

# THE BODY DEVA

Working with the Spiritual Consciousness  
of the Body



MARY MUELLER SHUTAN

author of *The Spiritual Awakening Guide*

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FINDHORN PRESS



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“*The Body Deva* is simply a great book. Through a series of simple-to-do visualizations, Shutan leads the reader on a powerful and effective journey toward self-understanding, self-healing, and self-liberation. Her writing is filled with deep wisdom and insights, which make the journey she invites us to take a trustworthy and safe one. Highly recommended.”

— **ROBERT HENDERSON**, author of *Emotion and Healing in the Energy Body*

“Mary is a gifted and compassionate teacher, and this book is ideal for anybody ready to move beyond the mentality of the quick fix. The exercises may appear surprisingly simple on the page, but working through them with patience and focus reveals their potency and their depth. *The Body Deva* is of great value as a workbook for self-healing, as a compendium of healing techniques, and as a guide toward an expanded view of the self.”

— **JONATHAN HOWARD KATZ**, composer and pianist

“Mary Mueller Shutan provides a body-aware and trauma-informed approach to ancestral and cultural healing in *The Body Deva*. Her work brings humility and respect for diverse kinds of life experience in a way that is much needed in contemporary spiritual circles.”

— **DANIEL FOOR, PH.D.**, author of *Ancestral Medicine*

“*The Body Deva* is a beautiful introduction for creating a compassionate relationship with your body and

understanding the incredible capacity for health and well-being that exists within each of us. Mary is truly gifted at providing vocabulary and understanding of how to access your own inner body deva and live a more balanced, connected life.”

— **JEANNE GORHAM**, craniosacral therapist

“All of Mary Shutan’s work is brilliant. Her fourth book, *The Body Deva*, may very well be her best thus far. This book allows the reader to connect with their own body’s wisdom in a grounded way that is an important step to greater self-connection and spiritual growth. There is a lot of material available that takes a person’s spiritual journey outside of themselves; *The Body Deva* brings you back into yourself.”

— **ALEXIS EDWARDS**, doctor of Oriental medicine and intuitive healer

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# Introduction

**M**uch of medicine, whether allopathic or holistic, understands disease. We are labeled and understood as a disease. We are Cancer, or Chronic Fatigue, or Depression. We are understood only by what is pathological, what has gone wrong within us. Our treatment and care is based on the named diseases and imbalances we carry, not who we are as individuals. Our treatment and care is focused on sickness, not on health.

When we receive care, we tend to only receive treatment for part of the picture. We are not a whole body—we are a large intestine, or a gallbladder, an emotion, or an ankle or leg. Or we are a constellation of symptoms that has been labeled: Crohn's, PTSD, Lupus. We are then further segmented based on the perceived mind-body split. Our physical complaints, those that can be seen and labeled and tested (and will show up on a test definitively), are treated by our physicians while therapists and counselors treat our emotions or "mind."

If we have dipped our toes into holistic therapies, we may have received care that assists with mind and body, or care that understands that our minds and emotions and body can help or hurt one another. While this may be still a bit of a leap for some (and old hat for others), if you were to ask anyone with depression if they experience physical symptoms due to their depression, the answer would be a resounding "yes." Similarly, if you were to ask anyone with cancer if they were experiencing difficult emotions or had an expanded spiritual perspective as a result of the experience, the answer would also be a resounding "yes."

There is no doubt as to the capacity of allopathic medicine to assist with emergency type care, or its ability to offer pharmaceuticals to those who need them to ensure proper balance and functioning of their systems. As allopathic medicine still has not fully embraced the understanding that mind and body do indeed interact (even decades after the term *psychoneuroimmunology* was introduced), we are likely many years away from any type of framework in mainstream medicine that would allow for anything other than a purely mechanistic approach to healing. While this type of care is important, it is just scratching the surface of our healing potential.

Methods of individually understanding our history are best represented by healing methods such as Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) and Ayurveda, both of which understand that five people may walk into an office with stomach pain in the exact same location for five very different reasons; those five people need to be treated according to their history, their patterns, and their unique mind, body, and spirit. Those five people with the same exact stomach pain may receive five different treatments, as the reasoning behind their pain would be different.

Our emotions and thoughts and body and spirit all create our relative illness or health. Who we are is not just a body and then a mind. We are a whole. Not only that, we are not only a mind and emotions and a body—we are also energy and spirit. Most forms of care, even holistic forms of treatment, miss out on the fact that we are indeed energy, matter, spirit, mind, and emotions. It is only by understanding all aspects of things, as well as our own unique history, that we really have all the pieces of the puzzle for what may be out of balance within us. It is through understanding all aspects of what make up our imbalances that we can begin to truly and deeply heal.

We are not a disease or an imbalance, or even a pain. We are not segmented into parts or purely mechanistic creatures—we are a whole person. We should not be treated this way, and we do not heal this way. When we are treated this way we look for symptoms, we look to suppress anything that is uncomfortable. By looking within, by looking for our own unique constellation of reasons why a disease, imbalance, or pain emerged for us, we can treat the root. We can heal the root. We can truly understand who we are and the workings behind why a disease or other pattern has emerged for us. We can align ourselves with our innate wholeness and health, instead of our sickness or imbalances.

## **Healing versus Curing**

Our bodies first start talking to us in whispers. Pain is a scream. If we begin to listen to our body, we can realize when it is whispering rather than wait for it to scream. If our body is screaming, we can begin to understand why and soothe it. We hold the inherent consciousness, the knowledge, and the capacity of healing ourselves within. Many of us simply do not have the tools to access this resource, known in this book as the *body deva*.

There is a difference between healing and curing. Healing is something that will arise from utilizing the tools within this book, but curing is different from being cured.

So what is the difference?

The difference is that healing permits us to release the energies, emotions, and experiences around an imbalance, disease, or pain. Healing can lead to a full understanding of why an imbalance came into your life, what function it serves, and all of the different “parts” that caused it to arise: the emotions, experiences, beliefs, as well as the physical and genetic causative factors.

While this may allow symptoms to leave, or even for something to be cured, it doesn't every time. What this means is that if someone has terminal cancer they may still physically die, even if they are healed. We have a lot of cultural fears around death, and I use this example to share that we may heal in ways that will cure whatever imbalances we carry. But we also may find healing, as in understanding of why experiences have arisen for us; this allows us to have acceptance and let go of emotions and beliefs that we carry about the situation, and to face whatever obstacles life throws at us in a peaceful and prepared manner.

I realize that this may be difficult to hear, and I may lose a few readers at this point who may have been hoping for a simple, easy fix to all that they carry in this world. But it is a part of authentically describing the process, and radicalizing the notion of what a book in the self-help space can actually do, to understand that someone can deeply heal and yet may still have physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual difficulties in their lives. We all will. Life in a physical body is difficult. Our lives will inevitably throw us curveballs. We experience loss, connection, joy, and heartache, and it is a part of the beauty of this world that we do so.

But we can weather the storm of the ups and downs in our lives in better fashion. We can experience more freedom and expansion in our lives. We can stop sabotaging ourselves and become who we are truly meant to be. By looking inward we can appreciate this journey more, and let go of the baggage that we have accumulated in our daily lives. We can fully understand who we are, why we are, and become more conscious about why our bodies and our lives are out of balance.

This may result in great physical change, a lessening of symptoms, and more joy and laughter in your world. I do

hope that it does, as the weight of the world and the heaviness of what we carry is often such an incredible burden. We are often unaware of just how much of a burden we carry until it begins to lift. We are often unaware of how many limiting beliefs we hold, and the impact of those beliefs on our lives, until we realize that we no longer need to have them shape our world.

## **The Clarion Call**

The sort of clarion call to take responsibility for our own healing has been sounding for decades, and as meditation and inner work grow in popularity we are more and more accepting of the fact that we must take part in our own healing process to truly get well.

This is not to say that we should not visit healers, medical professionals, and others on our path, as those skilled professionals can be of great help (and can get us out of some very stuck places). They can compassionately assist us and listen at the deepest levels, moving us forward in profound ways. Someone who has attended to his or her own healing path in an in-depth way can be a profound catalyst to our own process. One of my teachers used to say, "Shared pain is lessened pain," and I do find that to be true.

Work like this can lead to significant and deeply felt emotions and experiences. This is part of the process, as healing can be both blissful and at times uncomfortable. We are so used to numbing ourselves that any sort of pain or difficulty is feared or shoved aside. It takes courage to look within, as what is unhealed inside us may not always be pleasant to consider. But it is only through unearthing our wounds that we can face them as well as eventually free ourselves from them.

If we are truly ready, we can look within. We can understand ourselves in a different, in-depth way. We can realize why we are in pain, why we are so angry, why we react or think or understand ourselves to be a certain way. We can know why we relate to the world in a certain manner. We can understand why we “loop” or repeat the same behaviors and patterns again and again and break free from them. We can know where our beliefs come from, and change them.

We can be active participants in our own healing process, and evolve toward who we are intended to be in this world. We can take back the power we have so freely given to others in hopes that they will heal us, and realize that the resources to heal ourselves were always within us—they were just hoping to be recognized and worked with.

Most importantly, we can begin to free ourselves from the ties that bind us. Effective healing work allows you to understand the messages your body and soul are trying to relay to you; these messages allow you to live from a place of truth and authenticity in this world. This world needs authentic people. It needs people who are willing to look within. It needs people willing to move beyond the limiting beliefs, heavy emotions, and other energies that cause so much pain, both personally and collectively.

Our culture is changing, and so are we. We are ready for authenticity. We are ready for complexity. We are ready to look within. We are ready to let go of the empty promises and the easy, quick methods of healing. And this book will teach you how to do so ... or at the very least will introduce a new way of doing so.

Through this book, may you learn to lighten your load, heal, and understand yourself on a new level. By understanding ourselves in all our complexity we can sweep aside the illusions fed to us by others, the hoped-for but



never found miraculous cures and sudden wealth or health, and instead, look within to truly heal and understand who we are on the deepest levels. This knowledge will allow us to venture forward in our lives in a more free and joyful way, with a sense of purpose and connection that many of us are looking for, but rarely find.

## **Introducing the Body Deva**

This book will introduce you to the *body deva*, or the spiritual consciousness of the body. Some of you may currently believe that spirituality is something that lies outside of yourselves, or utilize spirituality to escape from your bodies and lives. But really, spirituality should bring us closer to our bodies, closer to our lives. We should be able to become healthier, understand ourselves on a deeper level, and become more embodied if we are engaged on a spiritual path. Learning to work with the spiritual consciousness of your body, the body deva, will allow you to do so.

The body deva does not require a specific religion or spiritual path to work with; if anything, the body deva may connect you to a greater sense of spirituality in whatever spiritual path or religion you have connected with already.

The body deva allows us to communicate with an inner resource that will have insight about our body, mind, emotions, and even spiritual patterns. We can learn to use the body deva to understand and heal everything, from physical pain to childhood patterns to past lives.

The body deva represents our inner health. It is our vitality, our essence, the wisdom and consciousness of our human form. Returning to this resource again and again throughout this work allows for a perspective that focuses on health and deep inner knowing, rather than story, pain, trauma, emotion, or whatever lies unhealed within us. We

continually hear from what is unhealed within; it is time to place our focus on the inherent health and wisdom of our bodies and utilize it as an ally to become more whole.

We have a deeply intelligent consciousness in our human form. We can know what our body wants, we can discover who we are, and move through this world from a solid basis of understanding what we want and need from ourselves and from the world. Imagine being able to ask your body about why it is in pain, how you can move forward in your life, or even what to have for dinner. All of this and more is possible if we consciously work with this intelligence.

This book will teach you what you need to know to connect and work with the consciousness of the human body. In some ways, this work is quite simple: we are communicating with the inherent wisdom of our bodies. How to connect to and communicate with this consciousness, and the many ways we can work with it to effect healing, are what is offered in this book.

This work is inherently practical, and you will learn many tools and resources to facilitate working with your body deva. You will learn to connect to the consciousness of the body as a whole, the consciousness of individual parts of the body, as well as how to focus on specific topics or patterns and resolve them with the body deva. At the end of the book is a chapter on how to tie everything together, or how to best utilize this method as a whole.

It is suggested that you work with your *body deva* until you feel connected to it before moving on to other chapters. By having a solid connection to the body deva as a whole, you will have a trusted ally in this process—one you can return to again and again for answers as well as assistance in the following chapters.

It is fairly common to be interested in more advanced work, such as working with ancestral patterns, as you start out. Such work can be exciting to think about and work with. But by working with and understanding your own body, your own body consciousness, and what your own experiences of this world mean, you will be able to work with the more advanced material in a deeper way. We heal best through gradual work, through taking one step (or a few steps) forward in our lives at a time. By grounding ourselves in our own bodies and lifetimes first, we can have a solid foundation to move into more advanced thoughts and exercises.

This work is like meeting someone for the first time from whom you have been disconnected or never properly introduced. For some of you it will be an instant “click,” when you realize that you have met before, or have met in a different way. For others, especially those who are disassociated or regard their bodies as something unsafe, it may take a bit more work to strike up a friendship with the consciousness of the body. Both paths require a bit of willingness. It is suggested that you be compassionate toward yourself, wherever you may lie on that continuum.

This work is always compassionate, even when you are working with subjects or emotions that are culturally considered “dark” or “bad.” By offering compassion and connection to even the darkest aspects of ourselves, we can hold every part of ourselves in the highest regard. This does not mean that we turn these shadowy parts of ourselves into a palatable or acceptable “light,” but that we consciously show compassion to the darker aspects of ourselves so they can be accepted and offered healing.

This work has emerged from my experiences in Craniosacral Therapy, with its framework rooted in Gestalt, Reichian Therapy, and Psychosynthesis, Zero Balancing, Traditional Chinese Medicine (acupuncture and herbalism),

Energy Work, Heart-Centered Therapy, Shamanism, and Spiritual Healing, as well as a personal meditative practice for almost twenty years.

I have written this book because I believe that many of you out there are searching for exactly this information. Over the last ten years, I have developed this work by utilizing it with clients. I have consistently tweaked and learned what truly worked (and what didn't) in order to find something that is coherent and helpful for everyone—from someone who is just starting to consider that their pain may have an emotional component to people who have worked with a spiritual or inner path for decades. I wish to thank all of the teachers, students, and clients who have helped me to develop this work and allowed me to become who I am in this world. I am always grateful to be of service to those who are willing and ready to look within.

## **About My Journey to This Work**

For most of my life, I was either partially or completely disassociated from my body. Although I understood where my physical body was in space when I was doing things like walking or taking part in physical activities, the idea that I could be grounded and really take up residence in my body didn't occur to me until I was in my early twenties.

When I graduated from college, I began to consciously realize how sensitive I was. I started to understand that my body didn't feel safe to me; it didn't feel like a place where I could really feel at home. I protected myself as a result of my sensitivities. That protection took the form of escaping or being anywhere else than my body, and also involved me blocking off sections of my body, or closing down by armoring or shielding as a mechanism for dealing with life. At the time, I lacked the skills to navigate my sensitivities, and as a result was frequently overwhelmed by them. When

we are overwhelmed, we pull away from our bodies and become ungrounded. We close down. We don't recognize who we are, and start to hate parts of our body as they become more and more distant from us.

I started to feel a call to become embodied, to learn to take care of and nurture my body in a way that I had not before. I enrolled in massage school and earned certification in Asian Body Therapy and Thai Bodywork. I was always fascinated by energy and had explored Reiki, but at that point, my thoughts of energy, spirituality, and the physical nature of the body was that they were three separate courses of study. I could not see how they intersected or informed one another.

At the time I didn't understand why I was drawn to Thai Bodywork or to clinical massage. Although I was fairly decent at both of them, as a sensitive and introverted type, many of my classmates were athletes, assured and confident in their bodies. They also tended to be more physically and scientifically oriented and were excited about studying things like kinesiology, biology, and anatomy. I later realized that learning about the human form, studying its anatomy and physiology, was an important stepping stone in my later work, which has been the realization that our physical bodies are conscious, and that physical issues, mental energies (thought patterns and beliefs), emotions, and spiritual energies that are out of balance are held as static or frozen energies in our system.

This is hardly the first time that someone has had some of these revelations, I realize. Mind-body-spirit has been kind of a buzzword for the last twenty years or so. The idea that there were some types of healing that could span more than just one of those (mind, or body, or spirit) was a revelation to me at the time, however.

I first really felt how emotions releasing from the body had an impact on the functioning of the body in a course on craniosacral therapy. For those who are not aware, craniosacral therapy is a light-touch form of bodywork that works with the nervous system and with the membranes that serve as the “lining” of the body, giving our spinal cord and brain, as well as other parts of our body, form and protection.

There is also a focus on the small movements of the bones of the body that are rarely paid attention to in other forms of bodywork, as well as the protective fluid that bathes the spinal cord and brain, and the fluid nature of our bodies as a whole.

This was my basic understanding of craniosacral therapy at the time, and is still the typical information that most craniosacral therapists give out in pamphlets and other promotional materials to introduce the subject.

But really it went deeper than that. Here, for the first time, was a modality that not only approached the physical body but the energetic, emotional, and physical nature of the body simultaneously. As a massage therapist, I had experienced people having emotional releases on my massage table. They might have a release of grief, or even of anger, but this was always approached as an aspect of the relaxation response, or how the body can hold on to emotions due to stress, and that by releasing stress, the held emotions would release.

In this workshop I began noticing that my body was releasing through the energy channels (or meridians) of the body, and I was fascinated to note that the places that I had pain in my body lacked energy movement and were also places that held deep emotions and memories. When these memories from childhood or other traumatic experiences came up, the area that held the blockage would start to

have flow, or energy go through it, that I could feel; not only that, the pain or dysfunction in that part of my body then lessened, or ceased completely, in response to the emotional and energetic release.

I then began to realize on a deeper level that our energy creates us. We are not physical, emotional, and spiritual energies, like a set of Russian nesting dolls stacked on one another. I started to see clearly that our energy, emotions, mental state, and physical nature were not only linked but that they were inseparable. We are energy. We are consciousness.

We do not “hold” emotions in our physical form, as if it were simply a container. Our world, and who we are, is energy. It is consciousness itself. Some of it is denser (like our physical body) and some of it is not dense at all (like our spiritual nature), but it is all energy. I began to understand that our energy creates us and is on a continuum, with our physical bodies and lives simply being the most dense, or noticeable. Consciousness creates and forms everything that we think, do, and are, including our physical body. It creates us, and it creates the physical world, and if we change our energy, we change our world.

Although this thought of how we are made of energy had crossed my mind previously, I didn't realize the impact of how even seemingly existential or spiritual patterns could create imbalances in the physical form until I began delving more deeply into my studies.

*The more flow we have in our bodies, the more flow and ease there is in our daily lives.*

*Stuck and painful areas of the body often reflect stuck and painful beliefs.*

These realizations have followed me since those days, and I have discovered how we can feel the ways in which we are stuck, emotional, or out of balance in our lives in our physical form. Not only that, by resolving emotional and spiritual patterns, our physical body will respond, opening and allowing more flow. As I took more and more responsibility for my own healing path, I began to understand that I could look to the outer world to see what was unhealed within me. What I reacted to, who I reacted to, would point me to areas of my body and imbalances in my body that were in need of healing.

I have always had a tight lower back. In my early school days we had Presidential Fitness tests, and one of those tests was to try to stretch far enough to reach your toes. They did this by sitting you at a block of wood that had varying measurements for how far you could reach. I was always awful at this. In a Zero Balancing workshop (another hands-on modality that focuses on the connections between mind, body, and spirit, but this time a focus on bones and joints and how they articulate with one another energetically as well as physically), someone started to work on my lower back and I began to have an emotional release.

For anyone who has had bodywork, or is a massage therapist or engaged in mind-body studies, that experience is not terribly unusual. But this time I not only had an emotional release but an understanding of an ancestral component to the pattern, realizations of a profound spiritual nature that centered on loss and grieving.

All of my life I had experienced a lot of grief around me. Due to my high perceptual capacities I could see and sense it. It colored my world and had an impact on how I related with others. I had a difficult early childhood, so counselors always pointed to my childhood as the source of such feelings. But I always knew somehow that it went deeper



than that. I just didn't have the appropriate experience or vocabulary to express it. And in this instance, I had a vision of ancestors lining up—ancestors who had fought and tried and failed and lost and triumphed.

Once this spiritual pattern with its emotions came up, my back released and I could touch my toes. Until then, I had only ever been able to reach as far as my ankles; now I could hook my fingers around my big toe. And this was all because I released a spiritual pattern and the emotions and beliefs surrounding that pattern through my physical body.

The considerable grief that had always had such a palpable presence began lifting and changing for the first time in my life. Until this time I had not realized the extent of the sort of Charlie Brown cloud of grief surrounding me and within me. With this Zero Balancing session, I not only became conscious of just how much grief I carried but experienced the clarity of some of it beginning to lift.

I also began to realize how much I carried that was not mine—that emotions, experiences, even beliefs could be handed down to us, how we would experience these energies as our own because we naturally assume that what is within or around us is ours. It took me many years to understand how we are shaped and formed by so much more than our personal history, and that incredible healing could be effected by becoming aware of and releasing held energies that were passed down to us by our family, ancestry, culture, even the place and time in which we were born.

I realize what you may be thinking here—that massage and bodywork is intended to release aspects of the body, that a good massage can do wonders. Perhaps you may even realize how important touch is to ease things like depression, grief, and patterns of isolation. But at this point I had been through massage school, further bodywork and

energy work training, and had started my master's degree in Traditional Chinese Medicine (acupuncture and herbal medicine). I had experienced quite a bit of bodywork, energy work, as well as therapy, and nothing had had any impact on my back, except this.

This allowed me to have further revelation regarding how our spiritual nature, emotions, state of mind, and physical body interact with one another. I found separate information in each sphere, or sometimes would find where one would overlap another. For example, I found a lot of information about how mind and body interact, and how our emotions can be held in our physical body. But what I was really looking for I found very little of: how we experience our spiritual nature through our physical bodies.

I was looking for how we could approach the entire continuum—physical form, mind, spirit, emotions, and energy—through the physical body simultaneously. I was looking for how our spiritual nature could be explored in an embodied way, making an impact on our daily lives and physical bodies.

I found that most resources on spiritual factors of disease were too simplistic—dictionary definitions of how lower back pain comes from low self-worth, for example. Most of these resources came from individuals who had little experience working on or with the physical body, or with clients of any type, and minimal education in health or even holistic healing fields.

The basic fact that we are all individuals, and five people may come in with back pain for five very different spiritual, emotional, energetic, and physical reasons was never explored in these resources. To make things even more confusing, we often have multiple patterns, and so between those five people there may be hundreds of different reasons for why that back pain has emerged. Until

we look at the individual, and not the disease or dysfunction, we will not move beyond the sort of surface level ideologies that are unfortunately so prevalent in mind-body-spirit studies, and which ultimately limit our own healing capacities.

On my own healing path, I began to see that for significant healing to occur I not only needed to approach the mind, emotional factors, spiritual reasons, and physical reasons for something occurring (meaning we might go to many different healers—one for physical healing, another for spiritual, and so forth) but work with the entire continuum, simultaneously considering the thoughts, beliefs, emotions, spiritual nature, and physical factors of pain or imbalances, thereby making a larger impact on them than treating them separately. What was needed was a bridge between all aspects of Self—something that could heal the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual simultaneously.

I also began to realize that everything from the most esoteric spiritual subjects to the mundane sort of aches and pains that come from overwork can be worked with through our physical body; that if we release things through the physical body our world, and our bodies, will significantly change for the better. I found that by working through the physical body, even while exploring something emotional, or of an esoteric spiritual nature, that healing the spirit, mind, emotions, and body together had a profound, life-changing effect.

This is because we are always focused on the physical world and our physical bodies. Unless we approach patterns through the physical body, our lives (and bodies) will not experience as significant a shift. By focusing on the entire continuum, we can heal everything held within that continuum—without neglecting any aspect of ourselves.

For too long we have held these things separate. We consider ourselves a physical body, and our spirituality is elsewhere. We go to a doctor to seek physical healing, a therapist for emotional healing, and possibly a holistic therapist such as an acupuncturist for that mind-body-spirit connection. If we are lucky, we may find a holistic therapist who has explored mind-body-spirit connections and can help us make dramatic improvements in our lives.

I have a lot of education in varying spheres from looking for this information and how to bring it all together. I wanted to know how and why the body held so much information, how these varying spheres (mind, body, emotions, spirit) intersected, and how they could be worked with together. I have explored everything from esoteric spiritual material to anatomical and biological sciences in order to come to the conclusion that we experience everything through our human form, and that by releasing what is held within our bodies that our lives, and our world, will dramatically change.

I have now worked with hundreds of patients and students throughout the years, and each one of them has been able to lighten their load in some small or large way. Through them I have changed and recalibrated this work so that it is as simple and effective as it can be without sacrificing depth. And all of them have discovered what I did, and still continually discover—that the held emotions, patterns, and blockages within our bodies reflect where we are blocked in our lives, and that once we resolve what is inner, our outer world is much happier, more peaceful, and has a sense of flow to it.

I do hope through exploring this work that you find what you are looking for. Each one of us who has the courage and willingness to look within is able to not only lighten their individual load but also has a ripple effect to our family,

loved ones, friends, community, and to the world as a whole. By healing ourselves we truly heal the world.

# **Part One**

# Introductory Work

*Our bodies have a soul.  
We just have to learn to listen.*

**W**ithin us is a consciousness known as the *body deva*. It is the soul of our body, the very essence of who we are in this world. It is the part of us that is vitally whole, conscious, and healed. Think about what would happen if you had a consciousness within you that could reveal what you are truly experiencing or feeling. We may understand at surface levels what we are feeling or thinking, but we have so many thoughts and realizations that we are not conscious of, or not fully conscious of yet.

At our core, we are consciousness itself. What is unhealed within us obscures our inherent health and the vitality of our system. In Buddhist traditions, the state of moving beyond this obscuration is known as the “true mind,” or experienced as a state of luminosity, emptiness, and freedom. Ramana Maharshi’s method of self-enquiry states that the mind is consciousness that has been restricted, and that our inherent difficulty lies in the fact that we understand ourselves to be the beliefs we have created about ourselves rather than pure consciousness, which is our true nature.

Spiritual traditions such as Kashmir Shaivism recognize all that exists as part of one divine consciousness, with each of us having the ability to recognize this light or consciousness within ourselves. This tradition (as well as that of Ramana Maharshi) also speaks to the importance of

the spiritual consciousness of the heart, which is one of the ways we can access the body deva. In animist and shamanic traditions, everything within and around us has consciousness. Every person, every organ, every part of our body, and every cell within us has a consciousness that can be spoken to. All of these point to the fact that we are able to access and work with a resource that aligns us to our deepest health, our deepest truth.

By moving beyond the beliefs we have created that cause us to feel separate and traumatized, we can associate with our inherent health, freedom, vitality, and joy. We can move away from the pain and the stories we tell ourselves, and into a place of recognizing our inherent consciousness, divinity, and strengths as a unique presence in this world. Imagine releasing what holds you back, what tells you that you are not good enough, that you will never be healthy, that you will always be in pain. In our pain we are constantly rejecting ourselves, and it is by truly looking within that we can embrace ourselves ... for perhaps the first time.



# CHAPTER ONE

## The Body Deva

**M**any modern spiritual traditions suggest the seeker look outside of the body, or even state that the physical body should be transcended or ignored. These traditions also come from a place and time where the individual may be able to drop their lives (or be willing to) to achieve a state of spiritual transcendence. In our modern world we are beginning to realize that our physical bodies are not something to neglect or transcend; they are a part of our spirit, our soul. We can awaken through our bodies and allow our physical lives to be not only a part of our spiritual path but the basis or core of our spiritual path. We can understand that we are much more than our physical bodies, and our world is much more than what appears materially, and still be deeply part of our lives and bodies.

We can become more grounded, more here, more embodied. We can experience ourselves and the world with less pain, more joy, and deepened connections with our loved ones. It is time to come home to ourselves, to realize that we can be spiritual and physical beings (and experience thoughts and emotions and utilize all of our wonderful senses) in this world. We can let go of that which is holding us back, that which causes us pain. By doing so through the physical body, and with the body deva, we will not only experience greater understandings about ourselves but will also notice our physical reality and our physical bodies shift to a state of greater health and consciousness.

If some of this sounds a bit out there, I can commiserate. Twenty years ago I would have laughed at

some of the concepts that I have found invaluable on my path, including this work. As with all things in life, I encourage you to work with this process with an open mind. You may be surprised by how you can engage with something that may be a bit out of your comfort zone initially.

## **The Physical Body**

Our bodies are magnificent and can heal quite a bit on their own, but when we get out of touch with our body, and with the innate intuitive senses that our bodies hold, we become disassociated. We can easily reach a point in which we can no longer tell what our body needs in order to stay well. Or we may be so stressed, depressed, or tired that the thought of our bodies being healthy or vibrant is a long past sentiment. We may fear or hate our bodies, and the idea of our body being an ally or the thought of being in any way embodied may cause panic to arise in us. We may also simply have never been taught the tools to listen to or work with the physical body in a compassionate, in-depth way.

Some of us will be capable of handling even the most stressful events that happen in our lives. Others of us may feel worn down, in pain, or are dealing with the busy nature of existence to the extent that we can no longer heal ourselves and are no longer able to process (or basically, deal with) what is happening right after something occurs that is traumatic or overwhelming for us.

When we experience an event, emotion, or belief that is too much for us to navigate, that energy becomes static. It “freezes” in that time and place. Our body consciousness (or body deva) is deeply intelligent and will section this energy off until we know what to do with it. Many of us are holding energies within our bodies that have been sectioned off at an earlier age due to trauma and overwhelm that we could heal, partially or fully, if we just knew how.

Our body deva sections off these frozen aspects of ourselves so that the rest of our body can continue functioning. What is most important is the survival of the whole, and certain aspects of our physical form (such as the heart and brain) take precedence. By learning to resolve

these separated energies, we not only become more functional, whole, and healed but our systems do not have to expend so much energy. It takes a lot of energy to have many sectioned-off parts; when we resolve them, our systems do not have to work as hard.

When we experience trauma, overwhelm, or something that is just too much for us to deal with at the time, we will not be able to process it appropriately. We lack closure. When we do not have closure on a spiritual level this means that the energy, emotions, and experiences of this event are still replaying as if in a loop. This means that this event, experience, or emotion is unresolved. Our bodies hate unresolved things; they like closure, compassion, and understanding. By working with your body deva, you can begin to realize what sort of beliefs, emotions, and experiences your body is still holding onto and begin to release your “loops” through the tools found in this book.

Through this work, the loops, or repeated behaviors and unresolved issues that we experience again and again, clear away. We have found resolution and closure and no longer need to “loop.” We can “unfreeze” what is frozen and locked in time within us to become more whole, stable, and healed. We can release the restrictive beliefs that have created our world and block our understanding of our innate health and well-being.

Our body consciousness is a gateway to understanding our physical natures. If we break our leg, we will need a cast to heal it. This is a clear and understandable line of rational thought that we will be entirely conscious of. But if we are exhausted, in pain, with no clear idea of why a part of our body is experiencing pain, or dealing with internal disharmonies (like a chronically upset GI tract) we may have a medical diagnosis but may not realize the reason why symptoms may have come about or the simple ways we can be a part of our own healing process.

Our bodies contain the memories and experiences as well as the scars and triumphs of our lives here. We again return to the idea that we are each individuals with unique histories; these histories make us who we are. Two people may experience the exact same type of back pain for two totally different reasons. One may be from overdoing it in yoga one day, and the other may be holding the emotion of fear in their back due to a childhood experience. It is by communicating with the consciousness of the body that each of those people can discover (and heal) the cause of their pain.

We are individuals, with an individual history, and that is the real key to healing. We need to know *our* reasons for being imbalanced, in pain, or out of sorts. By learning to communicate with our body consciousness directly, we can surpass the mechanistic definitions given to us by outer culture of why we may be in pain and discover and, more importantly, heal on an individual basis.

There is nothing more powerful than the experience of understanding what our body wants and needs to feel whole. I invite you to discover the body deva, the consciousness of your physical body.

*To start, we will begin discovering the body deva through imagery work. As you progress, you will want to work with the body deva in the more advanced ways shared later in the chapter.*

## **Beginning Body Deva Exercise**

Consider that there is a consciousness in your body that you can speak to. When you are ready, sit in a comfortable position without any outer distractions. We are going to begin working with the body deva through inner symbols. It is through working with symbols that we can initially understand concepts such as this in a simple manner. We relate spiritually through the use of symbols, so even if this type of work is totally new to you, or you don't feel as if you are a great visualizer, it is likely that, after a few tries, you will be able to create the appropriate symbol for you.

To start, you are going to consider that you have a body deva. I would like you to visualize it. This visual can be anything, and the purpose of this initially is to create a sort of persona, or character, with which you can communicate on some level. It is likely to be something totally unique to you. This could be you at your current age or another age. It could be something entirely extraordinary, such as a fairy or dragon. It could be a tree, flower, rock, cartoon character, geometric pattern, light, or blob. Trust whatever comes through to you when you ask to see or sense your body deva. In time this image may change, but there should be an inner sense of the body deva appearing and seeming "right" or at least correct for where you are right now.

For some of you, drawing your body deva may be helpful. This can be helpful for those of you who do not consider yourself visual by nature, or who simply wish to have the experience of drawing to get to know their body deva on a more visceral level. To draw it, I suggest sitting with a blank sheet of paper and simply allowing whatever sort of pattern or shape appears to come up automatically. You do not need to have a plan or visual already in place. When you are done drawing, there should be an intuitive

sense that the drawing seems right, or at least is right for right now.

Once a visual has emerged, you will simply focus on it. Notice everything about it. What color or shape it is. What it looks like. What emotions you may sense from it. Simply allow a visual image of your body deva to step forward by putting the intention forward that you would like to see or notice it in some way.

If you are feeling terribly blocked, or are not visual, you may wish to ask something like, *If I could see or sense my body deva, what would it look like?* Many people do not consider themselves to be visual, or that may in fact not be their dominant sense. But anyone, no matter what sense is dominant, can construct a visual image through their other senses. It is how our brains put together our world. By this I mean that if you are not a dominantly visual person, you can use your sense of intuition or sense of knowing (a strong intuitive sense for most people) to create a visual.

If you are feeling blocked, it often is a protective instinct. There may be good reason why you do not want to make contact with the consciousness of your body. This is especially true if you are disassociated, in pain, or simply don't like your body. The idea of approaching your body with compassion and with the purpose of getting to know it on a more intimate level may seem frightening. If you are having difficulty and are feeling fairly blocked in your life overall, I suggest moving on to chapter two, where you will learn to work with blocks and resistance.

From a spiritual perspective, we can communicate on some level with everything within our bodies or around us; we just may never have learned how to do so. The first time that people open the lines of communication it may seem silly, and there may be doubt about what information comes forward. All of that is perfectly natural. Simply write down

whatever is said and consider it when you are in a more logical headspace.

By this I mean that if your body deva says that you need to be eating an exclusively raw diet, or should move to Jamaica, or get a divorce, this may indeed be something that you are not willing, or capable, of doing. It also may be entirely the wrong decision for you to follow at this time, based on who you are and what your life is like.

Throughout this process, you will always follow up anything that comes through with logic and afterthought. Basically, it will be a process of acknowledging whatever arises but then taking a step back and thinking about what the right decisions are for your life. Acknowledging what comes up, even if it is not acted upon, will be a powerful shift, because you are truly listening and acknowledging the communication from your body deva.

It is easy to take this work too far and to think that the only thing you should rely on is your body deva, but we should be open to advice, thoughts, and information coming toward us from many sources. Our body deva is likely to be a trusted resource, especially in time, but always write down or think about what the body deva is relating, as it is always your decision to follow through or believe what has come across.

When you are first starting out, it is typical to hear thoughts and advice that are more what you expect to hear rather than what the body deva is actually communicating. From the “negative” or mental aspects of yourself, you may hear a laundry list of what you need to do and who you need to be. By working with the body deva over time, you can hear more authentically, deeply, and build trust with what information you are receiving. At this point, you should have a strong visual of your body deva. You will have either visualized it or have a drawing of it.



- You will now introduce yourself to it. Say a quick, internal *hello*.
- Ask it directly, as if you were talking to another person (but internally), if there is anything you should know about your health.
- You may have a specific pain in your body. Ask if there is anything that you should know about the pain you experience.
- When you ask a question, listen for the answer. The answer may arise intuitively (you just get a sense of it or a sense of knowing). The answer may not come immediately. You may realize an answer a few hours, or even a few days later.
- If you do not get an answer, do not worry. Just move on to another question. With time, the answers will come to you more clearly and readily.
- If you get an answer but it seems unclear, ask for more. (*Tell me more.*) Sometimes we receive answers in the form of a visual or one word. By asking for more information (multiple times, if necessary), we can find out all we can about what is coming across.

At this point, you can journal or just consider what you have heard from your deva. You can ask your deva any sort of information about your body—and anything that has an impact on you, such as emotions, beliefs, and even your spiritual nature. As silly as it sounds initially, you may at one point be able to ask about finances or your job and get an answer. But to start with, it is often easiest to ask about the physical nature of your body.

Some thoughts about what to ask about:

- **FATIGUE:** *Why am I so fatigued all the time?*

- **SPECIFIC DISEASES OR KNOWN ISSUES:** *What can I do to help my body feel better?*
- **EXERCISE REGIMEN:** *What is the best type of physical activity for me? How often should I exercise? Where should I exercise?*
- **DIET:** *What sort of foods should I include in my diet? What foods should I stay away from? Does my body like the food I am eating right now?*

Starting out, it is often best to keep questions simple and direct. Some of the answers may surprise you, or even may seem unusual or too simple. You may at first think that you are making things up. Especially when starting out, you will want to listen and acknowledge everything that comes up and then logically think about the answers. As you work with the body deva, you will establish trust and will receive more specific and helpful guidance. As with any relationship, it will simply take a bit of time to develop.

For example, your body deva may seemingly be telling you to exercise five days a week for an hour. If you are a couch potato who hasn't done any exercise for a few years (if not a few decades) that may be wonderful advice but not terribly practical, and may actually be harmful. Acknowledging that this advice may be something to work up to, and considering how you want to start in some small or large way incorporating something new into your diet, or getting more nature in your life, would be the way to start truly listening and working with your body deva.

