

Soul Retrieval

Gini Stanley interviews Tanya Patterson

In what sense is a soul retrieval shamanistic?

It's the only thing that can explain what happens to me when I'm doing this particular type of healing on someone. It's a sense of journeying into non-ordinary states of consciousness, in fact, it feels like travelling into other worlds. Before I go in to do the healing the intention is there and the person is aware that that's what we'll be doing. Basically, I put the intention out looking for the lost part of that person—I like to go to the very first soul loss. I believe we have lots of soul loss in our lives but there's always an initial one which triggers subsequent losses, like a domino effect.

Soul loss can be felt like a disempowerment or powerlessness. So for me, it's a sense of travelling energetically in a certain state of consciousness into other worlds, coming to a point where you become aware of the energetic system that's shut down. To me it's like a story, or metaphor, or allegory of visiting a place and seeing a part of that person, and what has happened for that energy to be locked away. It seems to go to a specific trauma or incident. Say, for instance, that a person experienced sexual abuse or a bad car accident at four years old, something so traumatic that part of that person's consciousness couldn't deal with it at the time. It shuts down and splits off and it may create its own world to live in. So I may see that four year old child sitting there and it's like sitting with that child, dialoguing, finding out what it was that split that energy off and then asking if they would like to come back.

The way I do soul retrieval is that I like the person to be involved with it because, in the past, I have brought parts back, and if that person doesn't have any ownership of reclaiming that part, it can split off again. So it's bringing back that energy system of the four year old and then dialoguing with the person there. It's interesting, when I work with people it's like their energy and your energy become one. It's like a sense of working synchronistically together and that person is very aware of that four year old as well. So there's the dialogue that gets set up. Then there becomes an awareness of the decision whether that child want to come back, and whether that adult want to receive the energy back. I've found that if there's a mutual agreement for reclaiming, it's a much more powerful healing. Invariably I ask people where they would like to place that part and invariably they always go to the heart. It's like when the energy fits into the heart it seems to enliven the whole system. It can be quite emotional as well. The sense of the heart becoming full

can bring on tears or bliss—a sense of oneness. I like people to integrate that energy for a few weeks, not to do any other therapy or counselling. I like them to sit with that energy, to be with it every day, honour it and visit it and then it becomes a part of them. Then they can pursue life more fully after that.

Can you tell me what you mean by 'to visit it'?

I ask people for at least 5 minutes every day to sit quietly with that part. If it's a four year old to sit with that child (it's a bit like Inner Child but it's an energetic Inner Child). So it's about sitting and sensing the feelings of the coming together, because they've been separated for a long time. So you keep honouring that communion, spend some time every day just to honour that coming together. After a couple of weeks people find that it's just a part of them, so there's not that sense of visiting anymore. They've blended together and they're one. Sometimes people will see the four year old or go into the heart and it's like that energy grows so quickly that they'll see the four year old grow into the adult over a 5 minute period. If that happens and they become very blended then there's no need for them to visit every day.

How does what you do relate to Spiritual Emergence?

It's a very good question because it's not simple to talk about. Spiritual Emergence to me is spiritual reclaiming back into the body, so it's a form of soul retrieval, a form of the energy systems blending together. In Spiritual Emergence there's that confusion, that unknowing. There may also come a point where they sense that something bigger than them is wanting to be a part of the smaller self. Sometimes a soul retrieval can be very beneficial for reclaiming the soul into the physical body. I believe that the process of Spiritual Emergence is the dramatic energetic process of soul retrieval happening for that person. And as for me when I went through my Spiritual Emergence (it went for about ten months) at the very end of it there was quite a dramatic sense of a soul retrieval. For me it was very much a past life soul retrieval. And I have found that there may be soul loss from past lives or 'in utero' (in the womb).

Could you give me an example of a past life soul retrieval?

