



The Role of the Shadow – Part 1

The concept of the Shadow is central to many healing modalities - from Ancient Shamanic traditions to modern psycho-analytics. This is an important concept to understand when trying to break old patterns of relating to the world. Check out Part one of my exploration into the Shadow Concept and how it operates during acupuncture healing.

The concept of The Shadow has been central to many healing modalities from indigenous Shamanic healing to the modern psycho-analytical works of Carl Jung. In the new age world it can get pretty murky and mystified because traditionally the "Healer" is the one who journeys into the dark realm on behalf of the one being healed. But it really isn't that mystical - and when understood - can be a terrific organizational tool to understanding the journey of healing.

You can't discuss the health of the modern human being without considering their environment. All day, every day since birth, we have been asked to process information or stimuli which is many times in direct conflict with our ideals, beliefs or the way we see ourselves. In order to protect ourselves from going completely mad, our mind creates a reservoir for that which does not fit our environment. Nothing gets into this reservoir until it has been judged harshly by ourselves or others. Thus - we begin to deny who we really are in order to match our environment.

I would take this a step further and say that within this reservoir are the unprocessed traumas that have been too difficult to feel. All trauma requires a full release in order for it to not affect our health - which means fully feeling the pain. But we would rather the shadow hold onto it for as long as possible in order to be able to continue to participate in society. But everything in the shadow wants to come out - and what's more is that we need it to come out in order to fulfill our destinies.

What do I mean by this? All those traits that have been rejected and banished into hiding were given to us for a reason. At birth these traits were poised and ready to be used on our path of life. They were specially tailored for us - in order to assist us. They are our allies and we need them.



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In my acupuncture practice I have seen that deep healing occurs during the process of acupuncture for several reasons. One of the major reasons I observe, especially since I practice in New York City, is that during acupuncture, people are taken out of linear time. They are released from the three dimensional world of schedules and demands and reactions. Most times, they are able to let go of all that is pulling them down and are able to get to a space where the conscious and the sub-conscious mind can mingle and integrate. When this happens, we are moved closer and closer towards being whole.

The most important phrase I picked up in acupuncture school was when one of my teachers said, "Illness helps us manifest our destiny." I love this concept. Your symptoms are your guides. Love them. Honor them. They are always pushing you towards more joy, more creativity and closer alignment with who you are. What could be better than that?