We heal through gradual, small steps. Drastic changes rarely ever work; they are too severe and unsustainable for us. Treating ourselves with severity and harshness does not come from a healed and whole space. By listening to your body deva and acknowledging what arises, you can start to understand what your body is craving or may need. What is

communicated is often quite simple—it is our mind that creates convoluted reasons and instructions. If you are receiving convoluted or complex instructions or responses, it is a good indication that you may need a bit more time to work with your body deva. If you are receiving harmful or worrisome thoughts, this is an indication that you are not connecting to your body deva but to something unhealed within yourself.

You can then check in with your doctor, healthcare provider, or do further research on what came up, as well as logically think about how you can take action concerning what arose. By then taking some small action, you not only show that you are listening and acknowledging what your body deva has to say but start to foster a significant life-long connection to your body.

Most of us have moved away from listening to our bodies and the wisdom that our body deva has to relate. While there are a lot of reasons for pain, medical issues, and the varying emotional and physical discomforts we experience, on an energetic and spiritual level pain and discomfort have to do with something that our body is attempting to communicate to us that we have not consciously acknowledged yet. By acknowledging and taking logical action, our bodies can feel heard, and will frequently cut down on pain, discomfort, and other symptoms that we experience.

## **Sally**

Sally was a practical, professional woman who spent most of her day behind a desk doing personal assistant work for a large PR agency. Although she had taken yoga classes and described her daughter as someone who was “into crystals and chakras and stuff,” she had no meditation experience and came in to see me for an acupuncture appointment for stress, fatigue, and lower back pain.

Sally described her life as incredibly stressful. She has three teenagers and a job where she is expected to complete quick turn-arounds on projects and

assignments. At night and on weekends, she described her state as being one of collapse, not wanting to do anything or even communicate with anyone.

Sally began working with her body deva quite simply. She visualized it (it looked like a tulip to her) and began asking it what the source of her fatigue and stress levels were. The usual suspects of her work and keeping tabs on three children came up. But as she questioned deeper, she found that her fatigue was a way for her to get some self-nurturing time. If she wasn't able to move, she couldn't do anything for anyone else. Her fatigue allowed her to take care of herself. She had moved away from taking any time for herself and had never really allowed others to nurture her.

When she asked what her body wanted her to do to heal her fatigue, it replied, *nature*. When she asked for it to tell her more, it stated that it would like her to be outside in nature, specifically in the gardens by her workplace, a few times a week. Sally felt that she could not go to those gardens so often, but thought that she could visit once a week at lunchtime.

Sally started to visit the gardens and eat lunch there once a week. She felt peaceful and restored while there. She realized that her body wanted some stillness and a little time alone. Although she still had stress at work and her three children creating a chaotic household, the gardens became her "me" time. She eventually brought her children and husband to the gardens and began taking walks on her lunch breaks and after work. Although she remained tired from her busy lifestyle, after a few months Sally discovered that her fatigue, back pain, and stress levels had all significantly lessened. She had more energy for her family. She continued to listen to her body deva, adjusting her diet and going to a massage therapist to help her with her back pain.

What our body wants and needs is often quite simple. Even in more complex cases than Sally's, simply listening to, acknowledging, and taking logical action based on what the deva has to say can cut down on stress and help us feel better and more in tune with our bodies. When you are doing the activity or following through with what your body deva suggested, take a moment and call up the image of your body deva. Let it know that you are going for a walk, or drinking more water, or doing the breathing exercises it suggested. This will show that you are following through and will strengthen the connection, allowing you to be more embodied and in tune with your body deva.

There may be certain cases where the body deva suggests something drastic: divorce, moving, or completely changing your life or career can be thoughts that come up. Those may arise because they are, in fact, something that you should consider. They may also arise because of fear, or expectation that your life needs some sort of drastic change.

When beginning to work with the body deva, we may find that our fear speaks instead of the consciousness of our body. In chapter three, you will be working with fear and other emotions, and this will allow you to understand when fear may be speaking or when a deeper and truer aspect of you (the body deva) is communicating. The key thing is to be patient and work with the body deva over time. When you first meet another person, it is rare that the

conversation flows naturally or that you discuss deep subjects. The same is true with working with the body deva. Some of you may take to this work quickly; for others, it may take working with the material in chapters two and three to move beyond blocks and fears and approach your body deva. Your body deva may tell you that where you are living is not correct, but that doesn't mean that you need to move tomorrow. If the body deva tells you to get a divorce, or do something elaborate or difficult, just acknowledge the information and then get a second opinion (or third) from a friend, family, or healthcare practitioner. Remember, we heal in small, simple steps, and although we often desire drastic change in our lives, that may not be the practical or correct way of going about things.

We may also desire outer change because it is simpler than inner change, or we may lack the tools to know how to achieve the inner change we are looking for. Even if we should get a divorce, change jobs, or locations, simply acknowledging that information (even if it is not acted upon) can result in change. Bringing up patterns and realizations into consciousness is an important aspect of healing, and the importance of doing so should not be minimized.

What your body deva says is also negotiable. Sally found that she could not go to the garden every day, but she found that she could go once a week over her lunch hour. Working with the body deva in a way that allows you to acknowledge and understand what it is saying, as well as take action, is what can allow things to fully heal.

## **Working with the Body Deva: Part Two**

Now that you have formed a basic relationship with your body deva, you may wish to work with it in a more advanced capacity.

To start, bring the image you visualized as your body deva into your body and ask where it would like to be located in your body or where it would feel most at home. This is an important step because we are starting to understand that the consciousness of our body is located within our physical form. This will allow a mental and emotional shift to occur. At first, it is often easiest to consider spiritual subjects as an outer mental projection or visualization, but by bringing them into the physical body we can start to understand and make connections of this consciousness with the physical form. We can begin to realize and recognize it as a part of us.

If you get an answer telling you where the body deva would like to be located (by visualizing it and then asking), visualize it merging into that spot in your body. Welcome it, and do your best to sense or visualize it there.

If you are unable to hear a response, a good starting place to visualize your body deva is either in your lower abdomen, solar plexus, or heart center. Those are places that are easily “home” to a consciousness such as this. If it does not wish to merge, or still seems out of body (or partially out of body), simply ask again on another day. Eventually, the merging and realization of the body deva with your body will feel right to you.

When you find a place within your physical body that feels right for the body deva to be located, again start with basic questions about your health as well as any discomfort or pain you are experiencing. Keep things simple and direct, asking questions like: *What can I do about my hip pain?* Or *What is the best way for me to go about healing my digestive system?* Listen to the answers, write them down, and think about them logically. Decide to act on what seems like a good first step (or two) and then do it.

The body deva can be utilized to ask questions about anything, from what you should eat for breakfast to your career, from thought patterns and beliefs to questions of a spiritual nature. This is like asking a respected elder for their opinion and thoughts on a matter.

By this I mean that we have many different types of consciousness that we can speak to. We will get more into this in later chapters, but for now, know that the consciousness of your body may have opinions on things like whom you date, what sorts of beliefs and thoughts you have about yourself, what you are eating for breakfast, and other struggles you may be experiencing in your life.

Checking in with your body consciousness about someone you are dating, for example, may reveal that your body deva feels a strong connection to someone, or it may reveal that your body consciousness is feeling cautious or not quite secure with someone. Remember that the choices of what to ask your body deva are endless, and that if a question isn't answered it may be because you are not quite connected yet (patience is always a good thing), because it is not the right time for you to learn about what you are asking, or because the question just wasn't the right way to go about things.

By keeping things simple and open-ended, as well as developing a relationship with your body deva over time, you are more likely to develop a life-changing resource that you can refer to time and again.

Possible questions to ask the body deva once you have visualized it within your body and feel connected to it:

- Can you tell me why I have been depressed lately?
- What can I do to ease my fatigue?
- How can I move forward in my life?
- Is this job opportunity right for me?
- What sort of career path would be right for me?
- Is my partner (boyfriend, girlfriend, date) right for me?
- How did you feel when I was out on that date?
- How can I feel less stuck in my life?
- What sort of action should I take to move forward in my life?

There are many other questions that could be asked of the body deva, but some of these should give you a basic idea about what to ask. Most of the replies from our body consciousness are simple and positive. If you are hearing

hurtful, aggressive, negative, or imbalanced viewpoints on anything, it is not from the body deva. Our body deva represents the wholeness and divine nature of our physical form. Any answer that it gives will reflect this.

Most of our care comes from a viewpoint of imbalance or sickness; in contrast, the body deva is a source of health and wholeness. By aligning ourselves with our innate health and wholeness, we can recognize a resource that is not speaking from a place of wounding or trauma. This is incredibly important, as even in our sickest or most imbalanced states we do have a part of ourselves that we can access that is vibrant, healed, and whole. That resource is the body deva.

One of the reasons to bring the body deva into our body is so that we can recognize where these answers are coming from. In our daily lives, we have a tendency to overthink. We use our heads a lot, as our heads are where most of the realizations and understandings about ourselves and our world come from. But our minds contain a lot of insecurity, trauma, and feelings of inadequacy. They loop thoughts repeatedly, and we may hear that we are not good enough, that we may never be healthy, or that it is better to feel stuck because at least we know what to expect.

If these thoughts or others like them arise, begin to question where the answers are coming from. You may know this intuitively, but ask if they are coming from the place where you now locate your body deva or if they are coming from your head. You can even ask your body consciousness to highlight where the answers are coming from and do a body scan (scan up from the feet to the top of the head and down the arms) to find an area that is drawing your attention or highlighting itself.

If you are having discouraging or complicated thoughts, it is likely that they are coming from your mind; simple



healing thoughts are coming from the place where your  
body deva has found its home.

## Finding the Body Deva Within

To understand this body deva more fully, you will need to sit or lie down quietly. Particularly during the first few times, you may find that lying down provides a better reading of your body, and you will be able to notice it better.

Now bring your attention to your midline. Your midline is what separates your body into left and right parts. The connection of the body deva to greater spiritual information is largely through the central channel (midline). In energetic theory this would be referred to as the “primary circuits,” or the *sushumna*, *ida*, and *pingala* in yogic theory.

The primary chakras of the body emerge through the midline. In craniosacral therapy, the energy of the midline allows the body to organize energetically and physically. In esoteric literature, the “middle pillar” exercise awakens and strengthens the midline, and the midline is where *kundalini* (the realization of our conscious, awakened nature) emerges and flows.

Physiologically, our central nervous system is housed within our brain and spinal cord, and energetically our nervous system is the “receiver” of what we perceive. This can be problematic for highly perceptual individuals who find their nervous systems “blown out” from either receiving too much stimulus or from not having the appropriate tools to know how to calibrate and nurture the nervous system.

In Traditional Chinese Medicine, the central channel is referred to as the *du* and *ren*, and is the first “circuit” to emerge energetically when we are being formed in utero. The *microcosmic* and *macrocosmic orbit* of Taoist meditation practices, the inner tree emerging along the spine from creative visualization practices, and many other spiritual practices and methods of seeing the body beyond its

physical form all point to the significance of the midline and it being the base of our consciousness and power.

This means that the body deva not only is the consciousness of our physical form but also has a large channel, or highway, that flows through our midline (separating us into left and right) and through the energetic circuits of the body—the sushumna, ida, pingala, and the chakras—to connect to information of a more spiritual nature or information beyond the experience of the physical body. It is able to receive and translate this information for us in a way that can provide relevance and healing to us now, in our present lives and bodies.

For example, while carrying out the visualization exercise in the previous section, you may have found that the “home” of your body deva is the heart. This is the root of our consciousness, the fulcrum, or pivot point, of our midline. Our hearts are often deeply protected and carry such wounding that it is difficult, if not impossible, for many of us to access the deep wisdom and consciousness within. In time, though, many of you may be able to heal the layers of protection as well as the pain that the heart is holding. You may then be able to truly awaken and sit with the consciousness of the heart and the deep wisdom of the body deva emerging through the spiritual heart itself.

It is not important to have a background in yogic theory, or to even understand fully what the above means, to start working with the body deva. It will connect using these energy structures, even if you cannot feel or sense them. However, some of you may be ready to feel both the consciousness of the physical form and the expression of the body deva into greater consciousness through the midline.

If you are able to connect to your midline, or the energy that divides you into left and right parts, this will be like a

stream of energy or a simple awareness of your midline. You may also visualize a black line going through your midline. If this is the case, begin to ask questions of the body deva, specifically the line of energy that was formed up your midline. You will likely get a greater and deeper sense of knowing in your responses. When you interact with the body deva through the midline, you will experience the emergence of a natural orientation toward stillness, centering, and grounding.

If you are not quite at this point yet, do not get frustrated. This is fairly advanced work. However, by working with your body deva, even as an outer symbol (the first exercise), you can begin to really and truly understand yourself in a way that you likely have never had access to before.

One way to discover the midline is to picture a beam of light coming from the earth, between the legs, through the genitals, up the midline, and out the crown of the head. It would ideally extend about six inches (or even farther) above the head and below the feet. Most of us are not adequately embodied or in tune enough with our bodies to visualize or feel this energy, but know that you can start wherever you are and see results by working through your body deva and have this structure “grow” or become more optimal. You may also find in time that you can feel your midline, as well as a natural focusing, or light, in the heart area.

This energy should never, ever, be forced. We frequently focus on “doing” in our culture, but it is by simply sitting with this structure and acknowledging it that we will come to a state of greater awareness.

Similarly, please do not force the heart to open. We are so hard on ourselves, and carry such wounds in this area, that anything other than compassion aimed at the heart is

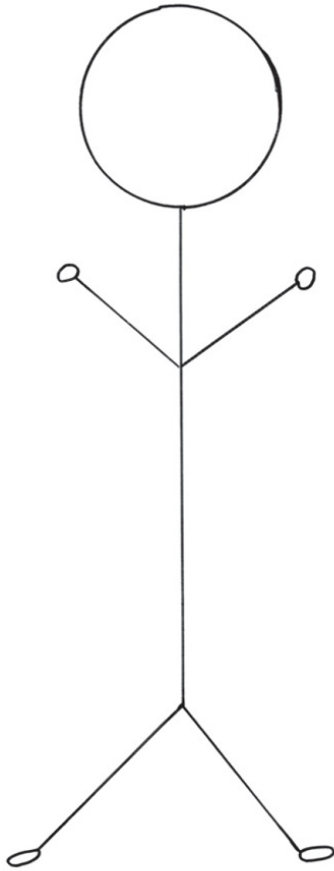
often perceived as violence, or something that is attacking or creating further difficulties for a heart that likely is already struggling.

## Body Maps

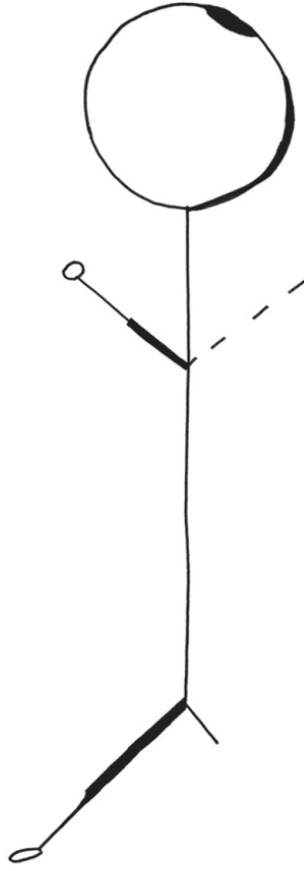
A body map is a simple way of seeing how your body is doing. We will use it to check out how present you are in your body, or what areas might need a bit of work.

To do this work it is easiest to get a piece of blank paper and a pen (any color will do). There is no artistic talent or in-depth anatomical knowledge needed here because we are going to represent the body with a stick figure.

This stick figure is going to represent how embodied you are, as well as what areas may need to be worked with by utilizing your body deva and “talking” to your body (the next section). If you were fully in balance and embodied this stick person would be a “full” stick person, with solid lines connecting all areas of the body. This means that the feet would be connected to the ankles and to the legs and so forth. A healthy and energetically vibrant body would have thin straight lines that are all connected and all present.



Embodied body map



Body map with partial embodiment of left arm and “missing” left lower leg and foot



Body map with large areas of disconnect and stuck energy

If we have an area of our body that we are disassociated from, that area will not have a line at all—there will be a disconnect (or empty space with no line). If we are only somewhat embodied, there will be a dashed line. If there is something else going on, like a lot of stuck energy or pain, there may be a line that is way too thick, or not straight, or off at an odd angle.

The purpose of the body map is to allow you to sense or see areas of your body that could likely use some healing or to inquire about using your body deva. This could be as simple as asking, *Body deva, why is my ankle missing from my body map?* There can also be a direct interaction with

the body part that is missing or imbalanced, as we will see in the following section, where we will learn to directly communicate with the body deva utilizing specific parts of the body.

There are a few ways that we can determine what our body map may currently be. The first is the simplest and often offers the best information. You will simply sit in a quiet space and allow yourself to consider your body map. This is simple intuition, and there are no wrong answers. You will then draw your body as a stick figure, considering which areas may be dotted, which may be absent, and which may be thick, not straight, or otherwise stand out to you. There should be a sense that the body map seems right, or is a reasonably correct representation of what may be going on in your body.

For people who are quite visual, working with the body map can be done without drawing. To do this you would do a simple body scan, starting at the feet and going up to the head and down the arms, connecting to your body deva first and asking it to highlight or show you areas of your body map that are missing, not connected, or otherwise out of balance. It is likely that your gaze or focus will automatically go to areas of your body that are not fully a part of your body map.

In some cases, we have been disassociated from large sections of our body for a long period of time so it may seem as if our entire abdomen, or entire lower body, is missing. This is actually perfectly natural to notice. As a culture we tend to be really focused and centered in our head, so it is not unusual to have large parts of the body map missing or seemingly out of focus. Many people are only embodied in their heads, or above their shoulders. Finding this out may be a bit of a shock, but working with the body deva will allow you to gradually embody and your body map to shift.



What the body map is showing are areas to consider working with in the next sections, as well as allowing you to consider, for perhaps the first time, where in your body there is consciousness and flow (connected energy), and where in your body there might be lack of flow or lack of consciousness.

In an ideal state, we would have a perfectly connected body map that is fully present. It is somewhat rare that this happens, as we all have areas to work on. We can all be more connected to our bodies. If we are not, it just signifies that we have some work to do, and it can be an exciting process to do healing work from the next sections and then return to your body map to see how you are doing. It is likely after doing work in the next section, as well as the next chapters, that your body map will change significantly, becoming more vibrant, connected, and present.

By doing a body map before doing further work, you can not only find areas to work on but also use the work as a barometer. The body map will show you “before” and “after” pictures as “proof” that there has been a shift in your body through this work.

## Talking to Your Body

Our body deva is our body consciousness and can be talked to as a whole, but every part of our body holds consciousness. Our body deva *is* consciousness—present in every cell of our entire body.

From an animist perspective, everything in our bodies has something to say; everything has consciousness. It may sound strange at first to realize that your big toe, or an individual cell in your body, or even organs like your heart or liver, have consciousness (let alone that you can strike up a conversation with them), but our bodies are a repository of untapped, individually based intelligence just waiting to be revealed to us.

We may find that our body consciousness as a whole and our individual “parts” have different thoughts and advice for us. This makes sense when we consider that the body deva is responsible for our bodies as a whole (as well as the emotions, thoughts, and energies within), while a part of ourselves (like our big toe) is mainly interested in itself, or the surrounding structures that support it.

To work with this section, I first suggest connecting to the body deva (wherever you are at with that, even if you are still visualizing it as an outer symbol) and asking it a few questions. As discussed in the last section, these questions could be more general, such as, *Can you tell me what is going on with my health?*, or more specifically, inquiring about an area that is actively in pain, such as, *Why is my big toe in pain?* You may also choose to work with your body map, noticing an area that feels off or out of balance and then inquiring about that by saying, *Body deva, can you tell me why my abdomen is not part of my body map?*

You may also choose to work with an organ or area of your body that you know is not doing well. Perhaps you have

had lab tests that have shown that your liver or thyroid is out of balance, or you feel stuck or in pain in a specific part of your body.

After you have questioned your body deva as a whole, you will then work with the specific area, such as the big toe or abdomen, and work with its individual consciousness. This means that you are still talking to the body deva, or the consciousness of your body, but it will just be in a more focused manner now. Once you have your “focus,” or the area of your body you wish to work with, you can continue. If you find multiple areas on your body map that pique your interest, you will either simply choose one or ask the body deva, *Which area should I work with first?* You can also ask your body deva to highlight or draw your focus to the most important area to work with, or to work with first.

You may also find it important to ask what the *linchpin* or *fulcrum* is. In some cases, our body map shows multiple parts because they reflect the same pattern and energy. For example, your throat and abdomen may both be holding the energy of anger. Asking your body what the fulcrum is allows for discovery of what may be creating or at the root of a larger pattern.

In time, you may discover that a focus can be an emotion, person, or an element of your life that you want to improve on. To work in this manner, you would do a body scan, and ask for where this energy is held in your physical body. It sounds odd to think that our relationship with our partner or our financial difficulties can be held within our physical body, but they can be worked with through the body deva with great effect. This is advanced work, however, and we will move back to simplicity, such as finding a big toe or an abdomen to work with.

## **How to Talk to Your Body**

- Start bringing some gentle attention and focus to the body part you have selected.
- How does this body part feel physically? Heavy, tight, painful, absent? Describe the physical sensations you notice.
- Now, what do you notice energetically? Does it feel full of energy or empty? Does it feel connected to the rest of your body? Does it feel connected to the next part? (for example, does your foot feel connected to your ankle?).
- Recall what this body part was doing as part of your body map. Was it completely absent. Did it appear as a dotted line, or otherwise out of balance?

In talking about an area of our body that is out of balance, it either will be energetically “empty” (lacking energy) or “full” (has blocked energy); in some cases, it might be both, as our blocked energy can lead to a feeling of lack of connection, a sort of emptiness. We can also have multiple layers of patterns in one area of our body. There is typically emptiness at the root of this, with a lot of fullness (and pain or significant imbalance) on top.

Continuing on, we will discover more about the imbalance, or what is creating blockage or lack of energy in this part of your body:

- Consider if your body part either is empty/missing, has blocked energy, or both. If you cannot sense this, just use your sense of knowing for right now (if I could sense what was happening energetically in my big toe, what would I sense?).
- Now, we are going to focus on the nature of the blocked energy. It is much more common for there to be some form of blockage, especially if there is pain in a body part, even if it has been disassociated from. If you do

not sense any blockage, you can move on to the next section, but chances are, you will notice some form of blockage, especially initially.

- If you were to visualize this blockage, what would it look like?
- How large or small is it?
- What shape would it be?
  - Even if it is a blob of dark goo, that is still a shape.
  - Does this shape remind you of anything? Our bodies may reveal an image that takes us back to a particular time. For example, a pen that we had when we were twenty years old. By noting this, we can receive insights as to when in our timeline this energy became “frozen,” allowing us to move into inner child work.
- Is this blockage dark, light, or a specific color?

If you are not getting answers by sitting and quietly observing your body, you can call up the body deva and ask these questions as well.

If you are used to mind-body work, you may further inquire as to what issues are being created in your body due to this blockage, whether there is an emotion that can be sensed that goes along with this blockage, or even how long the blockage has been there. One way of doing this is to ask your body deva to heighten or show you what this imbalance is doing to your body. If you ask this, simply feel this heightened imbalance and note what effect it is having on your body.

Don't question the answers that come up. By bringing gentle focus to the area, either a lot or just a little information may arise. It is okay if none or only some of your questions get answered. If you find that there is

emptiness there, you will similarly sit with the emptiness, and see, sense, or understand it the best you can by simply sitting with it with gentle focus. It may look like a black hole, or nothingness filled with gray, and you may not be able to connect to it at all at this point. If we were to return to the big toe example, you may look down at your big toe and realize that you can sense the bottom of your big toe, and not the “knuckle” or toenail of that toe.

We are now going to communicate directly to the body part:

- First introduce yourself. This may seem silly, but saying a quick, internal *hello* can really start this work in a helpful way.
- Then ask if you can ask some questions. In most cases, it will say yes, but if it says no, you may simply need to work a bit more with your body deva as a whole, or with some blockages or fears (next chapters), in order to be able to work with this part of your body.
- When you are ready, you will again ask simple, basic questions:
  - How long have you been holding this energy?
  - Can you tell me why you are in pain?
  - Can you tell me why you are blocked?
  - What do you need to be healthier or less stuck?
  - Can you tell me what emotions you are holding?

Sometimes, if we do not get a response, it is because we didn't ask the right question (in which case we can simply rephrase or ask a different question), because it may not be the right time for an answer, or because we are not ready to hear the answer. We may just be at the beginning of trying

this out, and like any friendship, striking up a conversation and “making friends” can take a bit of patience and work.

We may find that we can transcend some of this, even a lack of being able to connect, by asking, *If I were able to hear an answer (or connect to this body part) about why you are in pain, what would that be?*

When you ask your body what it needs, chances are that you will receive an answer. Usually it is fairly simple; sometimes it is not. No matter the answer that arises, you will again take a step back and consider it logically. For example, if our stomach says it needs more water, that isn't too much of a logical leap. If our toe says that we need to quit our jobs and move to Alaska that may take much more consideration.

You may choose to consider what you are hearing on the spot. For example, if our stomach needs more water, we may state that we are happy to drink more water. We then would actualize this in our daily lives by drinking more water. This is how we can link up with what our body is saying and let it know it is being heard. When our body as a whole, or a body part, is heard, it no longer needs to scream its message. It can simply talk, or even just whisper.

If what is coming through is complex, I would again check your energy. Is what is “talking” coming through your head or from the body part itself? This may not make complete sense yet, but when a body part versus our mind communicates with us, it has a much different feel. We are so used to overthinking and using our minds that the simplicity of the knowledge coming through from our bodies may cause us to doubt the message.

If what is coming through is something you need to consider, you can simply say thank you to the body part and close the communication. If what arises is not right for you, or something you are not able to do, you can still say thank

you. Even the act of being heard can allow change to occur in that part of your body. If your body part states that it wants you to eat more meat, and you are ethically a vegetarian, you may wish to compromise. You may ask if eating meat once a week would be helpful (if you are willing to do so), or if there are other products or ways that you could introduce the element of “meat” into your life.

Basically, you can negotiate. What you come up with in conjunction with your body part should be something you can actually follow through on in your daily life. Actualization is part of this process; without it, the shift that takes place will not be as big of a shift as with it. This means that our bodies love to be heard, and in carrying out what you discussed with your body (again, this should be something that brings you towards health, and is not destructive in any way), the physical world will create a “bridge” between the mental, energetic, spiritual, emotional, and physical levels of your body. This actualization means that every part of you—mind, body, emotions, and spirit—will have an opportunity to shift and heal in conjunction with one another.

When you end your conversation, you will always want to say thank you to this body part. Expressing compassion for ourselves, and for a part of our body that may feel unheard, unloved, or that we dislike because it is in pain is a part of being more loving to ourselves, and garners much better results.

After you have said thank you, you will ask your body deva and the individual body part to shift or change in relation to being heard. Simply ask for it. However, the process of listening to, truly hearing, then actualizing what comes across will also start to shift things in the body. If we go through these steps, we will often find that our body map will shift significantly. Sometimes this is immediate, such as



right after a chat; other times, it is after we actualize the energy in the physical world.

No matter what happens, by doing this work over time we will become more embodied and healthier. It can sometimes be helpful to keep the original body map that we have drawn and do this work over a period of time (a few months), then draw new body maps. Chances are, our body maps have significantly changed.

It is hard for our minds to realize how much we have healed. We tend to focus on how far we still have to go, so establishing some form of physical reminder is always a good, concrete way to recall just how far we have come.

### **Variation on Talking to Your Body**

You can utilize this same work to focus on an emotion, theme, or pattern that you are noticing. To do this you would pick an emotion that you have noticed come up for you (for example, anger) and start out by asking where that anger is stored in your body. Pick a theme (say, not being able to stand up to a family member), and ask where in your physical body that theme is. Or you may be feeling stuck in your career, so inquire where in your body you hold that stuckness. First check in with your body deva, and find out any information it can provide. Then do a body scan or notice where your focus goes in your body when you have picked your theme. You would then continue with the conversation I listed above.

Although, at first, it is easier to communicate to the body deva as well as individual body parts regarding pain, we also hold the imbalances of our bodies and lives within our physical form. We can find imbalances of family, work or career, our negative thoughts about ourselves or the world, or even feelings of being spiritually stuck or disconnected within our physical form. Our body deva can lead us to

discover where we hold these imbalances within our physical bodies.

The more you do this, the easier it becomes. Gradually, you will know exactly what your body is saying, and be able to act from a place of knowing precisely what to do for your individual situation and body.

In further chapters, we will discuss more advanced situations, including how to talk with your body in more depth to understand where a pattern or blockage comes from. For now, though, communicate with the body deva to ask about imbalances in your daily life and find out where they are being held in the body. Ask the individual body part for more information about what it is holding or why the topic or imbalance you are questioning emerged. For a summary of how to work with the consciousness of the body, you can move to the chapter Tying Things Together at the end of the book.

## **Ken**

Ken contacted me due to knee pain. He was a tennis player and found that as he got older, his knees were often painful after working out. He jokingly referred to this as part of the natural aging process but was willing to do whatever it took to be able to do what he loved.

He began by drawing his body map. To his surprise, the rest of his body was present, except that there were huge black lines where his shoulders were, and his lower body (from the hips down) was dotted or completely absent, except for swirls and a big black dot over his left knee.

In communicating with his body deva, he found that he had a tendency to carry energy in his upper body due to his work. Ken was an intellectual and writer who spent a lot of time in his head. Additionally, his body deva revealed that his body was so out of balance because a divorce ten years ago had “knocked him off his feet,” and that feeling of lack of stability had followed him around since that time.

He did follow-up work with me (inner child work, although he was in his thirties when it happened) to find further information on how the divorce affected him, and he simply asked his body deva how to get more in balance. The body deva revealed that he needed to get back out there—he needed to start dating again and heal the fear that resulted from his rather messy divorce.

He listened to this and agreed that he really wanted a relationship and was willing to find someone.

Ken then began talking with his left knee, which was the painful one for him. It revealed that it didn't feel supported by anything; it felt alone. It felt disconnected from the rest of his body and was taking on the impact of his tennis playing. It revealed that it needed to be connected to his hip and feet and feel overall connected with the rest of his body. He agreed and asked the body deva if it would connect his knee to the rest of his leg. He then went to see a Feldenkrais practitioner, who was able to help him walk in a more balanced way.

In doing these things, Ken found that he was in minimal pain and that the thoughts of knee surgery were in the far past. He found the support he was looking for; by following up with his body deva as well as his knee, his body map now shows energy in his lower body, and he is able to play tennis with only occasional and minimal discomfort.

## **Sheila**

Sheila came to me because she experienced a lot of rage in her life. She would find herself becoming incredibly infuriated while in traffic, at politics, and with people who she thought were trying to "screw her over."

She asked her body to highlight or show her where it held this rage energy. Much of it was held around her diaphragm area, and when she sat with it she described it as a big Texas-style belt that was put on too tight. She felt constricted and in pain and saw the colors red, purple, and black when looking at the area.

She began talking with her diaphragm, asking why it held this anger energy. It responded that she felt angry because she needed space. Anger was her way of acknowledging when she was overwhelmed and would push people away from her. It also allowed her a way to vent her frustrations. It revealed to her that because she had a big stockpile of anger within her, every time she was angry it was the proverbial "straw that broke the camel's back," and she would explode.

Her body revealed that she needed to heal some things from childhood (as well as, eventually, past lives) because that was the part of her that was really angry. She then did the inner child work with great success. But at the beginning of her journey, her diaphragm revealed that it wanted her to exercise. Although she did exercise, her diaphragm specifically wanted her to start boxing. She thought this was odd, as she was used to doing things like running, but agreed. She now goes to a boxing class once a week and finds that she no longer has any explosions of anger.

She did further work with her "inner children" (chapter four), and finds that as long as she boxes once a week, she is a calm, collected, and balanced person (well, 95 percent of the time; an hour commute still can create some havoc on occasion).

# CHAPTER TWO

## Working with Resistance and Blocks

There is a force within us that wants us to stay who and what we are. This force can be called many different things: blocks, ego, inner wounding, fear. It can also be called *resistance*—the parts of ourselves that do not want us to move forward or outright block us in our quest to heal and improve our lives.

We view resistance as something to be actively fought against, a negativity within us that must be overcome by persistence or a battle that we inevitably lose. Rarely do we recognize that there may be a vested reason why we may be resisting.

Our resistance is our protection. It is our fear and the accumulation of the disappointments, traumas, and difficulties that we have experienced in our lives. We resist because we fear change—who we would be if we released a core part of our identity. We resist because we believe that any change is equivalent to death... and in a way, we are correct. If we release something that has created beliefs and understandings, something that may have been a core part of our reality, of who we consider ourselves to be and what we consider the world to be like, it is a type of death. No longer are we the person we once were.

Rarely do we consider that after death is rebirth and a release of the shackles that have held us. On the deepest levels of our soul, we equate surrender and release with death. On a more surface level, we fear change because that means that our lives and our concept of who we are will change along with it. We fear the unknown, and it often

takes experiencing incredible pain on some level (physical, emotional, and/or spiritual) but also a subsequent mythic journey to the depths of the soul to find healing or alleviation for this pain, that we discover this type of death is necessary.

We are rarely conscious of the fact that who we are is continually in a state of flux. We “die” and move through cycles of death and rebirth quite often. Some of these are larger, such as moving cross-country, divorcing, getting married, or releasing a long-held belief, and some are smaller, such as deciding to eat something healthy for breakfast instead of sugary cereal. Each day, our decisions and who we are is in this death-and-rebirth cycle. By recognizing that we are engaged in larger and smaller cycles of rebirth and death continually, we can become conscious of the fact that we can work with and move beyond our fears of change.

Our resistance is also what is unhealed within us. We like to think of ourselves as one thing, one person, but we are not. We are a multiplicity. When we experience trauma or overwhelm, a part of us freezes at that age. We move on, but we now have an inner six-year-old who is unhealed within us. We accumulate all of these “small selves,” and they are the ones that feel unheard, unloved, and in need of protection. They are the ones who are resisting, out of the fear that comes with trauma and overwhelm. It is by healing and integrating these aspects of ourselves, as well as acknowledging that our resistance may not be coming from a current, adult space, that we can begin to heal and move forward in our lives without resistance or self-sabotage.

Our resistance is the relative force of what is unhealed, disconnected, and fractured within us. The more we heal, the more whole we become; the more connected we become, the less resistance we will experience. If we understand that what is resisting is not our current, adult

self but parts of ourselves that are deeply wounded, fractured, and frozen in time, we can begin to understand as well as develop compassion for our resistance instead of battling against it. Our resistance is often there for a very good reason: it is offering protection. It shields us from experiencing similar events.

If someone has gotten their heart broken very badly once (or a few times), it is understandable that they would be resistant to opening their heart again for a new partner. If someone has experienced a significant illness, such as Lyme disease, which wrecked and ravaged their immune system and digestive system ten years ago, they may not realize that their bodies are resisting healing because they are protecting a system that once needed a huge amount of protection or to be blocked off merely to survive. If we were living in poverty and later have enough money to buy ourselves something nice on occasion, we may resist because we are still in a state of fear and protection from twenty years ago. We may not realize that our fatigue is from ten years ago, when we had young children or were in school or in a difficult job.

The difficulty is that our bodies, once they have experienced trauma or overwhelm, no longer recognize or see themselves as a cohesive consciousness; they are fractured and no longer recognize the whole. Our inner selves and parts of ourselves that have experienced pain and trauma rarely understand that we are not six, or fifteen, or forty-five any more. That it is not last year, or even two weeks ago. When our bodies experience pain and trauma, they not only freeze but individual body parts remove themselves from the body map. They do this to preserve the whole (the integrity of the body) the best they can. Basically, the show must go on, and the rest of you needs to go to the grocery store and to work.

The part of the body that has frozen will resist becoming a part of the whole because it believes itself still to be the same age as when it distanced itself from its body map. It also is doing the best job it can in containing and holding the sickness, disease, emotion, traumas, and other imbalances that it holds within it; it will naturally not want to come back “online” and become a part of the body map again until its needs for protection are healed first. This may mean that your inner six-year-old is very afraid and needs protection, or that your body needs to release inflammation, anger, fear, jealousy, grief, or depression and is protecting itself because it would be too overwhelming to release it all at once.

Our minds are funny in their capacity to seek protection by resisting. When we heal in a significant way we must shift physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. Whatever level we are working on reverberates out to the other levels. While much of our resistance does come from fear, and understandable fear at that, it is our minds that lock us into place, that tell us that we cannot heal, that we are not worthy of healing, and that it would be too frightening to go through the “death” process (not revealing, of course, that rebirth is on the other side). Our minds tell us to stay with the known, because we know what to expect. Even if our lives are deeply unhappy, we know what to expect in our routine, and there is a sense of safety there.

Our minds will take on black-and-white, either-or thinking as a form of resistance. If we are not exercising, we set up a plan to exercise for 60 minutes every day. If we are unhappy with our lives, this means we should move far away and quit our jobs. Engaging in simplistic, dualistic thinking allows our resistance to have a voice and sets up a battle within. It allows the unhealed forces within us to say that we are unworthy, that things would be too difficult, and

that there is no middle ground in any situation. Watch out for this type of thinking as a way to engage in resistance; the path of the middle ground, or more gradual path, is often the best.

Reading over all this, you may think that it is surprising that anyone heals, or takes significant steps forward in their lives. But they do, and you can as well. It is by acknowledging and feeling compassion for your resistance that you can move beyond it. It is by realizing its function and giving yourself permission to move forward at a rate that you are comfortable with steadily over time that healing is really and truly successful. Our resistance does not need to be battled against, or treated as a villain. It is by treating even the resistant parts of ourselves with compassion and understanding, allowing them to be heard, that we can move past our resistance.

