirits who also facilitate power augmentation and divination work. Although I trained with several teachers accomplished in soul retrieval to acquire the basic tools, the heart of my method was taught to me by my spirit helpers, revealing quite clearly their pivotal role as teachers and guides in the practice of spirit medicine.

The primary causes of illness only become a threat when a person’s natural protective mantle develops a weakness. When the classic causes--disharmony, fear, and soul loss--manifest themselves as physical or psychological symptoms, they must be dealt with at the energetic and spiritual levels for true healing to occur.

Healing the Spiritual and Energetic Levels

The perspective of spirit medicine is still quite foreign to most of our Western healthcare practitioners, doctors, nurses, and therapists alike. However, this worldview, so familiar to the indigenous peoples, is gaining wider acceptance... because it greatly assists in the healing process, and because it works.

The shaman’s talents, like those of the Western trained physician, lie in diagnosis--in the discovery of the identity and the nature of illness. But unlike our modern Western doctors, the shaman can also empower their client dramatically, divine their illnesses' ultimate causes while in an expanded state of awareness, neutralize them at their spiritual and energetic levels, and prevent their reoccurrence by utilizing the assistance of compassionate forces poised to help us just beyond the borders of this physical world we all take so much for granted.

by Jill Kuykendall