



## What is Shamanic Healing?

Shamanism is the oldest spiritual practice known to humankind and has been around for over 40,000 years. The word "shaman" means spiritual healer or "one who sees in the dark." A shaman is a man or woman who interacts directly with spirits to address the spiritual aspects of illness, brings back lost power, performs soul retrievals, removes spiritual blockages, divines information, helps the spirits of deceased people cross over, and performs a variety of ceremonies for the community.

Shamans take on many roles; they act as psychotherapists, healers, doctors, priests, mystics, and storytellers.

Shamanism is not a religion, but it has been practiced by many cultures within most of the religions of the world. Ancient peoples understood what our modern culture has forgotten; there is more to healing and health than just the physical body. There are four levels of our being that must be addressed in order for us to enjoy balanced and healthy lives: the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual bodies. Our modern medical practices focus on the physical, our culture dwells on the mental, psychological therapies address the emotional, but the spiritual is often disregarded.

When people are exposed to trauma or extreme stress, parts of them may flee the body. In psychotherapy this is called dissociation. A clear example of this is war veterans and "post traumatic stress disorder". Any time you hear "he has not been the same since..." you are probably hearing about someone who has suffered "soul loss". The definition of soul that I am using is soul that is our essence, our life force, the part of our vitality that keeps us alive and thriving. There are a number of things that can cause soul loss, the death of a loved one, an accident, physical, emotional or sexual abuse, acting against our morals, being in a natural disaster, addictions, divorce, and abandonment to name just a few.

The symptoms are as varied as the causes. Some symptoms of soul loss are: depression, feeling spaced out, having recurring abusive patterns show up in our relationships, not remembering parts of our past, disconnected from our feelings, not feeling present in our bodies, ill health, poor boundaries, feeling depleted, alienated and so on. If you have any of these symptoms and have addressed them with traditional medical and emotional therapies, if you have changed your diet and take supplements and herbs yet you still feel you are not really well, you may be suffering from soul loss.

A shaman is a person who deals with spiritual illness working on the premise that when healing takes place at a spiritual level then the effect can also heal at the mental, emotional and physical levels. A trained shaman can perform a soul retrieval and actually bring back lost parts of a person's soul. This is a gentle, noninvasive technique that can be profound and life changing.

In our time of medical miracles, if we combine these ancient healing modalities by competent trained practitioners, we have the opportunity to heal into the beings we truly want to be.