What makes moving beyond our resistance difficult is that it requires openness as well as a willingness to ask questions. For example, we may realize that our belief that nobody loves us is false, and seeing that makes us realize how long and how forcefully we have maintained this belief. With clarity, we may see what sort of damage or difficulty we have imposed upon ourselves in our lives. With this type of clarity, we may realize with that there are some people in our lives who represent our wounds and need for healing rather than a successful relationship. We may also realize that our feet hurt, not because of a spiritual pattern of needing to move forward but because we need to visit a podiatrist.

It is natural to want to push our resistance away. We may fear it, hate it, shout at it, and get angry at it. We may feel blocked in some way, having tried to force ourselves beyond this block with no change or tried multiple methods of healing with little success. We may create lists of all of



the things we resolve to do tomorrow, or in the New Year, succumbing to the resistance and what is known each time.

We may simply sense that we are in some way holding back, or are not what we could be in our lives, and notice a subconscious (or barely conscious) realization of blockage or resistance to moving forward.

These are all ways to notice that you are experiencing resistance. Resistance is natural. It is by compassionately and directly inquiring why it is there that we can begin to work with it, instead of battling it and setting up unhelpful polarities that create more resistance.

## **Working with Resistance**

There are a few ways to work with resistance. The first is to work with it whenever you notice it come up. For example, say you are working with your knee and your knee reveals that it is holding a lot of anger from your divorce. You ask what it needs, and there is no reply. Or you feel some sort of shift but that there is something still there that you cannot get answers about. You may also notice a sense of stubbornness, lack the ability to even focus on your knee, or do not hear any answers (or perhaps a *This is stupid*).

You can also do this work separately. This means that you may wish to focus on your resistance for a period of time, because you either know it is a big issue for you or you are simply ready to bring some focus and healing to the topic overall. We all have this push-pull to moving forward and wanting to stay who and what we are. Working with resistance generally, as well as separately, can really allow you to understand all the parts of you that may not wish to engage in inner work.

When you are doing the work with the body deva, or any of the work in the following chapters on inner children, past lives, and ancestral healing, you may realize that in

some way you are resisting. While, certainly, information sometimes just doesn't come up, the energy of resistance feels like stubbornness, a blocked or "hiding" sensation. You may also find that this work isn't going anywhere—not because you haven't made a valiant effort, but because there is a layer of confusion or some type of feeling of obstruction. You may also find that resistance presents as impatience, a thought that you should be able to heal everything you carry within on the first try, or a belief that you have no inner work left to do. By approaching these beliefs as resistance, they can be moved past and further successful work can be done.

There are a few ways to work with this. When you are doing work with the body deva, ask it to show you the energy that is resisting. For example, you are doing work exploring why you may have stomach pain and realize that your entire abdomen is not a part of your body map. When you begin to talk with your abdomen, it seems confused and doesn't give any answers. You realize that on some level there may be resistance, or some form of protection blocking you from connecting to your abdomen. You ask your body deva to show you what part of your abdomen is holding this resistance. While it can be the whole abdomen, usually it is only a segment, or small portion, of what you are working with.

You will then ask your body deva to see this energy clearly, as a specific color separate from how you view the rest of your abdomen. You can then try asking that color (or that resistance) to step aside so you can work with the rest of your abdomen.

You will then work with the area that remains, realizing that you do not need to heal everything in your abdomen at once. If you realize that your resistance covers half of your abdomen and you successfully work with the other half, that is still a lot of progress.

Successful work utilizing this method results in a change in physical function, lessening of emotional and energetic baggage, an expansion (or clearing) of previously held beliefs, and a change in your body map. The body map change will come more gradually, as it can take up to a few weeks to fully integrate and consciously comprehend how much change has occurred.

## **Working with Resistance Via Inquiry**

This work is always done in a body-centered way. This means that our resistance, blocks, and fears always take up a physical space in our bodies. To start, you will do a body scan (start at your feet and move your way up to your head, not forgetting your arms) asking your body deva to highlight or draw your attention to where your resistance may be located.

If you have a lot of blocks or complex patterns going on, you may find multiple areas, or even one large area, highlighted. You may feel as if your entire body is resistant. If you find multiple areas, it can be helpful to be more specific; when asking about resistance you may ask for resistance towards healing, or towards healing your knee, or your relationship. Although resistance to healing something like your knee may be located in your physical knee, sometimes it is not, so it is always helpful to be open-minded when exploring.

If you are starting from a place of already being immersed in the previous chapters and are encountering resistance, you can still do a body scan to see where the resistance is. It is most likely going to be in the area you are working with, but it still can be helpful to developing a relationship with your body to ask and be open-minded enough to explore.

If you have multiple areas of your body that are showing resistance, you will either ask your body deva to highlight or draw your attention to the most important one, the “fulcrum,” or you will simply pick one. It is quite common to have multiple layers and types of resistance, and eventually they all can be worked with.

You will now sit with this part of your body that holds the resistance, noting things about how the resistance is felt as an energetic restriction or block in your body:

- What size is it? (Big, small, quarter-sized, pancake-sized?)
- What shape is this energy? (A circle, blob, squiggle, pattern?)
- What colors do you notice? (Is it dark or light?)
- What does it feel like? (Tight, heavy, empty, pulling?)

The purpose in asking such questions is to get the best idea you can of how the resistance energetically “sits” in your body.

If you are having difficulty with this, you can ask your body deva to highlight or really bring forward this resistance so you can sense it more. The purpose here isn’t to create more pain but to bring into consciousness how this energy of resistance is felt and seen.

If you are already working on something, such as knee pain or the emotion of anger in your pelvis or even an ancestral healing (all covered in later chapters), if the resistance is in the same area it is likely to present differently from whatever you are working on. You will ask the resistant energy to step forward within the body part you are working with. In some cases it may not present differently, as our resistance may in fact be creating a great deal of pain or difficulty for ourselves, or be the core issue of

why we are holding onto an emotion, physical pain, or spiritual pattern.

You will now communicate with this resistance within your body. For example, let's say you notice a dark, circular shape in your pelvis. After asking what is holding you back, or what you may be resisting, ask the dark circle questions, such as:

- Can you tell me why you are here?
- How long have you been here?
- What would happen if you were no longer here?
- What are you afraid might happen if you were no longer here?

Remember, our resistance is most often protective and may likely be from an entirely different place and time. You may not have had the resources to handle certain information or specific emotions like anger or fear as a child (or even six months ago).

The first line of protection is typically to protect you from consciously realizing something. This may be certain memories, emotions, or even the way you currently feel about a specific part of your life. It may be a realization that there is some sort of change needed in your life, such as a change in job or in your relationship.

Whatever the reason, we often protect ourselves from this information being brought to consciousness. This can be because the information may be difficult to acknowledge, but often it comes from a place of knowing that if we consciously realize something, then we will need to take action on it.

This does not need to be true. We can simply realize something and have it brought into our consciousness

without action. Letting our resistance know this—that we can simply receive all the facts or understand what is going on with ourselves so that we can determine over time what to do about it—is one of the best ways to move past resistance.

The other aspect of resistance is fear—fear that if you were to know something, you would somehow not be able to handle it. This again is a protective mechanism, and it often brings up valid points. If we were to open our hearts again, they might be broken again. If we were abused as a child (and a part of ourselves is still frozen at that age), we may not want to open or release energy from an area because it was an area of violation that perceives that it needs shielding. If, as a result of a parent, child, or friend passing, we experienced a lot of grief that was overwhelming at the time, we may have sectioned off that grief because we simply needed to go to work and get on with our lives.

Understanding and feeling compassion for this resistance and understanding the time and reasoning for the resistance is critical. We are not commanding, pushing away, or telling resistance that it is “bad” here; we are inquiring about its purpose. And as it reveals that purpose, we can determine how much, if any, of the protection it offers we still require.

If we find that our resistance is from a much earlier age—such as the abused child I referred to—we may simply wish to tell this resistance that we appreciate it but are no longer five years old and do not need the amount of protection it offers. Although it seems like a silly thing to say, ask the resistance if it realizes that you are your current age (*Do you realize I am not ten years old? I am actually forty-two. Can you acknowledge this?*). The information about your current age may allow the energy of resistance to “unfreeze” and become aware that you may no longer need as much, if any, of what it offered.

If the resistance is a sectioning off due to overwhelm, we again may state that we are no longer at that time and space (whether that was six months ago or several decades), and that now is the right time to begin to heal and work with the resistance, as well as the underlying pattern that created it.

The key is to work with the psychological concept of *titration*, a process that involves the gradual release and negotiation of healing at your own pace to avoid overwhelming your inner resources. For example, imagine that you have a huge block in your pelvis from childhood sexual abuse, with a significant amount of resistance layered on top of it. Releasing that entire pattern all at once would be too difficult for anyone, no matter how stable or experienced in this type of work they are; the associated energy and emotions would be overwhelming to the person's current body consciousness. Moreover, it is simply not necessary to experience this level of catharsis. Such huge, disruptive releases create havoc in the body.

So when working with resistance (or any of the healing methods utilizing the body deva in this book), the most healing method is to work with it step by step in a paced manner. We live in a culture where we like advanced, best, and now—if something is not described as simple, easily attainable, and quick, we move on. But if we are willing to have the patience to work in this gradual manner, in a compassionate way, we can effect healing that is profound, gentle, and life changing as well as life affirming.

So when you are working with this resistance, and it reveals its fears and reasons for being, as much as possible acknowledge what it is saying. Something like, *Yes, I understand that my anger is how I keep people at arms' length*, or *Yes, I realize that at some point I needed to be protected from men (or women)*, or *Yes, in my household, growing up, I couldn't express my grief because children*

*needed to be seen and not heard, but I am forty-five now and no longer need to contain or prevent this grief from arising.*

It may not be that deep, by the way; it could simply be, *“Yes, I realize that I am tired because I work seventy-five-hour weeks and have two children,”* or *“Yes, I realize my knee hurts because of that snowmobile accident in 1975 and that I am resistant because you sometimes just have to do things because you need to do them, despite the pain.”*

Sit with and acknowledge whatever you can about whatever arises, and ask yourself (or return to the body deva and ask) if you need this protection “fully,” “partially,” or “not at all.”

If you need this protection fully, you will simply say thank you to this resistance for serving your needs. If this happens, do not feel a sense of failure; conscious acknowledgement of what is going on does result in change. You may simply need external resources (such as counseling, healing work, and so on) so that you are in a better place to work with your resistance. You may also wish to remind the area of your current age again. By not forcing this area to change and approaching your resistance with compassion, even if it does not wish to change at all, you will find it much more receptive in later conversations as well.

Most of us gravitate toward the “not at all” option—as humans, it is our natural tendency to want to rid ourselves of anything we perceive as blocking our bodies (like ripping off a Band-Aid all at once). This is often a mental answer, so check in with your body deva, and again notice where the information is coming from by placing one hand on the area you are working with and sensing if it is coming from your head or the body part. You can also ask the body deva to highlight the part that is “speaking” to check your answers.



If the answer is “partial need for protection,” acknowledge this feedback, and ask the consciousness of the specific body part you are working with (for example, the abdomen) to change or shift as much as it is ready to. There is no forcing here. If done correctly, the image that was in your body (the energy, color, shape, and size) will have changed when you look back at it. You will then ask the body deva to integrate this shift with the rest of the body.

You may wish to end with gratitude for the protection that your resistance offered, as at one point you may have needed this resistance. It served a vital function, and although it may have been misguided in its efforts, it had a specific and positive role that on some level kept you safe. It is rare that we express gratitude to the things within us that we perceive as dark, difficult, or resistant, and the highest level of healing is being able to express compassion and love to all aspects of ourselves.

### **Working with Resistance via Symbol**

Similar to the body deva, we can also work with our resistance by creating a character, symbol, or image for our resistance. This method is helpful for working with our resistance as a general concept, or if the previous method is not garnering enough information.

To do this you would do the body scan or find an area of resistance (exactly the same as the prior method), and again note how the area you have found it in feels physically, as well as sense an inner visual, shape, or size of the energy.

You always want to engage the body first to ensure that this work does not turn into mental gymnastics or a method of disembodied creative visualization. What allows for

healing is the embodiment and clarity that comes from truly engaging with the consciousness of the physical form.

You would then ask your resistance to step forward as a character or symbol. As you can see, we are working with similar methods, just with different intentions. Our body deva imagery, that healthy body consciousness that we can tap into and gain wisdom from is going to be different when it takes the form of a visual image or “character” than the image or “character” of resistance.

- You will simply sit with this image and see it as clearly as you can. If you cannot see it, what would you intuitively “know” about it? This is often our strongest sense and can be utilized to create a visual.
- When it seems somewhat clear, you will then say hello to it and ask it if it has anything to say. A journal can be really helpful for this to write down things after.
- You will now ask it what it is offering you protection from. What would happen if it was not protecting you?
- Inquire what age it is from. This may not result in an answer if it is a bunch of different ages. If it answers “Forever,” it may either be from early childhood or an energy that has been passed down to you.
- Be compassionate to this fear and resistance. It is protecting you, even if it is misguided in its efforts, or you no longer need its efforts.
- Once you understand the fear, you can negotiate a bit. Let it know if you no longer need protection, or as much protection, as it is giving. Let it know that you appreciate its efforts, but if it could back off a bit (say this nicely) that you would appreciate it.
- Most of all, say thank you. The highest embodiment of compassion is being loving and compassionate toward everything within and without. This does not mean that

this fear becomes love, or something deemed acceptable; it means that we are willing to listen to every single aspect of ourselves with the highest regard. We are willing to listen and accept fear as much as the joyful parts of us. This is true shadow work, and it will allow for significant inner (as well as outer) transformation when done over time and with some patience.

It is helpful to have many different ways to do inner work as you will find that sometimes one method works in instances where another one does not. You may also find that, at first, creating an outer visual is easier, or easier to do on its own.

Whatever method you choose, remember that your resistance did not show up overnight, and likely will take some time to leave. You will know that you have been successful when you perceive changes in the energy you have visualized and a change in your body map. You may also be able to move beyond the resistance to understand and communicate with the consciousness of that body part now. Even if there is a slight change to the symbol (such as becoming smaller or changing color from black to gray), this will allow you to access more information or whatever you were working with before to be more readily accomplished.

## **Questions about Resistance**

To work your way around mental blocks, a line of simple questioning is always helpful:

- What if I could hear what is going on here?
- What if I could hear what you have to say?
- What would happen (what is the fear) about hearing this?

- Would it be okay if I hear about this pattern without having to do anything about it?
- Do you realize that I am (current age)?

These questions are often helpful when you are in the midst of working with your body deva, an aspect of your body, or any of the following chapters, as they are ways to negotiate or subtly move beyond the mental blocks that form resistance. We often believe we need to do something with the information we receive, or deeply fear hearing something because to be conscious of it means we would have to take action. Taking that off the metaphorical table is incredibly helpful in moving past resistance, as is asking the questions about fear, protection, and simply “what if” type questions.

## **The Energetics of Resistance**

For every force there is an equal and opposing force within us. The force that we have propelling us forward also has a force of equal strength keeping us back. Understanding this force, and how the energetics of momentum and resistance works, can allow someone to move beyond the heightened resistance that forms when engaging in healing activities or meditations.

When we are going to engage in healing work, inner work, or anything we may plan for ourselves in order to move forward in our lives, a heightened energy develops, a momentum developed from our planning and intentions. But here is the difficulty: the greater the energy we expend on becoming a “new person” or doing something new, the greater the resistance that builds.

Although this sounds odd, it is by doing things without mentally building them up that we can succeed in cutting through the built-up energy and achieve something new,

whether that is a new art project, going to the gym, or doing the work in this book.

If you are able to maintain the mentality of, *This is simply something I will be doing, and if it doesn't happen that is perfectly fine*, it will allow you to move beyond your basic resistance, as well as the sort of mental planning, resolutions, and promises to be a changed or new and better person tomorrow that we all tend to loop through.

When we engage in this manner, the momentum of resistance does not build as drastically as if we were to create the opposing momentum of “change” energy, and we are more likely to be successful at actually doing something. While sitting with and consciously thinking about things is always helpful, as a culture we are so in our heads that it is rare that we actually follow through on even a fraction of our dreams.

We can use this principle of opposing forces to simply state something like, *I would like to go to that class at my gym. I am going to sign up for that class, and if I go, that is great, but no pressure*. This is a lot different from the energy of someone stating, *I need to start lifting weights. Starting tomorrow, I am going to lift weights for an hour every day*. The first person is more likely to make it to the gym, and the second is likely to have mysterious things pop up, such as stomach aches, things to do at work, or other forms of resistance, which will prevent them from going.

## **Lucy**

Lucy was aware of a great deal of anger and fear that she held within her. Her parents were refugees, and as the eldest in her family, she was in a position of having to take care of the other children while her parents worked long hours. Lucy was diagnosed with endometriosis, thyroid issues, IBS, and generally felt low energy.

She noticed that this anger was pretty widespread: in her pelvis, heart, throat, and jaw. In talking to her body as well as her body deva, all she heard was unintelligible screaming or nothing at all.

She started by asking the question, *What if I could hear what is going on here?* After asking, she still couldn't make out anything other than screaming, pain, and darkness. Lucy had been through therapy for five years with little change in symptoms and so was looking for spiritual healing and related methods to assist her.

She found most of her resistance in her pelvis and throat. When asking where the fulcrum of the resistance was, she found that the pelvis was highlighted. The energy she found there was like a brick wall, impossible to penetrate, and too tall to look over.

This wall told her that she had too much anger and pain within her, and if the wall were to disappear she may never stop crying. It told her that she not only carried her own anger but that of her mother, and that she was taking responsibility for her mother's pain as well as her own. I asked her if this was an *ancestral pattern*, a family pattern that extended back farther than her mother, and her pelvis agreed that it was holding onto the pain and anguish of several generations of women.

Lucy said that the resistance and pain was creating difficulty for her, and asked if the wall was willing to change or shift a bit so she could actually work with the anger, fear, and grief underneath. The wall was cautious but allowed a small window to open. This window allowed Lucy to work with her childhood and ancestral issues and release a bit of the energy in her throat, jaw, and pelvis.

She then returned to the wall and asked it to look at her current, adult body and if she needed as much of this protection still, as she felt she didn't need as much. The wall agreed, but cautioned that she needed to work through some fairly difficult emotions in order to heal. She said that that was okay, and the wall became thinner and short enough for her to look over.

Over the next few months, Lucy worked with ancestral issues, her inner children, and the body deva and found that her anger no longer was a factor. She then worked with the grief and the despair she found. The wall slowly dissolved and released, and she found herself happier, in a new job where she was appreciated, and reconciling with her mother and sisters.

Her digestion vastly improved, her periods became less painful, and she found upon returning to therapy that it was more successful this time. She did further work on contracts (chapter five) and found that she experienced more freedom in her life and was less critical of herself and those around her.

As you read these case studies, you may be noticing that I am not saying that people become multimillionaires with no issues ever again after doing this work. These case studies are all based on real people whom I have worked with (or are composites of a few people with the same general themes) who were courageous enough to look within and to move beyond many of the emotional, mental, physical,

spiritual restrictions that were causing them an incredible amount of pain. This work allowed them to be much more functional, more joyous, and to understand themselves on a much deeper level than before.

It is part of inner work that we will always have something to work on, more to explore, and more to heal. The more we choose to do so the freer we become. But we are all in human bodies and have human lives that inevitably have ups and downs. No matter how much work you do on yourself you may still swear in traffic, not get along with your sister, and have some days where you feel better than others. But by fully engaging in our bodies, by becoming fully human and conscious of what we carry, we can move beyond the blind emotional reactivity and the unconscious carrying out of patterns that we once did. This allows for a sense of freedom, better self-worth, and improved functionality, and step by step, we become more alive.

By being willing to engage, knowing that we always have something to work on (and not engaging in ego dynamics that suggest that we don't), we can continually free ourselves from the many things that have created so many restrictions in our lives.

# CHAPTER THREE

## Working with Fear and Emotions

Our emotions provide us with valuable insight into what we need to work with internally. We all have a *core emotion*, an emotion we gravitate toward in times of overwhelm or distress: fear, anger, shame, or grief. Think of how you typically respond to situations you find overwhelming, violating, or just simply bothersome. For many of you, the emotion is likely to be anger.

We do not live in a culture that celebrates our emotions. Anything perceived as “negative” is quashed down, ignored, or is something that we attempt to push aside. In modern spiritual communities, the emotions of fear, anger, and other perceived “dark” or “negative” emotions are seen as something to transcend or turned into “light.” Our emotions do not go anywhere if we ignore them or shove them aside. What happens is that we create a stockpile of unhealed emotions that continually grows each time an emotion is not expressed.

These unexpressed emotions color the life of the individual and prevent them from reaching a state of health. They also affect our loved ones, our society, and even our world. It does not take much realization to see that collectively our unhealed emotions, such as rage, anger, grief, and fear, are played out repeatedly on a world stage. By doing this work you are taking responsibility not only for your own experience but also for healing your family, friends, neighbors, and resolving part of the whole, like waves on the ocean rippling outward.



## Understanding Our Emotions

Our emotions serve a vital function and role in our lives. We are meant to experience our full range of emotions—everything from anger to joy, pain to bliss. Many of us never learn the proper tools and skills to communicate with our bodies or connect with our emotions in a healthy and intelligent manner. Picture this. Two people get into a car accident, both rear-ended by someone on their cell phone. The first person gets angry (anger that is appropriate for the situation), takes some deep breaths, calls the appropriate people to deal with the situation, and in a few hours has moved on from being angry.

The second person begins swearing, shouting at the person who caused the accident, wants to fight them, and gets a headache that lasts throughout the day. Days later they are still mumbling about what an idiot that driver was, and how nobody pays attention and how dangerous it is for people to be constantly on their phones. Over the next few months, whenever this person thinks of this experience a surge of anger flows through them and they express hatred towards this individual.

In the first example, we can see what happens when we are in a place of emotional intelligence or skill. We are supposed to get angry, grieve, feel pain, as well as all of our “positive” emotions like joy, happiness, contentedness, and ease. Full emotional intelligence and usage is the capacity to have healthy, functioning, and full use of our emotional range, to understand why we may be experiencing an emotion, and the uninhibited, healthy expression of that emotion so that it does not add on to the “stockpile” within us.

What this work will do is gradually ease that stockpile so that you will begin to respond more and more

appropriately to the situation and not have your responses be magnified by your stockpile. It will also allow you to move beyond the ideologies that any emotions should be avoided or are “bad,” and into a space of flow, or a healthy expression and compassion for all emotions.

## Questioning Emotions

To start coming into consciousness (or further consciousness) about your emotions, I suggest beginning with a bit of questioning to determine how much you may be magnifying the emotions you experience on a daily basis. By this I mean a daily process of noting when you feel anger, grief, depression, or fear by asking how magnified this emotion is.

I would choose one emotion to start with. I frequently suggest working with your core emotion first—the emotion you notice yourself gravitating toward in distressing situations, or just as a daily occurrence even in non-distressing situations. Things like depression or apathy are often complex and multi-emotional, so picking anger, fear, or grief is often better to begin with.

When you experience this emotion, ask yourself, *How magnified is this emotion for the situation?* This is harder if there is no situation (you randomly feel angry without a conscious catalyst). In cases such as this, I suggest jumping ahead and doing some of the work later in this chapter (working with the body deva to understand and work with emotions locked in the body) and then coming back to this work.

You can also ask, *How appropriate is this emotion for the situation?* Sometimes that question gets into our own restrictions and rules about how any emotion within us is bad or inappropriate. We are supposed to experience the full range of emotions; however, it can take some work to realize this, and to overcome the sort of cultural, personal, and family conditioning that has told us that difficult or “negative” emotions are not okay or must have a lot of rules around them to be a valid part of our experience.

The purpose of this line of questioning is to come up with a number or idea about the extent of your over-reaction or magnification of the situation. This is not intended to make you feel bad but to make you conscious of the extent of the present anger (fear, grief), and the anger that may be backlogged (or need to be worked on).

Going back to our car accident case study, in person no. 1, we can see that there is no magnification of anger; the person experienced anger that was appropriate for the situation and was able to release it appropriately so it did not get held within their body. If person no. 2 were to do this line of questioning, however, they may find that only 10 percent of their anger arose from the current situation, with 90 percent coming from somewhere else. So even though from the outside this line of questioning seems simple, it takes a bit of practice to get the hang of it.

When you experience an emotion (your core emotion) ask yourself:

- How much is this being magnified? (Double? Five times? Twenty times?)
- What percentage of this is appropriate for the situation? (5, 10, 90 percent?)
- How much of this emotional reaction is from prior situations (not from the current situation)?

The answers to these questions will enable you to recognize what is healthy or appropriate for the situation, and begin discerning how much material may lie within that you can work with utilizing your body deva.

With practice, just using these simple questions will allow you to let go of some of your anger (or fear, or grief) simply by bringing into consciousness how your emotions work. Just by utilizing these questions it is typical for

reactions to start to change. A client who found himself frequently angry due to work emails said, "I didn't realize how much of my anger was coming from past experiences. It felt good to find out how much of my anger was actually appropriate for the situation. I had a right to be angry about some of what was going on, and how much I was being asked to do."

A funny part of this is that you are likely to discover that many of your emotions are completely valid; they are just magnified or distorted due to prior experiences and conditioning. By understanding our emotions and their functions we can make headway in knowing ourselves better. Emotions serve as messengers, allowing us to defend, protect, or deeply feel on a level that we may not be aware of yet.

## **Functions of Emotions**

Our emotions are valuable messengers—they tell us what is going on within us, as well as in the context of our environment. Different emotions have different roles, so we will discuss the basic functions of emotions and what they may be saying to us.

## Anger

Our anger is our greatest protection. It allows us to understand when our boundaries are being breached and to energetically create a boundary around ourselves that tells others to keep away.

The easiest way to notice how anger creates a boundary is to sit in a public place, such as a bus or train or café. Scan the room and look for someone who is so angry it is palpable. People around them will likely be giving this person a wide berth—an empty seat next to them on the bus, the tables next to them in the café will be empty, and so forth.

In the wild, the expression of anger by a mother lion—the gnashing of teeth at a predator coming near her cubs—will keep her cubs safe and cause the predator to fall back. Although we no longer need to defend ourselves in this way, the mechanism from a time when we needed to do so is still ingrained in us. This biological mechanism may work in exactly the same as it did for our predecessors who were worried about others taking their fire or food, but nowadays, it gets triggered a bit differently. We still perceive the predator attempting to “take” or “violate” us in some fashion, but our anger frequently shows us when our energetic or emotional boundaries are being breached during the event as well as after the fact.

Our primitive, reptilian brain originally developed as a way of helping us survive a dangerous early human environment (so that we would not be taken or violated, resulting in our death or that of a family or community member). In modern times, our primitive brain response may still get triggered, perhaps when someone makes what feels like a big demand on us, such as asking us to help them move a couch, get along with a family member over

the holidays, or do more than our fair share of work in the workplace.

I realize that the distinction between these events may not seem clear to some of you. After all, there would seem to be a major difference between a mother lion fighting for the survival of her cubs, our ancestors fighting to prevent their food or fire being stolen or them being raped and pillaged, and us receiving an email from a friend, family member or colleague who breaches our boundaries. In fact, they are on the same continuum: they all breach our boundaries, which exist to ensure our survival and the integrity of our systems.

Our anger allows us to instinctively protect ourselves and to survive. We may not be conscious of our boundaries, or know what they are, but on a subconscious level we are always aware when someone is looking to “take” from us, or when our boundaries are being significantly encroached. In many cases, anger may show us when we are giving more energy than we are receiving from a situation or a person. When working with boundaries and unequal relationships in interpersonal relationships, I suggest using energetic cord work, which you can learn about in detail in my book, *The Complete Cord Course*, as well as in this book.

If we understand that our anger arises from our perception that our boundaries have been violated, we can become more compassionate about its vital role in our lives. We also can understand its secondary function, which is that anger is actually an outward expression of fear.

Our anger is not really anger much of the time. In Traditional Chinese Medicine, anger is classified as a “yang” emotion. Yang emotions are extroverted, loud, and allow us to “vent.” Emotions like fear and grief cause us to retreat inward; the emotion of anger allows us to express ourselves.



At the deepest levels, all emotions boil down to fear—the memory on some level of being violated, abused, or taken from. Whether that is from our own lifetime, from family/ancestry, past lives, or genetic and cultural memory, we have all had experiences of having our power taken in some way or other.

Our anger, being an outward emotion, allows us to deny our inward experiences and realizations of fear. We dislike being small, being reminded of the ways in which we deeply fear for our physical lives, our families, and ourselves. Out of this fear comes protective anger—a way to keep ourselves safe as we hold onto our fear. Anger makes us energetically larger. It causes others to keep away and, on some level, causes us to deny the inward expression of fear that lies beneath the anger.

We may also be utilizing anger as a protective mechanism so that we do not feel “yin” emotions, such as grief. Within ourselves, we may find a very angry child, ancestor, or teenager, who upon being given compassion and understanding reveals this grief.

If we understand that our anger is often a biological mechanism of fear, that we hold onto past experiences (or stockpiled) anger, that anger can cover other emotions, and that anger is a protective mechanism, we can come to a place of understanding that anger doesn't need to be ignored, chastised, or pushed aside. It is attempting to serve a valuable function in our lives, and simply may have gotten magnified or skewed due to the unhealed experiences we hold within.

*Anger, being a yang emotion, is often best processed through physical expression. Exercise, movement, and artistic expression are all suggestions of how to channel this seemingly*

*destructive and negative force into a place of health. "Doing something" is the motto of anger: volunteer, protest, find the direction in which your anger wants to "do" to help the world, and yourself. Asking your body deva what the best expression, or manner, in which you can express your anger to fully allow its expression in a positive manner, can allow you to start working with this powerful emotion.*

## Fear

Fear is the creator of our other emotions and is thus considered our *base emotion*. Are we going to be okay? What happens when we die? Are our family, job, and loved ones going to be okay? What happens if someone breaks into our home? Will we be safe if we lose our jobs, our health? As we begin clearing and healing the stockpile of emotions that lie within us, fear of our physical demise, fear for our safety, and fear of the unknown all come up full force.

These fears deeply restrict our lives, and we have created a lot of beliefs to soothe the unknown, to placate the fears around death that we all have. There are entire industries devoted to telling people exactly what happens after they die, or that claim to definitively make the unknown a known. We like closure, knowing, and simplicity, so the idea that there are things that will eventually happen, such as our death and the death of loved ones, or that we cannot possibly know everything, or even if we will be okay, is deeply troubling to a mind that likes clarity, control, and closure.

There are ways to transcend these fears, as much of our fear comes down to the fear of our physical death, but that process is somewhat beyond the limits of this book. What we can understand is how these fears impact our lives and heal the fear that has accumulated due to past experiences.

In Traditional Chinese Medicine and similar methodologies, there is a concept of “root” and “branch.” This means that for every pattern we have, there is the outward expression (the “branches”), the core of what is being expressed (the base of the tree), and what originally created or caused everything (the “root”).

We will talk about this concept more in later chapters, as it is important when considering family and ancestral patterns; for now, just realizing that our fears greatly hold us back, that they create other emotions and a range of beliefs and outward experiences, can allow us to gradually work with the branches, the base of the tree, and eventually face the root, which is fear for our survival and physical death. Doing so will allow us to see how our fear creates many of the restrictions and blockages we carry in this world.

In any discussion about fear, we also need to talk more about how it is a protective mechanism. For years I disliked the word “ego,” as I completely disagreed with the way the word was used by New Agers. The emphasis on having “no” ego, that ego was “bad,” that we are meant to be beyond emotions and even our physical bodies as a sort of goal seemed strange and inauthentic to me.

We are intended to have separate personalities, goals, and emotions. Our differences make us unique and beautiful. We are intended to deeply inhabit our physical form, utilize our senses, and be present in our daily lives. Any sort of spiritual transcendence allows us the opportunity to discover that not only are we deeply connected and “one” but also our own vital and beautiful expression of who we are on an individual level. Any awakening or transcendence will allow us not to separate but to be deeply connected, to more fully feel and be in concert with our emotions, and to develop the emotional intelligence to understand and work with our emotions with compassion.

*According to Traditional Chinese Medicine, fear is a yin emotion, something that is deeply held and felt internally. Fear causes us to contract, to curl up.*

*To release fear requires understanding and compassion. It requires an unfolding. We can often find areas of fear in our bodies by noticing which areas of our body we seek to keep warm, covered, or that are continually contracted. Many who are in a continual fear state will withdraw or seek comfort by contracting in the fetal position. Artistic expression can be used to work with any emotion (yang anger as well as yin fear and grief). Fear is best worked with by soothing, stillness, meditation, and by offering safety, support, and boundaries.*

*The key to working with fear is compassion, understanding, and nurturing.*

I choose to think of ego as simply our identity, our concept of who we are and what the world is like. We do not create the universe in a solipsistic manner, but based on our wounds and unhealed issues, we “loop” through the same issues again and again, seeking healing. We believe the world to be a certain way because of our unhealed pain. As a result of this work, our beliefs, fears, and emotions can significantly shift. But that requires a certain level of openness to do so, which is why working compassionately with even the darkest or most resistant aspects of ourselves is suggested.

Our fear lets us know when we are unsafe, when we need protection, when something in our environment is not right. It allows our systems to react, for us to get that adrenalin surge, go into the “fight-or-flight” mode, and flee (or fight) the attack that is taking place.

The difficulty is that we may have so much locked within that we are continually in “fight-or-flight” mode. We may have parts of ourselves that are five years old, frozen in a continual fear state. A part of us may come from a long

line of family members who had every right to be afraid of attackers, or we may have memories of family, past lives, or a cultural heritage in which continual abuse or violations have taken place. Those fear mechanisms never found the healing they needed, so they are continually “on” with no capacity to go to the “off” switch.

By working with fear gradually, pattern by pattern, and feeling compassion for this biological mechanism which allows us to realize when something is unsafe, you can release fear and slowly allow yourself to switch off and on only when needed.

## Grief and Sadness

Our grief allows us to deeply feel; it allows an access to our soul that no other emotion allows. This may seem like a gift with few benefits, but those who have truly experienced grief have a depth of soul that few others can conceive of. In our modern culture, grief is seen as something that is to be hidden away, private, and feminine. We are only intended to grieve for a culturally specific amount of time, and after that, we should move on with our lives, or get over it.

Grief has no time limits, and because it is a yin emotion (unlike its fiery yang anger counterpart), it moves more in cycles and waves than other emotions. This means that if a family member or loved one dies, we may experience the crest of the wave of grief right after the death (or a few months afterwards, once the shock has worn off), but it may also come up six months later, or even several years later. There is an ebb and flow to the emotion of grief that is not fully respected by us, or culture at large.

We may intellectually understand death as a transition, or spiritually reconcile ourselves to own death, but the reality of death and dying always creates a level of grief. Whether or not we are conscious of that grief, or fully allow ourselves to experience it, is really the question.

When we fully experience our grief, we allow the waves and ebbs and flows associated with that emotion to come up. Grief is a process, an inward (yin) one at that, and we can bully and shame ourselves into not feeling it if it comes from a loss that we feel we should be over (or when others not so kindly suggest that we should be over it).

In healthy grief, we are able to make room for grief, treat it with compassion, and seek out methods for its healthy expression. In many cases, methods that are more internal, or yin, are helpful, such as drawing, painting,

journaling, and so forth. Our creativity and our emotions are deeply linked—they are essentially the same force—and allowing the expression of our emotions through artistic expression allows us to create beauty from our sorrow.

In healthy expression, grief is seen as a dynamic, soul-level force, one that can take your breath away but can also foster creativity and positive and beautiful memories for what is no longer physically available to us.

In unhealthy expression, we get stuck in our grief. We get stuck in the “what if’s,” the wounds created with that person, the lack of closure; in this case, grief is like slamming into the same wall head first again and again. This is unhelpful. As much as grief is a process that should be admired and deeply felt, there is a difference between having a part of ourselves frozen in a state of grief (such as at the time of a loved one’s death) and actively moving through the waves and flows of the grief process.

We may also experience a great degree of sadness or depression without having a specific loss to point to. Patterns of abandonment, not being heard, and of loss on a level that feels pervasive or has always been present can all be experienced.

One of our primary needs is to feel seen and heard, and if we have not experienced this, especially in young childhood, we will feel a certain measure of grief and longing for the love and connection we never properly received. We will continually try to grasp toward others to fill the hole created as a result of not being seen, loved, heard, and appropriately cherished as a young child.

We also can carry grief that has been passed down to us without us consciously realizing it. Family and ancestral patterns of loss and grieving are often energies we inherit, and we may feel considerable grief without knowing why. Working with the percentages in the previous chapter, you



may have also discovered that you have a lot of stockpiled grief, without there being specific reasoning or causative factors that can be logically pointed to.

Although grief can allow us to feel on a deeper level that others may not understand, we cannot simplistically state that feelings like depression, sadness, and emptiness share the same root in each person. Our circumstances and the ways in which we have not been heard, or seen, or felt a part of things can vary considerably. This is why doing work with the body deva is so important. Finding out *your* reasons and patterns of unhealed grief, sadness, and depression can help you heal on an individual level. A whole host of people may state, “If you have depression, you just have to do X, Y, or Z, as all of it comes from the same issue,” but it does not work that way.

Our grief shows us our disconnection from one another on some level. Your level may differ from that of your neighbor, however. For example, your grief may be from parents who didn’t outwardly show love and appreciation for you, while your neighbor’s may be from being abandoned at an early age, and their neighbor’s may be from family patterns tracing back hundreds of years involving men having to leave their families to go to war.

Our emotions may have specific functions, or roles, and may even have similar dynamics (an inner child not being loved or heard to the level that they needed, for example, is an incredibly common pattern), but by being open to understanding and realizing our own reasons for being, however complex and multi-pattern those may be, we can begin to heal long-standing and even the most difficult or complex emotions within ourselves.

*Grief can be healed or utilized in similar fashion to the other emotions, such as through artistic*

*expression. Grief is a yin emotion that can be best expressed by allowing it to have a certain amount of yang energy. What this means is that you need space and time to grieve, cry, and allow it outward expression.*

*In certain spiritual traditions, such as the Dagara of West Africa, circles of mourners or “grief ceremonies” were held so that others could witness and hear the expression of grief. Keening, or public wailing at funerals, was a part of traditional Irish funerals.*

*We tend to stifle grief, so it sits within our systems. Watching a sad movie, witnessing our grief with the body deva, and allowing tears to come can release grief. If grief is too overwhelming, working with someone who can witness your grief in the early stages can be incredibly helpful.*

## Looking for an Outlet

One of the methods of basic awareness we can develop in relation to our emotions is to notice how we frequently look for a target for our unhealed emotions. The easiest way to see this is online, on social media, where we will grasp onto whomever or whatever we can get angry at, or even feel joy or a heart-felt space with.