The one that comes to mind is a woman whom I'd been working with who'd been having panic attacks when she had turned 40. We went through a lot of work

Tania Patterson works as a naturopath and spiritual healer in Kurrajong west of Sydney. After Spiritual Emergence experiences, which were mostly shamanic in nature, she undertook a Certificate in Transpersonal Psychology by correspondence with the International Transpersonal Institute (started by the Grofs). It was while doing a module on Shamanism that she encountered 'Soul Retrieval'. This gave her a name for what she was already doing intuitively. Tania was member of SEN in its first Australian incarnation from 1988 to 1992. Some years ago I heard Tania give a talk about Soul Retrieval and later talked to a friend who had felt profound healing from a Soul Retrieval with Tania.

together and at one stage we went into a past life where she had died but her spirit was lost. We reclaimed the part that hadn't died properly, back into her physical body. By doing that her panic attacks and anxiety totally left her.

Could you tell me how you came across that past life?

Basically, when we were in the middle of the healing she went into a panic attack. So we moved with that energy. And in the moving with that energy we became aware of that lost soul. I came to view the death and dying process and what had happened and she was seeing it at the same time. I never like to control what is happening in the healing. I just sit back and take a witness position. I seem to have this ability to see what is happening at that particular time. I become very conscious of a story unfolding in my own inner consciousness.

Do you see images?

Yes. Very strong images that unfold. It's like watching a TV screen. I tell the person what I'm seeing and it always means something for them.

Can you tell me some other problems which have been helped by soul retrieval?

Basically any disorder. I had a lady with Hashimoto's Disease which is an auto immune disease of the thyroid. Working with that came the awareness of a relationship she had a few years ago. There had been a lot of soul loss or disempowerment in that relationship. So it was like reclaiming a part of her that was still with the other person.

I don't believe in interfering with the process, but we sometimes need to slow it down a bit so that the person can cope with it a little bit easier.

Maybe I should explain how I see the world. We all have a holographic energy around our physical body. We also have what I call umbilical cords that connect to everything, so it's like a web or a weave. On those energy umbilical cords you have energies that flow backwards and forwards. Sometimes the energy might totally flow one way and it may not be coming back the other way. Or people might find that they could be with someone and they feel very tired afterwards, they feel as if their energy has been drained from them, so for me

that's your soul loss— someone has sucked the energy from you. I don't believe it happens on a conscious level, I think it's just the way the power structures happen between individuals and so for this woman, with her physical illness, she had been totally disempowered in this relationship. The other person had basically grabbed all of her energy, grabbed what resources she had, and she wasn't strong enough to stand up against that, to claim it back. So the soul retrieval was about empowering her to claim the energy back from that individual. I have found that when you do that it's interesting what happens for other people. It can have a ripple effect.

Someone else came to me specifically for a soul retrieval. Her and her sister had always had major problems in their life around relationships. We did a soul retrieval with her and went back into a past life where she and her sister had been placed onto a boat to sail from England to America. They were basically on their own. Their parents had put them on the boat with someone else looking after them.

One night on the boat she woke up and her sister was missing. While she was panicking about this, the boat sank and no one survived. We went back and looked for her sister, who had been taken and locked away in a box. She had an awareness of unlocking the box, opening it, bringing her sister out and reclaiming her back as her sister. There was then a reclaiming of her own sense of guilt about abandoning her sister.

When I talked to her about a week later, it seemed to her that she had got a lot of benefit out of it but it also seemed to have helped her sister as well. Her sister actually started to lose her depression and live a fuller life. Sometimes in soul retrieval there seems to be this ripple effect on to other people as well, as if there's a dynamic energy system that we are all plugged into. We are not just an individual soul but we're all one, we're all connected in some way.

I may only do a soul retrieval once or twice a year; my main work is as a naturopath. The bulk of my work then is on a physical level but there may be the odd occasion where someone comes in and you get a sense that they've been searching for years. The treatments don't seem to be going far enough and this person may be open to exploring these more spiritual dimensions. It's as if they have a spirit sickness, a form of psychic sickness that is beyond any herbal medication.

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Could you tell me some more of the problems that you've been able to help with soul retrieval?

I have one lady who was a manic depressive, and she specifically wanted soul retrieval. I wasn't convinced that it would help because she was still on medication. We performed the technique and she was able to let go of the medication about a month later. She has remained in contact with me on and off over the years. She said that the only thing that she can put this major change down to was the soul retrieval.

Was she depressed or manic?

