

Soul Retrieval by Sandra Ingerman

Imagine yourself sitting in a circle with members of your community. You have gathered together to support one community member who is suffering from a traumatic experience. You know that if one person is suffering and is ill it affects the entire community. So you have come to help hold the space for healing to happen.

It is dark and the stars are shining bright in the night sky. The air is still. Everyone feels held in the loving arms of the universe and there is no doubt that healing will happen for all gathered here.

The shaman begins to drum and dance calling the power of the universe to her as she puts her egoic self aside and becomes an empty vessel that fills with the help of the spirits.

The client lies quietly in the center breathing deeply to be in a receptive state to receive back his lost soul; his lost vitality.

The shaman sings her journey out loud as she tracks down where the soul has fled. And on finding it returns and blows it deeply into the heart of the client filling the entire body with the light of life.

There is a great joy for all as one heals all are healed. The community is now whole again and can be in peace and harmony.

The work is done.

Shamanism is the oldest spiritual practice known to humankind. We know from the archaeological evidence that shamanism was practiced all over the world for at least 40,000 years. However many anthropologists believe that the practice dates back over 100,000 years. And the most amazing thing is that shamanism is still practiced worldwide today. A practice that dates back so far and is still practiced today must be potent.

The word shaman comes from the Tungus tribe in Siberia and means "one who sees in the dark". Shamanism has been practiced in parts of Asia, Europe, Africa, Australia, Greenland, and Native North and South America.

A shaman is a man or woman who interacts directly with spirits to address the spiritual aspects of illness, perform soul retrievals, divine information, help the spirits of deceased people cross over, and perform a variety of ceremonies for the community. Shamans have taken on many roles in tribal communities. They have acted as healers, doctors, priests, psychotherapists, mystics, and storytellers.

Shamans look at the spiritual form of illness which might manifest on an emotional or physical level. When I was doing the research for my book *Soul Retrieval Mending the Fragmented Self* I found that most shamanic cultures around the world believe that illness is due to the loss of the soul.

It is believed that whenever we suffer an emotional or physical trauma a piece of our soul flees the body in order to survive the experience. The definition of soul that I am using is soul is our essence, life force, the part of our vitality that keeps us alive and thriving.

The types of trauma that could cause soul loss in our culture would be any kind of abuse sexual, physical, or emotional. Other causes could be an accident, being in a war, being a victim of a terrorist act, acting against our morals, being in a natural disaster (a fire, hurricane, earthquake, tornado, etc.), surgery, addictions, divorce, or death of a loved one.

Any event that causes shock could cause soul loss. And what might cause soul loss in one person might not cause soul loss in another. Shamans believe that alarm clocks can cause soul loss. I think we all know what they mean.

It is important to understand that soul loss is a good thing that happens to us. It is how we survive pain. If I was going to be in a head on car collision the last place that I would want to be at the point of impact is in my body. My psyche could not endure that kind of pain. So our psyches have this brilliant self protect mechanism where a part of our essence or soul leaves the body so that we do not feel the full impact of the pain.

In psychology we talk about this as disassociation. But in psychology we don't talk about what disassociates and where that part goes. In shamanism we know that a piece of the soul leaves the body and goes to a territory in what shamans call non ordinary reality where it waits until someone intervenes in the spiritual realms and facilitates its return.

Although soul loss is a survival mechanism the problem from a shamanic point of view is that the soul part that left usually does not come back on its own. The soul might be lost, or stolen by another person, or doesn't know the trauma has passed and it is safe to return.

It has always been the role of the shaman to go into an altered state of consciousness and track down where the soul fled to in the alternate realities and return it to the body of the client.

There are many common symptoms of soul loss. Some of the more common ones would be dissociation where a person does not feel fully in his or her body and alive and fully engaged in life. Other symptoms include chronic depression, suicidal tendencies, post traumatic stress syndrome, immune deficiency problems, and grief that just does not heal. Addictions are also a sign of soul loss as we seek external sources to fill up the empty spaces inside of us whether through substances, food, relationships, work, or buying material objects.

Anytime someone says I have never been the same since a certain event and they don't mean this in a good way soul loss has probably occurred.

You can really see how much soul loss there is today as we put money over life. Anytime someone says that we have to kill other life forms for material gain that person must be suffering from soul loss. Anytime someone feels that buying one more car or that gathering material objects will bring happiness that person is suffering from the loss of soul. As you can see we are looking at a great deal of planetary soul loss today as you watch how we behave towards each other and the rest of life.

Coma is also soul loss. But in coma there is more of the soul out of body than in the body. Coma is very complicated to work with today for many reasons. It takes skill on behalf of the shaman to find out which way the soul is trying to go. Does the soul want to reenter the body or does it need help moving on which would lead to the death of the patient? There is a lot to say about this topic and it beyond the scope of this article.

Today there has been a resurgence in the interest of the practice of shamanism. We now have many hundreds of wonderful shamanic practitioners reintroducing the practice of soul retrievals into our culture.

It is interesting to note that as soul loss was so understood in shamanic cultures people who suffered traumas were given a soul retrieval within three days after a trauma occurred.

Today as we have not been practicing soul retrieval modern day practitioners are going back ten, twenty, thirty, or forty years or even more looking for lost soul parts.

Also in a shamanic culture the individuals knew what was out of balance in their lives that might have caused an illness or issue to occur.

In our culture we are unaware of what is out of spiritual harmony that is creating illness. And because often our soul loss happened so young we are unaware of the unconscious patterns we are living out due to our first soul loss. We are always trying to retrieve our soul. And how we do this is by repeating the same trauma over and over again. The names might change of the people involved in our life story, but the story is often the same.

The effects of having a soul retrieval vary person to person. Some people feel that they are more grounded in their body and feel more solid. Some people feel lighter and a joyful way of being returns to them. For some memories of the past traumas might be triggered bringing up a variety of feelings that must be worked through. And for some people the effects are too subtle to notice a change until further work to integrate the soul is done.

As people feel more present in their bodies and in the world they become more conscious of behavior that might be out of balance and disharmonious.

When we are numb we might be aware that things in the world are not right but we can easily distract ourselves from feeling a need to change. When we are fully "inspired" there is no place to retreat to and we are more inspired to change our lives.

I believe that once a person has his or her soul brought back the client now has to do some work. If the person has done a lot of personal work the soul retrieval might be the end of the work. If not the soul retrieval would be the beginning of the work.

Now it is up to the client to look at how to create a healthy life style and attract healthy relationships that will support wholeness and a life filled with healing. How do we want to use the energy that was returned from the soul retrieval and our returned vitality to create a positive present and future for ourselves? And how do we bring passion and meaning back into our lives again so that we thrive instead of just survive? All these issues I call "life after healing" and are crucial to create long term healing after a soul retrieval.

I write about spiritual practices we can bring into our lives to create a positive present in future in my books *Welcome Home: Following Your Soul's Journey Home* and *Medicine for the Earth: How to Transform Personal and Environmental Toxins*.

As you are reading this I am sure that you can see the relevance of soul retrievals in your own life and the importance to help people once again become "inspired" for the sake of the planet.

This is vital work for the times we live in. The earth wants her children home and she wants them home now. It is time to come back home again and take our rightful place on the earth. It is our birthright to fully express our souls and create the world we want to live in. And it is our birthright to shine as brightly as the stars above us. It is time to share our light again in the world.

To find a practitioner in your area who can perform soul retrievals, please [click here](#).

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