We may authentically want to cuddle those kittens or be upset with our congressman and whichever celebrity did something newsworthy this week, but we also look for targets for our unhealed emotions when we interact online. We are always seeking to externalize our inner experience, but if we were to heal our internal emotions, we would find ourselves less reactive (or more appropriately reactive) to the outer world.

What this means is that if we are anxious, we will find things to be anxious about. If we are angry, we will find reasons to be angry. Our outer chaos will match our inner chaos. By taking responsibility for our emotions and healing them, we can stop ourselves from engaging with the world in such an unconscious way. Most importantly, we can look at the outer world (and whatever we find ourselves reactive or emotional about) as a signpost pointing to what we still need to work on internally.

This can be worked with by utilizing percentages (how much of that celebrity saying something stupid are you truly angry at?), by noting what emotions arise often for ourselves (our “core” emotion), and by utilizing the body deva to find the source of our emotions and doing inner work on whatever we are outwardly reacting to.

We get used to a certain amount of chaos and emotion in our lives, and will create chaos and emotion at the level we are used to if we are not currently experiencing it.

Working with the body deva will allow you to gradually back away from the simple projections and emotive creations that plague you and become a person who is clearer, calmer, and healthier physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually.

Again, working with this is a simple process of realizing that our reactions often point to unresolved inner experiences or stockpiled emotions. If we can notice when we are projecting and question the motivations behind our judgments, anger, and fear, we can begin to heal the parts of ourselves that we hold separate, that are wounded, and that are deeply afraid, yet yearn to be united with the whole..

A helpful starting point for you to notice what may be unhealed within is to ask yourself simple questions when interacting, online or otherwise, such as:

- What age am I acting? (Is it your current adult age? A teenager? A young child?) If it is someone who is completely unlike you (such as an old man when you are a younger woman), it is likely signifying an archetype, family, or ancestral influence.
- What purpose is behind what I am saying?
  - Is it simply a venting of emotions?
  - Is it to prove that I am superior or better than another?
  - Is it to calmly share my view with others who may also critically think or be able to engage in discussion, or is it to project unhealed emotions?
  - Is what I am feeling toward this person even about the person?

- If it is not about the person, who or what might you be truly angry at, sad about, or fearful of?

It is a deep irony that what we project is often a reflection of what we have unhealed within. If we accuse others of being a specific way, we likely need to work on that very thing ourselves. If we continually seek to prove ourselves superior, we often have a pattern of feeling in some way inferior. If we are accusing others of being stupid, there is likely a part of us that feels stupid, or at the very least a former version of ourselves (an “inner child”) who felt stupid at some point and who could use some healing.

Although things can certainly be a bit more complex, a good place to start and continue working is to notice what we are accusing others of and question our motives when we are interacting. We may really be angry or fearful, but much of what we experience may be the result of the stockpile of past fears and anger we are simply looking to pin on external sources. If we were to reconcile it within, we may still get angry at the outer world, but it is a healthy, adult, and current anger, not skewed by past hurts or beliefs.

## **Working with the Body Deva to Understand and Work with Emotions**

The first phase of working with emotions, or really any pattern, is to bring them into our conscious awareness. If we are not conscious of something, or do not question how and why we may act, believe, or feel the way we do, we will not move on to being open or willing to work on it.

It certainly does take a deal of openness and willingness to heal. We all like to feel that our beliefs and understandings about ourselves and the world are the “truth”; moving away from them means that we may not be

as in control as we believe ourselves to be. Our ideas about who we are and what we hold to be true must change, and the idea that we can transition from someone whose anger explodes on a daily basis to a peaceful individual, or from someone who has an ocean of grief and despair coloring their world to someone who experiences joy or happiness, seems too far fetched for us.

## Working with Emotions

- First, consider an emotion that you would like to work with. For the purposes of this work, I will choose anger as an example.
- Now, get in contact with your body deva. You may also choose to ask your body deva if there is an emotion that you should work with, or may have received insight through previous work that working with anger (or fear, grief, despair, apathy, and so on) would be a good thing to spend time on.
- Ask your body deva to highlight or show you an area of your body where this emotion is being held.
- Do a body scan (feet to head, not forgetting the arms) or sense what areas of your body may seem to be drawing your focus or highlighted for you.
- If there are several areas of your body that show up, ask which area would be important for you to focus on, or to focus on first.
- If no areas of your body show up, you can work with resistance or ask the question, *If I were able to sense anger in my body, where would it be?*
- Sit with this area of your body and note how it feels. Does it feel stuck, tight, heavy, empty, full, or pulling?
  - Do the best you can to feel what this area really feels like to you physically.
- Now, sense the energetics of the area. How big or small is this blockage or emptiness that you are sensing?
  - The size of a tiny point? The size of a baseball? Does it take up the entirety of that area of your body?

- If you are having difficulty, you can always ask the body deva to highlight the area more, or ask it questions about the area to glean more information.
- Now, create a visual for this area of your body and the energy that is being held there:
  - What shape might this energy be?
  - What colors? Dark or light?
  - Sit with this until you have a sense of a visual, realizing that the visual may not be a distinct visual but more of a sense of a ball, or clouds, or something else entirely.
- If you are working with an area that seems empty, you can still work with a visual.
  - How big is the emptiness? Is there anything around the emptiness?

Now that you have a basic sense of the energy and area of your body, you will move on to “speaking” to the body consciousness of the local area:

- Internally inquire why the blockage or emptiness is there.
- Ask what its function may be.
  - Ask it what would happen if it didn’t hold this energy/emotion there.
- Ask what age the energy is from.
  - You may wish to engage in “inner child” work (the next chapter) if it feels appropriate.
- Ask if this energy is fully “yours.”
  - This means from your lifetime and experiences here. If the answer is yes or that the emotion



has always been with you, you may wish to follow up with work in Part Two of this book.

Once you have a basic understanding of what is going on, you will compassionately ask the emotion what it needs to say. One of our primary needs is to be heard, and simply inquiring as to what the anger (or other emotions) have to say can result in profound change.

You will listen to what your anger might have to say in an open and compassionate manner, not looking to chastise or tell this emotion that it is wrong or incorrect. Even if your current, adult, and logical self realizes that it doesn't feel this way, or you don't agree with what is being said, there is a part of you that does. Allowing this part of you to be accessed, heard, and given a "voice" can result in the energies of the area shifting or changing.

You may wish to again have your body deva show you just how large of an impact this emotion is having on you (*Body Deva, heighten this emotion (anger) so that I can feel how this energy creates difficulty for me*). Do not despair if you realize that an emotion is drastically coloring your world or creating quite a bit of difficulty or pain in your physical body. It is by becoming conscious of such things that we can begin to let go of what we have held for so long and come into a healthier relationship with ourselves and the world.

Other options for giving anger or other emotions a voice is to journal, dance, or do artwork or creative work in some capacity. To do this, you would ask the emotion to come forward and "speak" what it has to say. Once you have made it known that you are willing to listen and engage with this energy respectfully and compassionately, it will come forward and release, via simple listening or creative pursuits. You would then paint with the "voice" of anger.

People often incorrectly assume that there is need for catharsis, or that an emotion like anger needs to release through angry explosion. What it needs is to be seen and heard and given an outlet with compassion. By no longer battling this emotion you can begin to develop skills that will allow you to simply listen and deeply hear what this part of yourself has to say. In doing so, you will become more aligned with the essence of the body deva, the health in your system.

You will know that this method is working for you when you return to your body, and your body deva, and look again at the part of the body that was holding the emotion. It should shift or change, growing smaller or thinner or changing shape in some way.

It is important to realize that we do not need to heal all of our bottled-up anger in one day, and it is likely that the protective capacity of our bodies and the wisdom of our body deva will stop us before we attempt to do so. If we have an ocean of grief in our bodies, it is enough to release a bucket. Over time the buckets will accumulate, and our ocean will turn into a small lake, then a pond, and eventually a thimbleful.

The key to this work is to not treat ourselves roughly. We have experienced enough pain and have told our emotions enough times that they are not wanted. Our emotions do not want to be forcibly cast aside, scraped, cleared, or ignored. They want to be heard and understood from a place of compassion.

If distressing or overwhelming emotions or experiences come forward, it can be quite helpful to have an external resource to assist us. An ocean of grief may understandably be too overwhelming for us to deal with, and although I always suggest going slowly, having another human to listen to our grief, anger, fear, and pain and to listen

compassionately can offer further reprieve and insight into our emotions, as well as eventual healing.

Modalities such as Craniosacral Therapy, Hakomi, Somatic Experiencing, Zero Balancing, and Spiritual Healing approach trauma through the body in ways that will integrate well with this work. I suggest finding someone who is certified in their modality, has it as a primary focus in their practice, and has at least five years of fulltime experience in it.

Once you have listened to what your anger or other emotions may have to say, you will say thank you and ask your body deva if some of the energy held in this area would dissipate, change, or shift. You are not doing this forcefully, or commanding; it is simply an opportunity for realization on the part of your body-mind that it is time for the ocean of grief to become a river, and for your body deva to facilitate that happening.

In most cases there will be some shift, or there will be shifts that have already occurred simply by asking or recognizing that your body is carrying an emotion in a specific body part. If there is not, it simply means that more work needs to be done, or that the process in this area may be more gradual for you.

## **Looking at our Reactivity in the World**

We are continually looking to project our inner emotions onto the world and the people in it. We externalize our emotions and then project them onto others as we lack the skills or awareness to take care of them inwardly. We are continually showing one another our pain and what lies unhealed within us. We are also looking to place people into unhealed loops or roles that we have developed for them; for example, if you have an unhealed relationship with your father, you are likely placing the men in your life in a

“father” role, seeking from them what you did not receive from your own father.

In this situation, you are likely also placing a lot of energy and emotion on the target of your projection. They may be similarly projecting the unhealed wounds of their father or mother onto you, and both of you may then enter a relationship of enacting the same unhealed “looped” energies again and again. Simply put, you may be unconsciously replaying your relationship with your parents in your adult relationships, whatever that relationship may be. Both parties in this situation are then using one another to fulfill different roles, “loops,” or unhealed material.

At its best, this relationship can allow both parties to heal, to “unfreeze” what is frozen within them, and transcend this type of looping. At its worst, both parties simply loop or reenact the unhealed traumas they have within them, without any type of awareness.

If we have a stockpile of anger within us, our system is continually looking for ways to engage with this anger to release and heal it. Unfortunately what arise are simply situations in which we can get angry, or do get angry, without the inner reconciling or proper release of the inner emotion that is looking for healing. We lack the proper tools and consciousness to recognize how we may be projecting onto the world and the people in it. By doing this work you can begin the process of releasing the inner experiences and patterns (the “loops”) so you are no longer continually enacting them in the outer world.

You can begin to take personal responsibility for your emotions and understand what is truly making you angry, grief-stricken, or fearful. One of the ways this work can be done is by acknowledging what or who is creating emotion within you that is appearing in the outer world—what is causing not just temporary annoyance or anger but causes

you to still be thinking about it and reactive hours, days, even months later. This may be a person or an event you are connecting with to serve as an outlet for your inner stockpiled emotions.

A typical response to this information is that there are things in the outer world (people and events) that should make us angry, or afraid, or create grief within us (as well as joy and bliss and pleasure). This is true, and with emotional intelligence we can deeply grieve and feel anger or fear in a way that is appropriate for the situation. But by questioning what we may react to in the outer world and utilizing it as a catalyst for our own process, we can utilize the outer world (and the people in it) as a part of our inner work.

This means noticing the themes or types of people creating a reaction within us. Do we get angry at abuses of power? Do we experience soul-crushing depression when we see an animal getting hurt or abused? What do we accuse other people of? What we accuse others of is typically something repressed and unhealed within ourselves. What we feel the need to continually prove to others shows what we need to prove to ourselves.

Sometimes, situations are not terribly complex. For example, many people get upset about the latest celebrity happening because it allows them to vent their emotions (and have a target to do so). We really don't inwardly care too much about what a celebrity does with their love life, or what outfit the latest celebrity is wearing; celebrities, corporations, and the events on the news give us a "safe" target to vent our backlogged emotions and allow us to go numb or look away from our inner experiences.

So notice what you are connecting with when emotions arise. What percentage of you is truly currently upset at the situation? What percentage may be from backlogged emotions? Ask yourself the following questions:

- If you were to picture a line going from the “target” into your own body, where would it go?
  - This target may be a person, your computer, or even a specific post online.
  - If you cannot visualize or sense this, ask the body deva to highlight or show you the part of your body this “line” connects to.
- What emotion is involved here?
- What pattern or situation is involved here?
  - You may not know the first time that you question this, but over time this question will reveal the patterning behind what you are reacting to.
  - For example, you may always react with anger when someone is not faithful to their partner. With observation of this pattern you may realize that the pattern is about how your parents interacted when you were young.
  - You may also find yourself fearful any time the news reports something. Tracking this fear within yourself can allow you to heal what fear is there that may be watching the news to enact this continual fear state within yourself.
- What are you accusing others of?
  - This will reveal something unhealed within yourself. This may not be direct—when reacting to animal abuse you are likely not an animal abuser, and much of what you feel may be pure emotion that is appropriate for the situation. But you may find an inner hurt portion of yourself in relation to this reaction. For example, your inner six-year-old may be quite hurt at seeing animal abuse. While the adult

you is certainly upset as well, this points to your inner six-year-old needing some healing.

- This also may be very direct, such as accusing others of not being “real” or lacking power or femininity or masculinity.
- What do you hate or seek separation from in the outer world?
  - The experience of hatred always points to something within us that needs to be healed. Chances are that hatred has been passed down and you are enacting it without much thought.
  - There also may be a pattern of hating something you hate within yourself, such as individuals who denounce gay marriage as immoral and then are found to be having same sex affairs.
  - It is perfectly fine to disagree with things, but if we truly hate something, or consider ourselves separate or superior from one another (whether by religion, socioeconomic class, race, location, and so forth), it points to something within us that could be healed.

By using our outer experiences of the world and noting our emotional reactions, we will have a considerable amount of information to put on our “to heal” list. You can use the emotions and questioning above, noting what you are reactive to and beginning to question why, in order to find something unhealed within yourself.

- When you ask the body deva to show you where you are holding what you are outwardly reactive to, you will again move to the questioning of that part of your body.
- Find the shape, energy, and color, and where they fit in your body.

- Ask this part of your body to clarify what the pattern is here. Basically, you are asking why you may be reactive to this outer experience.
- Ask what emotion is held in this area.
- Ask this part of your body what the *core wound* is. Our “core wound” is our reason for why we carry this energy. What may emerge is a belief (*I am not good enough*) or even an understanding that was passed down to us (*I was taught to hate people different from me*), but most likely it is an emotion that stems from our lives here (for which we can do inner children work with), our ancestry, family, culture, or even past lives.
- You may now choose to go on to the appropriate work for this situation (such as work with an inner child) for a more complete healing.
- To do so you would begin asking this area of your body questions like:
  - What age is this from?
  - Is this from my family?
  - Mother, father, or grandparents?
  - Is this from my ancestry?
  - Is this from a past life?
  - Is this from my culture?
  - Is this from my in utero experience?

When working with our body deva, either as a whole or with the individual consciousness of a body part, we may get a straight answer, such as, *Yes, this is from your mother*, upon asking about family patterns. Most of the time we do not get such a clear reply, or since we are complex individuals with the possibility of multiple patterns or needs for healing, we may find multiple “yes” answers.



The clearest response is through pacing and pausing and noting how that area of your body responds. There should be a sense of something happening in that area of your body (either release, a sense of heightened energy, or even a temporary increase in discomfort) if you find the correct response.

You can look in the back of the book to tie all of this questioning together. For now, though, know that even acknowledging and sitting with what you see in the outer world, and what emotions you experience in reaction to it, can be traced back into your body to the places where emotions and beliefs are held.

In this way you can look at the outer world as “fuel” for your healing process. You can actually get to a point where you express gratitude for those who have inspired something unhealed within you to arise, as they are showing you something that you can work on in yourself in order to become more cleared, whole, and healed in your life.

You may choose to “talk to your body,” using the tools in the previous chapter, to see if some of the held emotions and energy will release. Ask for understanding, for knowledge about what you are reacting to, for the emotions involved. If tracked back to your own body, you should be able to work with your body deva, as well as the individual body part, to establish why that energy is there and what it might want to say.

After it does so, you can ask about the *belief systems* involved. In our unhealed states, we carry restrictive beliefs about ourselves and the nature of the world and the people in it. We will get more into this concept in later chapters, but it is good practice to start by simply asking if there are any beliefs about yourself, the nature of the world, or the nature

of people (or specifically men or women) that are associated with this held energy.

You may choose to go on to the more advanced work or may simply ask for a release or shift of some of that held energy. Ask what your body needs in order to feel comfortable releasing some, or all, of this held energy. Always ask if there is something that you need to do to take action in the outer world to clear this energy. And remember, it is a negotiation process not a command.

## **Our Tornado of Chaos**

We get habituated to the amount of stress and chaos around us. This chaos is like a tornado circling us. We get so used to its presence that we actually create chaos in our lives to allow this cyclone to remain at the same level of intensity. It's important to understand this concept: we create chaos, emotion, and circumstances in our outer world to keep this tornado spinning at the same intensity or magnitude.

We may not realize how much difficulty and hardship we create for ourselves as a result of the old beliefs, patterns, emotions, and wounds we carry. It is only by stepping away from them, healing, and gaining perspective that this understanding typically forms. We may feel grief or anger toward ourselves for the amount of hardship such wounding or beliefs created and how we have perpetuated our personal tornado.

We can step away from this tornado. We can step into our midline and communicate with our body deva, asking it to show us the cyclone that surrounds us. We can then draw or simply sit with whatever sense of this comes up, noting the basic characteristics of our personal tornado.

When you step into your midline (by focusing on the energy that flows through it) or sit with your body deva, you are in a place of calm and stillness. It offers perspective, or a step or two away from this tornado.

When we heal, this cyclone should slow down, become less substantial, and our lives will generally become less chaotic. This does not mean that we will have nothing difficult ever happen in our existence ever again, or will no longer suffer the slings and arrows of the naturally tumultuous nature of being a human. It does mean that we can develop a certain perspective on our tornado, and step

away from creating more chaos simply because we are used to it being there in our lives.

Understanding this concept and asking your body deva to show you your tornado while you are in your midline will allow you to get a gradual sense of it. Once we become aware of such things we naturally engage with them. In addition to the other work that is being done throughout this book, the “tornado” is a good indicator of how much healing work we may have left to do within ourselves. Healed people generally radiate a sense of peace, calm, and stillness, and have stepped away from the cycle of engaging with the “cyclone” to create more difficulty than is necessary for themselves.



## The tornado of chaos

### **Samantha**

Samantha came to me because she felt constricted in her throat. A mind-body practitioner herself, she thought that it was because she was not connected to her creativity and that her throat chakra was blocked. She recognized an element of grief, and wanted to explore that emotion.

She discovered that her grief was being held in her throat, chest, and head. When she asked her body deva which she should work with first, her body highlighted her thyroid. When she focused on her thyroid, she saw that it was like a walnut, a protective “nut” outside but a sense of emptiness in the middle.

She asked this walnut about the grief. The response was that she carried a lot of grief about wanting to be an artist but not feeling good enough to really show her artwork to the world. She had an underlying fear that in some way she may be attacked or hurt by showing her artwork.

With further inquiry, she found that this emotion of grief came from her childhood, and that while she frequently had paintings and drawings up in her school and was commended on her artistic ability, her father was never interested in her artwork. Like most children, she really wanted to be seen and heard by both her parents, and his dismissal and disinterest led her to believe that she was worthless, as her artwork was an extension of who she really was.

After this realization she felt the “walnut” change into a lump in her throat, the accumulated grief from this and other experiences. She asked if it was willing to change or shift, and it changed into a smaller lump. She asked her body deva about what was left, and it said that she needed to physically connect back to her creativity again. She began painting, each time tapping into her grief to allow it expression, and over time the grief lessened and disappeared. She found herself more willing to be seen in her job, in her relationship, and with her family.

# CHAPTER FOUR

## Working with Inner Children

**W**e like to think of ourselves as one congruent identity, one Self. Whether we are a forty-five-year-old businessman, a twenty-year-old college student or a seventy-year-old retiree, what we think of ourselves is based on what we are currently doing and who we believe ourselves to be.

If we return to the example of trauma and overwhelm offered at the beginning of this book, we may begin to realize that we are not just one Self; we are composed of many different selves. These parts of ourselves are frozen in time in an unhealed state, constantly looping or repeating their wounds, hoping that they will one day be heard and healed. We also will explore our natural “selves” (different aspects of our personality) in a later chapter.

We may have twenty six-year-olds within us, or many different aspects of Self all along our personal timeline. By offering these parts of ourselves from a younger age the closure and healing they need, they can “unfreeze” and we will no longer find ourselves “looping” or reacting from the place of this unhealed part of ourselves. We will also find that the beliefs of that six-year-old, once they have been healed and integrated, have disappeared and no longer affect our lives as they once did.

To offer a simple example, I will say that if we were a six-year-old whose parents divorced, we likely had a limited capacity to deal with that situation. We were six, with the intellect and understanding level of a six-year-old. This six-year-old was not able to process the emotions and

experiences of that divorce. The body deva then sectioned off, or separated, this part of ourselves in our physical body. The body consciousness does this so that we can move on with our lives reasonably intact, but a part of us is frozen at that age, with the emotions and unprocessed overwhelm still located within us.

That six-year-old may be angry, unsure of what is going on, and has relied on sweets to self-soothe. We may now be thirty years old, but there is still a part of ourselves that is six, with the beliefs, traumas, and other unhealed and overwhelming material still informing our thirty-year-old self. Every time we run across a situation that triggers the wounds of the six-year-old we revert to being six and run to sweets to self-soothe. We may feel a part of us is confused and unclear about relationships, or that our relationships fail because we hold the belief that “all men or women cheat” (if this was what precipitated the divorce). Or we may feel immense grief, or anger, and in our current lives there is limited reason for us to feel this way.

If we work with this “inner child,” the part of ourselves sectioned off by our body deva, we can release the anger, pain, and beliefs that were created out of this situation, and our body deva can allow it to be a part of us again. We may find ourselves experiencing less pain and more sensation in the area of the body where our “six-year-old” was once sectioned off, if we heal this inner child in full or in part. We may also find that the needs of that six-year-old (the craving for sweets) disappears or at the very least recedes into the background a bit.

We are also likely to find that we no longer “loop”—no longer revert to acting like a six-year-old and acting out their pain and limited resources (reaching for sweets and getting angry) every time their pain, or something reminding them of the original situation, occurs. This is because the six-year-old is no longer frozen, “looping” and



in need of healing; they are simply an integrated aspect of our adult selves now.

The wonderful part of doing this work is that it is not a logical or scientific process. The point is not the story, or the endless mental recitation of conscious memories, but of becoming conscious of what lies within, acknowledging the “loop” (or understanding how this unhealed self and their beliefs affect us in our present-day reality), offering compassion, then releasing the beliefs and emotions so that the part of us that has separated can become healed and part of an integrated, healthy whole.

In traditional therapies or even mind-body work, we might begin to work with our inner children by consciously picking a time or experience that we know has impacted us. This may provide a great deal of healing for us, or be necessary in our process. But when we “freeze,” or section off parts of ourselves, we may not consciously remember them. By communicating with the body deva we can find these parts of ourselves that are below (or deeper) than our conscious recollection.

It does take a bit of an open mind as well as willingness to move beyond the mental and logical. We construct our lives and experiences through story, and culturally we are taught that certain variables must be present for something to be “true” or “valid.” While I understand that mentality, I would encourage anyone to simply do their body scan, draw out their body map, then do this work with an open mind. It is by seeing the impact of this work on a personal level that it can be appreciated more readily.

This work can turn into endless mental gymnastics, or be focused solely on the mental realm, if the work is not done through the physical body in conjunction with the body deva. The focus here is not on mental story, but on shifts in the body, a shift in beliefs, and changes in the body map, as

well as the visuals and “felt senses,” or what we feel in our bodies, that have emerged. This is always paired with the ability to be compassionate toward ourselves. Working in this manner will allow you to be more successful with some of the more “spiritual” work, such as working with past lives, or very young aspects of self.

Although this work is intended for your inner child, it really is best to begin with inner children who are out of infancy (age two and up), and can be done even for parts of ourselves that are in a teenager and adult state. States prior to the age of two require more experience and much more reliance on a relationship with the consciousness of the body, so it is often best to work with situations related to older inner children.

Generally, it is best that we have a bit of time and space to reflect clearly, so events and “inner children” at least five years prior to your current age are suggested. More recent events are often still being processed, and can often be worked with utilizing the “talking to your body” or the basic “body deva” questioning.

This work is fairly straightforward, but it likely needs to be done multiple times, even with the same age range. What this means is that we may have four parts of ourselves that have “frozen” from the age of six, either from the same event, or due to different events and experiences from that age.

Although it is rather clichéd at this point, the metaphor of healing being like peeling an onion is always apt. We may be willing to work with our inner four-year-old’s anger about life experiences she cannot understand, but once that anger is healed, that same four-year-old may now be filled with despair from the same event. We may find that we have multiple parts of ourselves frozen at the age of four. We, again, are complex beings with complex reasons for our

imbalances. Having compassion and being willing to work with an inner child, even if it is multiple times, is going to provide the best results.

## **How to Work with Your Inner Children: Part One**

Although you can pick an event or age that sticks out in your mind, I caution against it. It is best in this work to be intuitive, and to flex your intuitive (rather than mental) muscles here. If we allow our intuition, or sense of knowing, to emerge, even if we feel a bit silly or lack confidence while doing it, it is highly likely that different, or new, information will be received. Our mentally and intellectually based minds may believe that our anger is coming from a specific age. Working with that age may be very fruitful, but when you go in with an open mind you may find an inner surly teenager instead of an inner angry six-year-old, and working with that teenager would provide the most healing, or the healing that you need right now.

One of the things I hear from people who are just starting this work is worry that they will be wrong. While it is more likely at the beginning that you may self-create, or come up with ages and experiences that you already are aware of, with experience you will come to a more trusting place. While I cannot say that it does not matter if you self-create something, what I will say is that in the healing process what matters is resonance and results. Resonance means that the information that comes up for you feels right in some way to you and your body deva. Even if it is something odd, unexpected, or off the wall, it should somehow ring the bell of truth for you or garner a response, such as a shift in energy or heightened energetic response, from your body. If it doesn't, it is an indication to inquire a bit further.

By results, of course, I mean that what comes up, what shifts, and what you realize has an impact on your daily life and how you lead it. Becoming more whole and healed (which this work does, or will do) should allow you to become more grounded, more functional in your daily life, and feel better physically, mentally, and emotionally. In some way, your “load” should feel lightened. After this work, it is likely that your body map will feel more filled in and you will feel more embodied. All of these are signs of what this sort of work can do for you, and signify that you are on the right track.

For most people, if they do make up things, they simply will not see changes in their daily reality, how they react to things, and the area where they were sensing an imbalance in their physical body will retain the exact same physical sensations as well as visuals as it did before. A small percentage of the population uses work like this to further disassociate or create chaos for themselves. While I do not dismiss this occurring, it tends to occur in people who are not in a stable enough place for solo inward exploration, and in those who are creating mentally rather than engaging with their body deva.

Most commonly, as noted in the previous chapter, people will start working with a body part and realize that what is held there is from an inner child. You may also choose to engage your body deva and set the intention of working with an inner child, and then perform a body scan to see which area, or areas, of your body are highlighted for you. If multiple areas emerge you would ask which area is most important to work with, or to work with first and follow that guidance. How to fully incorporate inner child work with the rest of the body deva protocol is discussed in later on, in the chapter the Tying Things Together.

To begin, you will start with the intention of finding where this inner child is held within your physical form. If

you already are working with a body part and an inner child comes up, you can skip this step. You will then assess the physical and energetic aspects of the space in your physical body where the energy of this inner child is held. This is always done in this protocol to ensure that it is body-focused, as well as to create a baseline understanding of how things are held and how they shift through the physical form.

For simplicity, I will be utilizing “she” for the rest of the exercise:

- Sit with this age for a moment and ask your body deva to show you a picture of yourself from that age.
- Again, if you do not have strong visual capacities, ask, *If I could sense myself at that age, what would be emerging?*
- Notice what she is wearing, what she might look like.
- Now sense where she is. Where is she located? What is going on around her? What is happening to her?
- You do not need an extensive story or narration here. Get the basics about what is going on so you can now get a sense of what may be distressing, overwhelming, or traumatizing for this child.
- Through sitting with this inner child, you should get information about what sort of trauma or overwhelming experiences happened that caused her to “freeze,” or separate.
- If it is too much to focus directly on your inner child, you can always visualize your inner child and then ask your body deva to relate to you what is going on.
- You can also picture a blank television or projector, and when you turn it on, it will be a scene of your inner child and what they are experiencing. This allows a certain

degree of separation if what is arising seems overwhelming to your current self.

- What is helpful is a basic idea of what is going on with her, what she perceives as too overwhelming or difficult to deal with, and the basic emotions that may be involved.
- A good indicator for this is to feel what emotions you are currently feeling as this part of you arises.
- You may also find beliefs or understandings arising that are coming from this inner child.

You are welcome to stop here. Simply allowing this inner child to come forward is healing in and of itself. It will also allow you to become more conscious of when in your daily life this inner child and her unhealed needs, or “loops” (repeated behaviors coming from being unhealed), are coming forward.

When we are under stress or emotional in our current adult lives, we tend to activate, or energize, these unhealed inner children. When we get angry, we may revert to being a sullen teenager. When we feel out of control, we may revert to being a two-year-old who really wants her mommy. Inquiring how old we are when we feel emotional or “wounded” in our daily lives can give us an excellent indication of what sort of inner children we have lurking within.

If you are ready to work with your inner child in a healing capacity, you can continue with the exercise.

- Now, you will ask her directly (as if speaking with her internally), or ask your body deva, what she needs to be healed.
- Your body deva will offer a healed, conscious perspective; your inner child will offer a wounded

perspective. Both are valid ways to gain information, but if you are open to it, I would suggest directly engaging with the child, as the need to be seen and heard is deeply healing.

- Among other reasons, we tend to protect ourselves and divide ourselves out of fear.
- What would she need to get over that fear?
- What would she need in order to feel safe?
- What or who would protect her?
- Now ask her, what would happen if she received what she truly needed?
- Offer that to her, and visualize her receiving it.

Often in the case of needing protection, needing to be listened to, or seen or nurtured appropriately (all of which are very common inner child reasons for splitting off), there may not be a good person at that time who can provide that for us. The best way to get around this is to offer (if you are willing) to be that resource for your inner child as an adult. Offer to listen, to hear, to give her protection, or to nurture her. Just the simple offering will be immensely healing for this inner child.

Your inner child may only be willing to accept a bit of healing. She may not be willing to get rid of all her anger or pain. This is perfectly acceptable, and in fact, is how we heal—through gradual work. Do not force her to heal, or to do anything that she is not ready to do. Much like our adult selves, we do things when we are ready to do them. Remembering that just by acknowledging the existence of such patterns in our body, of our inner children, you will allow a natural healing process to occur.

When it feels right, you will ask her to release as much (fear, anger, overwhelm, or other emotions) as she feels ready to let go. Some people find that it helps to visualize a

white or other light color coming into their inner child to support and take away the anger or pain she is experiencing.

If your inner child is healed, they will disappear. You will no longer notice them. If you still are noticing them, it just means that there is more work to be done. Ask her what else she needs, then offer it to her. Allow her to speak, be heard, and get her basic needs met.

It may be that you cannot heal this inner child in one day. It is good practice to intuitively sense if the work for the day feels complete (even if your inner child still seems angry, sad, or overwhelmed), or ask your body deva if the work for the day is done.

## **Healing Inner Children: Part Two**

Once you have the basics down, it is time to more fully question what sort of beliefs or understandings were created from the situation. Trauma always creates beliefs: about ourselves, the nature of the world, or our relationship to people in the world. Visualizations can be deeply healing, but it is by questioning our deeply held beliefs (or beliefs that were created by the experience our inner child had) and offering that inner child safety, compassionate listening, and whatever they need that we create the bridge that heals our physical body, mind, emotions, energy, and spirit simultaneously.

To start, you will return to the basic body scan and the “talking to your body” work in the previous chapter. While talking to your body, it may arise that what you have energetically blocking or creating imbalance in this area of your body is an inner child, or an experience from an earlier age. The more you do this work, the more clearly and accurately that information will naturally emerge.



It is always wonderful to start this work with a check-in with the body deva. Feeling into your body deva, whether through outer visualization, felt sensation in your body, or energetically tapping in (through your midline or where your body deva is located in your body) will allow the body deva to be a trusted ally in this process.

You will then do a simple body scan, or you may choose a part of your body that on your body map seems out of balance. You may also choose an area that is consciously painful for you, or state specifically that you wish to find an area that holds an inner child pattern. In an advanced capacity, I like to check in with my body deva and simply ask it to choose—to highlight or otherwise draw my attention to the area of my body that I should be working with today.

Once you have chosen a body part, you will utilize the “talking to your body skills” to find out the basics of what is going on with it. However, you may begin to get a sense that something deeper is going on with that area. Perhaps it is an area that has been troublesome for some time, or has significant imbalance. Or maybe it is an area that has not responded well to any sort of healing, either allopathic or holistic. You may also wish to bring up the idea of questioning if there is an inner child component to the body part to see what the response is.

You will simply ask this body part if it is holding an inner child experience. Ideally, you will get the sense of a “yes,” or an inner sense of resonance (a feeling or shift in your physical body) that tells you that this area of your body holds energy from your past experiences in this world.

You would then continue by asking what age this experience is from. The good part about first bringing the body deva online is that if the knee (or liver or other body part you are working with) is unclear, or you are not

receiving an answer, you can ask your body deva what age is being held in the body part.

You will likely receive an age (an approximate age is fine at first). You will then visualize her, feel into what was going on at that age, and what might have been overwhelming or traumatic for her. Find out the basics of what was going on, what emotions were created, and what she may need to heal or feel better.

You will now add on a few additional steps. Understanding and allowing our inner children to be heard and visualizing what they need can be deeply healing, but we need to understand that trauma and overwhelm alter the way we see and experience the world. We change what we think about ourselves and about the nature of the world (or the nature of people) because of these experiences of overwhelm or trauma.

You will want to ask your inner child directly what beliefs were created out of this experience:

- How did she think differently about herself?
- How did she think about people in general?
- How did she think about men (or women)?
- What did she now know to be true about herself?
- What did she need to do to protect herself from this happening again?

While not all of these questions need to be asked, it certainly can be helpful to ask them all and see which ones have resonance. A few may not make sense, depending on your inner child and their experiences. But as a result of our overwhelming experiences, emotions, and traumas, we wind up wounded—wounds that are deep, and emotionally based. As a reaction, we create protection around the wound (and

our body deva sections it off, much like our body tries to do with physical infections). We then create beliefs and understandings about who we are and what the world (and the people in it) are like in response to these wounded parts of ourselves. This is the lens through which we experience our life then.

When we understand our beliefs and where they come from, an incredible amount of healing can occur, and our beliefs can shift or change in ways we likely never thought possible. As a result, our experiences of the world will change.

As part of this release process, it is often important to take personal responsibility for the beliefs that are arising. Acknowledge that you still hold the beliefs or understandings that the inner child is relating to you, and take the time to reflect on your conscious awareness of this belief and how it still affects you in your current, adult life.

You will then tell your knee (or the body part you are working with) that you are no longer six (or whatever age you are working with) and that it no longer needs to hold the experiences, memories, and beliefs of this six-year-old. You will also now want to ask the body part to change or shift in relation to the processing that has happened, even if the inner child has not fully disappeared. Ask the body deva to integrate the work—to change or shift the body as a whole in relation to the release that was experienced. If it feels appropriate, you can end by saying thank you to both your body deva and your inner child for working with you.

It is typical for emotions and memories to come up during and after working with your inner child. Realizing that emotions, memories, and even thoughts that arise are coming up because they are releasing and healing helps your body and mind to understand that what you are experiencing is not current.

If difficult experiences and memories emerge, finding someone to talk to can be an important part of the process. Do not be afraid to reach out for support, as friends, groups, or healers of all stripes can help us work through heavy or difficult energies if they arise, as well as provide clarity or an outside perspective on our process.

If you are looking to work with something that is less location specific, such as understanding your fatigue, all-over body pain, or a specific emotion, start with that intention (*I ask that my body deva help with my fatigue*) and then ask your body deva to highlight or show you where in your body this fatigue is being held.

You may see or sense many places, but you could then ask what would be most important to start with, or you may sense one place that really draws your focus or attention above all others. It is often helpful to ask for the linchpin, or fulcrum, if you are working with a pattern that seems fairly large or is located in many spots.

Similarly, you may start out with a specific age or experience you wish to work with. You would then recall that time (for example, when you were picked on in the high school cafeteria) and inquire where in your body that experience was held.

## **The Concept of Micro-Trauma**

In many ways, it is quite a bit easier to start out with the “big fish,” so to speak. We may have experiences come up that were a singular trauma. For example, at our tenth birthday party we only had one other friend come over (when we invited the whole class).

These singular experiences are often what come up first when working with our inner children. However, we may find that what is emerging is something that was experienced over a long time period, or at a variety of ages. Many people

deal with trauma that took place over a period of time: being molested, violence or drug addiction in the home, not having enough to eat when growing up due to living in a single-parent household. Between the ages of fifteen and forty, we may have had a depressed parent who had an impact on us, or we may have grown up with the sense that our sister was the “perfect” one or the “favorite” in our parents’ eyes.

Certainly, singular experiences can emerge from events that happen over time, but “micro-trauma,” or seemingly small (or sometimes large) events that take place over a period of time, may create an inner child who does not seem to have a singular, large experience of trauma but needs healing just the same.