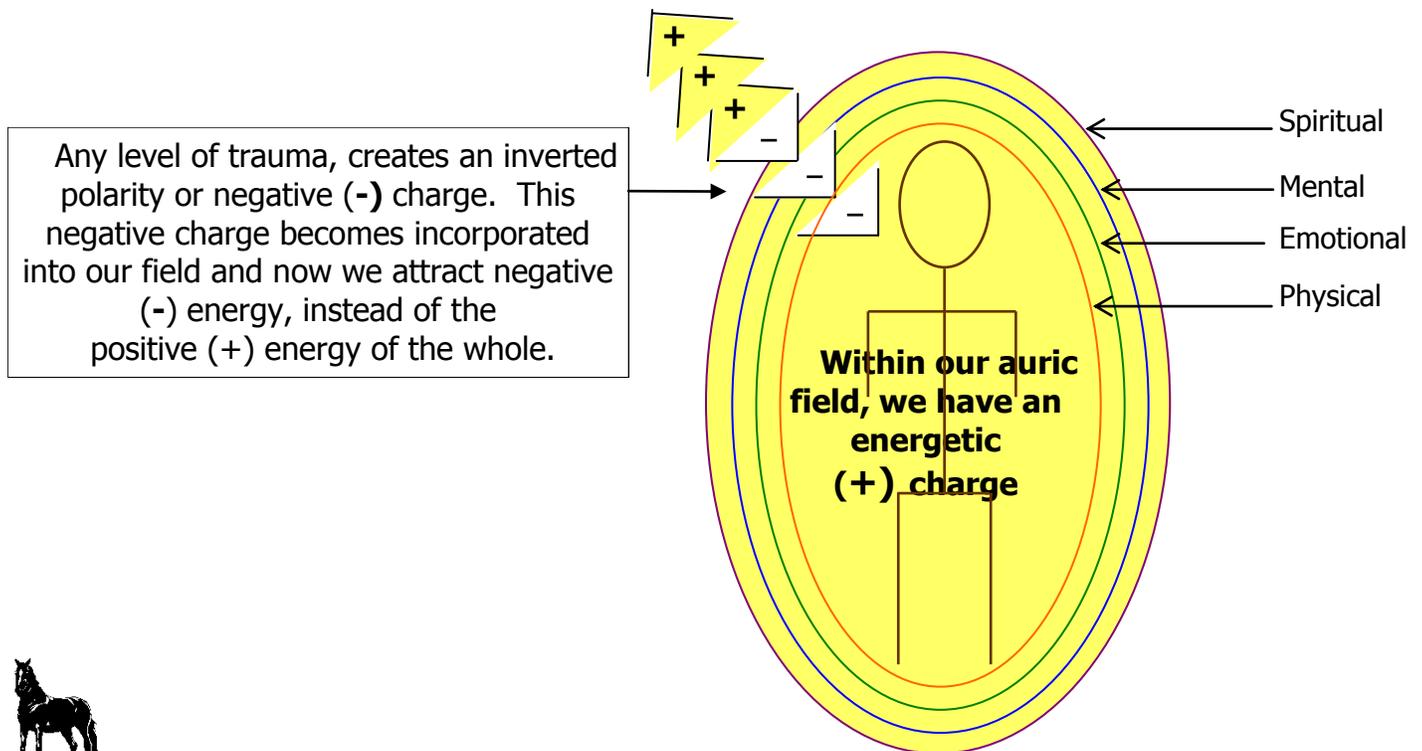


### **Our Protective Fields**

We come into the world surrounded by a semi-permeable membrane. It's like a cell wall, but it's actually the energetic field around us known as our aura.

Our energy field works through simple electromagnetic charges, much like how a magnet works, with positive and negative poles that attract and repel. The negative and positive are not good and bad, they just repel same and attract different. Through the electromagnetic charge, our field draws into us the things that we need, and repels the things that would be harmful to us or that we don't need.

To use a simplified model, imagine that you are born with an energetic field all around you that carries a positive charge. If your energy field is intact or whole then we stay in the positive energetic charge of homeostasis. However, we all experience things that sort of punch holes in our energetic field or aura; things like trauma, injury, death of a loved one, etc. When that happens we start drawing in things with a negative charge or things that have the potential to cause harm, instead of attracting the positive charge of natural balance. The following drawing illustrates my point.



### **Power Animals**

Shamans would say that within the hidden realm or spirit world, there are helping spirits, who are compassionate spirits who offer their healing help and guidance on behalf of all life. Shamans also say that we are born with at least two or three "power animals" that are available to help us. Energetically, power animals could be considered to provide particular energy frequencies to us, which help keep our energy field protected and help us operate optimally. Because we each come into life with certain gifts, personality characteristics, and tasks to accomplish, we each have a different combination of animals. At various times during our lives, a new power animal may join us to help with what we are dealing with at the time. Individual power animals are said to carry the energy signature of the faculties and gifts most portrayed by

the species they belong to. So, for instance, an armadillo is known for its protective shell and would be good protection. An elk has great strength and stamina which it could bring to us. A goat offers us surefootedness, actually or metaphorically.

Animals may come and go during our life, depending on what we most need at the time. But if an animal leaves, and is not replaced by another one, we may suffer power loss and be vulnerable energetically. So we begin life with this intact energetic field around us, protected by the energy signature of our various power animals.