It was hard to tell with the medication, but I think for her it was more the depression that affected her. She was on specific medication for the depression. I hadn't worked with anyone on medication before so I wasn't sure how the energy system would work. Soul loss can be specifically about depression—you have no life force, no energy, no motivation—so those would be the symptoms of what we call soul loss. That is where you would look at soul retrieval.

I believe that you lecture in Spiritual Emergence?

Hawkesbury University have a Community Link Program. I've been doing courses on well-being and wholeness and nutrition. A couple of years ago I started to run talks on Spiritual Emergence. They were one day workshops that ran twice a year and were well received. The university was happy for me to run the courses. The sessions were purely informative; it wasn't appropriate to be taking people through any type of processes. I've been doing these for a couple of years now.

What did you cover?

What the different forms of Spiritual Emergence can manifest as. The Shamanic Crisis, even alien abduction (because I think that can be a part of it as well) and unity consciousness. I use a lot of Grof's stuff as I find that easier to teach because of the framework. I talked about the things that people can do if they find themselves in these specific states. The sort of practical things that they can do like eating grounding foods; certain herbs I find work well with Spiritual Emergence. There's one specific one that's terrific when someone's spirit is totally out of their body. It's very good for grounding them, it slows the process up. I don't believe in interfering with the process, but we sometimes need to slow it down a bit so that the person can cope with it a little bit easier.

What's the herb?

It's called Golden Rod. It's a Kidney herb and it really does slow the process down to the point where they can be quite moody for two or three days. I warn people

that there's going to be a bit of a struggle with the spirit popping in and out, but by the third and fourth day they'll actually feel the groundedness and can then more easily cope with what's happening.

Is anything else useful?

Finding a practitioner that will listen to you, I think that's really important, definitely grounding, but I find with someone that's in Spiritual Emergence it's really hard to keep them on a diet. I find herbs work well, also Bach Flowers and Bush Essences, and basically creating a space for that person to feel OK about what's happening for them. Giving them literature so that they feel that what they are experiencing is normal. "Stormy Search for the Self" or other books that I've collected over time that relate to specific things that are happening for them. I think that people can feel a sense of: "I'm not normal"; "I'm really different"; "what's wrong with me?". We had someone this week who was diagnosed as schizophrenic but who I believe is going through a Spiritual Emergence. He'd had some marijuana about a year ago, which threw him into a crisis where they were seeing God and the devil at the same time. So we help him to recognise that what happened to him was not an ordinary state of consciousness and are helping him to integrate it into his life at the moment.

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How do you help him to integrate that?

I work with 'where people are at the time'. If someone is very physically oriented then I'll work on the physical to integrate the physical symptoms: the hot and cold flushes, the adrenaline rushes, the low blood sugar, sleeplessness. I work with the physical but I work with the emotional as well to help someone make sense of the emotions that are happening for them.

But if someone is spiritually aware then I look at symbolism, their dreaming stories, their awareness, their faith system, what they believe in, to make sense of their journey so that they can gain an awareness of what it is they are trying to learn. I have a sense now of how I work. I find that it's fine to have a lot of spiritual awareness but it needs to be integrated into the physical and then brought out into their world so that they can find what it is they are specifically here for—what is their journey; what is their purpose in life—and help them to make sense of the world that they're living in. It may mean asking "are you in the right job, what sort

of work should you really be doing?"

So it's very involved and it's very complex. For some people I might see them for 2 or 3 months and that'll be fine and I might not see them again for another year or two. For someone else I might work with them for a couple of years until they really find the place in the world where they belong.

When you're working with someone for a number of years, does that involve counselling?

I may only see them every few months, working with the physical symptoms. I think the spiritual healing aspect of what I do is where my gift is. So if they're having trouble with a life situation or relationship issue or a work issue then we'll do some energetic healing work to integrate the knowledge or the learning that's coming up for that person. They might go off for a while and come back again. I'm not one to see a person every week forever. I believe in the energetic process and that's what I tend to work with more. Then, as it integrates and a person moves along fairly well, something might start to shake their world and they'll come back again.

So what does it look like when you do the healing?

