

The Causes of Illness in Shamanism

In Shamanism the main causes of illness are: -

Soul Loss
Intrusions
Soul Stealing

In Shamanism all illness is believed to come from the unseen world. We know that mental and emotional anguish often leads to physical symptoms. Illness often comes to us after we have experienced bereavement, divorce or the loss of our job.

Soul Loss may be caused by - Abuse/Accident/Shock/Trauma/Loss of Lover/Chronic Illness/Great Pain/Death of Loved One/Divorce/Guilt over Past Actions.

Shamans believe that after a major shock part of the soul/spirit may go away from the body to a safe place. The soul part may go to the Upper, Middle or the Lower World. The soul part may hide in a tree, garden, cave or underground.

The shaman will travel to the Upper, Middle or Lower World to find the soul part and bring it back to the person. Once the soul part is returned the person needs to feel supported otherwise the soul part may leave again.

The Soul/Spirit

Jan Engels-Smith says that we can think of our soul or energy system as being like a giant jigsaw puzzle. Generally when we are born we have all of the pieces. However with some people soul loss may occur in the womb or even prior to incarnation.

As we go through life with its traumas and difficulties we lose pieces of our soul. We are no longer complete; there are "holes" in our soul left vacant by the missing pieces. We have less energy available, much like a battery that has been drained but not recharged.

The holes tend to fill with any energy available. We may take on the feelings of sadness, depression, anger or powerlessness from other people.

Shamanic soul retrieval finds the lost pieces and puts them back in place, restoring the soul. We regain our divine energy and reconnect with vital qualities such as feeling loved, cherished and valued. After a soul retrieval session a sense of belonging returns to the person. We become vibrant and whole again, the puzzle is complete, its beauty is revealed.

Shamanism and Soul Retrieval

In traditional cultures, soul retrieval is generally performed soon after any traumatic event in a person's life. Events such as a difficult childbirth, the death of a loved one, an accident, a broken relationship or bad argument were addressed immediately by performing a soul retrieval. It was assumed that anyone going through such an event would have a high probability of soul loss.

This is why people in indigenous cultures were generally happy and crime-free. When people feel fearful, threatened or fragmented their responses to life are very different from those who are trusting, optimistic and complete.

In our culture, we have very little experience of trust and optimism. Our cultural system is based on a win-lose hierarchy. Someone is always gaining while another is losing. In indigenous cultures this win/lose phenomenon is seen as soul stealing or stealing away someone's personal power.

Soul Stealing

Many people purposely steal personal power from others. A person can be the victim of soul stealing at any stage of life. It happens most often to children, especially if they are raised by authoritarian, controlling or needy parents. The parents actually steal power away from their children. If a person is abused in any way, emotionally, physically, sexually or mentally there is a resultant exchange of power. The overpowered loses energy to the abuser.

Children are extremely susceptible to soul stealing. They automatically want their parents to love them and often give of their soul in order for this to happen. This form of soul stealing at an early age often leads to feelings of unworthiness, abandonment or feeling not good enough. These feelings can be felt during a person's entire life if the soul is never healed. If there is no care of the soul built into the society the result is made up of wounded people.

Feelings of unworthiness can lead to all sorts of dysfunctional behaviours and attitudes. To be healthy people need to be genuinely loved and connected to a higher power. Once a soul theft occurs an effort must be made to recover it.

People also give away their power trying to find love or acceptance. Women have been taught to give away their personal power to the men. Most cultures are based on male dominance; the result is a socially reinforced loss of personal power for women and a false sense of social order.

The lyrics of the Country and Western song "Stand by Your Man", is an example of this imbalance in power in relationships. The void caused by engaging in this behaviour can have extremely adverse effects. In a relationship of true love and acceptance one does not give away one's soul.

Another form of soul loss happens in relationships built on co-dependency. Co-dependency in a relationship is a where one person is controlled or manipulated by another person. It also often involves placing a lower priority on one's own needs, while being excessively preoccupied with the needs of others.

In a co-dependent relationship people manipulate in all kinds of ways trying to keep the relationship together. In a co-dependent relationship abuse is tolerated on many levels.

Some people take on the attitude of a rescuer, they think, if I help them, they will love me. This is a false love that can create soul loss on both sides. True love augments the soul and is most present when the soul is whole.

We have a culture where years of soul loss have accumulated for people, creating souls that are fragmented. We can see the results of this by looking at the mental, emotional, and spiritual health of our society.

We have a society where people are depressed, taking drugs, alcohol and on permanent medication. Our young people have difficulty finding purpose and meaning in their lives. Relationships and families fall apart with ever-increasing frequency. Our culture is not grounded in taking care of the soul.

People are hurting physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually. The issues that doctors and psychologists deal with on a daily basis are what a shaman would see as signs of soul loss. Signs of soul loss can include:

- * Chronic-fatigue, depression, faulty relationships, emotional problems, suicidal tendencies.
- * The inability to come to terms with an emotional trauma such as a death, divorce or other loss.
- * Addictions to alcohol, drugs or food.
- * Not feeling connected to the body, abuse of the body.
- * Difficulty in recovering from surgery particularly when anaesthetic is used.
- * Repetitive sicknesses, colds, flu, etc.
- * Major illnesses.
- * No sense of direction.
- * Feelings of shame or guilt.
- * Feelings of unworthiness.
- * Not feeling one's personal power.

It is rare to come across someone who feels a sense wholeness rather than woundedness.

The care of the soul has many facets to it. Soul retrieval is one component. If a person has soul loss, these empty spaces fill up with any energy to try to become whole. If we are exposed to anger, fear, greed, anxiety, unhappiness and hatred repeatedly, those are the qualities that our body will absorb.

Extracting negative energies, bringing back the lost soul energy and then teaching a person how to stay whole will not only heal the individual and restore personal power; it will begin to restore wholeness in to society.

Based on an article by Jan Engels-Smith

<http://www.janengelssmith.com/healing/soul-retrieval.htm>