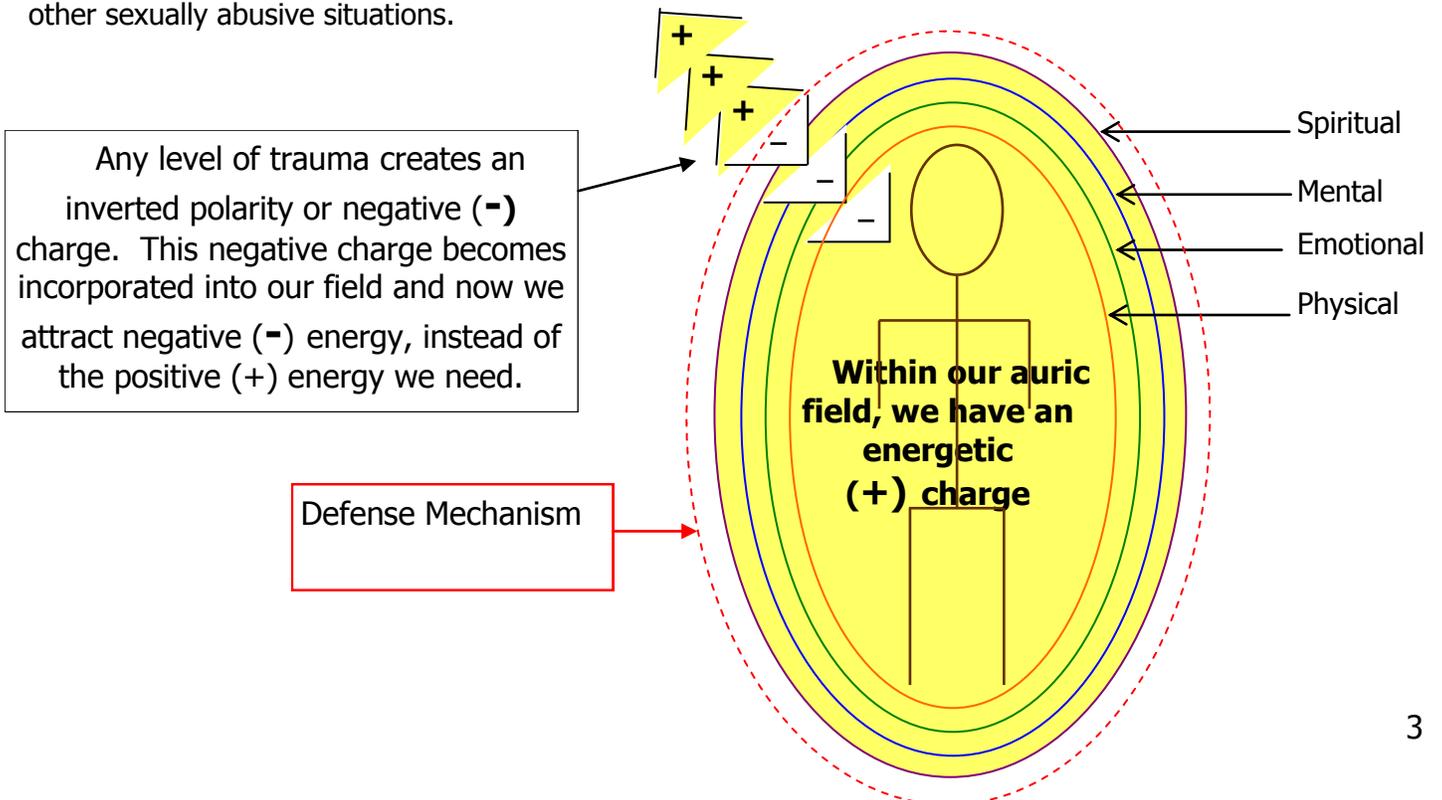
## Soul Loss

We don't actually lose our souls or even parts of our souls. Soul loss is a term that Shamans use to describe what happens to us when an aspect of ourselves disconnects from our whole in an effort to avoid the pain of a trauma or unbearable circumstance. It is important to note that the soul loss was a good thing in that it helped us survive pain. Although the soul loss is a survival mechanism, the problem from a shamanic view is that the soul part that left, does not usually come back on its own and not only lost the soul part might be stolen by another person. Also the soul part doesn't realize that the incident of pain is no longer present and that our life is now safe. We need our soul parts to return to us to function as whole and more powerful beings.

Where did that soul part go? In shamanism we know that it left the body and went to a territory in what shamans call non ordinary reality where it waits until spiritual intervention facilitates its return.

Soul loss can be envisioned as the taking away of a piece of your energy field, thus causing it to be inaccessible. Once a "soul part" leaves, an electromagnetic charge reversal occurs, or that area of your field converts to a negative charge. Then, instead of drawing in what you need, you repel what you need and attract what you don't. Also, we often establish coping or defense mechanisms that further complicate the probability of attracting what will help us to be whole and in our true nature.

This reversal in your energy field only pertains to that area of your life in which the soul loss occurred. For instance, if the trauma was related to being sexually abused, then your energy field would tend to attract other sexually abusive situations.