The person is lying comfortably on a mattress and I'm sitting next to that person with 'hands on healing'. I might move to certain parts of the body and place my hand where I feel the energy is getting blocked. It's very quiet, serene, relaxed. I use certain types of music for certain types of people. I use soft music in the background which I find blends with the energy that happens when I'm working with someone. So it doesn't look very dramatic. I've had people come in for soul retrieval who want drumming and loud noises. That's not the way I work. Mine is quiet, gentle and soft but has a powerful energetic impact. People might feel tingles, heat, sensations flowing through the body, the room may get cold or hot. Sensory type changes happen in the room. Otherwise, if you were sitting and watching it would probably look quite boring.

So your perception is of removing energy blocks?

Not so much removing them as unblocking them. It's about allowing that energy to start moving. It's like a river that's damned... we remove the dam. People can be very conscious of what's happening for them. They may see a hand holding the energy, so I'll ask them who the hand belongs to. It may go back to some sort of person that had a major impact on their life, such as controlling them. There is a lot of visual imagery in the work that I do, both for myself and the person that I'm working with. The response is not always the same, some people see colours or are aware of energy sensations. I think it's a cooperative exercise and the

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person has a sense of ownership of what happens in the healing. They feel like they are part of the process and can walk away feeling empowered.

What about Kundalini?

Very dramatic. I see menopause as a Kundalini experience. If I were to treat it I'd be treating it as if it were menopause. There are specific physical things that happen to someone with Kundalini so I feel quite competent in working with that. It involves adrenaline and the endocrine system. Kundalini for me is the dramatic awakening of the energy system in the body.

The energy system?

Yes. It's coming from the lower chakra areas and moving straight up the spine. What it tends to do is hit on a specific block on the spine. People find that their confusion comes from this. It's about unblocking the energy in the body, bringing life force back into that person. It's dramatic and can be quite uncomfortable. I feel a lot of menopause is a spiritual experience. It's about the female energy opening her up to a higher consciousness. I've had my own Kundalini experience as well. What I like to do with it is slow it down, let it not be so dramatic. Again we're looking at certain herbs and diet to slow it down so a person becomes aware of the 'remembering' that's happening for them.

You don't see it as an evolutionary process then?

Yes, I do see it as an evolutionary process. I see it as an awakening of that person's spiritual identity.

You were saying a "remembering"?

I believe it's a remembering. I believe in cellular memory. The sense that we carry all of our knowledge within ourselves and there are certain things that hide it from us for whatever reason. So soul retrieval is an awakening of the inner knowing that people have. It is evolutionary in the sense that you become aware of realisations and awareness of yourself on a spiritual dimension. My sense is that we all have our own knowing and are hidden from it. The Kundalini is a way of awakening that remembering of who we are. I think that people have everything they need to know within themselves and we can bring an awareness to that person of what they've forgotten.

Have you worked with anyone with schizophrenic symptoms?

My mother was a schizophrenic. That's probably taken me into working with what they call "mental states". So I'm aware of what it is about. That sense of helplessness towards what I could do for her has probably taken me towards working with it and finding out what it is. I've probably only had two people come in with schizophrenia.

They've come in with their parents and on a very physical level. So I've worked on that level but it's never moved beyond that because of family and medical constraints. I haven't worked on a spiritual level with someone with schizophrenia where I believe schizophrenia is spiritual. When it starts to be medicated I believe it goes into psychosis. Before the medication it would be good to work with someone because I believe it is a spiritual journey. I can't generalise and say all schizophrenics belong to this specific thing but it's definitely a shamanic crisis. The hallucinations, the energy, the feeling of being torn apart... for me it is a shamanic crisis.

And how do you see manic depression?

I've seen a few people with manic depression. I like manic depressives and schizophrenics and I get on well with them. I think it's to do with my mother. I believe manic depression is a soul loss— disempowerment through some sort of past trauma. My own awareness is that the depression is an awareness of the soul loss and the mania is the spirit trying to come back to reclaim the physical. It gets into that high energy, not a Kundalini experience, but it has the same sort of vibration. I think soul retrieval would work well with manic depression, but not necessarily with schizophrenia because that is more like a spiritual journey and we need to bring an awareness to that journey.

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