In this case, you would find that your mind cannot settle on a single age, or there may be a layer of confusion or lack of a strong visual or age that emerges for you. You would ask a symbolic inner child to step forward—basically, a speaker for the events that happened between the ages of twelve and eighteen—and then go about the work as usual, asking what they need to feel whole, what they need to express, what beliefs emerged, and finding where that energy has isolated or blocked itself in your body.

## **Richard**

Richard initially came to me with a lot of pain in his mid-back area. He had visited a number of doctors, an acupuncturist, and several massage therapists seeking relief. While he did find relief through those methods, his pain always came back a few days later. He went through further tests and found out that his pain corresponded to his gallbladder and began to cut out foods from his diet that were high in fat and grease. When he focused on the pain, he found that it was like a rope burn and brought up the emotion of grief. He focused on his gallbladder and asked if it was an inner child pattern. His gallbladder replied yes, and so he proceeded. When he asked what age the inner child was, he was told that the child was age fourteen. He visualized himself at a school dance. He had gone there with a girl, but she had ended up dancing with another boy. He asked what the fourteen-year-old needed, and he replied that he wanted to be seen

and liked. Richard then asked what beliefs were created, and heard the reply that nobody liked him, or ever would.

Upon hearing this, he realized that a deeper pattern was emerging. He visualized his fourteen-year-old getting what he needed but realized that what he was hearing were the words of his father telling his mother that she was worthless. He remembered being eight and feeling helpless that he couldn't do anything to protect his mother from his abusive father.

He clearly saw this eight-year-old crouching in the corner of his living room, trying to keep out of his father's way. At first, a surge of anger came up in him, but he asked what his inner eight-year-old wanted, and the child said that he wanted everyone to be okay and get along.

Richard felt a lot of resistance to this. He visualized his resistance and worked with it. He began to realize that there was a part of him that didn't want his father to be okay and realized that his current adult self was preventing his inner eight-year-old from receiving healing. He worked step by step with his resistance over a few sessions, beginning to ask his body to release the emotions that it held, and gradually felt decreasing pain as well as emotions in his diaphragm. He then was able to move forward with allowing the inner child to receive what he needed.

As Richard was doing this work, he noticed that his outer world was changing. He had previously kept to himself, as he figured that nobody liked him or wanted him around, but colleagues were now talking to him more at work, and he began to realize that his inner child was preventing him from seeing the world clearly and that people could like him.

Gradually, his inner child healed, releasing layers of anger and pain and fear. Richard patiently saw this through. He found that he no longer had pain in his body, related better to others, and that while he still had to watch his diet, he could (occasionally) eat a deep-dish pizza or burger without pain.

## **Monica**

Monica grew up in a single-parent household in which she was left alone for long periods of time. She is stable and holds a full-time job, but still recalls standing in line for government cheese and the summer days she needed to stay inside because her neighborhood was too unsafe for her to go to the playground.

Monica specifically wanted to work with this part of herself because she never felt like she was really an adult. She described feeling like an imposter, and thought that any day now someone was going to come and take everything away from her and she would be back in the neighborhood she grew up in.

With this intention, she asked her body deva to show her where this energy was being held. It took up her entire abdomen and looked like an empty hole on her body map. Since this was something that spanned fifteen years, Monica asked for a representative of her inner child to step forward. This inner child desperately wanted to know that everything was going to be okay, that she

would have enough food to eat, and lived in fear that her brother and mother would be harmed or taken away from her due to violence.

Her inner child was unable to express these needs because she didn't want to be a burden on her mother, who was already struggling with so much. The inner child expressed her pain to adult Monica and started to feel better. Monica offered her some care, attention, and a calm green light to help her feel better. Monica then asked about beliefs. There were a few, but the largest was a fear that what little she had could be taken away from her. Monica began to see how this belief impacted her life, and she realized that she was enacting a "loop," in which she would buy things and then return them because she didn't feel worthy of them.

Monica asked her inner child what it needed to heal this loop and release the fear, and her inner child stated that she wanted to play outside safely in the sun with her brother and mother and feel their love for her. After doing this, the inner child was no longer visible, and the hole in her abdomen went from being basketball size to the size of a golf ball.

# **Part Two**



# Intermediate and Advanced Work

In Part Two, we will work with more intermediate and advanced concepts and patterns. It is helpful to have a solid grounding in the methods in Part One before moving on to the work offered in the following chapters. This is because we often need to clear some of our own “baggage” (held energy) in order to be able to see how other patterns are affecting us.

I understand that people may not believe in some of these concepts. Do not allow this to deter you; incredible healing can come from working with your inner child as well as the consciousness of your body. You can simply read through the information if you are curious, or disregard some of these chapters if necessary.

I do encourage an open mind, and at least a willingness to hear from the wisdom of your body deva if something such as a past life arises, even if it does not fit with your current cosmology. Even if you need to view a past life as an archetypal force or metaphor, it will still result in the same changes in the body map, difference of feeling or sensation in the body part, or change in the visual of the held energy in that part of the body, even if you are not consciously on board with the notions of past lives, or that your experience in utero can affect who and what you are today.

So my general advice is to work with what you are ready for. It's best to explore the work in this section in an open way (for example, if you do not feel that your family

has affected you, simply ask yourself something like, *If I could sense a family pattern within me, what would I sense?*). We tend to block ourselves from gaining new understandings and realizations, so it can be helpful to approach healing work not only with openness but pragmatism and logic. No matter how far you are along on your healing path, there is always more work to do and more to learn about yourself and the universe as a whole. Being open and curious will take you far in your quest for personal healing and evolution.

When approaching spiritual patterns, many of us may tend to throw the proverbial baby out with the bathwater—to not take responsibility for our emotions and experiences by simply designating them as a “past life” or “ancestral.” In this work, you will realize not only the past life or ancestral influence or pattern but also how you embody such energies in your current life. By understanding how these energies originated but also how you have taken them on and added to them in your present lifetime, you can heal both the “root” and “branch.” This will allow for full healing of such patterns.

# CHAPTER FIVE

## Working with Contracts

Just as we may have made written or oral agreements with our work, landlords, or others, we are continually energetically engaged in the creation of agreements with ourselves and others. The difference with an energetic contract is that they are primarily subconscious—we are not fully conscious when taking on a contract that we are shifting our beliefs and perceptions as well as our identity and outer reality.

An energetic contract is an agreement that results in a change of perception or a taking on of roles or responsibilities. For example, if a young woman grew up in a household that was chaotic and with a mother who was unable to deal with her emotions, that young woman likely created a contract around being a peacekeeper for the household or taking care of her mother. A child who grew up as the eldest in the household may create a similar contract. Similarly, that young woman may make a *reactive contract* about not becoming her mother, not having children, treating children to a different home environment than she had, or not having children before she is ready to.

A young male may have grown up in a household with an angry, abusive alcoholic of a father who continually told him to “man up.” This could result in a contract in which this young male becomes an angry, wounded male whose priority is to achieve a certain level of machismo. It could also result in a reactive contract in which he moves away from anything that would be considered “manning up” and publicly denounces the culture that created the need for

men to do so. In a healthy and healed way, this man may become an advocate for what a healthy and vital male could be. Since this contract was created in relation to specific trauma and interpersonal relationships, those will need to be released for this male to get to this place of health.

We are very influenced by the perceptions of others, especially when we are growing up and forming our basic identity. However, we can form contracts at any time. Our openness to the opinions, insights, and values of friends, loved ones, and authority figures plays into many contracts that we have taken on. Some of them can be deep and soul wrenching, such as contracts that we have made to become the exact opposite of a parent, and some of them may seem surprising or even silly.

When I was doing this work I found a contract based on my junior high school teacher telling me that I wasn't good at math, and that I was lucky that I was good at art. Before this point I had a math teacher who I enjoyed and who told me that I was one of the best in his class, and he was sorry that I was moving (I moved and changed schools at that age). I took on the "contract" or belief that I was no good at math, and this followed me for many years.

This was not a huge or impactful contract, as some can be, but it still needed to heal because it was creating a change in the way I perceived myself and causing me to be reactive, both about my abilities in math and my identity as an artist. There was no reason for me to have that one authority figure (the teacher) define my reality or who I was. Although I am still not a mathematician of any caliber, the release of that contract resulted in the releasing of the belief that *I was lucky to be good at art because I am no mathematician.*

So let's take a step back and talk about what a contract is in specific terms:

- A belief or understanding about yourself or the world that you have created over the course of your lifetime in reaction to specific events.
- A belief or understanding that has been given to you by another, frequently important person in your life (such as a parent telling their child that they are stupid, or a lover telling their partner that they will never find someone as good as them).
- A belief or understanding that has been passed down through ancestry, family, or past lives.
  - For example, an ancestor who may have been hungry may have decided that they will do whatever it takes for their family to survive. This contract has now passed down to you and you are enacting it without consciously realizing why you are doing so.

We form contracts within ourselves in relation to specific events, traumas, or simply information coming our way. We also form contracts with others, and when someone significant says something upsetting to us, we will take that on as a form of contract. We also may form contracts to do the opposite of whatever or whomever we deem “bad”; decades later, we may not realize that a contract we made when we were six to not turn into our parents may be interfering with our quest to find a suitable partner. We may discover that we have based the majority of our existence on a *reactive contract*, or a contract to do the opposite of what we have seen or experienced.

A contract is a belief that you have taken on. Once that belief or understanding has been accepted on some level, a subconscious agreement will form. This will then color or shape the way you interact with the world, the people in it,

and what you believe yourself to be capable of, as well as is a shaping tool for your general identity.

Some of these contracts may seem to have good results, such as the child of divorced parents vowing to not have a broken home or someone whose ancestral background was one of general lack working toward a comfortable lifestyle for themselves and their family. But contracts come from a place of trauma, and anything that comes from trauma creates restriction. Even if these contracts seem to have benefits, we will benefit more if our beliefs and understandings come from a place of healing, rather than pain.

Many of these contracts will come up naturally through the other work in this book. It is always helpful to question our beliefs and what we know to be true to see if they are creating restrictions for ourselves. The beliefs we hold onto most adamantly, the things we really *need* to be true, are always a good place to start. It is one thing to have a belief and to stand solidly in that belief; it is another to have a belief that creates significant chaos, judgment, or inability to allow others to have differing beliefs or understandings from our own.

Although I will share some thoughts about possible contracts here, it's likely that once you get familiar with this concept you will begin to understand how our minds get stuck in repeating these contracts inside our heads over and over in order to convince ourselves of their reality. If something simply *is*—meaning that it is some form of healthy truth, not coming from a place of wounding—we no longer need to spend our mental time and energy focused on it. We also do not need to spend large swaths of time online or in person arguing about it, or convincing others that our belief is valid and all other beliefs are not.

So write down or think about some of the contracts you may have made. You can start by acknowledging what repeats mentally to you. Is it that you are not good enough, that nobody loves you, that you can't do something? One of the most detrimental beliefs we have is that the world (and the people that are part of the world) are out to get us. This usually arises as a result of early childhood trauma or in utero patterns. Understanding that the world, and the people in it, largely don't care about us is a difficult concept to get across to someone firmly engaged in the belief that the whole world is against them.

*Energetically, a contract is an experience (trauma), a taking on of the beliefs of that experience (believing it to be true/worthy of absorbing), and a decision made in relation to that experience. This decision is to either directly take that belief on (I am bad at math) or is a decision to act in opposition to that belief (I will never be my mother or father). These contracts are frequently out of date (formed at an earlier age) and are held onto by our bodies until we can consciously release them.*

Some commonly held contract prompts that you may wish to consider:

- *I am not good at (insert hobby, area of study here).*
- *I will end up (or not end up) like my mother or father.*
- *My (mother or father) is this way, so I am this way.*
- *I am not worthy, loveable, likeable.*
- *The world and everyone in it is against me.*

- *The world and everyone in it are out to harm me.*
- *I will never find Mr. Right (Ms. Right).*
- *I always need to struggle (in general, or for money, for work, and so on).*
- *I need to be this way, otherwise this will happen.*
- *All men (or women) are like this.*
- *I am not a sexual person (or judgment for being “too” sexual).*
- *My religion growing up (or current religion) said that I was this, or needed to be this way.*
- *My sexual orientation and the way I choose to express myself are wrong/bad.*
- *My culture has machismo. Men are supposed to act this way.*
- *I can never succeed or excel at what I am good at.*
- *I will always have a soul-sucking job.*
- *I can never make enough money to support myself.*
- *I will always go hungry.*
- *I am not one of them.*
- *I was not meant to be in this world.*
- *I will never be healthy or strong.*
- *I won't (or cannot) open my heart.*
- *I will show (put name here).*

Look at people whom you seek to impress and the ways in which you feel you need to prove yourself to them. If we feel comfortable and confident, we no longer need to prove ourselves to the outer world. Look at the “loops” of what upsets you in others, what you find yourself thinking about and talking about most often. While there is much in the way of healing work that goes beyond simple mirroring



(what we see in others is an expression of what is unhealed within us), what we consistently say and do, as well as where we consistently find fault in others, is a good place to look for contracts.

There are a lot more contracts, both big and small, that we create for ourselves or take on through our interactions with others. It should be noted that we may need some of our contracts. Ideally we wouldn't, but as we formulate our reality based on our beliefs to a large extent, if you are currently in a terrible job that doesn't pay enough and are worried about grocery bills, it may not be the right time to release a contract about not going hungry. We have enough stockpiled contracts that we can work on others if there has not been enough space to have clarity or put some of our contracts in the past. You would be surprised how clearing up contracts about self-worth, or ability to have or hold a career, can impact something like financial status, however.

Contracts are typically worked with in conjunction with the other work, but can be released using the same method of accessing and working with the consciousness of the body.

## **Releasing Held Contracts**

By this point, it is likely that you have thought about a contract you may have. If you do not have a specific contract that you would like to work on, you can also ask your body deva to show you where in your body a contract may be held.

- Ask your body deva to highlight or show you where this specific contract is held in your body (or where a contract is, if you are keeping things open or do not know of one).

- Do a body scan and note areas of your body that you are drawn to or seem highlighted to you.
  - If multiple areas show up, ask your body deva which is most important to work on, to work on first, or to work on today.
- Ask the body deva or the individual consciousness of the body part that you have found what the contract is that is held there.
- Simply sit until you get a clear sense of what this contract may be.
  - This may not be a clear understanding. This may be a sense of knowing, a picture, or something that doesn't compute with what you have experienced in this world. Simply note whatever comes up, no matter how strange.
  - Continue to ask this part of your body for more information (*Tell me more*) until you get a sense of what this contract may be.
- Ask the consciousness of your body, *What belief or understanding about myself, the world, or about people (men or women) is held here?*
  - If what comes through is unclear, again ask to be told more.
  - If there is resistance, you can move to working with the resistant part of yourself.
  - If there is lack of clarity, you may simply need to do a few sessions with this body part (you can return another day) to find out what is going on. Often we need to "digest" information when it becomes conscious, and so whatever we can become conscious of concerning a contract, even if it seems vague, is a wonderful starting point.

- You will ask the consciousness of this body part to tell you about the circumstances of what happened.
  - Who was involved?
  - How old was I?
  - If this were a scene on a television, what would be going on in that scene?
- What is the contract here?
  - We are asking again for purposes of clarity, and to get as close to the wording of the contract that we created as possible.
  - Remember that a contract is often a belief that you have on some level agreed to and taken on. This can be taken on *directly* or *in reaction*.
  - This means that if we failed to climb the rope during gym class and got made fun of that we could have decided that we were lousy at physical pursuits. It may have also caused us to decide to never be made fun of again and to become physically focused so that we could climb that rope faster than anyone else in our class.
  - Although this reactive belief has resulted in the person becoming physically fit, it is still in reaction or trying to prove to the gym teacher that they are worthy. By healing this belief, this person no longer needs to prove himself and is no longer in reaction to the original situation.
- What was the decision that was made?
  - We have the situation or trauma that occurred, a belief that was expressed, and then an agreement that was formed. This agreement was a decision to be (or not to be) a certain way.

- This agreement could also be a *relational* agreement. This means that we could decide that the world is scary, that all men or women act a certain way, or that all authority figures are invalid.
- If the information that you are receiving does not correlate with your life experiences here (it was passed down to you), you can either choose to continue if you have the capacity to pick up information, or may choose to inquire as to where the information is coming from.
  - Ask your body deva or the individual consciousness of the body part if it is *ancestral* (family) or *past life*.
  - This is only to be done if there is some sort of indicator (a sense of knowing, visuals, or other information) that has led you to believe that this is coming from a place beyond your experiences of this world.
  - Remember, when you ask your body slowly, pausing between each choice, there will be an indicator (typically, a sense of knowing or a change in energy in the area of the body you are exploring) that will indicate which choice (past life or family/ancestral) is correct.
  - Occasionally, there are multiple contracts. If this is the case, you will ask if any are from your timeline, or your experiences here, and work on those first.
  - If it is from beyond your own experiences here, you still want to get a sense of what was happening, the beliefs created, and the agreement that was formed. The work in further chapters will more helpfully guide you to and through this process.

- Once you know what the contract is, and largely what age, you will consider if you need the contract. Do you need it *fully, partially, or not at all?*
  - Ask the consciousness of your body for guidance about this. We would all like to release anything that restricts us, but we may not be fully ready to.
  - Respecting the body and offering compassion will allow contracts to change more readily than forcing things to leave.
- If you do not want the contract at all, you will visualize yourself at the appropriate age to the best of your abilities and let her know that you understand why the contract was formed, but that she no longer needs it any more.
  - You may choose to segue into inner child healing work to fully heal this situation and integrate the inner child.
- You will then let your body know that you are no longer the age that you were when you created the contract.
- Ask your individual body part/consciousness if it realizes that it is holding on to an outdated contract.
  - Remember that when we hold onto trauma, we get frozen and fractured, which means that the individual consciousness of a body part may not understand that you are no longer a six-year-old.
- Reiterate that you understand the reasoning for the contract, but that the contract is now null and void because you no longer need it in your life in your present-day reality.
- Ask that the individual consciousness of the body part you are working with clear the contract.

- Ask that the body deva (the consciousness of your body as a whole) release the contract more fully as well as integrate that body part with the rest of your body map to whatever extent it is able to.

## Changing Contracts

It is easy to be disheartened if you hear the word “no”—that you are meant to keep the contract, whatever it may be. If this is the case, you can ask the consciousness of that body part what sort of preparatory work may be necessary in order to work with it.

In most cases there will either be a release of the contract in full or negotiation room in the contract. Just as a lawyer may negotiate clauses in a lease or work contract, we can make our contracts more freeing and present.

Although we will not go through every variable, consider how there may be some form of “wiggle room” in the agreement that has been created. For my example of being told that I was terrible at math, I found myself reworking that contract at first to be something more open, such as, *I am not great at math, but certainly am not terrible at it*. It sounds like not much of a change from, *It is lucky that I am good at art, because I am terrible at math*, but what I did was take away the “authority” figure (my math teacher and what he said to me) and the sentiment around my artwork, which was creating a certain amount of guilt for me when I engaged in the creative process.

Eventually, I was able to work with this belief again until my body no longer held any belief related to this, I no longer had emotionality regarding this, and the contract overall was dissolved. I am still not great at math, even if we were to look at this situation with total clarity. That is not the point here; the point is that that trauma, however small it might have been, created restrictions and baggage in terms

of who I thought I was, and changed what decisions I made about certain factors in my life because of an unhealed situation and out-of-date contract I had taken on.

## **Tiffany**

A more complex situation around contracts would be to consider Tiffany, who came to me because she could not get into a relationship. They all failed quickly, and she found that the men she dated would then get in another relationship and get married. She desperately wanted to find a partner to share her life with. She found a contract from her grandmother that told her that, *All men will just leave you in a ditch*. Her grandmother raised four children by herself after her husband left her, and she recalled her grandmother telling her frequently as a young child how men acted and what they wanted from women.

Based on her grandmother's words, Tiffany made an agreement with herself that she would never allow a man to do that to her. This contract was formed in her pelvis, an area that she also complained of feeling pain in during sexual intercourse. She realized that this contract meant that she would never get married or have kids in her adult life, as that would be the only way to truly ensure that no man would leave her as a single mother.

She was unwilling to fully release the contract, as she was cautious about men after the experiences that both her grandmother and mother had gone through. She reworked the contract to state that she was an adult now and that she would proceed cautiously with men. She then further worked with the contract to change *All men will just hurt you and saddle you with responsibilities to I am open to relationships and have the adult capacity to take care of myself and any children, man or not*.

Eventually, she realized that that agreement formed was still restrictive, and that as an adult she was in a place to enter into a relationship gradually to ensure that it would be a correct match.

Tiffany did further work with the consciousness of her heart to release past pain and to open it to the possibility of loving others, even if doing so might mean that she would get hurt. In opening ourselves we always have that possibility, especially in the heart area, but if we are completely closed we never experience the joy, love, and "good" stuff either. Understanding all of this as an adult, rather than a child at her grandmother's house, allowed her to fully release this contract and feel more freedom and opportunities in dating.

By working with the consciousness of your body you can compassionately inquire as to what sort of contracts you may hold within and how they can be reworked to meet your current mentality. By then working further with inner children, ancestors, and family patterns, you can then come back to the contract work, or work with contracts in conjunction with that work, to further release them.

Please be compassionate with yourself doing this work. Releasing a contract is a big deal—the sorts of agreements we have taken on or formulated create what we know to be truth. Although coming to a greater truth results in a letting go of wounds, held energy, and outdated beliefs, it does result in a change in reality. It is always a good idea to be patient in the pursuit of healing and releasing often long-standing beliefs, or beliefs that formulate our experience of the world. Any compassion we show ourselves can only result in greater healing and clarity.

## **Henry**

Henry grew up as the youngest of three children. He was a “surprise” baby and was born several years after his brother and sister. His brother, Jeff, seemed like the golden child to him—everything he did Henry wanted to do as well. His parents seemed to agree, and dinner table conversation, even when Jeff was at college, was about what sports Jeff was excelling at, or how proud his parents were about him doing well at school.

Henry could not meet those expectations. He was a shy child who preferred the company of animals as well as a few friends rather than a large crowd. As a teenager Henry was having difficulty fitting in and decided to make a contract that he was going to act like his brother in order to be popular. There was an additional contract based on the idea that his parents loved or favored his brother more and so who he was would never be good enough. He started trying out for sports, went to the mall on weekends, and found a girlfriend.

Twenty years later, Henry realized that he had no idea who he was, and that he was doing many things in his life simply because he thought that that was what he was supposed to be doing. He found that there was a contract in his solar plexus that revealed that he had put on a mask to survive, to be liked, and to be loved equally by his parents.

Henry realized that as an adult he no longer needed this contract and asked it to release. He did further inner child work on his teenage self, assuring his inner teenager that it was okay to be who he was. After his solar plexus released this energy, Henry’s digestion improved, he felt more secure about who he was and what he wanted to do with himself in this world, and he was able to more deeply explore the grief that came from feeling not as loved by his parents as his brother was. He realized that it was okay to be an introvert and enjoy the company of a few friends, and ended up buying a cabin in the woods to be near the nature and animals that he loved so much.



# CHAPTER SIX

## Healing In Utero

**O**ur time in utero sets up our basic relation to the outer world. How we feel about being here and whether we feel wanted or not on a basic, primal level often has energetic roots in our in utero experience.

If we were loved, wanted, expected, and fully welcomed into this world we are more likely to feel loved, wanted, and fully welcomed by the earth, as well as the people on it. If there were significant health issues, emotional issues, confusion, or trauma surrounding the pregnancy we may be unsure of our presence here in a human, physical form.

If our parents did not want us we are likely to live our entire lives believing that nobody likes us, that we are unloveable, or that there is something deeply wrong with us. If the pregnancy was threatened, tumultuous, or there was severe stress resulting in states of fear we are likely to feel as if the world or the people in it are out to get us, and that it is not a safe place for us to be.

Our time in utero can be a time of great safety, love, and warmth—a time when we feel deeply connected and held by our mother. It can also be a time of great fear, chaos, and deeply held emotions that can be directly transmitted to us from our mother during this time.

Energetically, there is no barrier between our mother and ourselves when we are developing in utero. We are not only having our own experience, developing and growing to meet the world eventually, we are directly taking on the emotions of our mother, unable to discern where the

emotions are coming from. Partly, this is for obvious reasons—if the physical well-being of the mother is threatened, the pregnancy will have a high likelihood of being threatened as well.

But what I am referring to is more of a “sponge-like” capacity in which the in utero environment becomes a sea of the mother’s emotions, thoughts, and experiences. This sea can be calm and loving and nurturing on the deepest levels, but it can also be tumultuous, scary, or life threatening to the child developing within that sea. We are fully in a watery environment in utero, and this sea absorbs everything from its outer environment. Our concept of the world comes from our mother, and this time in utero as well as the energetics of this relationship between child and mother sets us up for our basic relationship to the world and the people in it.

Any trauma we experience in utero or in the birthing process makes a significant imprint on us. During our in utero time we are a grouping of energies gradually coming together. As we draw nearer to our birth, the pattern, or web, of these energies consolidates so that we can become a living, breathing, separate human. Our time in utero forms the “container” or outer webbing for how we react to the world and the people in it.

Various signs and beliefs will point to this time and its need for healing in your life:

- Belief that the world is against you
- Belief that the people in the world dislike, hate, or are against you
- Belief that you are separate from the earth
- Belief that you come from “other,” myths about being from “elsewhere”

- Even if this is spiritually true, we do create a lot of possibly misleading mythological constructs out of deep struggles, including our in utero experience.
- Belief that the world is not a safe place
- Deep, unfounded fear about your survival
- Self-hatred
- Belief that one must “take” as much from the world, and the people in it, as possible
- Lack of connection to the earth
- Inability to connect to others
- Feeling of being totally alone or without support
- Knowing of an in utero history of difficult pregnancy, birth, or trauma.

Some of these patterns point to family, ancestral, and other patterns as well. Our individual reasons for being and why we have enacting certain beliefs can come from a multitude of places. However, this is an aspect and time of needed healing for many that is not discussed or given regard by many body-mind practitioners. If we experience a difficult in utero experience in which we never connected and received the nurturing that we needed from our mothers, we are also going to have many experiences in our lives that will add to, or be colored by, the beliefs that were created during our time in utero.

It should be added that pregnancy is rarely an ideal process; it is normal to have a certain amount of tumultuous energies for the duration of the pregnancy. If the mother is reasonably healthy, many of these difficulties will be worked through or not experienced as threatening by the child. If the mother is out of balance significantly (whether physically, mentally, emotionally, or spiritually) or is lacking

in support herself in a significant way, these imbalances are much more likely to have an effect on both mother and child.

If you are experiencing difficulty working with this on your own, or wish to find a practitioner to assist you, seek out Biodynamic Craniosacral Therapy or Castellino prenatal and birth therapists, who can help immensely in processing these embryological experiences. Sensory deprivation tanks also mimic the in utero experience and can assist in conjunction with this type of work.

## **Working with the In Utero Experience**

This work can be a bit difficult to tap into. There may be natural resistance to exploring this time or we may find that ages that we can consciously recall (such as when we were six or twenty-five years old) are easier for us to access. We obviously do not have conscious recall of when we were in utero, so working with this subject matter requires a bit of practice as well as mental openness.

As with all things, if this work doesn't resonate with you, I would simply move on to other chapters. It is likely that through further work you can return to this work at a later date and access it in greater depth.

You will first access the body deva. Once you have done so, you will state the intention of working with your in utero experience. You will now visualize or sense yourself (at your current age) surrounded by water. Even submerged in this water you will still be able to breathe comfortably.

As this water surrounds you, you will feel yourself becoming smaller and moving into an in utero state. Some people aim for a specific month or time when there was known difficulty, but I suggest leaving things open in order to more fully access what may need to be healed.

In this watery state you will sit with the experiences arising and ask your body deva the following questions for contemplation:

- Do I feel warm?
- Do I feel safe?
- Do I feel nurtured?
- Do I feel connected?
- Do I feel confined? The in utero space should be one that feels slightly open but still safely contained. If it feels claustrophobic, tight, or restrictive, that would point to something out of balance.
- Do I feel as if there is enough “water”?
- Are you comfortable and nourished by what surrounds you?
- What emotions do I sense?

Now ask your body deva to highlight or show you where you may hold any imbalances related to your in utero experience in your current, adult body. Explore each body part individually, noting what you feel physically in each part. You are looking for basic physical and energetic sensations in each part. These sensations will give you a baseline of how and where in utero energies are held static in the physical form, anchor the work in the physical body, as well as allow you to notice any healing that occurs by the shifts that take place.

Simply acknowledging what comes up can be deeply healing. You can ask the body deva (or the individual body parts that hold these energies) to release, shift, or change when you become conscious of them.

You may also choose to ask for changes and shifts in your in utero experience. For example, if you didn't feel

enough warmth or nurturing, you may wish to visualize yourself receiving that warmth and nurturing. This can result in beautiful changes; however, in many cases further work should be done to fully reconcile the in utero experience.

## **Advanced In Utero Work**

In utero work can create an environment where deep emotions and felt experiences from that time can emerge. Becoming conscious of something and creating a visual for the experience needed can result in profound shifts, but more work is often needed in order to fully heal.

This remaining work will involve communicating with the consciousness of the child (or cells, or group of energies coming together, depending on the time worked with), the consciousness of the mother to provide differentiation, and working with the in utero grid, which will be covered in the next section.

You will do the work in Part One, allowing yourself to come into that watery state, but instead of communicating with the body deva, you will ask the child (or grouping of cells or energies forming) the following questions:

- What do you need to feel safe?
- What do you need to feel ready to emerge into this world?
- What do you need to feel in order to experience the world (and the people in it) as being supportive and loving toward you?
- What do you need to feel to truly feel wanted by your mother?
  - By your father?
  - By the world?

- By the earth?

Remember that our connection (or lack thereof) to our mother is how we feel about the earth. The purpose here is not to create a huge narrative or mythic story about your existence in order to increase wounding or feelings of separation. I say this because it is easy to be carried away by what we discover and to create a framework for our lives that is not helpful for our healing process. The purpose in discovery and sitting with these questions is to discover your individual reasons for why you may not have felt excited or ready to greet the world, or what forces may have caused you to feel unwanted or unsafe.

You will now ask the following questions to your in utero self:

- How do you feel about the world?
- How do you feel about your mother?

If the answer is anything but feeling safe, connected, and ready to emerge into the world, it means that there is work to do to heal the situation. You will begin by working with the consciousness of the mother.

To do so, you will consider that you are being held in this in utero state by a greater consciousness or container; this container or consciousness is your mother. You have access to this consciousness because in an in utero state there was no separation between your growing consciousness and the consciousness of your mother. This separation doesn't happen until around the age of six, when the child begins education and greater socialization into the outer world. For some people, this separation never happens, which would point to the need for healing of an inner child at the appropriate age.

You will sense or feel what being surrounded by the energy of your mother feels like. Does it feel comforting? Does it feel well contained? If your mother was experiencing trauma or overwhelm beyond her capacity to deal, those emotions are being transmitted to you. Feel any emotions that may be here. For most people, these emotions will be fairly strong as they work with this subject.

Sense whether these emotions are coming from you (in utero) or if they are coming from the “container” around you. They may be coming from both places, but acknowledge if any of the emotions are coming from your mother. This is important because those emotions are now being held within you; by acknowledging that they do not come from you, they can be differentiated and released.

Now sit with any thoughts that may be coming from your mother. Picture a greater “egg” or container around you in utero. See or sense what emotions, beliefs, or understandings may be coming your way:

- What emotions are coming toward you from this egg?
- What thoughts or beliefs are there?

Beliefs can be harder to pick up than emotions, but when simply sitting in this state and gently questioning, it is likely that some thoughts may come up that you repeat to yourself, such as not being wanted, loved, or supported. Pregnancy is an understandably emotional and difficult time for the mother, and emotions and thoughts tend to be amplified and transmitted to the child.

While in utero, the baby will not have the skill to differentiate or understand thoughts and feelings coming from the mother, such as the mother contemplating abortion, which may have led the child to feel unsafe and as an adult, unable to understand why they have never felt



wanted by the earth. In addition, the mother may be carrying a great deal of fear over her pregnancy. Much of this is natural, especially for first-time mothers, but if there are past instances of miscarriage or threatened pregnancies, this fear can be heightened.

This is the type of patterning that can emerge when we use this work to explore our time in utero. Realizing that emotions, thoughts, and beliefs are not yours can result in shifts, but you may wish to communicate with the consciousness of your mother to more fully resolve the situation:

- If you were to ask her what she would need to feel supported, what would she state? What sort of support may she need from her partner, her parents, or the community at large?
- What would she need to feel safe?
- What would she need to be ready to bring you into the world?
- What would she need to be willing to connect with you?

You can visualize or sense her receiving these things. Doing this work can be a bit tricky, as we may not believe in the simple power of our offering such support, or that it can result in a significant shift. It's not that what we are doing changes what happened or erases any aspect of the story. If we didn't have proper nutrition, or had a mother who was deeply fearful and lonely, that is still part of history that has shaped our life.

What we *are* doing with this work is clearing the held emotions, thoughts, and beliefs that emerged as a result of our in utero experience. As adults, we do not need to hold onto the experiences and emotions of our in utero self any more than we need to hold onto the emotions, thoughts,

and traumas of our mother during her pregnancy. By becoming conscious of why we are storing these emotions, thoughts, and beliefs and offering a way to release them, we allow all aspects of ourselves to not only become fully conscious but for us to move away from an imbalanced, frozen state to align with our adult selves.

It would be rare on the first try for the mother to be willing and able to provide everything the child needs. This is not a practice where you force such things to occur; you are working compassionately not only with your own consciousness but that of your mother, which is imprinted within you from that time, and inquiring what she may need, what you may be willing to offer her, and what she may be willing to accept. Any shift toward her feeling more balanced will be transmitted to the child.

As we do this work, as well as further work with ancestors and family, it should be noted that we carry the forces and dynamics of our time in utero within us. The ripple effect from our healing can deeply heal our family, including our mothers, but we are doing internal work to heal opposing or restricting dynamics within ourselves, and we are not offering healing to our real mother, but to the held energy of “mother” that has frozen within us due to trauma from the in utero experience. For those of you who have had especially difficult experiences with your mothers, this may help you reconcile offering healing to them. Each person has their own path, and although this work can shift dynamics in relationships, it is always the decision of an individual to change, shift, or heal something within them.

Whatever work is done, you will now return to the consciousness of the in utero state and ask the child to acknowledge that their environment may now be different due to the mother shifting. Ask the body deva to shift or change the in utero experience. Check in with how that child is doing now, and say thank you to all involved.

## **The Heart and Uterus Connection**

While doing this work, you may notice that you are not feeling any connection from mother to child. This results in feelings of alienation, not being supported, and other patterns that are enacted in the outer world once born.

In Traditional Chinese Medicine, there is an energetic channel, or meridian, within the body that connects the heart and the uterus. This connection energetically connects the heart of the mother to her growing child during pregnancy. If this connection is severed, or never developed, the child will not feel loved, wanted, or supported by its mother. Once born, the child is likely to develop a life-long pattern of not feeling supported or wanted by the earth or other people. The experience of not feeling wanted or supported will lead to a lack of grounding, or willingness to ground and receive connection to the Earth, which will result in feelings of separation, fatigue, and inability to connect to people and the world at large.

This is a large pattern, one experienced by many people—we can see the worldwide ramifications of our separation from our mothers and the earth. If we are able to restore this connection and heal the in utero experience, we can become more connected and acknowledge that we need to care for and connect to the natural world, rather than simply take from it.

When we start doing this work, we may find that we do not sense any sort of physical or emotional threat but are not feeling any kind of maternal connection. We synchronize with our mother and are intended to connect with her in a deep, emotional, and bonded way. We connect to her heart—in fact, the heart is the first organ formed in utero. If we do not feel a connection with our mother, this can result in feelings of not being able to connect to oneself, others, or the world.

Our heart is the place where our deep emotions arise; this is one of the reasons why the emotional status of the mother directly impacts the child. As we are forming within the consciousness and the “container” of our mother, her experiences and emotions directly influence our own formative state, and are a large part of the in utero grid that forms, which we will explore next. As you do in utero work, you may discover that this heart connection is missing. If there is any sense that the connection has not formed, or it may not be fully connected, or there is something wrong with the connection, it is worth exploring this connection between your mother’s heart and your own. If you are not feeling warmth, nurturing, and completely loved and cared for in utero, it is worth working with this connection to see if it could improve.

While doing the previous work, you will want to question if this connection and the synchronization of energies is there, and whether it is fully healthy and operational. If it is not, you will check in with the consciousness of the mother to see what she would need in order to be *able and willing* to create such a connection. There is a distinct difference between having the capacity to do something and the willingness to do something, so it is best to inquire about both.

You will then offer her what she needs by visualizing her receiving the support, guidance, or love she never received. Although there are other reasons for doing this work, those are the most common. If we have never known heart-centered connection with our own parents, we are unlikely to learn how to offer it to our own children. We also may be feeling isolated, hurt, or in a physical or emotional state in which there is reason for disconnection from the pregnancy.

This is not a forceful event, and the consciousness of the mother is unlikely to move from a state of total disconnection to complete and undying love and connection

to her child. Allowing whatever opening there is to occur, even if the mother is only willing to try to do so or offer a small amount of love and connection, can drastically change this type of patterning.

If there is any willingness on the part of the mother, you will then ask for the in utero self (you) to receive this connection to whatever degree they are able. You will then ask the body deva to facilitate this connection from the heart of the mother to you in utero. Once there is a feeling of connection, it is likely that both mother and child will allow more connection and flow to develop. You may wish to go back later and inquire as to further connection, and again ask the body deva to facilitate this connection.

If you feel as if you are at an end point with this work for the day, you will say thank you to all involved (including yourself in utero) and return to your current, adult body. You will then ask that the body deva release and integrate this experience in your current body, and give permission for this change to take place. If appropriate, you may wish to go to the individual body parts where you sensed this energy from the in utero experience was being held and ask the consciousness of those parts to recognize that they no longer need to hold the energy from this experience and to release it.

## **Working with the Grid**

We are formed by a matrix of energies in utero. These energies come from several places: our history (what was happening in current history while we were in utero), our culture, location/place, as well as cosmic or spiritual energies of varying types.

