

## ***Shamanic Healing – an Overview***

**Soul Retrieval:** Soul loss in terms of classical shamanism is when a person experiences loss of vital life energy due to a trauma, accident, illness or near death experience. According to Sandra Ingerman author of Soul Retrieval, the most common symptom of soul loss is dissociation, when people feel as though they are observing life, rather than participating in it. It is believed that soul parts split off in order for the body and psyche to endure the trauma. However, problems may occur if the soul part does not return on its own. The soul may have traveled so far that it cannot find its way back. It also may not want to come back for fear of further trauma, or a thief may be holding the soul part. Other symptoms may include: addictions, chronic illness, chronic depression, feeling and loss of childhood memory,

A shamanic practitioner with the aid of their helping spirits, travels to non-ordinary realms to retrieve the essence of the soul part that fragmented, bringing back vital life energy to the client.

**Extraction Healing:** It is commonly believed among shaman's throughout the world that all physical illness begins as a spiritual illness first. According to Michael Harner author of The Way of the Shaman, all people have a spiritual side. A person with intense feelings such as anger and jealousy can vent not only verbal or physical abuse, but spiritual abuse without knowing it. An example is when walking into a room where an argument has recently occurred. One can usually feel the thick energy in the room. This energy can cause damage to another person on a spiritual level. This mismanaged energy can cause spiritual intrusions in another person unknowingly potentially leading to physical illness. With the help of spiritual allies the shaman, working in an altered state extracts the intrusive energy, removing the spiritual intrusion. In a way it is like cleaning out a closet to make room for new energy.

**Power Animal Retrieval:** From a shamanic point of view, if a person experiences a streak of bad luck, accidents, or is prone to recurring illness they are suffering from power-loss. The shamanic practitioner helps to restore this lost power, by retrieving a power animal for the person. According to Michael Harner, this power is somewhat like a spiritual immune defense system. The shaman's

role is to help restore a person's link to his or her own spiritual power.

**Depossession and Psychopomp:** The signs that someone may be undergoing a possession is when a person is acting out of his/her character quite frequently. A shaman who helps heal souls who are no longer living in this world, is called a Psychopomp or conductor of souls. According to Michael Harner in an article entitled "We are not Alone" most cases of possession of humans are by other humans who are dead, who reside in the middle world, and are not aware that they are dead. Vulnerable people who are disempowered, or have soul loss and power loss act as vacuums into which the confused entities enter. This is involuntary possession according to Michael Harner. A Shaman, with permission, helps the entity move on to where it belongs, to be reunited with its loved ones. The client's power is also restored to ensure that another occurrence does not happen.

**Divination:** Divination involves journeying on behalf of another person to retrieve an answer to a question. Working in alliance with spiritual allies a shaman will seek to find answers to questions, without prior knowledge of the person's situation. Sometimes the seeking involves utilizing aspects of nature such as reading a rock, feather or bone.

**Personal Ceremonies/Rituals:** It is important to anchor the healing that has occurred. One way to do this is performing daily ritual or ceremony. A shamanic practitioner guides the client in creating their own ritual or ceremony to practice on a regular basis. This may include a dance or chant, song, prayer or poem that is recited. The spirit helpers give guidance as to the ritual that will help. It is in this practice that the healing process continues, as the client takes responsibility for his/her own healing.