## **Soul Sharing and Soul Stealing**

Our personal energy or essence can also be given away, consciously or unconsciously (soul sharing), and even taken away by another (soul stealing), especially when we are not well protected or have sustained a lot of soul loss. For instance, we offer others some of our essence when our heart goes out to them or we reach out and offer them a hand. When we offer our support, we are literally fueling another's life with our energy. If this is done briefly, and just long enough for the other person to gather his or her own energy to use, it is appropriate, but if you move into pity or a codependent role, or forget that you have opened an energy channel to another, you can become drained. Your personal energy is now being used other than for your own personal being.



## **Little Jane, a story of soul loss**

One day, Jane is sitting outside on her front steps, playing with her ball, when it rolls onto the front lawn. At the same time one of Jane's neighbors is walking his dog in front of her home. Jane runs and reaches the ball just as the dog does. The dog grabs the ball and at the same time unintentionally bites Jane's outstretched hand. Jane screams, her mother, who is already stressed, comes running outside and yells at Jane for going past the front porch. Jane is told to go to her room, without ever having been asked why she is crying and holding onto her own hand. The neighbor quickly walks away.

Looking at this scene we see that, at the age of four, Jane feels unable to communicate to her exhausted mother that she was frightened by the man and the dog that bit her. The mother doesn't have a right to take her bad day out on a child and the neighbor could have had concern for the child who was obviously frightened and injured.

Aside from being unable to communicate at that level, doing so might also bring on more wrath from her mother and the neighbor, so what does Jane do in order to cope with such a circumstance? She assumes responsibility for the incident and hides her fear and pain from her mother, and tries even harder to be an obedient, non-complaining, perfect little girl.

Jane is not big enough to defend herself, and she also depends on her mother to care for her. If her mother is not concerned, does not have the skills, time, or presence to help her return to balance, then Jane believes she is not worth being cared for, fed, provided for, or safe.

While she used to think of herself as a good girl, who deserved to be protected and provided for, she now believes she's a bad girl and takes fault for the incident. She disconnects from her right to be worthy of care, protection and attention. This is soul loss. The term soul loss makes it sound a lot more mysterious than it is, but it is the term used in many cultures on the planet.

What used to be a positive charge in Jane's energy field is now, in this one area, a negative charge. Therefore, in this area of her life, she is now drawing in the things that are harmful. She is also repelling the very things that she needs. If this goes uncorrected, Jane will be the woman at work who will be overworked and do more than is expected but who never asks for a raise or feels too inadequate to get a promotion. She may even tell you a logical explanation as to why she is no further up the corporate ladder. In addition she may also never enjoy the friendship of a canine companion because she has developed an unknown fear of dogs.

This soul loss causes the frequency of her spiritual level to drop, which sets up an energetic disharmony among the four levels of her being. If she were a four cylinder car with a fouled spark plug, she'd run rough with a lower output until the spark plug was replaced. However, she's an organism, not a machine, so all the other levels of her being are going to drop their frequency to compensate, thereby reestablishing harmony and homeostasis. Now she will function, but at a slightly lower overall output.

It doesn't take long for Jane to put up a labyrinth of defenses and protection. She runs screaming and hiding any time she sees a dog, she doesn't like to go outside to the front lawn of her home, and she wants to hide in her room when she expects her mother to come visit her home.

In a four-year-old that might seem a little quirky, but at twenty-five this could cause serious problems. By the time Jane is twenty-five, she just thinks this is who she is. Her defenses have been there so long, that now she believes she is just not a good enough employee, and she is not a dog loving kind of person and that she and her mother just don't communicate well. She has most likely forgotten the incident that caused her beliefs in the first place.

That is the way it is with soul loss. We just know we don't do certain things, although we usually don't remember why. Yet at some level our mind knows why because it perceives that it once almost cost us our life by doing those things.

Jane might eventually end up seeking psychotherapy. She may be able to make some behavioral changes such as switching jobs or careers, or using a relaxation technique to quell her desire to hide when she sees a dog. She may also come to understand that her fears and feelings of worthlessness were a result of her mother's neglect and behavior, and she may be able to rebuild some of her self-esteem and grieve her losses.

These changes may help to relieve some of her emotional distress, and rearrange her defense mechanisms so she is less crippled, but the problem still remains. This is because her energy field is still damaged. So Jane can still be re-injured because she continues to draw in the things that are harmful to her.