But more significantly we are formed through the energies of our ancestry, our father, and most significantly, our mother. Our mother, the person who carried us, forms

the greater consciousness, or container, in which we develop. Everything from her emotional state to how she felt about the pregnancy develops deep imprints within us, as well as the baseline for our matrix.

Our matrix shapes how we view the world, our base emotions, and how we relate to the world. On a simple level, this can mean that if our mother had a lot of fear while we were in utero we may feel a base emotion of fear and anxiety throughout our lives and never have the conscious ability to understand where it comes from. This will lead most of us to think that this fear is without cause, or will point to other more rational causes that have taken place in our known and consciously recollected lifetime.

If our mother carried deep grief as a result of previous pregnancies, or was unclear whether she wanted to keep the pregnancy, we may find ourselves surrounded by a cloud of grief in our lives without being able to point to why.

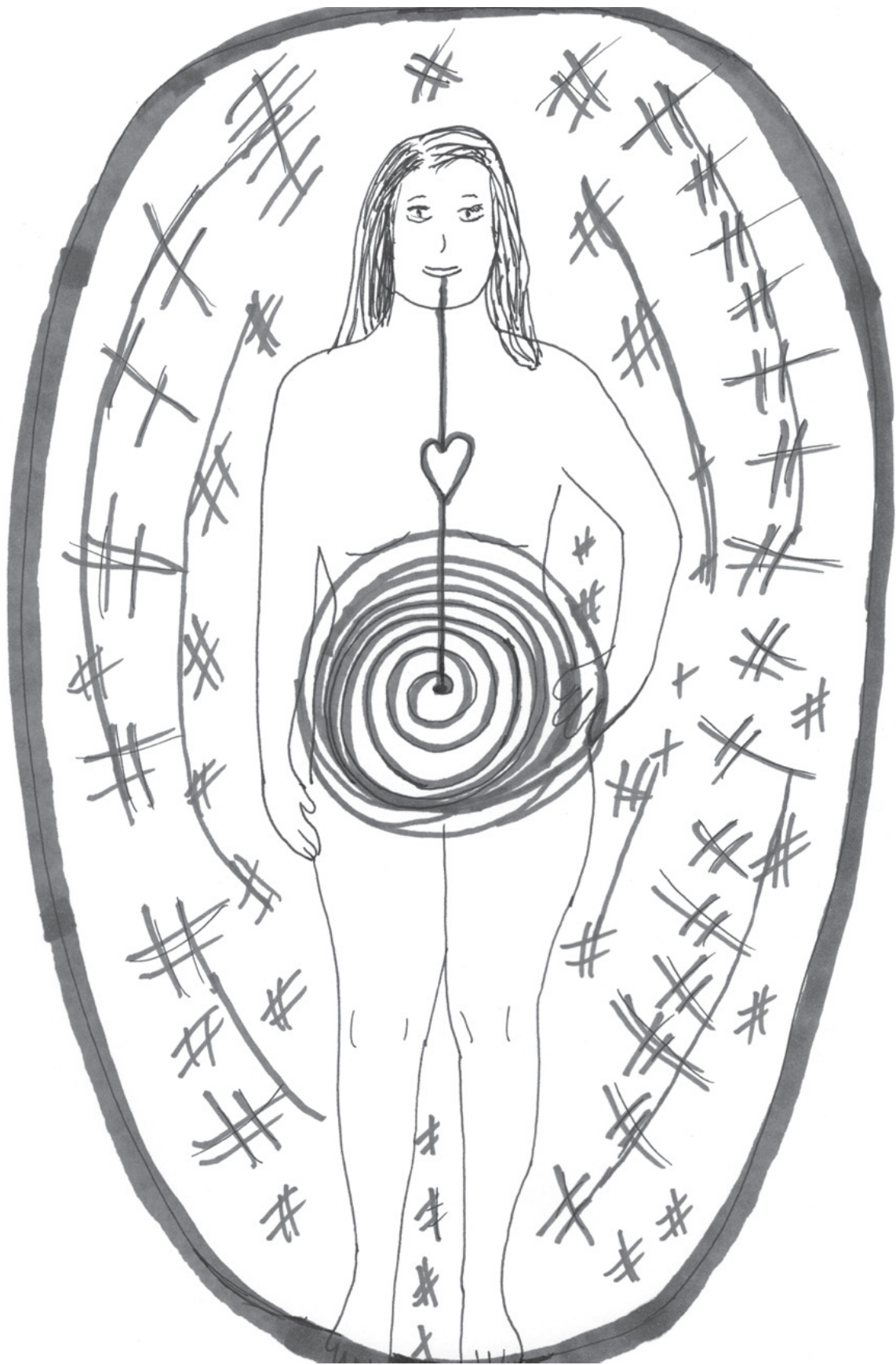
If we had an in utero experience where we were fighting for life, lacked nutrition, or our mother was unable to emotionally connect to us, we are likely to experience that as a difficult and continually reoccurring theme in our lives.

This in utero matrix sets up how we view the world as a whole, how we view other people, as well as how we view ourselves. As a result of viewing things through this matrix, we will spend our entire lives exhibiting a reaction to others and the world (and Earth) as a whole as if they were our mothers. This can either be the joyous realization that the world is a nurturing place for us, or that the world and the people in it are looking to harm or take something from us. In reaction, we will then look to take as much from the earth and from one another as we can.

The way in which our matrix has been created will then be reflected in the world around us. This is not because the world has changed and become inherently evil or selfish but

because the person who has an unhealed matrix is operating under the belief that the world is this way, so they will perceive everything coming at them this way. After you have worked with this pattern, it will be easy to see what an impact it has on the world, and how disconnected we are from ourselves and one another as a result (either partially or fully) due to unhealed energies that emerge from in utero experiences.

This means that if our matrix is composed of threads of fear or struggle for survival, this is likely what we will experience in this world. To fully heal from the wounds developed in the in utero state, we should not only consider the emotional, mental, and spiritual connections and needs for healing but also the matrix that has developed, so that the beliefs and understandings that created this matrix can be released.





## **MEDITATION: Part One -**

### **How to Release Negative Imprints from the Matrix**

- Begin by putting yourself in the “watery” state from the previous section, and ask the body deva to help you with your intention of discovering and healing the in utero matrix.
- At first you are likely to see a straight, dark line going from the back of your tongue and throat to the belly button. In some cases this line may go below the belly button.
- From that straight dark line you will sense a globe, oblong, or another shape surrounding you.
- Sit with this until you are able to sense both the straight dark line as well as the energy surrounding you. These may not have connected to one another yet if we have a lot that is unhealed from our in utero experience.
- As you sit with this energy, it is normal to feel a bit spacey. Simply sit with it at first and see if any emotions arise. You can breathe out any emotions through your mouth, acknowledging them as emotions associated with that experience that can now leave.
- If nothing arises, you may simply need to restate your intention, or you may actually be trying too hard to access this information. Take a few breaths in and out and let the information arise rather than searching for it. Settle back into your midline, into the body deva, and see what emerges. The information will arise when it is ready to do so.

If information is difficult to access, it may be that you need to do more initial work with your in utero experience or with the tools in the rest of the book. We come to consciousness when we are ready to do so, and if you really find yourself having difficulty accessing this information you may wish to try asking the body deva to show you where in your body you may be holding resistant energy to this process, or simply, if there are any patterns in your body that you need to heal prior to doing this work. You would then do a body scan and talk with the individual consciousness of that body part, as well as the body deva, to resolve whatever is held there.

It is common to start to see or sense birth or in utero imagery when accessing this state. A feeling of water around you or within a bubble may form. As you sit with this energy, you will begin to ask what this matrix contains. How do you relate to the world? What do you believe to be true about the world and the people in it?

Allow this information to come from a place of knowing rather than a logical (head-oriented) place. Answers should feel as if they are coming from that line, or a place deep inside, rather than from your head/brain.

Allow yourself to be truthful and transparent about this. Do you feel victimized? Do you feel like the world is out to get you? Are others just looking to take from you? Do you believe that the world and the people in it can support you? Can they nurture you? Do you want to be here on Earth? Do you want to be in physical form?

A lot of people talk about ascension, or being from another origin, and it is rooted in birth and in utero matrices. If we feel as if we were not wanted, we will feel as if the earth and the people in it don't want us. Even if we are originally from somewhere in terms of spiritual origins, in our present incarnation we are on Earth, in a human form, and that should be our primary focus. You are welcome to take a break and write/journal, or to continue...

## **MEDITATION: Part Two -**

### **How to Release Negative Imprints from the Matrix**

Now that you have your thoughts and realizations together about how you perceive the Earth and the people in it, you will again go back to that line that you discovered in Part One (from the pelvis or belly button to the back of the throat).

- You will now put some focus on the outer “bubble” or matrix that surrounds you. If you have had a difficult in utero experience this may not appear, or may appear broken or weak in places (or overall). You also may not be able to sense it at all.

- You will now return your focus to that line and ask to see the matrix unfold from that place. If you sit with this, you should notice or feel electricity, lines, or an awareness of the space around you filling up with energy. You may also notice heaviness or emptiness.
- You will again return to center (the dark line) and ask this matrix to shift or balance in a new, healthier way. You do not need to force this or journey and fix anything. You will simply acknowledge this matrix and ask that it reform in a healthier way.
- You can also ask it to expand, lighten, or energize.
- You can also ask what you need to know, to hear messages from this matrix, or simply sit with it for a period of time.

Even acknowledging this matrix will allow it to change and shift in a positive way. Over a period of time, it will shift and change and allow us to experience ourselves and the world differently. If we are willing to allow this to occur, it can be a drastic change. But even if we are not ready for a drastic change, sitting in realization of this energy, and how it might have colored how you perceive the world, can allow significant shifts in your perception to take place, as well as healing opportunities to occur.

## **MEDITATION: Advanced Applications**

In cases of chronic depression, apathy, or difficulty being here, it is likely that the matrix does not have enough energy in it. It is not vitalized or connected. This matrix is intended to connect us not only to our mother but also to ourselves, to humanity, and the natural world as a whole. While exploring our needs for healing in utero, we may also find that there is a part of ourselves holding back, or that it did not fully incarnate in our human form.

We are intended to be connected energetically to the earth, to one another, as well as to Spirit. If we are missing one of these connections, it is hard to be healthy and balanced enough to feel vitally alive, or even to have enough energy to go about our day.

At the appropriate time, when we have healed enough of our own matrix (when it feels open, balanced, expansive, and has some energy to it), we can make space for it to connect. If we are in a state of chronic depression or are unable to vitally explore this matrix, we can connect as much as we are willing to. I often suggest connecting to the earth matrix at first. There are many methods of grounding that can help to start this process. In my book, *The Spiritual Awakening Guide*, I offer a grounding technique where you ground by sensing and visualizing yourself as a tree rooting into the earth.

When it feels right, you will again feel your matrix as best you can, then like a set of reaching branches, roots, or a grid, you will ask internally if you are ready to connect to the earth grid a bit.

If the answer is no, be patient: you can either let it go, or you can ask if it is willing to connect a little bit to the earth.

If the answer is yes, you will ask your matrix to reach out and become a part of the matrix of the earth, as little or as much as it is ready to do.

There should be a palpable sense of connection or shifting of energy if this is done right.

At first, this matrix might come through your feet, but in time can reach out, so you are a part of all directions and sort of “clicked in.”

You will then ask for as much nurturing and support as you are ready for from the earth matrix. Start out small. Picture this energy as electricity, color, or just a palpable sense of something flowing into you.

Work with feeling this matrix and asking for support and nurturing from it until you can feel a current of energy flowing into and through you from it.

In time, if you are ready, you will feel more energized from connecting in this way. You may find it easier to connect at first to a specific aspect of “Earth” energy, such as a tree in your yard or a favorite spot in nature.

If you feel as if a part of you has remained behind, or did not fully incarnate, you will now go back to the previous sections and the perceptions of the in utero self and find out what they would need to be fully ready to be born. Talking to the in utero part that does not wish to be born can be facilitated through the body deva in order to find out what it may need to be willing to fully incarnate.

It is important to realize that with advanced subjects and energetic structures like this, there is always a pull to “do” something more, or to go faster with work like this. This is deep, transformative work that allows us to change who we are and how we relate to this world. By acknowledging this energy and simply sitting with it, it will transform. We do not need to transform everything right away, or overnight. By allowing ourselves to gradually, over time, sit with this matrix and explore the questions of how we operate in this world and how much nurturing we allow ourselves, we can gradually open as well as heal this matrix.

## **Prior Pregnancy, Abortion, and Loss**

The experiences of the mother in relation to past pregnancies and childbirth can have a large effect on the experience of subsequent children. If a mother experienced loss of a child, the experience of grief is understandably likely to remain. If there was abortion, even if it was the correct decision on the part of the woman at the time, it can similarly create grief. Stillbirth and high-risk prior pregnancies, as well as becoming a parent the first time, can create understandable emotions of anxiety and fear in the parent-to-be.

When exploring the in utero experience, realize that some of this information may come up. You may already have knowledge of it, or you may not be able to see how your mother's prior loss before becoming pregnant with you may have resulted in grief you currently experience.

Abortion is always a tricky topic, but as every part of us has cellular consciousness, our awareness of a pregnancy and any subsequent trauma, beliefs, or emotions in relationship to the experience that have not been fully healed can be a vital place to explore if we are ready to do so. If you have had a prior loss, abortion, or difficulties in pregnancy it is well worth doing the "inner child" work on that topic to see if there are any held energies within yourself in relation to it.

As we explore this, we may wonder how any of us can have a good relation to the earth and one another, as the ideal pregnancy, with the appropriate amount of emotional support and proper nutritional, physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual balance, is rarer than one might think. How we were brought into this world certainly can create a lot of deep-seated energetic and spiritual issues for us. But please remember that we do have a natural capacity for handling even moderately challenging events, and that pregnancy is naturally a time of chaos for the new parent or parents-to-be. Being compassionate toward your mother is the

appropriate approach to this work, realizing that in most cases she did the best she could with the resources that she had.

This work is never about blaming or creating a polarity in which someone is the villain. Leaving aside true psychopathic tendencies, it is easy to understand how a mother who had unprocessed trauma, as well as lacked support and appropriate adult tools to handle the situation, may have experienced a non-optimal pregnancy. Be kind—both to yourself and those around you.

Understanding a situation doesn't make it okay, or that it was right or fair that it happened; by the same token, healing the situation doesn't mean that the situation was good, or needed, or that you need to call your mother after this work and give her a hug.

What it does mean is that you have learned in an adult capacity to stop reacting as if you were still in that state, and to release whatever was frozen or separated at that age from its pain. You have released the force, or energetic polarity, that was creating division within you. You have learned that the emotions can release, that the beliefs created out of pain can be healed, and that you can move forward in greater wholeness and connection to yourself and the world.

## **The Mother Wound**

As we emerge from our mothers, they are often our greatest source of wounding. This can happen in utero; this can also happen through our early childhoods, as we are entirely dependent and enmeshed with our mothers for survival.

There is an old folk saying, *Give me a child until they are seven, and they will be mine forever*. Our development on all levels—socially, perceptually, physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually—creates a blueprint of who we

will be in this world. If we do not move through the stages of healthy development, we can stay frozen in this state because our needs have not been met.

Although sad to think about, we then will spend our lives frozen in an infantile state, continually looking to place people we meet in the outer world in the position of “mother” in our attempt to heal this wounding. We may also move in the opposite direction, creating a contract in which we deny anyone who takes on a role similar to “mother,” such as teachers, those in authority, or really anyone who could provide us with some level of nurturing.

The mother wound can be formed through severe trauma, loss such as death, or absence. It can also form in those who were adopted or born through use of a surrogate. It can also form from lack of bonding or an energetic lack of connection. There may not be severe or noticeable neglect or abuse in these cases, or even anything in the early childhood that someone may consciously complain about, but there was an energetic lack of synchronization between mother and child, which meant that the child on some level registered that they were not fully receiving what they needed.

In this case, the mother may have been going through post-partum emotional or hormonal shifts, may never have experienced synchronization with her own mother so does not know how to embody it to her child, or it may have taken her a while to bond with her child after the birth.

As we move forward to work with family and ancestral patterns, realize that this primal sort of wounding from our mothers is likely a rich resource to look into for healing. We are not neglecting the importance of the father here (or the partner), but as we emerge and are created through our mother and, unlike our father, are reliant upon her for our survival, we are more likely to realize her impact on us.

This wound may also impact us on a cultural level. What women have passed down to them in terms of what is appropriate in terms of behavior and ways of being can be worked with by considering family and ancestral patterning (Chapter Seven) as well as cultural patterning (Chapter Nine). This work of healing the “mother wound” is applicable to all sexes and genders, as we all arise from a mother and interact in a world in which feminine and earth energies have been significantly wounded.



# CHAPTER SEVEN

## Healing Family and Ancestry

One of the biggest misconceptions about healing is the idea that we should just be over things, or that memories should be altered or erased from our history. I may possibly be the first to tell you that trauma on whatever level is not okay. Growing up we should all have the opportunity to thrive in loving, healthy environments that teach us boundaries and allow us to eventually become stable, loving, and functional adults.

This does not happen as often as it should. It is not fair, and it is never right that you, or anyone else, did not receive the love and support they needed to truly thrive. What trauma does is fracture us, and we may believe that we are the only one who has experienced such things. We may intellectually know that we are not; however, the sense of separation and loss that comes from fracturing due to a family environment that did not allow someone to thrive has the effect of convincing them on emotional, mental, and spiritual levels that they are alone in their pain.

One of our primary needs is to be heard, as well as to be seen. If we are able to offer this capacity to ourselves now, we can heal in ways we never thought possible. This also means that as an adult we may have (or will hopefully have) the perspective to look at our parents, extended family, and ancestors, in a new way. This does not make what happened okay, but it heals the fracturing and returns to wholeness the parts of you that may have separated due to family trauma. It makes it possible for us to take the

strengths and lessons from the experience and leave behind the frozen, fractured, and blocked energies.

Whether we have had children or not, the natural tendency of a mature, rational mind is to realize that people are often doing the best they can. This may mean that they make a terrible mess of things, resulting in lack of boundaries or the child not being “seen” because the parent had to work. It may mean outright abuse and violence, neglect, or not experiencing the sort of energetic synchronization that occurs between parent(s) and child that allows for feelings of safety and of feeling truly held and heard.

Even if we did not experience outright abuse as a child, and did feel emotionally connected and synchronized with both parents, our childhoods are always a fertile time for healing work. Our concept of who we are, how we relate to others, and our development—not just on a spiritual level but on a physical and social development level—is created largely before the age of six. Our brains create the tracks that color our world during our early childhood, and our adolescence is often full of the struggle to become independent and to consider oneself a separate being from the family unit.

One of the biggest forms of resistance in doing this work is often the resistance of an adult self. Our inner two-year-old may really want love and attention from our father; in our adult state, we may want our father to stay as far away from us as possible to preserve our safety or sanity. It is by being open to what that part of you wants, even if it differs from what you may wish to hear at your current age, that more healing can occur. It is by resolving inner conflicts and opposing forces within us that we can heal.

Our minds will naturally want to create villains, especially if we have been harmed, or we were not loved

and heard to the level we needed. While in rare cases, true psychopathic behavior does exist, in most cases parents were doing the best they could—struggling against a background of trauma and overwhelm, with inadequate tools and support to properly care for their children.

It is by working with our ancestry that we can often gain the most insight about the sort of weight and patterning that has been enacted in our families. Our parents and their way of being did not simply emerge out of the ether; it came from how they grew up, and likely from patterns and beliefs and trauma that had been passed down the lineage.

As a spiritual healer, one of my first experiences doing ancestral work was with descendants of Holocaust survivors. These were middle to upper class individuals who had significant fear, anxiety, and control issues. They would find themselves hoarding food, experiencing deep grief, and would become obsessive about their jobs and the safety of their family members. It was by working with their inner children and their ancestry that these individuals began finding more peace in their lives and letting go of their fearful and obsessive behavior.

Since this time, I have worked with many ancestors and lineages, working with the ancestral effects of slavery, poverty, genocide, war, disease, and land that could not produce crops. For many of us in our modern world, it is hard to imagine the effects of losing several children, dying in childbirth, having a disease or plague wipe out a whole village, being displaced or forced to leave your land, or having the men go off to war, leaving the women and children behind. Our ancestors were more likely to be farmers, to be less protected from the seasons, to fight in battle, and to fall victim to plagues and diseases.

In many other ways, our ancestors are quite similar to us. They loved, lost, and struggled with health and providing

for their families. They experienced trauma and abuse and may have received mixed messages about religion, spirituality, and money. Our capacity to handle money in a responsible or clear manner may be impacted by the financial situations of our ancestors.

How we relate to food and hunger, fears and emotions that seem too large considering your own experiences in this world (or without cause), and our attitudes toward work, money, security, and our loved ones, are all common patterns of fracturing, “freezing” and wounding due to the experiences of our ancestors.

We tend to more readily connect to the “victim” aspect of our ancestry. This work is crucial, and deeply healing. For those of you ready to consider such things, healing the perpetrator is also suggested. This means that we may have ancestors who owned slaves, who brutalized others during times of war, or who spread religion through domination and decimation. These things are certainly not easy to consider, and many of us could spend large amounts of fruitful time working on ancestors who experienced loss, disease, and all of the struggles that came from being human during their time in history. However, the eventual healing of the perpetrator can reveal great amounts of insight, inspire healing, as well as release familial beliefs regarding race, sex, gender, culture, and religion that we may still be enacting without consciousness.

Similar to our own experiences of trauma, our family members and ancestors experienced trauma that caused them to “freeze.” The emotions, beliefs, and experiences that were a part of the trauma become frozen, or locked in time. Ideally, our ancestors would have the skills and opportunities to heal these energies and resolve the trauma they experienced. Often near death, or as part of the dying experience, they may have had the opportunity to cast off or heal emotions and traumas.

But if the trauma of our ancestors is not resolved, it gets passed down through the lineage, or our *ancestral line*. We may have an unresolved trauma that has been passed down from our mother or grandmother. We may also have an unresolved trauma that is from several hundred years ago, and each generation that it has passed to has added on, shifted, or simply acted out the same trauma “loop” again and again.

To explain this further I will use two metaphors. Imagine a small snowball at the top of a hill. This snowball represents an original trauma or experience of one of our ancestors. This snowball then rolls down the hill, collecting more snow. To make things more complicated, that snowball can go straight down that hill, passing down the exact same beliefs and emotions from that original snowball; it could also veer off course due to another trauma added on top of the original one, adding additional beliefs and emotions to the snowball.

In this work, we always simply work with what arises, focusing on the closest we can get to that original snowball. If we heal the original snowball, the rest of the snow melts. To mix metaphors, this is like a series of dominoes. We do not want to just take care of one or two dominoes; we want to get as close as we can to the domino that was set up first, or has caused all of the other dominos to fall. In this way, we can truly effect the greatest amount of healing and release.

If this sounds complicated, know that whatever arises is perfect for you to know about and work with in the moment. This means that even if you work with a snowball that is midway down the hill after veering off course, it still represents a considerable amount of release and healing. Sometimes, we need to work through layers of ancestors, or we may not yet have the experience level to understand that an event from long ago is still affecting us now.

Wherever you are at is perfect, and you can again look at the end of the book to the “Tying Things Together” section to see how to incorporate this work as a part of the entire protocol.

It is actually easier in some ways to work with our ancestors because we have conscious recall and have mentally constructed stories and beliefs around what we have experienced with our family as well as extended family from our childhood. Reexamining what we can consciously recall can sometimes be tricky, or we may have resistance around it for good reason. Our memories are actually more fluid than we may believe, and a new understanding from an adult or child perspective may emerge that could provide new insight as well as healing.

My suggestion is that you stay open to new beliefs and realizations from an adult perspective concerning your childhood. Some of the most shocking realizations and most insightful healing work can happen when we are courageous enough to look at our childhood with openness and readiness to see things in a new light. What may have traumatized us deeply as a child can be comforted, understood, and offered compassion as an adult. What we may have experienced as a child and hold onto as a solid, static belief and memory may look entirely different with adult information and recollection.

To be clear, I am not saying that memories are false, or that whatever you experienced as a child was less traumatic than you remembered—what emerges may, in fact, be more of a big deal than you once believed. But from an adult perspective we have more tools, understandings about ourselves and the world, and a realization that we emerged out of the situation reasonably intact. We can see those around us from that time with a more nuanced, informed perspective. That perspective makes all the difference in the

inner child “unfreezing” and becoming integrated as a part of us again.

It is natural for family energies to emerge first when we do this work. Our relationship with our father, mother, as well as other family members often needs to be explored before more in-depth work with ancestors is done. We often need to explore our active, conscious trauma (that which we remember and is top of mind) before working with deeper layers, such as ancestral energies.

If we are feeling hesitant to do this work, it is an indication that it is exactly the type of healing work we need to do. You can examine this resistance, and if no difficulties or needs for healing arise in relation to your mother, father, or your experiences in this world, you could ask the following question: *If I could sense anything unhealed in relation to my family (mother/father/grandparents) what would I sense?* It is likely that once you have moved past some resistance, a lot of patterns will emerge.

## **Working with Ancestral and Familial Patterns**

For the patterns that you can consciously recall, you will work with the inner child protocol. To begin, you will always check in with your body deva. You may wish to ask it what you should work with today, or specifically intend to focus on an emotion or pattern that you feel may be related to your family or ancestry.

When working with the individual area of your body, you may find that the energy feels more than just yours. One of the key indicators of ancestral energies tends to be overwhelming or large emotions that do not make sense in terms of your individual timeline. For example, you will notice a huge amount of grief within you, and while you may have reasons to have some grief, the amount of grief within is much more than your own experiences of this world.

You also may be engaged in the inner child protocol and find that there is a restrictive pattern or something going on with your mother, father, or other family member that seems like it is blocking or preventing full healing for that inner child. For example, say your inner six-year-old needs to be loved and heard by his father. The father seems unwilling, unable, or resistant to the extent that it doesn't seem right to visualize this. This would be an indication that something is going on that is either familial or ancestral.

When we are working with ancestral healing, we are always working with who started the pattern. Everyone down that line (all of the other dominoes) has taken on that pattern. We have taken on that pattern, as well as added our own beliefs and experiences to it. In this work, it is important that we relate any beliefs of our ancestors resulting from the trauma they experienced to beliefs we hold in our own lives. There may be a direct parallel, or we may have taken on this belief in a slightly different way.

It is by releasing both the initiator of the trauma as well as our relation to the energy that we can fully heal the ancestral line.

As mentioned, you will begin by asking your body deva to reveal where there may be an ancestral pattern in your body. You will do a body scan, noting areas that draw your focus or seem highlighted. You will then ask your body deva to show which area would be the most important for you to work with (if multiple areas show up). You then would sit with this area of your body, noting how it feels physically, what you sense energetically, as well as visualize the blockage (or emptiness) as a basic shape in your physical form.

You may then wish to move on to checking in with the individual body part, as well as the body deva, to find out basic information about what it may hold. Inquire if this



energy is ancestral. If the answer you receive is yes, or you feel a significant shift in that area of your body in response, this will serve as confirmation.

If you are already immersed in the whole protocol (checking in with an individual body part) or are engaged with inner child work, you may wish to ask if any of the energy is ancestral or familial. If the answer is yes, or a shift in the body part occurs, you would also continue.

For the following work, you will rely on your sense of “knowing.” It is often our strongest psychic sensitivity. As noted earlier, if you feel you are making up visuals or stories, what will happen is that there will be no shift in the body map or individual part of the body after the work. If you are truly engaged in ancestral work, there often are emotions that begin arising, as well as realizations that occur about how some of what you believe may not have come from your individual experiences of this world.

- Ask your body deva to bring forward the ancestor who began this pattern.
- See or sense this ancestor. Are they male or female?
- How old are they?
- What do they look like?
- What are they wearing?
- Now, look out to where they are. Where are they and what are they doing?
- What emotions can you sense?

If this information does not arise, you may wish to ask: *If I could sense this ancestor, what would I sense?*

If you have further difficulty, you may wish to either ask your body deva to relate the information to you, or picture a

blank television screen. When you turn this television screen on, your ancestor will appear.

Once you have a baseline sense of what they look like and where they may be, you will want to know what is causing them overwhelm, difficulty, or harm. This work is similar to the inner child work. We do not need to create a whole story, but need to know the basics of what is causing the person to feel traumatized or overwhelmed.

- Ask your body deva what is going on with this ancestor.
  - You can try asking the ancestor directly, but at first, it is often easier to ask your body deva or rely on your sense of knowing to fill in these details.
- Ask for the basics of what may have happened to them, what caused them to experience trauma.
  - A good indicator is always emotions (those you sense them experiencing or those that may be arising in you as you do this work).
  - Another good indicator is the scene you see them in. You have seen them there for a good reason, and where they are can give a good indication about what is going on with them.
  - Once you have understood the trauma or cause of overwhelm, you will ask about the beliefs created from the trauma.
    - What beliefs about the self were created from this trauma?
    - What beliefs about the world (or the people in it) were created from this trauma?
  - Check in with these beliefs and see how you may resonate or carry similar beliefs in your own life.

- In some cases, it may be an exact parallel:  
*“Yes, I totally feel like, no matter what I do, I am always going to suffer.”*
- In other cases, it may be strikingly similar: *“I haven’t lost children, but I can relate to feeling like I will be grieving forever.”*
- Ask your ancestor what they would need to heal.
  - Visualize or offer this to your ancestor.
  - Some may choose to visualize a specific color light flowing to their ancestor to help them feel better.
- Ask to receive the strengths that have emerged from your ancestry.
- Your ancestor will disappear when their energy is no longer “frozen.” If they are still there, it simply means they need more time (or something else) in order to heal. Continue asking what they need until you can no longer sense them.
  - You can also check in with your body deva and ask it if the ancestor is healed.
- You will now go back to your own body and where the energy of your ancestor was being held.
- Let your body part know that this ancestral energy has resolved, and ask it to shift or change due to that knowledge.
- You can now move on to resolving or releasing your own experiences of this energy, either through talking to the individual body part or through doing inner child work.

This work is non-forceful. We are not forcing light or energy into these frozen ancestral energies. We are acting from a place of compassion toward anything that arises.

Occasionally, the question of ethics arises as it pertains to ancestral work. Working with the actual spirits of ancestors is something that experienced spiritual healers and shamans do quite frequently. This is not what we are doing here. We are working with how the body has taken on the beliefs and energies of trauma and healing our own consciousness and the dynamics of what has been passed down to us and is still held within. By doing this, healing is likely to reverberate out to others, such as our children and family members, but it is also always their choice to what degree they wish to engage with how they have individually taken on the patterns and traumas of their ancestors and made them their own.

Resolving how we have taken on these energies and made them our own is an important step in this process. It keeps things body-oriented, as well as allows us to take personal responsibility for how we have enacted these patterns in our own lives. Even if you do not go through the entire protocol and simply find some beliefs that were created from this trauma, simply being aware of that is immensely healing. Our subconscious mind will already be working on how to resolve the emotions and trauma energies when we are ready to explore more deeply.

It is important to ask to receive the strengths of your ancestors while doing this work. Our ancestral line may be filled with trauma, and healing that is incredibly helpful. However, it's helpful to understand the positive traits that have been passed down to us, as our struggles often offer us beneficial strength, resiliency, and a specific way of relating to the world. Inquiring how those strengths inform us is at least as revealing as discovering and working with restrictive ancestral energies. It can allow us to more fully

understand who we are and the specific culture or ancestry we emerged from.

On occasion, the ancestral energies may be resistant or unwilling to engage in a healing process. We can often move beyond this resistance by offering understanding as well as asking, *If you could imagine needing anything, what would that be?* Ancestral energies are large, and the change would be simply too immense if we were to shift things too quickly. Making space for healing, even if the ancestral energy doesn't completely resolve, can allow for shifts in the held energy in the physical body, and a subsequent shift in your life.

If you really get stuck, I suggest working with a spiritual healer or shaman who specializes in ancestral lineage healing and has the spiritual capacity to intercede and work directly with spirits. People like this can be difficult to find, for despite the popularity of shamanism these days, many "shamans" do not work directly with spirits (even though that is a core requirement of the work). Look for someone with five years or more of fulltime experience, specifically as a spiritual healer with a focus on ancestral healing. It takes a long time and immersive study to become competent in spiritual work, even with a calling, so someone solely focused on spiritual or shamanic healing in their practice, rather than a range of holistic or psychotherapeutic modalities, is suggested.

## **Steven**

Steven found himself consistently enraged by what he described as minor inconveniences. He would emerge from his rage embarrassed and unsure about why he got so upset at traffic, friends, or work colleagues. When he worked with percentages, he found that 10 percent of this rage was appropriate and that 90 percent was not.

Steven came from a loving, middle-class home. His parents were always available to him, encouraged him in football and orchestra, and supported him financially as much as they were able during college. He reported having an

older brother who he got along with reasonably well during the holidays, and no particular early childhood trauma.

We asked his body deva to show him where this rage was coming from. It showed his genitals, pelvis, and left leg. The pattern felt dense and cold, and Steven said he felt like running and his body shook when we started looking at it.

We asked the body deva as well as the individual pattern (the pelvis, genitals, and left leg) if this pattern was ancestral. What came up was the sensation of cold as well as fear that caused his lower body and leg to shake.

When he asked an ancestor to emerge, Steven remarked that he looked male, young, and that it looked like he was running from something and completely terrified. Based on the scene he viewed, he had the sense that this may be connected to his Haitian lineage.

With his sense of knowing, Steven felt that this came from the Haitian revolution and that this man was part of the slave revolt. He had given his life so that his people could be freed. When he realized this, his body began feeling warmer and some of the sensation of wanting to run away lessened.

He asked this man what he needed, and he replied that he wanted to be known for what he did. Steven said that he would be proud to honor him, and his body deva said that he died without being honored (more on what a “good death” involves can be found in the Past Lives chapter). Steven imagined a funeral for him with a well-tended gravesite.

Steven visualized a funeral for this man, and asked what beliefs were created from this situation. The man had no reply. He then asked his body deva, and it replied that there was not a specific belief, but a pervasive feeling of being lost or not at home that came about due to this man and his experiences. Steven related to this feeling and how it had a place in his own life.

The scene disappeared, and Steven returned to his own body, letting the pattern in the pelvis, genitals, and leg know that it no longer needed to hold this traumatized energy. The energy released quickly, revealing other ancestral patterns for Steven to work on. Even though there was more to work on in this area, he felt more vibrant and present in his daily life, and became interested in his family history. He had not mentioned lower back pain, but said that he no longer experienced back pain or headaches after this ancestral energy resolved.

## **Madison**

Madison felt like she was a little girl trapped in an adult body. Her voice, affect, and the way she related to me practically screamed that she was “frozen” in a younger child state (around four or five years old).

Madison had done enough therapy and self-exploration to know that she had an uncle who had abused her at that age, as well as a family friend and neighbor who had abused her between the ages of five and ten. Despite the healing work she had done, she felt not quite ready to immerse herself in such trauma (and she doesn't need to for this form of work), so she pictured a

television screen in which a young girl appeared to her in a completely dark room. It was her bedroom at night, and there were monsters and shadows on the wall, but she was too frightened to get out of bed. This little girl had the belief that drawing attention to herself would get her harmed, and as her uncle was over, she remembers urinating in her bed because she was too afraid to get up to go to the bathroom.

When her mother came in the room to clean her up, she noticed a sense of apathy and stoicism from her mother. Her inner child wanted love and to be told that everything was going to be okay from her mother, but her mother seemed like a zombie, unable to offer such things.

Madison asked her body deva where her relationship to her mother was held, and it showed her heart area. The area felt tight and like there were pins being shoved into her heart from the outside in. Madison asked if this energy was from ancestral or family sources, and her body deva said yes. Madison asked for clarity about whether this energy came from beyond her mother, and the answer was again yes, that it came from her grandmother.

Madison asked her grandmother to step forward, and she saw a scene of her grandmother fixing old socks and hemming clothes to make ends meet for the family. Her fingers were numb, and she was working by very little light. Madison asked the body deva to tell her what was overwhelming or created trauma, and she was shown that poverty and not being shown love from her spouse over time caused her grandmother to retreat within and to develop a hard shell around her so that nobody could see her pain. Her belief was, *This is what life is*, and resulted in her deciding to become numb and detached from life and her body. This energy was transmitted to her child, Madison's mother, and Madison saw how she herself used this energetic shell and numbness as a way to protect herself when she was experiencing abuse.

Madison asked her body deva what her grandmother needed, and the reply was to be at peace. Madison visualized her outside with her sister, simply drinking a cup of tea. She had no idea how or why she came up with that visual, but it seemed to work, and the energetic shell began to fade and a smile came over her grand-mother's face. Her grandmother began to see the beauty in the world and slowly faded from awareness.

Madison asked her heart to release this ancestral pattern, telling it that she was willing to see the world as more than a place of struggle and pain. It released the needles and revealed a wound and scar underneath. She went back, but her mother was still not able to show her compassion for wetting the bed.

Madison has had a difficult life, and this one piece of work did not solve all of the trauma and abuse she has experienced. But she was willing to work daily to make herself more functional, healthier, and more open. This session, in particular, allowed her to stop feeling as if she was coming up against a brick wall with all she did, and to let others see more of her true self without the fear she once had.

# CHAPTER EIGHT

## Healing Past Lives

**W**e are not just our own experiences in this world; we are influenced by a variety of energies and belief systems. The easiest example of this is our family. Unless there is some sort of healing or coming into greater awareness that occurs, we will most likely take on the beliefs and understandings of our parents. We are also likely to “loop,” or live out their wounds, pain, and unprocessed emotions without realizing it.

We rarely understand that many of the energies, beliefs, emotions, and patterns we carry do not originate with us, with our experiences in this world, in this incarnation. This is not to shirk any sort of personal responsibility, by the way—even when we do inherit patterns and traumas and emotions, we still have our own experiences of them and add onto them. Many past life therapies and healing only focus on what was experienced in the past life. This work offers you the opportunity to understand the past life, what occurred, what sort of blocked or “empty” energies this created within you, as well as a chance to reflect on how you took on the patterning from your past life.

