

SHAMANISM

Soul Proprietor

Shamanic healers help clients overcome trauma and find healing through the practice of journeying and soul retrieval.

FACING THE FIVE-YEAR anniversary of her husband's death, and still grieving daily, Connie Deschamps had no idea what she was going to do with the rest of her life. She'd tried dating, volunteer work, taking classes, and keeping busy, but she was plagued with a sense that her existence was meaningless.

"I really couldn't move forward because I didn't have an intact soul," says Deschamps, a retired St. Louis psychotherapist. "To find the happiness, the life potential that was out there, I had to get my soul back first."

Deschamps had learned about the shamanic practice of soul retrieval by reading Sandra Ingerman's seminal book on the topic, *Soul Retrieval: Mending the Fragmented Self*. After taking a workshop with Luisa Kolker, a Santa Fe-based shamanic practitioner, Deschamps decided she trusted her enough to sign up for a soul-retrieval session.

"People are spiritual beings," says Susan Mokolke, president of the Foundation for Shamanic Studies, a nonprofit educational institution founded by anthropologist Michael Harner, who had studied techniques that were common to shamans worldwide and adapted them for Western use. "They have souls, and shamans deal directly with that. It's like a spiritual immune system in a sense. If your soul is weakened, you're not able to function very effectively."

Emotional trauma triggered by abuse, grief, or stressful events can cause a person's soul, or spiritual essence, to lose power or even fragment, according to the ancient tenets of shamanism. "It's really an adaptive mechanism on the part of the psyche to keep parts of our essence safe for us, even if remotely located, deep in the unconscious," explains Kolker, a psychotherapist who has been working as a shamanic practitioner since 1987.

While a person may continue to function fairly normally, "ravaging aloneness, loneliness, and panic often accompanies a soul loss," Kolker says. "That feeling of being disconnected from oneself is so horrific that we usually seek to

fill it up as quickly as possible," typically through drinking, drugging, excessive work, or other distracting, numbing behaviors.

Illness, accidents, and repeated misfortunes frequently stem from soul loss, Mokolke says, and it's the job of a shamanic practitioner, working with "highly evolved, compassionate spirits," to retrieve and restore the missing soul parts.

Through an age-old shamanic process known as journeying, practitioners typically use rhythmic drumming to subtly alter their brain waves, allowing them to access non-physical reality to divine the specific needs of each client and then do the healing work required.

"From a shamanic perspective, health is a function of having a fully present soul, as well as a connection with a spirit such as a power animal," Mokolke explains. "Shamanic practitioners work by removing the things that do not belong to a person's soul, things that keep us from being spiritually whole human beings, and restoring what does belong, including one's power connections. I'm not there to fix them but to make their soul as fully empowered as it can be."

People don't need to understand shamanism, or even believe in it, for it to be effective, Mokolke says. "But a person's willingness to be healed is very important."

Though Deschamps had no idea what to expect from a soul retrieval, she recalls experiencing a profound shift after just one session. "It gave me such a complete feeling. It allowed me to let go of the past and just go on. It was the final turnaround of the grief work."

Glen McKerrihan, a Santa Fe photographer and artisan, says he also gained a sense of wholeness after Kolker reunited him with an energetic, optimistic, youthful soul piece that he identified as his 14-year-old self. "I feel like my creativity has come back. I feel like I'm a foot and a half taller, like I take up more space. My overall mood has changed too. It has lightened. There's nothing less than



Untitled 
Misty Mawn

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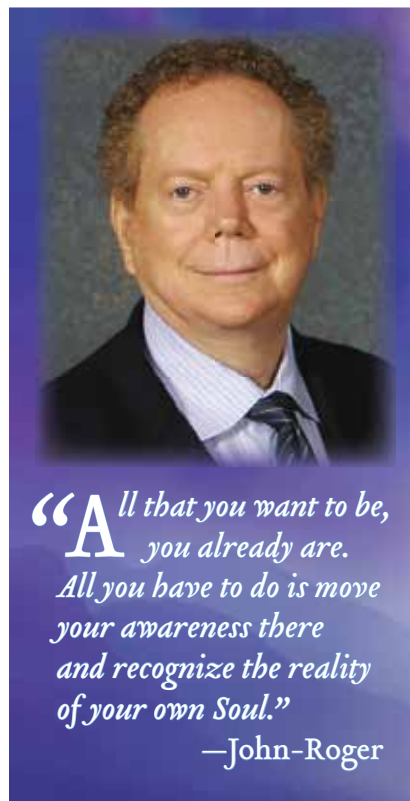
positive about all the changes.”

Kolker likens a soul retrieval to “inflating a collapsed balloon. I can feel the person filling with their own essence, and nothing is more of a relief than that. It’s like we’re turning on a main power switch. All of a sudden, they’re back into a flow, a relationship with Source that can be life changing.”

Mokelke concurs. “It’s like they got unplugged from the power source

and when they’re plugged back in again, life gets better. If you’re fully in your power, you move through life in an easier way. It’s nice to have a soul doctor around to at least make it fully operational, and then whatever you do with it is up to you. It’s a miracle in some ways, but it’s not a cure-all for everything. That day-to-day use of the whole, restored self is the true miracle.”

— JOAN CONROW



“All that you want to be, you already are. All you have to do is move your awareness there and recognize the reality of your own Soul.”

—John-Roger

Soul Transcendence is becoming aware of yourself as a Soul and as one with God, not as a theory but as a living reality.



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