Soul loss can cause the same things to keep happening over and over again in our lives. The faces may change, but the situations are similar. It's like the person who grows up with an alcoholic parent and then ends up marrying one. But there is an upside in that when we repeatedly draw in that which is harmful we actually have more than one chance to face the memory and heal the damage.



### **Magical Transformation**

In indigenous cultures it was understood that soul loss would be a consequence of any traumatic event, and soul retrieval was done within three days of the trauma. In our society, we have soul loss from birth, but we don't have a provision for spiritual healing, so it is left unaddressed. Many people are of the mindset that once we become ill or are traumatized, we never really recover. Our whole culture has a belief system that supports this. We do not have to be subject to or victims of our trauma. Spiritual healing methods like soul retrieval can actually reverse negative patterns, heal depression and in some cases even help people recover from life-threatening illnesses. A series of soul retrievals can sometimes cause people to look many years younger. This is because the body responds to the re-enlivened spirit inside it. Moving spirit through our physical bodies changes them. Suddenly it feels like a magical transformation.



## **A soul retrieval session**

One of the primary ceremonies or jobs of a shamanic practitioner is to perform a journey. What is a journey? It is to go into an altered state of consciousness, a form of meditation, using repetitive sound (drumming or rattling) to help the practitioner enter that state. While in the journey state the practitioner can access the "unconscious" of another person (client) or "hidden realm", find information, or "track the soul" and then return the lost essence to the client, known as a "soul retrieval." This access allows the shamanic practitioner to find where a person had disconnected from themselves or their power and by drawing attention and understanding to it, enables them to reconnect. The information in the journey comes through in the form of an interactive dream containing both literal information and metaphors.

As an urban shaman, I usually use a drumming CD and headset, but if the circumstance seems appropriate I will sometimes use a drum. Traditionally we would both lie down on the floor and relax while I listen to the drumming and go into the journey, or we may simply sit comfortably. In my practice we will be sitting in very comfortable reclining chairs. While I am in the journey I will narrate to you what is happening. I will also record it on a recorder so that it can be placed on a CD for you to take with you for further reflection. Near the conclusion of the journey I will ceremoniously deliver the soul parts back to you. When I come back from the journey I will share my healing story with you focusing on the gifts and strengths that have been returned and describing any specific healing that took place during the journey. We discuss the information and what it meant to you and you will probably want to take notes for future reference and further processing.

If an individual has done a lot of personal work the soul retrieval might be the end of the work. But in most cases the soul retrieval would be the beginning of the work.

After the session, listen to the tape and or review your notes between our sessions, follow any suggestions, and journal the process for further integration. I have found that one of the best ways to assist the integration is listening to your CD more than once and journaling as you process the information. This journey and healing comes from deep in the subconscious like a dream and tends to slip back into the subconscious if we do not take measures to hold it into our reality. The effort on your part to truly integrate what has been brought back in journey can result in creating long term healing.

A soul retrieval occurs at the spiritual level of your being. Be aware that during the time that follows a soul retrieval and its integration, your mental, emotional and physical levels will also be affected. The four levels are all connected. Memories may appear (mental), you may or may not feel sadness or joy (emotional), or you might experience a headache or relief from pain (physical).

After a soul retrieval and integration you can expect to see your life change. You become unstuck, see more clearly, and move forward in your life with more power and substance. This is an amazing form of healing and empowerment. I am grateful for this ancient wisdom and to the people all over the world who with vigilance and sacrifice preserved these teachings that we might experience them today. I am honored to share shamanic healing with you.

I am a graduate of the Path Home Shamanic Practitioner's School. For more information, please visit the Find Your Path Home website [www.findyourpathhome.com](http://www.findyourpathhome.com).

Credits:

Wiyaka, Gwilda. "What is Shamanic Healing?" "New Client Information"  
<http://www.findyourpathhome.com>.



### **Animal Communication and Shamanic Work**



If I am working with your animal friend, after first having received permission from you, I will then explain a revised version of the above information (through animal communication skills) to your animal and ask its permission to work together.

Any work I do with the animal is in alignment with their training,

The rest of the process is similar to what it is like with people with the exception that you will need to help them afterwards with integration through your interactions, intentions with them and giving them any recommended support (flower essences, stones, crystals etc.) Most animals are very receptive and integrate naturally and easily with this very healing process.

Beccy Brane, Shamanic Practitioner



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