Our past lives are intended to be in the background. We are not intended to be aware of them. If we are, they are likely *unhealed*, meaning that there is something about that lifetime that is creating restriction in your current body and life. Similar to the inner child work, past lives need closure, to heal any overwhelming or traumatizing experiences that were not able to be reconciled, and to release the beliefs associated with them.



If our past incarnation was not able to reconcile the trauma or emotions they experienced, that energy gets passed down to us. It is a part of the energy that we inherit coming into this world, and clearing at this level can have profound and often surprising effects. We may have little idea before doing this type of work of the impacts unhealed past life beliefs and traumas are having on our current incarnation.

There are common reasons why past lives linger. The most common is manner of death. Ideally, we would all have what is known as a “good death.” This means that we die consciously, that we are ready to die, and that our death was not surprising to us. Understandably, there are times when a good death does not occur. In these cases, the manner of death frequently needs to be worked with. It may be surprising to notice while doing this work that an area that is creating physical pain for you may be linked to a hanging in a previous life (throat), a miscarriage or death during the childbirth process (pelvic pain), starvation or exposure (digestive tract) or a stabbing (solar plexus), but these are all commonly realized patterns when working with past lives.

When we do not have this good death, the death remains unresolved. Our bodies and spirit like closure. We did not have time to fully resolve emotions, feelings, or other experiences because of the manner in which we died. We may not feel as if we had an honorable death, either. This is more important in some cultures than others, but the proper honoring and burial for a warrior, soldier, or someone who died anonymously can allow the death to become honorable and the unresolved energetics of the manner of death to dissipate.

The other pattern for past lives is largely emotional and trauma-based. Much like our own lives, we struggled and loved and lost in our past lives. Any trauma, emotion, or

experience that was too much for us to work through in our previous incarnation is unresolved and carried forward into this lifetime. A red flag to possibly suggest that past-life healing may be helpful is fear that does not make sense within the context of your experiences in this world. This fear is beyond the normal and logical experience of fearing heights, betrayal, earthquakes and natural disasters, or other experiences in this world.

We will then attempt to heal this unresolved past life energy or might relieve the experience without our conscious awareness. We may, in fact, meet people from previous incarnations with whom we are attempting to heal some sort of rift. In simpler ways, we may not understand why we have always had a fear of the ocean, or carry around a huge amount of grief, are angry toward a particular type of profession or person, or have a huge interest in airplanes, or knowledge about airplanes, without much if any study.

We are, of course, rarely conscious of any of this. If we are “awakening,” we may begin to recall past lives and have strange dreams that feel like they are from elsewhere, a recollection of odd events, or even flashes of ourselves in a past life. More commonly, people come to past-life healing because there is an area of their body in pain that nobody can figure out. As a spiritual practitioner, I find that the people who come to me typically have been to see as many as twenty other health care practitioners with little change to their situation and are often willing to try anything, no matter how strange, to bring themselves closer to healing.

Past-life healing is, of course, not a panacea for all that ails us. We are unique individuals with unique reasons for being, and have many reasons for disease and dysfunction. But in many cases, past lives are a piece that helps us complete the puzzle of our lives, and in healing the root reason why something began (a past life), other methods of

more traditional care may start to work, or work better than they did previously.

In previous chapters, the concept of “root and branch” was introduced. When we get to deeper, more spiritual patterns, we are getting closer to the root of a pattern, that is, why it may have emerged in the first place.

For example, we may have significant digestive issues and have visited many physicians, therapists, and holistic practitioners for treatment of the physical, emotional, and some of the energetic issues yet still experience problems. In some cases, this would point to more time needed with the physical elements of the digestive system (which take time to heal). But in many other cases, the root of what originally caused the digestive issues has not yet been expressed.

The ancestral, familial, or past-life energetics, once worked with and resolved, would heal the root of the issue. Typically, what occurs is that the physical, therapeutic, or holistic methods (the “branches”) of working with the digestive tract would then begin to work with higher efficacy. We are spiritual, emotional, mental, and physical beings, and it is by working with all aspects of ourselves that we can heal both root and branch.

It goes without saying that this type of work is for people seeking to heal. We may create a lot of illusions for ourselves about past lives and other spiritual matters, and be open and curious about them, but the right frame of mind for this type of work is to remain somewhat skeptical.

There always should be a part of ourselves that is logical and questions what we are doing. We can work through this material with an open mind but remain skeptical simultaneously. What is important are the results and shifts in our bodies and lives as a result of the work, not the stories that emerge. Being healthier, more functional, in

less pain, and in a more embodied state are the intended results of this work.

If you are unwilling, or due to your faith or personal cosmology cannot work with past lives, this section can simply be skipped, as there is more than enough to work with in this book to effect considerable healing and self-knowledge. Ideally, you will eventually open to the possibility of working with past lives, even if they are to be considered “archetypal” rather than “real” past-life experiences. What is most important is that there are changes in the beliefs of the traumatized individual who emerges and a shift to a higher degree of embodiment in the body map and shape of the blocked or empty energy within the body, not the “truth” behind whether it was a past life or not.

After doing this work, you can always go back to the body map and see how things have changed, but if it is done right, there should be a palpable and noticeable shift at the time. It is important to know that you do not need to already be aware of a past life in order to do this work; it can almost be better if you do not go into this work with preconceived ideas about what will emerge.

## **Working with Past Lives**

To begin, you will want to contact your body deva. If you are specifically interested in finding and working with a past life, you can ask your body deva to highlight or point out an area of your body that holds a past life trauma. You would then do a body scan or just notice what emerges or draws your focus. If there are multiple body parts that show up, you can ask your body deva to show you or make clear which one would be best to work with today.

You may already have been working with your body deva and talking with a specific body part that called your

attention to it. While speaking with it, it may clearly state that it has a past life energy to work with. Or you may begin by creating a list of questions, such as, *Is there any element of this that is ancestral? What about past life? Is there any element that is inner child?* We will go over a full list in the Tying Things Together chapter so you can clearly know how to ask for this information.

To avoid making things too confusing right now, I will say that it is very likely that your body will offer multiple answers to these questions (*e.g. It is from trying to lift a couch a few years back, an inner twenty-year-old, past life, as well as ancestral* ). You eventually will have the tools and capability to work with multiple layers of patterns. For now, there should be some sort of resonance or “activation” (the body part starting to shift or change in some way) if you say the words “past life” to it, or it gives a simple reply of “yes,” or you get a sense of knowing that leads you to feel that working with a past life would be fruitful.

In time, you may find that a past life emerges for you. Most commonly, this is through dreams, but experienced meditators and others on a spiritual path may simply recognize or realize that some sort of pattern is coming up for them that may be related to a past life. If this happens, you would ask the body deva to show you where your body is holding this past life energy, then continue.

You will now feel into the area of your body, and utilize the “talking to your body” exercise to get a general sense of how that area is doing. You may wish to do a quick body map drawing and notice what the area in question looks like.

You will then ask the body deva (and the area of your body you are working with) to show you specifically this past life energy. What this means is that if you feel your whole abdomen is on lockdown, the past life energy may be the

whole thing, or may just be a little something to the right of your belly button. Asking the body deva to highlight and bring up the past life energy specifically will allow you to separate and sense what this energy may specifically feel like in your body.

You will sit with how this energy specifically feels: how big it is, where it is being held, what colors or shape it displays in your body. When you clue in to this energy, you may notice an emotion. Get a sense of what emotions may be there—Fear? Anger? Despair? Name whatever emotions come up for you when focused on this energy.

During this initial phase, you want to get as much information as possible. If you are able to clearly sense the shape, color, and emotions behind this held past life energy, you can move on with more success and clarity. It can be easy to get frustrated with work like this; we always want to get everything on our first try or right away. But even the acknowledgment and connection to our body deva and recognizing the past life energy (even if you do not see it or sense it clearly) will allow you to begin healing and reconciling the energy.

You will now ask the body deva to clearly show you the past life that started this energy. To be able to see or sense this, you can ask the following questions of the body deva:

- Is this past life male or female?
- How old are they?
- What are they wearing?
- What color hair do they have?

The purpose here is to get a basic description of the person. What we are doing is energetically focusing on them, similarly to how we focus a camera lens. If you feel like you are making things up, it is understandable, but if something

comes up for you there is a reason why. There is a reason why your mind self-created a sad-looking thirteen-year-old with brown hair wearing an apron.

If this information changes, you can simply correct it later. If you realize that you thought someone was thirty, but on closer examination they were forty-five, or even seventy, it really isn't a huge leap. If we are self-creating, we will receive no feedback from the body deva when checking in, and will not notice any changes or shifts in our physical body.

During the more spiritual work it is easy to try too hard. This is almost always the reason for people being blocked. Breathe in a few times to center yourself. Allowing information to come to you is helpful, as is distinguishing between information coming from your body deva (and where it is located in your body or its energetic structure) and information coming from your head. Ideally, this information will come to you, and you will not need to energetically force any information to come through. Sitting back, taking a few breaths, and allowing things to arise naturally, without trying too hard or searching, will permit information to come up.

If multiple people come up for you, ask who initiated the pattern, just as you did in the ancestral work. When multiple people come into consciousness, it often means that it is a pattern that has passed down through more than one past life. If things are unclear, and you are not able to see or sense anything, you can go back to working with resistance (Chapter Two), or simply try another day.

Once you have the basic description, you will then get a sense of what is going on around this person:

- Where are they?

- Can you sense anything about the time period or location?
- Is there an emotion that you can sense here?

It is likely that a fair amount of information has come up. Check in with your body deva and ask if it is okay to continue:

- What is going on with this person? There is likely some sense of overwhelm or a trauma happening.
- If you cannot sense this, ask, *If I could sense what is happening with this person, what would I sense?*
- Again, you will tap into any emotions you are sensing. Ask your body deva why the person is feeling (sad, hopeless, filled with grief, angry, afraid).

There doesn't need to be a whole, huge story that emerges here. What we need to know is basically what happened to this person that created unresolved trauma or frozen energies that have passed down to you. This will give us something to start working with.

If you are not getting a clear sense of things, you can always try again another day, or you can ask your body deva to tell you more. This means that if you hear that it is a young girl who is sad you can simply state, *Tell me more*, and it may emerge that she is sad because her mother has passed away.

You will now ask your body deva or the past life coming forward what they would need to find closure. The body deva allows for a bit of separation and a healed perspective; chatting with the past life allows for more story or emotional perspective. If emotions are too overwhelming, you might work with the body deva as a way of having some much-needed space and perspective, and to avoid getting



wrapped up in the mental and emotional trauma being expressed.

Often what is needed is to release emotions, or heal the physical wound or experience that led to the person's death. Many times, the past life needs closure by simply letting their memory be shown. As you are asking these questions, you are likely to feel a sense of shifting or lightening of the body part you are working with.

As you did with the earlier inner child work, you will get a sense of what the person in your past life would need to heal or find closure, then visualize them receiving this.

Our past lives are frozen in the state of trauma they experienced, looping through it again and again. They do not realize that their story, according to linear time, is over. They are so stuck in a "death loop" (their manner of death), or their grief, anger, fear, or other emotions, they may just need recognition and the imagery of resolution to allow them to get unstuck and the energy to clear.

You will ask your body deva for the personal or outer beliefs that were created due to this trauma.

- How did this trauma change how this person saw themselves or what they believed about themselves?
- How did this experience change or create beliefs about the world, people, or men/women in the world?

Sit with any beliefs that emerge and see how you, in your adult state, personally relate to them. We always take on beliefs like this unconsciously, and by bringing them into consciousness, we can reflect on how we have taken on beliefs that did not originate with our own experiences of this world and have made them our own. We all have experiences that will consolidate or add onto the beliefs and

by considering your personal expression of these beliefs, you can heal the entire continuum, or both root and branch.

As with the inner child work, the past life will gradually dissolve or no longer be apparent if it is healed. If they remain, there is still a need for closure and healing. Continue asking your body deva or the past life what their needs for closure are until you can no longer see or sense them.

Similar to the ancestral section, you can also inquire as to the gifts or strengths from this past life. This is much more apparent in ancestral lineages, but it is important to understand that our struggles, and that of our previous lives, may have gained wisdom, strength, or benefit from what they experienced. This does not mean that every tragedy is a learning experience, but that our lives here are complex, with opportunities for wisdom, strength, and many other gifts that come from our direct experience. Understanding these gifts from our past lives can awaken them within ourselves, and allow us to realize how we may relate to or embody these same gifts.

It is not important that this final resolution occur, however. Healing everything in one try will happen, especially as you get better at this work, but many of our past lives require a fair amount of resolution, or may come up continually in different ways if they have many unresolved issues. Practicing compassion for yourself and asking the body deva if there is anything that needs to be done today in order for healing to occur (and being okay if the body deva says to come back another day) will allow you to take steps forward in your healing process at a pace and level you are comfortable with.

Once the energy dissolves (or you are simply done for the day, even if the past life is still present, or you are

unsure in some way), you will then go back to your own body and to where you sensed this energy.

The energy and sensation in your body is likely to have changed. Even if it has, you can ask that body part to change and release due to the past life healing work that was done. Let that body part know that it no longer needs to hold the energy of this past life.

You will then end by saying “thank you” and then asking your body deva to recognize and shift and heal in relation to the past life energy you released.

## **Past Life Beliefs and Personal Responsibility**

As mentioned, we take on energies from all sorts of different sources. Some of these are past life sources. Taking responsibility for our path and bodies really means that we cannot blame our experiences on our past lives (or our ancestors, or karma, or even our family or inner children). To complete and provide closure for the past life energy that lived within you, there must be some sort of reconciliation of how it impacted you.

If you consider this past life (you can also do this while working with it), this person likely had a lot of emotions and thoughts about their experiences. Trauma changes us. It changes what we think about ourselves. It changes what we think about other people, and creates fear and separation in our relation to the world.

If you were to get a sense of what patterns emerged out of this past life, what would they be? What would the contract be?

There were likely beliefs or understandings that emerged due to the trauma of this past life. This person may have distrusted authority because they were a servant to a king, or may believe that the world is unsafe because

their village was raided. They may believe that they cannot use their voice and that they will never amount to anything; they may feel that men (or women) are dangerous as a result of the experiences they have had.

With experience, you may be able to relate their experience to one in this life, and note your relationship to the king (who in this life may be your mother), and how the situation has “looped” or been created again.

While working with the past life energy, you are welcome to ask the body deva these questions, but an important part of the process is to take a step back and contemplate what belief structures and understandings changed as a result of the trauma this person experienced. If it is matter of death, the person may have formed fewer ideas about the experience, as they may have simply not had time, but otherwise there is likely something there for you to consider.

When an idea emerges, you can realize that you have taken on this belief or reaction in some way. Maybe you are afraid that your house will be broken into, or feel as if the world is constantly out to screw you, or are deathly afraid of heights. Maybe you have had dreams of being strangled, suffocated, or lynched, or you find yourself unwilling or unable to trust your partner due to a betrayal by them in a past life. Whatever it is, you have taken on these thoughts, realizations, and reactions and made them your own. You will have done so directly (believing in the exact same way that the world is constantly out to screw you) or the belief may have shifted and changed based on your own experiences in this world (you now believe that a particular class, race, or gender will break into your home due to the beliefs and traumas of the familial household impacting you).

Realizing this will offer the opportunity for further release. Going back to your body deva with this realization, and asking the body part where this energy was being held to release as a result of this new understanding, will permit full closure of any past lives being expressed.

It is always lovely after such work to take a bit of a breather (a few days) and then to redraw your body map, or simply see how your body is feeling. Release at this level can cause release of emotions. For example, if the person in your past life was grieving, you may feel some grief arise in your own body. This is always surprising to people, as they are not used to working with something spiritual and having it have a physical impact. Some experiences of soreness can occur with this type of work. We are doing deep excavating here, and this type of response will really show how we do in fact hold energies like this within.

## **Margot**

Margot wanted to understand her long-standing pelvic pain. She was deeply afraid of sex, and found it extremely painful. Her gynecologist told her that it was due to anxiety, and prescribed anti-anxiety medication for her. Margot had been in therapy for the past twenty years due to experiences of childhood sexual abuse, but had found in the last five years or so that she had plateaued, despite changing therapists.

Margot was quite sensitive. She found that Reiki and other healing methods helped her quite a bit but realized that there was “something else” going on. This was just a sense she had at this time; she was not the type of person to entertain past lives or remember them.

She began doing work with her body deva as well as speaking to her pelvis. A great deal of anger and pain and inner child imagery and healing came up for her. Her digestive tract became really inflamed. She found that instead of speaking to the pelvis that she needed to speak to everything from the belly button down to the knees (front and back), and that instead of a broken or “missing” feeling, she felt pulsations, heat, and a sense of screaming emerge from the area.

Margot went back in and asked if there was any part of this that was past life. The answer that came through was yes, and she saw an image of a tall, thin woman who was peering out of the basement of a house. She was quite young (early twenties) and was very shy. This woman revealed that she was not supposed to leave the basement, and that she was a servant of an important

man. Her impoverished parents had sold her to this family, and the man of the house was quite violent and sexually abusive with her. It was further revealed that she died due to this violence, and that nobody ever realized that she was dead, or the manner in which she died.

This young woman wanted someone to see her and recognize her. Margot agreed to do so, and the woman gradually disappeared. Margot then realized that this woman thought she was invisible, as if her suffering were invisible. Margot saw that in this life this male was her father. In her own life, and with her own experiences, Margot was also shut down, not seen, and not believed. She really felt sad for this woman, as well as herself, and as she asked her pelvis to release the energy from this experience, she began crying.

After she felt better, she began to notice that she could feel more energy in her pelvic area. She realized how distanced she had been from it before. Several weeks went by and she was able to have sex with no discomfort, and found that being intimate with her partner was more enjoyable. She then asked her body deva if this past life was anywhere else in her body, as she sensed a part of it was unresolved. She then worked with her throat and released all of the unspoken energy from this young woman. She was then able to work with more clarity with the emotions and experiences that were hers from her childhood, and found a transpersonal therapist to assist her who welcomed her spiritual experiences.

After this experience, Margot realized that she had been stifling her voice. She began writing and painting, and realized that she wanted to be a resource for other child sex abuse survivors to find their voice. She enrolled in a transpersonal psychology program and is studying shamanism and is hoping to one day specialize in helping those who have had similar childhood experiences.

## **Andre**

Andre came to see me as a last resort. He was a former semi-pro football player and had a pain in his stomach that he had tried everything to relieve. He daily found himself reaching for antacids and likened his pain to being stabbed, pointing to a specific place under his left ribcage. Scans of his abdomen showed nothing significant enough to create the stabbing pain he felt.

Andre said that he was raised in a Christian household and had no prior meditative or spiritual background in which he would ever consider that some of the energy there didn't originate from his own experiences of this world. He was open and willing to consider anything, and looked forward to telling his friends about the weird thing he did (seeking energy work and spiritual help).

Andre immediately clued in to the stabbing pain and described it like a large dagger being shoved into his side. He pictured his body deva like a diamond shape, and asked it what was going on in the area. His body deva replied that he should ask the area of the body where he felt stabbing, and that it had to do with something that may surprise him. When he asked the area of his body where he felt the stabbing pain, he felt the emotion of anger come up.

He asked me if that was relevant, and I told him yes, and to focus on the area and tell me what else came up as he was focusing on it. He said that it was odd, but what was coming up was the fact that he was always really jealous in his relationships. He would constantly text the women he was dating to check up on what they were doing, and eventually the relationships would break up because of his jealousy.

I suggested to him that he do the percentages. He talked to the area of his body that held the pain, and it replied that at least 50 percent was not his own pain. He was surprised by this, and asked where it came from. It said, a past life, so we asked the past life to emerge. He was uncertain about his ability to do this, so I had him visualize the scene as if it was on a television screen. He saw a young man standing outside a small hut of some sort. The man was angry because he knew that his wife was at the house of another man with whom she was carrying on an affair.

In the scene, he saw himself go over to the hut of the other man to find his wife. The house was dark, but he went inside anyway. He felt a stabbing sensation in his side and fell over. The last thing he saw was the man standing over him and his wife sitting in the corner.

The beliefs that emerged were that he could not trust people, and that women would always betray him. He recognized what an impact those beliefs had had on his current life and friendships. He asked his body deva what the man needed, and the body deva said that he just needed the betrayal to be known, as it was covered up. The man also needed to release the anger that was unresolved. Andre told the body deva that he saw the man's pain, and asked him to release his anger so he could go in peace, and the man slowly faded. Andre asked his body to release the stabbing pain and then felt like something was being pulled out of his body. The stabbing pain completely released, and Andre reported two weeks later that he no longer had any pain in that area, and that in approaching women he was able to give them a bit more space than he had previously.

# CHAPTER NINE

## Healing Cultural Energies

We not only emerge out of a specific family and ancestry but also are a product of a specific culture (or many cultures). In New Age forms of thought, the idea of “oneness” largely means people attempting to erase culture, race, and basic differences in identity. This is not helpful, nor is it terribly conscious, as we are products of the culture that we are part of, and the unique essence that we bring to the world is to be celebrated.

Our culture informs us and provides us with strength and a sense of belonging. The cultural framework we have emerged from can also carry wounding. In spiritual work, the thinking behind larger concepts such as culture is *power loss* or *inappropriate power gain*. A lot of pain, wounding, and trauma patterns emerge out of a cultural background that has been brutalized, harmed, has been taken advantage of, or is seen as lesser by dominant cultures.

While these patterns are likely to emerge from your ancestry, in a wider lens they are also products of the entire culture—the beliefs, traumas, and experiences that have emerged from the history of a specific group of people.

In other cases, we may have emerged from a culture that has sought dominance, or has owned slaves, persecuted others due to religion, or has in some way participated in the power loss of another group of people. Our world is full of wars and conflicts between cultures, and while you as an individual may not look at yourself as superior to another culture, or have not actively participated in the destruction of another culture, the healing of the



*persecutor*, or the healing of the culture that someone has emerged from that caused such destructive acts, can allow for a great deal of personal healing to emerge.

It is also likely, no matter how conscious we believe ourselves to be, that we carry thoughts, beliefs, and ways of being in relation to other groups of people. We more easily relate to victimhood; however, it is only by considering and being conscious of the parts of ourselves that relate to the *conqueror* (if we have emerged from a culture that has dominated or taken from others) that we heal beliefs and do our small part to rectify the power dynamics of our current culture or that of our ancestors.

We can heal the internal conflicts between oppressor and oppressed that lie within. As an individual we are a thread in the massive web of life, and we can do our part to heal the web of the world by healing our internal dynamics. We can heal the parts of ourselves that carry pain and power loss, as well as release the power gained through taking or conquering. We can release difficult ideologies and ways of looking at the world, or other cultures and people, if we are brave enough to face such things.

This is difficult work, as the patterning of power loss and inappropriate power gain are passed through generations, and we are often not conscious enough to realize that there is another way. It is by looking at who or what we are reactive to on a larger, cultural scale that we can see our needs for healing at this level. It is by reconciling that many of us carry both victim as well as perpetrator within that we can look at our reactivity to other cultures as well as our own to see how power loss and inappropriate power gain have manifested.

This work may emerge in a few different ways. The first would be through working with your ancestry and noticing that a group of people emerges rather than an individual.

You may also notice that you are focusing on a village, or people, instead of an aspect of your ancestry. This would indicate that something cultural would be helpful to work with rather than a specific ancestor.

You also may recognize yourself in the above and have awareness of pain or restricted beliefs caused or created by your culture. It is suggested that this work be done after some basic ancestral healing has been done, as it is somewhat easier to connect with our ancestry than our culture.

If you come from many cultures, or have been adopted or displaced from your culture or land, this work is often vital. The loss of cultural identity can often cause people to feel rather lost in their lives, or to continually reach out to other cultures and assume their identity. This is often seen in spiritual groups, as people reach for shamanic methods or take on cultural identities that enact the conqueror pattern, and unconsciously contribute to the creation of further power loss and stripping of cultural identity. This is a complex problem, and it is rare that people are willing to see that they are engaging in conqueror dynamics or actively taking power from a culture, when they often simply believe that they are honoring or participating in that culture in a helpful way.

When engaging with other cultures, spiritually or otherwise, it's always worthwhile to consider power dynamics. We cannot truly know another culture unless we have immersed ourselves in it, understanding the language, history, mythology, and everyday reality of that culture. We tend to romanticize the "other," but superficiality arises when we do not really know or relate to people from that culture (except possibly in a paid environment). Speaking as someone who has studied Traditional Chinese Medicine in some depth, I can say that there is a big difference between what I have learned versus my friend who grew up in China

and learned folk remedies, ancestral veneration, and other practices through her daily immersion in the culture.

We tend to surround ourselves with sameness—people who have emerged out of the same culture and with the same outlooks as our own. By interacting with people from other cultures, we can move past our idealized romantic notions or restrictive or hate-filled beliefs about them and authentically listen to their experiences. In this way, we can encourage a relationship rooted in equal power, rather than dynamics of power loss and of conquering or “taking” from that culture for our own purposes.

The energies of war and similar worldwide events always have an impact on culture and cultural beliefs. Similar to personal trauma, collective trauma creates beliefs and realizations, as well as contracts. These beliefs may involve the culture one is a part of, other cultures, or beliefs enacted as a result of familial and ancestral patterns of trauma.

In severe cases of power loss, there may be hatred or dislike of the culture from which you emerged. You may also notice yourself reacting to a specific culture with disregard or antipathy; these are often ideologies passed down through ancestral lines and can be healed with willingness.

The purpose of this work is not to make things “okay”; genocide, slavery, war, displacement, conquering, or taking power are never okay. Our history—how our culture came into being—is important. It should be known, related, and understood to the depth that it deserves.

Nevertheless, we can heal the energies we hold in relation to the cultures we emerged from. We can be more conscious of the dynamics of power and relationship to other cultures in our daily lives. We can move from a place of power loss, inappropriate power gain, and the subsequent beliefs and restricted thinking that occurred as a result of

trauma into a place of considering the beauty, wisdom, and strength of our ancestry. We can be proud of our heritage, who we are and what we emerged from, in a way that is healthy and life affirming and that represents the vital essence of who we are.

We carry the force of both the oppressor and the oppressed within us. By healing the relational aspects of these destructive inner relationships, we can free ourselves from them. This will allow us to act with greater clarity in the world, become more conscious of unconscious racism, classism, and “othering,” and move beyond them.

## **Working with Cultural Energies**

When we consider cultural energies, we are talking about a web, or grid, that has informed our identity as a part of that culture. This can be a specific culture associated with a country, such as Sicilian, or a more general construct associated with a larger geographic region, such as European or Eastern European. This work can also be utilized for race as well as gender constructs. Further work on gender constructs will also be discussed in the Archetypes chapter.

Putting this perhaps in an abrasively simple manner, a South African who is white, from a middle class household, and received private schooling is going to have a different cultural “web” from a South African who is black and was subject to abject poverty growing up. A third-generation Mexican immigrant living in the United States is going to have a different cultural web than a first-generation Mexican immigrant whose family may still be living in Mexico.

In most cases, this work will arise after or while doing ancestral work. This happens when the individual ancestor may be healed, but there is a sense that there is more work to be done on a larger scale or in a deeper way. There may

also be an intuitive sense that working with cultural energies would be helpful.

This work also can be done through simple intent and utilization of the body deva, but may be harder to access or see clearly unless some ancestral work is done prior to approaching cultural work.

You may also be working with the body deva or an individual part of your body and upon asking what it may hold, the concept of culture, race, sex, or gender, may arise. The Tying Things Together chapter discusses how to work with a checklist to elicit this information, but when asking about cultural energies, you will first want to check in with the body deva or the individual body part to make sure it agrees with you or watch for a change or sense of heightened energy in the body part. If you are starting by wanting to have a focused intention on cultural energies, you will ask the body deva to show where in your body you hold such energies. You may choose a specific aspect of your cultural background (if you come from many cultures, there may be one that you are drawn to), or you may ask more generally. You would then do the body scan and find the area of your body it is being held, asking the body deva and individual body part for information about how that energy looks and feels within the body, as well as basic information about the energy and what it may be.

- You will now ask the body deva for a *representative* or *spokesperson* for that culture to step forward.
- You will see or sense them as clearly as possible: age, male or female, what they look like, what they are wearing, and what they are doing currently.
- You will now look behind them to the “crowd.” What may be happening collectively to this culture?

- If you are having difficulty, picture this as if it is a television turning on. What story or show are you tuned to?
- Ask the body deva what is going on. What trauma, power loss, or inappropriate power gain is occurring?
- Ask, *What is creating a lack of balance for this culture?*
- Ask the body deva what this representative needs to feel whole.
  - Do they need power restored that they lost or that was taken from them?
  - Do they need to give power back that they took?
  - We are looking for the basic power dynamics here, or the idea of something lost or gained as a result of being a part of a specific culture.

## **Healing Power Loss**

- If power loss occurred as a result of having power taken, you will ask the body deva to now show you where the force of the oppressor is located in your body, and do a body scan to find this force.
- You will ask the body deva for a representative of the oppressor to step forward again simply describe them and what they are doing.
- You will ask the body deva or the oppressor what that person who took power would need to give it back.
  - If we are holding onto power that is not our own, we are not in balance. Ideally, we would be filled with our own power. No matter how violent or malevolent we may be outwardly, this is something we all understand on some level.

- If the person who has taken power is willing, you will ask the body deva to restore the rightful power to your representative. It can be done by utilizing intention and a specific color light that feels appropriate intuitively to you and your body deva.
- If the person is not willing to do that, ask if they would be willing to restore some power. The answer is often yes.
- If the person is still not willing, they often need to feel their own power. The body deva will let them know that their power is much more magnificent and healing than taking the power of others.
- Allow your representative to feel the restoration of power.
- Ask the oppressed representative for the beliefs that were created out of this trauma, both with regard to their culture and the conquering culture.

This work may elicit an occasional and understandable resistance to asking a conqueror to give back power. While this is entirely understandable, what is being worked with here is the core power dynamics of the situation. The forces of the oppressor and the oppressed are being held in conflict within your body. By permitting power to return to its rightful source in a compassionate way, the power dynamics are less messy than if power were forcefully taken back from the other individual. Using this method, no more trauma is created.

The purpose here is not for you to want to hug your persecutor, or to create a belief that the opposing culture is full of wonderful people who will now look out for you in your daily life, or even for you to want to interact with them in the physical world. It is to acknowledge that both of the representatives—the one from your culture who has had

power taken away and the representative from the other culture responsible for taking that power—are forces that are active and still creating pain within you.

Allowing yourself to heal and move beyond the pain and restrictions can allow for the clarity, wisdom, and the power of your culture to emerge through you, rather than the unhealed or aspects that feel powerless.

## **Healing Power Loss by Place or Event**

In this work it may seem that power was not taken but was lost. You would verify with your body deva how power was lost (through taking or through loss due to an event or experience). You would then ask your body deva about the beliefs created from this situation, and ask the body deva to restore the power to the representative.

## **Power Gain through Taking**

You may find yourself in the position of conquering or taking the power of another culture. You would again ask your representative to appear, as well as a representative from the other culture, locate both forces within your body, and offer to return the power to the oppressed representative. If they do not want it, or you feel intuitively as if it should go to the land instead, offer it to the land.

You would do this by asking your body deva to release any held power associated with taking the power of others in your culture, and again, picture a light or color releasing from the area of your body where you initially clued into cultural energies.

For the taker, there is often power loss underneath this. We do not take from others unless we feel a lack of wholeness ourselves. If we feel strong and able, we certainly will defend ourselves, and sometimes violence in our world



is necessary to maintain societal structure or preserve what we have. This is because despite our own healing, there are many others still in the position of being unhealed, and who have not moved beyond their own inner divisions and seeking superiority, or the power of another.

While certainly our own healing has a ripple effect, at some point we will contend with the fact that we do not create the world, and that despite the work we do to heal loss of power or gain, it does not lead directly to peace on Earth. We are one thread in a massive web of life; the more people who do work like this, the more healed the web is.

You will offer the power back utilizing the body deva, if it feels appropriate to do so. This power can be sent to the Earth, to a representative of the other culture, or it may be restored in a different manner.

Whichever option you work through, you will now reflect on the beliefs and understandings that have emerged and how they have impacted you. You will now ask the body deva for the *strengths that have emerged* out of this situation for you and your culture.

Our traumas and difficulties are a double-edged sword, in that they cause us immense pain but also can lead to understanding, ingenuity, beauty, creativity, and unbelievable strengths. Understanding the individual strengths of your culture, and how you relate to those strengths, allows you the opportunity to begin to carry those strengths instead of maintaining cultural wounds.

Finally, you will ask your body deva and the individual body part to release whatever held energy was there in your body, and then say thank you for its help.

If you find that there are cultural elements that are restrictive in a different way (not the opposition of conqueror and conquered), you will still ask a representative of the culture to step forward, find out what is happening

within the culture, and what restrictive beliefs or ways of being have been created. You can then consider if you require this “contract,” and let the representative know whether you wish to change, alter, or nullify the contract.

You would then ask the representative to take their “true form,” which will be explored further in the chapter on working with archetypes, then inform your body consciousness, or where you held this restriction within your body, that it no longer needs this contract at all, or to the degree it has been in effect.

## **Krista**

Krista was a yoga teacher and Reiki practitioner who wanted to explore her resistance to grounding and the lack of embodiment she felt in her lower body. She felt like she had done an incredible amount of work on her physical body, childhood issues, and even spiritual issues, but still felt like she wasn’t fully in her body or connecting to the earth.

Krista had a feeling that it had something to do with her ancestry, which was of mixed Europe origins. When I mentioned the possibility of cultural healing, she said that it resonated with her and she was open to exploring it.

The body deva revealed her feet and both of her legs up to her knees as being the places where this pattern was held. Her legs and feet felt completely missing from her body, and showed up as dotted or missing on her body map.

She asked a representative to step forward. It was an older Ukrainian woman. This woman looked afraid and seemed lost, as did the other crowd of people in the background. The body deva revealed that this was a case of *power loss*. Krista asked her body deva to show her the *conqueror* or *opposing force* creating this power loss, and a large Russian male stepped forward. This opposing force was felt in her solar plexus. Krista asked her body deva if this male would offer the power back, and the male reluctantly said yes after Krista visualized him receiving his inherent power back in place of it.

Krista visualized a yellow light going into her representative, and a green light going into the conqueror to restore their power. The opposing force then disappeared, and Krista asked about what beliefs were being held. The belief was that it is better to be invisible than to be noticed. Really being present would cause Krista to be seen, she realized, as she commented on how she contributed to and resonated with this pattern.

She asked her body deva to relate the strengths associated with this situation, and it replied, *The closeness of family and the ability to offer oneself to another*. Krista said thank you and told her legs that she was ready to release this belief. She released an additional individual contract regarding the belief

around being hidden that she had created as a teenager, and asked her legs to shift into a place of balance, grounding, and embodiment, and for her solar plexus to release the opposing force.

For the next few days, Krista reported having muscle cramping and strange dreams in which she felt she was processing on a deep level. A month later, she reported that she felt much more in her body and how strange it was to actually feel and have awareness of her feet for perhaps the first time.

## Daniel

Daniel was of Mexican and Peruvian descent and had already been working with ancestral and family origin issues for some time. He was adopted into a family that did not share his cultural background, and he had many stories about growing up in a predominantly upper middle class, white neighborhood where he experienced offensive and inappropriate interactions that created micro-traumas in him.

Daniel wanted to delve into the energetics and spiritual dimensions of the adoption and how it was affecting him. While exploring other issues, he revealed that he would get in a lot of fights growing up, and would sometimes express explosive anger whose cause he could not determine. Working with his early childhood years prior to the adoption helped him to minimize the frequency of these outbursts; nevertheless, they continued to occur.

We decided to approach the body deva and ask about the rage because I felt that it was related to the adoption. The body deva highlighted the solar plexus and said that it was related to cultural energies. The energy felt dense, like a rope wrapped around his midsection, squeezing it, and was dark in color.

Daniel asked his solar plexus to bring forward a representative from his culture to help him to heal this. An older Mexican gentleman stepped forward. He was quite powerful looking and radiated a sense of vigor. The body deva revealed that this was a representative of *machismo*, or the sense of how a man should be. When he asked the body deva for beliefs he was carrying, it revealed a list of items about how men should act and behave and how Daniel did not live up to those high standards.

Daniel realized that he had internalized this from his early childhood (pre-adoption), when his birth mother was married to a violent alcoholic. He realized that he felt a conflict inside because part of him wanted to exhibit machismo but his only personal experience with it involved someone he did not want to emulate.

Inner child work was done to heal his inner six-month-old and then he went back to the imagery of the man. He asked his body deva what the man needed, and the response was for him to connect to his inner machismo in a healthy way. He asked for more information, and it said he needed to heal the belief that he was a threat to others based on his experience of how men act and the harm they create that was created by the six-month-old.

He asked where this belief was held. It revealed that it was in his solar plexus but was a small dense blob, not the rope he sensed around his whole solar plexus and diaphragm. He let the body deva know that he had healed the six-month-old and no longer needed that belief at all. He asked his body to change and shift, and it cleared both the blob as well as most of the rope.

He asked the body deva what else was needed, and it said that he needed to do something that would allow him to understand his masculine power in a healthy way, and he agreed to go back to martial arts, which he already felt an intuitive pull to do. Daniel started his daily martial arts practice and in two months reported back to me that he felt much more powerful and balanced, and had not experienced any anger outbursts.

## CHAPTER TEN

# Working with Archetypes and the Multitude of Selves

**W**hen we are on the path to knowing ourselves deeply, in order to heal or evolve spiritually, we tend to pursue one concept as though it were the Holy Grail—the “true self,” the concept that we are one thing, one person, with distinct likes and dislikes. We think that if we only knew our essence without it being clouded by pain and beliefs, we would return to an original, “pure” nature; that if we only were healed enough we would integrate into one thing.

The irony of this is that we always have a multitude of selves within us. We have forces and parts of us that are incredibly “true” yet may be at odds with one another. We are not just one Self, but a multitude of selves, many forces and energies coming together. By reconciling our multitude of selves, we no longer need to battle them or cast them aside.

The easiest pop culture reference for this dichotomy is the idea of the “sexy” librarian—the quiet introvert who prefers to spend her time in silence in the hallowed halls of a library surrounded by books, hair in bun, but who is simultaneously a vivacious sex kitten. Or perhaps Clark Kent, the somewhat shy yet studious friend, who is also Superman. We are fascinated by the polarities inside us, what lies beneath if we scratch the surface.

When we talk about such a thing, the mind may easily travel to the concept of multiple personalities, now known as dissociative identity disorder, where the mind fractures in order to cope with severe trauma. In this disorder, separate personalities or selves come out, some of which may not have knowledge of one another. Or we may consider sub-personalities as a form of pathology, as we are not in a place to reconcile the difference between wounded aspects of self, such as inner children, and the aspects of ourselves that may simply have different interests and needs.

While this can move into an area of pathology or severe imbalance, even the healthiest among us contain separate selves, separate identities. All of these different selves provide a centralizing identity; they form the general reality for the individual. These selves are formed through our relationship with our inner selves, as well as a relational context. We form our identity based on the movies we see, the teachers we had, the literature we read, who our parents and friends were, and many other sources.

We are informed by archetypes: recurrent symbolic figures and symbols in mythology and literature. Our relationship to those archetypes deeply informs who we are, as well as who we feel we should be. Mother, father, hero, nurturer, lover—these are all labels with an expected role in society. Societally, we have agreed what a “mother” should look like, what she does with her day, and how she should act at the neighborhood barbeque. If we do not live up to the archetype, there will likely be hell to pay as she has broken an implicit social contract.

Additionally, “mother” will on some level understand that she is not living up to this contract, and she will either question her capabilities, have difficulty with self-worth, or will be at a point where she has considered the archetype and the social ramifications for not living up to it and has decided to free herself from it.

Archetypes allow us to easily label and understand one another, as well as ourselves. They build in a sense of safety, allow community to develop between like minds, and for us to live our lives with certain set expectations and instincts, both societally as well as personally. We also tend to outgrow, outlive, or simply move beyond some of the archetypes as a natural part of maturing. We may be an ingénue at age twenty, but at age eighty that label will likely be long past. Our centralizing myths (covered in the next chapter) provide us with a sense of meaning and navigation in this world. The inherent difficulty is that our unconscious association with these myths means that we act, identify, and judge others in ways that are restrictive, rather than healing.

With consciousness and healing, the positive aspects of an archetype can inform who we are and be worn like a hat in the appropriate environment. You may wish to put on your “nurturing father” hat when your child scrapes their knee, and your “virile male” hat while out on a date.

We all have archetypes that are creating contracts, beliefs, and reactivity within us and causing us to suffer. It is by healing our relationship with that archetype, as well as any other layers of personal, ancestral or cultural healing, that we can come to a place of right relationship with them. The purpose here is not to rid ourselves of all things, or to shove any parts of ourselves aside, but to not have anything that is creating pain or restricted beliefs for ourselves.

The contract and archetype involved with “artist” may be creating issues with being financially solvent, or the archetype of “innocent” may be creating issues in the bedroom. But the archetype of “artist” may allow you to dress and behave in a way that you enjoy doing, and be in the company of people and a community who understand you. The archetype of “nurturer” may allow you to offer heart-centered love and be needed by others. The

archetype of “rebel” may allow you to push yourself continually outside of your comfort zone in all areas of your life.

We are not just one archetype, although we may relate to a few, or have one or two, be dominant. It is worthwhile to examine all labels you have been given—mother, daughter, father, son, brother, grandson, teacher, student, employee, and so forth—not in an effort to cast them aside but to see if they are creating any restrictions or imbalances within yourself, or in your world.

This list is not comprehensive, but here are some of the more common archetypes and associated roles we may identify with:

- Hero or white knight
- Creator
- Lover
- Nurturer
- Explorer
- Innocent or dreamer
- Rebel
- Sage
- Mystic or magician
- Jester
- King or ruler
- The Everyman or Regular Joe (or Josephina)
- Mentor or Teacher
- Villain
- Heretic
- Outlier: witch, shaman
- Crone: wise old woman or man



- Shadow (what is unknown within us)
- Animal (our base instincts)
- Sexual instincts or passion (sex goddess, god, virility)
- Masculinity and femininity (we carry both in our nature, it is worthwhile to examine both aspects, no matter your sex or gender)

To work with archetypes, you will first consider which archetypes you feel most inform your existence. Under each archetype, write out a bit about what you feel that archetype means: how that archetype acts, how others would relate to them, what their social contract(s) may be.

Choose one archetype you feel may be out of balance. If you are trying to choose among several, you can also ask your body deva what would be most healing for you to work with. You will ask your body deva where you may hold elements of this *corrupted archetype* within your body. Do a body scan or notice what shows up, if need be, inquire as to which part of your body would be best to work with, if multiple areas show up.

Talk with the individual consciousness of that body part, with the archetype in mind. Say that you would like to heal the archetype, and note the physical sensations, energetics, size, and shape of the restricted or empty energy in your body.

Ask the body deva to show you the most relevant pattern to work with. At this point, you can begin to build a list of questions:

- Is this from my experiences here (inner child work)?
- Is this from in utero?
- Is this from a past life?
- Is this ancestral or familial?

- Is this cultural?

You will want to ask these questions slowly and wait for either a sense of knowing (a yes from the body deva) or a shift in the individual body part you are working with. There are likely multiple answers, so you may wish to ask which one is most relevant to the body deva. You would then do the work from the relevant prior chapter.

This work is done so that you can heal the interaction or understanding from the relevant point of view. You may have an idea of what “woman” is, or how to relate to her, based on viewing your mother when you were eight. You may have an idea of what “teacher” is based on your high school interaction with a teacher you disliked. You may reject all authority because, when you were much younger, you created a reactive contract concerning your parents and how they were unable to nurture you. You can also examine which archetypes you carry by utilizing the body deva.

It is helpful to heal the part of you that led you to understand these roles and archetypes as having a specific function and societal as well as personal rules. Doing so will allow you to understand how the archetype became *corrupted* and a source of restriction and unhealed energies for you. By healing, you can release any pain or trauma associated with the archetype, let go of restrictive beliefs, and choose to embody the strengths of the archetype.

You may also find that you need to work with the archetype itself. This would best be done after healing some of the varying traumas and layers surrounding the archetype.

You would again ask the body deva where this archetype is held. The concept of the *corrupted archetype* means that the archetype is informing your existence in a way that is creating restrictions in belief or pain. If an

archetype is a *pure archetype*, that means that we are relating to it in a way that informs our existence and provides strength and a positive sense of navigation in our lives. Archetypes most often get corrupted through our own experiences of them. If what we know of being a male is of an absent, neglectful, or possibly violent father figure, we likely have corrupted “male,” “father,” “teacher,” or “authority” archetypes.

Archetypes get corrupted and utilized all of the time in pop culture, advertising, and other sources as a way of manipulating us. One of the archetypes of female sexuality in Western culture is the “pop ingénue,” a highly sexualized yet “innocent” female creation who has not reached adulthood. One of the archetypes of male sexuality in Western culture is the impossibly muscle-bound male who dominates women and narrowly escapes explosions. Examination of both would likely reveal sources of wounding for both men and women in terms of sexual restrictions and patterning. When we become conscious of the societal roles and archetypes we are bound by, we are no longer restricted by them and move beyond blind, emotional reaction and struggle in relation to them.

We may also find that we are holding onto an archetype that we should have outgrown. If we inwardly still feel like a small child who wants to hold her teddy bear, that inner child could use some healing and to be initiated into positive adolescence or adulthood.

Pick an archetype that you wish to work on (or are reactive to in the outer world), then ask the body deva where it is held within your body and to show you the corrupted archetype. Much like the initial visualizing of the body deva, or working with restrictions, you would create an image of what that archetype looks like, where they are, what they are wearing, and what they are doing.

You would then inquire as to ways that this archetype may be informing your existence:

- How is my association with this archetype creating restriction, pain, or suffering?
- How does this archetype limit me?
- What do I believe is true (what is the contract) concerning this archetype?
- How do they act? What do they accomplish? What is their role in society?
- What are the societal rules and restrictions for this archetype?
- What are the strengths of this archetype?
- What is the beauty of this archetype?

Consider what has arisen and, if necessary, negotiate the contract about what this archetype means to you. Although there are implicit socially constructed connotations with all of these archetypes, our individual experiences color them. It is by our individual relationship to them that much of the pain, restriction, or corruption around the archetype is created.

When we become conscious of the restrictions that society has placed on us, we can also make a decision about how restricted that really makes us. We can negotiate our freedom from such things, even if we still embody them. We spend so much of our lives defining ourselves by the thoughts and rules of others, and of society at large. While we may not initially be comfortable moving beyond such labels and associated societal roles and conduct, by healing our own reaction to the role we can begin to move beyond the restrictions of society as well. This does not mean that we need to stop being an “explorer,” an “artist,” a “teacher,” a “mother,” or a “soldier”; it means that we can

consciously explore and understand the rules of conduct for such roles, and embody them in their *pure* form, transforming it to a source of strength and a part of our identity that brings us joy rather than restriction.

If you are ready, ask your body deva to transform the archetype closer to its *pure form*. Then ask your body deva or the individual part of your body holding the corrupted archetype to shift or change.

Like all other work, if there is a shift in feeling in the area, a change in body map, or a change in beliefs (renegotiation of contract or letting go of some of the beliefs surrounding that archetype), the work has been successful. The shift in image of the archetype to a stronger or healthier version is also a sign of success. This work can, and should be, worked with over time, as we are not going to understand ourselves, or even a single archetype within ourselves, in a single sitting.

## **Working with our Multitude of Selves**

We have parts of ourselves that are nun-like, sexual, male, female, young, old, vicious, violent, peaceful, animalistic, intellectual, introverted, extroverted, and interested in different hobbies, movies, and music. We may enjoy thrash metal one afternoon and pop music the next, or watch superhero movies as well as foreign films. We may also enjoy marathons as much as sitting on the couch eating Cheetos.

The deeper we venture into inner work, the more that we will find this multitude. The difficulty is that we believe ourselves to be much simpler than we actually are, and may feel as if these different aspects of ourselves are at war with one another. If we understand our multiplicity, we will know that it is perfectly okay to enjoy relaxing with a cup of tea

and a book as well as laugh loudly and swear consistently at a dinner party.

We may discover that what is creating a conflict is not our core or centralized identity that has balanced all of these myths and archetypes to form a congruent personality, but a struggle between seemingly opposing forces within us. The part of us that is animalistic, primal, and masculine and wants to eat large hunks of meat roasted over an open fire, and the part of us that works as a buttoned-up businessman have very different needs, societal roles, and obligations. The exhausted nurturer who simply wants to watch a movie uninterrupted is likely battling the inner aerobics enthusiast who is at odds with the notion of relaxation.

Every decision we make is privy to these inner selves, and what may be causing our confusion or lack of direction is that two sides that are seemingly “at war” or opposing one another are both offering suggestions. Until we understand our multiplicity, we will never have the clarity of knowing why we may always sabotage ourselves when making a plan to eat healthier, start exercising, or break other habits.

For example, a woman plans on starting a routine of walking around her neighborhood every day. She knows that this will allow her to relieve stress, get some sunlight, and offer movement in a day that is spent in front of a computer. She notices herself self-sabotaging, and that inner voice telling her that she should just close her eyes and take a nap or catch up on a television show instead. When she does these things (watching television or taking a nap) instead of doing the “healthy” activity, she slips into negative self-talk and berates herself about sabotaging her efforts to get healthy.

In this situation, neither “force” within her is getting what they truly need. She is not getting the rest that she needs because she is distracted with the opposing force telling her how awful she is for wanting to watch television or take a nap. She then further distances herself from this need for relaxation by continually checking her phone or eating. When she is walking she focuses on how tired and depleted she is, so she never notices the sunlight.

These forces are not actually in opposition with one another; they simply have different needs. This woman both needs to relax, eyes closed, away from her computer and experience walking and greater health. By allowing these seemingly opposing forces to have their voices “heard,” she can begin to fully allow herself to experience her naps (with no negative self-talk or feelings of needing to be doing something else) as well as walk daily.

The only caution for working with these aspects of ourselves is that if one of them is out of control, it is not easily understood and chatted with. This is why this work is at the end of the book; we have other things to work on first if we are still in the ravages of drug addiction and eating disorders or are significantly traumatized to the extent that we are a two-year-old in a fifty-year-old’s body.

But if we are ready, we can understand the opposing forces within ourselves, and even the opposing relationships in the outer world as forces within us. It may sound strange to think of our boss, our partner, the random person we interacted with in a heated argument, our parents, and others as a “force,” or something that is a part of us, but nevertheless, we can explore the inner dimensions of our relationships in this manner.

To do this, you would consider the relationship or situation that is upsetting or feels unhealed to you, and ask your body deva to show where you hold it in your body. You

are not doing this work for anyone else (as they have their own work to do), but as we are relational beings and are all in a web of life, we can use the outer world, and those whom we have significant relationships with, to find unhealed or opposing forces within ourselves.

Similar to the cultural work, one force may be in a different location from another. Finding both forces and allowing them to speak up about their needs, then enacting what they need in your life (always checking for safety and basic logic), will allow the battle to cease and all parts of you to receive what they really need.

In alchemy, the union, “marriage,” or reconciliation of the female and male aspects of Self is part of the “Great Work”; by seeking the unity and healing of these otherwise divided and polarized parts of ourselves, we are able to experience a greater level of evolution and wholeness than would otherwise be possible.

We all contain forces that are pushing and pulling us in different directions. We may find that what is reactive or restricted within us is not the current, conscious, and centralized Self (us, right now, in the present moment) but another aspect of Self. The clearest example I have of this comes from working with many individuals who went to Catholic school and had an inner “nun” telling them that all of their sexual choices were horrible, creating shame for them about the sexual act itself. This would come up during something like inner child work, where we were working with an inner teenager who espoused a belief that sex was not meant to be pleasurable or that it should be secretive.

The adult, centralized Self was usually more than willing to heal the inner teenager and enjoy sex or be more passionate sexually, without the repression they experienced. The force of the inner nun was what was preventing such a thing. It was only by working with the



opposing force within that the sexual restrictions healed, or at least considerably lessened.

Similarly, we may have forces within us impacting our decisions: our finances, who we decide to date or marry, whether or not we have a child, where we move, what job we take, and more. We may have a part within us that desperately wishes to have a child, and an opposing force that is saying that it is too expensive and is fearful of the pain of childbirth. We may have a part of us that desperately wants to succeed, and another part of us that is opposing that because success would take us away from our community, neighborhood, and family. By reconciling and understanding these parts we can have clarity and heal what is restricting us from becoming who we are meant to be in this world.

This is obviously quite advanced work, but I do like to include elements that people can work their way toward, if they are not already there. We are long past the time when people only operate on surface levels of consciousness and books that only skim the surface of what can truly be accomplished.

Much like the cultural work, we will be working with two (or three) parts. The third would be you (adult, centralized you), and the first would be whatever trauma you are working with: inner child, familial or ancestral, or past life. While working with this inner child, you may feel it is correct to ask about the opposing force. In some cases, it will be the mother or other caregiver or a teacher or similar role. You will ask where this opposing force “lives” in your body, and ask this opposing force to step forward, noting what they look like and who they may be to you, or to the aspect you are already working with.

You may also choose to work directly with an aspect of yourself that you have become aware of. I will not list them

here, as they will come up for healing when they are ready. You will ask the body deva to show you where this wounded or separated aspect of Self is held within the body, check in with the body and the physical, energetic, and visual representation of the energy held there, then create a visual or symbol for that aspect of Self.

You can also access this work by using the questioning (in the Tying Things Together chapter) and may find that the question *Is this an aspect of Self?* elicits a yes answer or there is a shift in the energy of the body.

You can also use the idea of opposing forces to seek clarity and understanding about a particular relationship or reaction that you had to someone in the outer world. You would first seek what is wounded or reactive within you, then consider the opposing force, or the person you are reacting to, and where that force is located within you.

All of these would be started with the basic protocol of using the body deva to find where this dynamic or energy is located within your body and sitting with the physical sensations and visual representation of the blocked or empty energy in that area of the body.

- You will now create a visual, asking what is reactive or wounded within you (or simply ask the first force or aspect of you) to step forward.
- Once you have created a visual, you will want to as clearly as possible find out what it is, if you have not already.
  - Is it something unhealed within you that you have been working on already, or is it an archetype or aspect of you?
  - We relate by using labels, so if it is an aspect of you or an archetype, sit with it until it becomes

reasonably clear what it is (*Oh, this is the "crone" aspect of me*).

- Ask the body deva what this part of you has to say and how it is impacting your life.
- Ask if there are any traumas or ways that it is creating restriction for you.
- Ask what strengths, knowledge, or beauty it is bringing you.
- If you are creating this force as a reaction to the outside world, or in relation to a decision you are making, you will want to ask their thoughts about this subject.
- Now, ask about the *opposing* force.
- Go through the same process of visualizing or sensing this force, where it may be located, and what its label may be.
- Ask the body deva what this opposing force has to say, in general, as well as about the other aspect of self (or wounded inner child, ancestor, archetype).
- Ask the opposing force or archetype what it needs to communicate to you.
- Ask the opposing force what its function is.
  - This function may be control, protection, or something else entirely. It will likely believe that this service is beneficial.
  - Ask the opposing force what would happen if it wasn't serving this function (*What is the fear of what might happen?*).
- Consider if you need this opposition—this aspect of you controlling or creating beliefs around the other part of you.
- If this force is someone that you are reactive to or in a relationship with, ask if they are mirroring or pointing

out anything that is unhealed within you.

- If they are, you will want to ask that inner child to come up so it can be worked with.

- If you do not need this force within you, or do not need the opposition as much, say thank you to the opposing archetype (or aspect) and let it know its services will no longer be needed, or needed as much.
- Ask your body deva to shift the archetype or aspect of Self to its pure form, or invite it to depart, dissolve, or recede into the background.
- Return to the original aspect of Self that arose. Ask it if it can recognize that it is no longer opposed, and invite it to heal or shift.
- Ask your body deva to shift, change, or heal the aspect of your body where it was held.

## **Matthew**

Matthew felt as if he had hit an impasse in his relationship. Although he deeply cared for his wife, he felt that she was cold, uncommunicative, and that they were no longer on the same page. He realized that he could not change her but wanted to look at the internal dynamics, or basically, what he was contributing to this situation.

The body deva revealed a pattern around his heart, throat, and head that looked like a large, shadowy balloon. In talking to this area of the body, it revealed a great deal of grief but also a sense of protection; it was keeping him from experiencing the depths of the grief that he held within his body.

This grief was related to a past life in which his wife (his same wife from this present lifetime) as well as a child died due to a disease that was sweeping through their village. He felt guilt that he could not take care of her, that he could not save her. He created a contract that he would always love her and take care of her. As Matthew related this, he realized that he was still in that position. He experienced clarity that his wife was dealing with a significant amount of grief herself and that he was still trying to “save” her. He called up the “opposing force,” or the aspect of him that appeared as his wife. This opposing force was in his throat area, and his grief intensified when it came up. The wife revealed that she was struggling with grief that wasn’t hers, and that she was resistant and cold to Matthew to protect him from it. She believed that this was something that she needed to take care of herself, and that she needed to remain stoic in the face of all she suffered.

Matthew asked this force what she needed, and she said that she needed him to not try to save her but support her instead. He agreed, and we went back to the imagery of the past life and let go of the contract of needing to save her, and offered relief and healing to the past life he had experienced.

He asked his body to shift and change and felt a release of energy through his heart and throat. He asked his body deva how much of this he should say to his wife in physical reality, and it replied that he should encourage her to heal this past life and to seek counseling for her present-day difficulties in functioning, but to do so in a compassionate way, and to let it go after that.

He ended the session by saying that he needed to think about how he could approach his wife in a way that was supportive but not looking to save her. Matthew worked further with his heart area to learn how to relate in a new way to his wife. He reported that his wife feels much more comfortable sharing what she has been experiencing due to his efforts and that their relationship has a sense of ease that it did not have before, but that she is not yet in a place to seek out her own healing efforts.

## **Irina**

Irina was a woman in her mid-thirties who wanted to work on the fact that she had never really felt feminine. She didn't wear makeup, dressed simply, and was uncomfortable with anyone noticing her. She defined herself as "gray," which meant that she rarely felt sexual attraction for anyone.

Irina immediately clued in on a part of herself in her abdomen that was a teenager who was confused about the fact that she didn't want to date and several experiences that were embarrassing for her, including a school dance. This part of her received clarity from adult Irina about why she was the way she was. It helped teenage Irina feel better and feel like she had a support system in adult Irina. Since she did not "disappear" after this, even though she seemed okay, we asked if there was anything else she needed. The body deva said that she still felt as if she was wrong for her sexual preferences.

We asked the opposing archetype to step forward. It looked like a hypersexualized woman from one of the James Bond films and was located in her pelvis. It said that she needed to look and act a specific way in order to be considered a worthy woman. Adult Irina said that she understood the archetype and felt like she denied the archetype a bit because of her wounded inner teenager. She and the archetype negotiated ways in which she could feel more feminine, such as placing flowers around her home and being more confident in her attitude. The opposing archetype disappeared, happy that she had been heard. Irina's inner teenager realized that she did not need to act or be a specific way to be considered "feminine" or a "woman" and disappeared.

Irina started to buy flowers and even took a flower-arranging course. She started using cooking to explore her feminine side, and had a friend teach her to put on makeup for special events. Her sexual preferences did not change, as they did not come from a place of wounding for her, but she became even more confident and clear about who she was and how she wanted to relate to others

in a relationship. She found her relationships went much better now that she had the capacity to be up front and clear with anyone who expressed an interest in her.

## **Charlotte**

Charlotte had done a lot of previous mind-body work and noticed that the left side of her body and the right felt very different from one another. In this work, she immediately clued in to the fact that her right side was more “feminine” and her left side was “masculine.”

Her masculine side revealed that she did not feel comfortable with aggression, anger, or stating what she needed in this world. Charlotte realized that she held a corrupted archetype of “male” based on what society told her a man should be, and how one should behave. She told this opposing force that she was ready for it to become more *pure*, or to take on its true form. It revealed a warrior in gleaming armor.

She then worked with her feminine side, and societal ideas about how she needed to be gentle and soft came up. She didn’t relate to this, as she was in a male-dominated science field in which she needed to act stoic and intellectual and not draw attention to her femininity in order to be accepted. She asked the female aspect of herself what it needed, and it revealed that she could embody both softness and warrior qualities; there was no battle between the two. She agreed to this, and her inner warrior turned into a fierce female warrior. She felt energy flow up through her midline and after the session reported talking to both “sides” of herself frequently in order to reconcile them. She now feels much more confident, and no longer feels divided between the two forces within her.

# CHAPTER ELEVEN

## Healing the Central Myth

**T**he central myth is at the core of our being. It is our sense of purpose, gives our lives meaning, and we follow it blindly. The path that we are on, or believe ourselves to be on, creates restrictive beliefs and actions that we can free ourselves from.

The Jungian concept of “shadow” is not neatly defined. It is not what we deem as “bad” or “dark” within us; it is the parts of us that are unconscious of what we have repressed. We move through our lives blindly, acting out our wounds, the pain of our ancestors and past lives, and living according to the cultural, archetypal, and mythological structures of our world.

Some of you may have utilized this book as a form of self-healing, which is wonderful and completely appropriate. We all have so many wounds, so many beliefs and fears we are operating under, that to have any of that lifted away is to experience a sense of freedom that not many know. But we can allow ourselves to travel farther down that proverbial rabbit hole and discover what holds and confines us and seek freedom from it.

The work of seeking the central myth, as with much of the work seeking opposing forces and separate selves, is not intrinsically self-help, although the work will result in a great deal of change, including physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual healing. These forms of work are for those truly interested in diving deep and releasing whatever is keeping them caged, that is, whatever lies unknown, cast aside, or simply acted out repeatedly (“looped”) without awareness.

Put more simply, seeking out your central myth is not likely to cure your knee pain. Typically, the work on the knee, the inner children, and other similar subjects comes first, not because it is simpler or less valid but because it needs to be worked on first. We cannot see or access our central myth if we have a population of screaming inner children clamoring for our attention.

Our central myth is how we define our life journey. While we may have more than one myth, or have our myth change over time, we define ourselves at the very core of who we are as enacting a specific myth. For many of us, it will be the concept of the “quest.” We may seek out truth, knowledge, peace, clarity, or purity. We may feel called to a particular area of study and make that our life work, or tread a path of an archetype such as “teacher,” “witch,” “crone,” “sage,” or “seeker.”

We may also centralize a myth based on those that are already part of our culture. I will discuss a few such myths below, but it is important to understand that our personal mythological constructs emerge from our culture and familial background. In simple terms, this means that someone who is Middle Eastern will have different mythological structures from some of the predominantly Germanic or Western mythologies and stories I list below.

So consider the myths you grew up with, that are a product of your culture (even if you are removed from that culture physically, there is still a connection there), as part of this discovery process.

## **Common Myths and Fairy Tales that Construct a Centralized Myth**

- **AMERICAN DREAM:** the idea that if one works hard enough, they can and will achieve their dreams.



- **PRINCE CHARMING:** the belief in being rescued or of being the “white knight.”
- **PRINCESS AND THE PEA:** the feeling of being too sensitive or not healthy physically, for this world.
- **BEAUTY AND THE BEAST:** the belief that underneath it all, someone has good character or is a “prince” or “princess,” despite outer appearances or actions, and one just has to love them so they will change.
- **CINDERELLA:** the belief that love or a “soul mate” and a perfect existence will come after misery.
- **SUPERMAN OR HERO:** the belief in the need to be strong, to save the world (and sometimes save women from themselves).
- **WOUNDED HEALER:** the belief that if one heals themselves, meditates, or spiritually explores enough all of their physical, emotional, and spiritual difficulties will cease.
- **THE SNOW QUEEN:** the belief that one is good, pure and, innocent despite being cruelly treated, and that in the end, that evil will be found out and cruelty will be punished.
- **PETER PAN:** permanent childhood and rejection of anything “adult.”
- **ROBIN HOOD:** activism and activities focused on offering relief to those suffering, accompanied by anger toward those who are “rich” or do not have the same beliefs as you may have.
- **WARRIOR:** a path that includes struggle and discipline for a larger cause.
- **THE OUTLIER:** a mythology created from pain and separation.
- **STAR WARS:** the belief that one is fighting the forces of darkness and evil. The “Self” is good and must always

stay “in the light” despite lower urgings.

- **HARRY POTTER:** the belief that the world, and the people in it, are out to get you, and that one must always be on guard or alert.
- **THE CHANGELING:** similar to the Outlier, but with a mythology that the Self is alien, fairy, or non-human in some capacity as a way of shielding oneself from participating in the human world.

There are many other myths and fairy tales, and these are obviously crude assessments of how taking on a central myth or story can create a dysfunctional “loop” in our lives. Some of these are more damaging than others. Speaking as someone who has been engaged in spiritual exploration and work for a long time, I can say that the Outlier belief as a response to pain and trauma is prevalent; it is rare to move beyond the wounds associated with it, as the mythology is too appealing to release.

If we heal our inner children and release the need for this myth, we can move forward without it. Even if we truly are an outlier, or wish to have a part of us be a “white knight,” or truly feel called to teaching, being a plumber, geologist, fireman, or shaman, if we are suffering or feeling restriction as a result of our central myth, we can examine it and release it. In this way we can let go of the quest, the endless and relentless need to prove oneself or create drama, and take the beauty and strength of those mythologies we resonate with.

When we become conscious of our myths, we can release them. The difficulty is that they are so central to our identity, we may not be sure what to do with ourselves without them. What would happen if we were a knight of the round table without a quest to go on or a fire-breathing dragon to slay? What would happen if we were no longer

waiting for our magical Merlin to teach us and guide us? Who would we be if we were not feeling separate, unloved, or an outlier?

## Releasing the Central Myth

To begin, we will either ask the body deva if there is a myth we should look at, or we may already have one in mind that we wish to work with. If we are unclear, the myth of the “quest” is always a good place to start. Ask the body deva to show you where you may hold this myth in your body. Explore the physical and energetic nature of this part of your body, and ask the individual consciousness of this area what it holds in relation to this myth.

- After getting your initial assessment (creating a visual and feeling the physical effects in the individual body part, or area of the body), you will ask, *What parts of this myth are causing constraint for me?*
  - How does this myth cause you to act a specific way, have specific beliefs, be attracted to specific individuals (or attract specific individuals to you) in your life?
- Visualize the protagonist of this myth.
  - This will be you, but it can look like anything. It will be the aspect of you that relates to this myth, or quest.
  - For example, what does your inner teacher or sage look like?
  - For example, what does your inner activist Robin Hood look like?
- Ask this protagonist who they are and what they believe to be true about themselves, the world, and the people in it.

- Consider how you relate to this.
- Is this outlook creating pain?
  - Is this outlook preventing you from feeling free to achieve certain things in your life?
  - What sort of wounds would I have to work on if I did not believe this myth?
  - Is this something that feels strong, or is it creating pain or struggle?
- Consider also how much energy you have put into this quest. This means that if we have been on a quest for forty years to find “the truth,” we have likely expended a lot of energy and experienced a lot in relation to this. Some of this may have been a fruitful use of our time, but at other times we may have felt pushed, controlled, or experienced trauma as a result of this quest.
- Ask for the beauty or strength of this myth and what it has brought you. Realize that you can take the strength and beauty without the constraint, feeling controlled or blindly acting out this myth without consciousness.
- Consider, in your current adult state, if you still need this central mythology. If you wish to experience total freedom from it, still need it partially, or still need it totally.
- Fear may arise at the idea of ending such a mythology. It is helpful to remember to work with that fear and feel compassion for it, and to realize that the “death” of this mythology means freedom rather than physical death (and a subsequent “rebirth”).
- Let your body deva know your answer, and ask the protagonist to change, shift, or disappear in relation to how much you feel you may still need it.
- Ask your body deva to change or shift the area of your body where this energy was held in relation to this

central myth.

- Say thank you, if it feels appropriate.

## **Mary Kay**

Mary Kay was seeking to break the cycle of always seeking a “white knight.” She actually had a mixed mythology, in that she would meet men who she felt were wonderful, but when she got into relationships with them they would be subtly or outright abusive to her, quickly going into “beast” mode. She would then hold onto the myth of the “white knight,” thinking that if she only could love or care for the man enough that he would turn back into a “Prince Charming” character. After they were cruel to her, they often would do this, which confused her further.

Mary Kay worked with inner child, familial, and cultural energies. She grew up in a household where men were expected to dominate women and provide for them. Her background was largely Macedonian, with a tradition of women taking on specific gender roles in the household and taking care of children. The confusing aspect of this to her was that she enjoyed some of this—she wanted a male to be a source of strength and to take care of her. She wanted this in a healthy way, however, and without feeling demeaned or violated as a result of it. She stated that her parents’ relationship was a perfect example of this, and that her father was her ideal “white knight.”

Her body held this myth in her heart, and her heart revealed a broken-down “princess” character who desperately wanted someone to love her and give her life meaning. She realized that this “princess” was attracting men who would show her this love in a way that was not healthy, and asked her body deva to shift her into someone who could be a “healthy princess,” or someone who could hold her own and still be treated by men as worthwhile yet feminine. The princess changed and stood upright.

In this situation, Mary Kay did not want to get rid of her mythology, but to alter it. Perhaps at some point she will no longer feel a need for it, but after the session she reported feeling stronger and having greater capacity to stand up for herself. She also laughed at the fact that she now was in touch with her intuition at a greater level and realized when “white knight” men who wanted to create a pattern of abuse or had an inner “beast” approached her. She now is very conscious of this “loop” and will not allow her inner “princess” to be anything but strong and to wait for a man who can also be a healthy source of strength for her.

## **Gregory**

Gregory had been on the path of the “magician” and “hermit” for thirty years. He was a practicing occultist who, since childhood, had had a deep interest in anything hidden, “occult,” or mystical. He was initiated into several traditions and systems, and related how separated he felt by what he had experienced. He

was realizing lately that embodying this archetype had its limitations and had long ago become weary of associating with most other occultists.

We asked for his inner “magician” to come forward, and it was held in his solar plexus. It looked like a tired, world-weary old man. He was surrounded by a cave of books and was sitting next to a fireplace. There was nobody else around him, and nobody in the direct vicinity.

When asked for the strengths associated with this myth, the inner “magician” replied that he had gained immense knowledge and truly knew what it was like to see far beyond what most people do. But this had come at a price, and he felt like he was no longer a part of this world, and could not be. He felt weary of this world, and of others who were not able to see the world as he did, so his path was now one of the “hermit.”

Gregory related that he felt this way, that he realized how much this path had offered him, but that he no longer wanted to be constrained by the solitary, world-weary magician. He expressed to his body deva that he felt that he no longer needed this myth, and the “magician” disappeared, and his body released the energy in his solar plexus.

Although Gregory still prefers a very small circle, and isn't exactly enthused about the world or the people in it, he reported feeling no longer constrained by needing to study and practice so much. He sold a large portion of his library and is finding enthusiasm in nature. He feels much more energized, and no longer feels constrained by the “quest” of the magician: to always explore deeper and deeper terrains. He is happy to simply explore what he sees fit to, and has let go of the specific rituals and achievements that once defined him.

# CHAPTER TWELVE

## Tying Things Together

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a clear framework in which to seek out and work with the body deva. The method in some ways is simple: we are engaging with the consciousness of the body to find out what lies unhealed within our physical form and then providing the support to resolve it.

The variations and ways to go about this, as well as what we may find within, are endless. In time, your own direct experience and engagement with the body deva will teach you new ways of working with this material, and offer you a sense of flow that takes you far beyond the ten-step process listed below.

### Before the Session

To start, you may wish to draw a body map. This can highlight or show you possible areas to work on, and allow you to see how you are doing with this work over a period of time.

Body maps can be done every time, before doing the work, or you may wish to do them on a semi-regular basis, such as once a week, if you are doing this work on a more frequent basis.

### STEP ONE

You will now “call up” your body deva. Visualize it as either an outer symbol, an inner symbol, or by visualizing or sensing your midline and/or heart.

## **STEP TWO**

Set intention or state what you would like to work with. There are a few different ways to pick what you are going to work on in a session. The first way would be to simply think of a topic that is top of mind, or is really calling out for your attention. This can be a specific pain in your body, an emotion, a reaction or interaction that you wish to look at, or something of a more energetic or spiritual nature.

For example:

### **Physical**

- *I would like to find out why my (knee, hip, and so on) hurts or feels restricted.*
- *I would like to work with anything that is creating (a specific disease, discomfort, or imbalance).*
- *I would like to work with anything that is causing for me to feel low energy, ill, or sick.*
- *I would like to explore why my body map shows that I do not have an abdomen or legs.*
- *I would like to explore why my menstrual cycle is so difficult, or what is creating hormonal imbalances.*

### **Emotional**

- *I would like to explore why I get so angry (or why I get so angry every time someone does "x").*
- *I would like to explore: grief, depression, apathy, loneliness.*

### **Energetic and Spiritual**



- *I would like to work with anything that is causing me to feel blocked or stagnant in my life.*
- *I would like to understand and heal any self-sabotage.*
- *I would like to explore why I am not embodied in my lower body (or why I do not feel grounded).*

## **Interpersonal**

- *I would like to understand and heal my reaction to or conflict with (family member, friend, random person who has caused an emotional reaction).*
- *I would like to know what is at the root of the dislike I have for my boss.*
- *I would like to know why I cannot stay in a relationship, and why I only attract a specific type of person to me.*
- *I would like to heal my relationship, marriage, or partnership. Show me what I am holding in relation to this.*

## **Specific Patterns and Conflicts**

- *I would like to work on an inner child, ancestral issue, or past life issue. Can you show me where I may hold these energies?*
- *I would like to heal my issues with money. Can you show me where I hold this imbalance?*
- *I would like to heal my issues with (sexuality, femininity, masculinity, power, strength, being who I am intended to be in this world). Can you show me where I hold this imbalance?*
- *What is preventing me from becoming more conscious?*
- *What is preventing me from being fully who I am in this world without apologies?*

The other ways to start would be to have an “open session.” This means that you will simply ask or intend whatever would be most healing for you to come forward in the session. As stated above, you can also use your body map to focus on a specific area of your body that may be out of balance.

### **STEP THREE**

You will now sense or visualize your body deva, say hello and state your intention and ask the body deva what it may have to say about the subject.

### **STEP FOUR**

You will now ask the body deva to show you where you may have unhealed energies in relation to the topic.

- Do a body scan or sense what areas are highlighting or drawing your focus.
- Pick a body part that is the most significant to work with, or is drawing you in the most. You can also ask for the “linchpin,” or the pattern that would provide the most healing.
- Sit with that individual part of your body and notice how it physically feels to you.

### **STEP FIVE**

You will now work with the individual consciousness or “talk” to the specific area of the body that was found. This will relay different information than your body deva. The body deva offers general information and is concerned with preserving your body as a whole. An individual cell would have a very specific focus and consciousness, with specific information to relay. An organ or part of the body (such as

the pelvis) will have information mostly regarding itself and the specific area.

### **Talking to Your Body**

After feeling how the area physically feels, you will note whether the area feels *full (stuck)*, *empty*, or *both*. Remember that we have many layers, and an area may have different patterns that need to be healed, so a mixture of both is not surprising to find.

- You will note the energetics of the area and create a visual of the emptiness or fullness. What is its shape? Colors (dark/light)? Size?
- Ask the individual body part (or whatever aspect of individual consciousness you are working with) for general information about what it may be holding. How long has the energy been there? What function does it serve? What emotions are present?
- You may choose to work with the individual consciousness of this body part, asking it to reveal its needs for healing and helping it to understand that you no longer need the function it describes. You may also let it know that you are an adult (state your age) and now have the ability to let grief or other emotions arise.
- The body part may not understand that you are now fifty years old, because in its unhealed state it is as if it was frozen in time. Ask your body consciousness to release any unhealed emotions and shift or change to a healthier state.

### **STEP SIX A**

Ask the body deva what you would need to actualize in your life in order to fully heal the area, negotiating if necessary. For example, if your knee pain is coming from sitting at a desk all day, you may be ready to go completely to a standing desk, but you may wish to negotiate instead and offer to get up and stretch. The key to this is to actualize this in your daily life and, ideally, let the body deva know when you do.

If you decide to work on this step (instead of alternate Step Six B), move on to Step Ten after completing this step.

## **STEP SIX B**

You may choose instead to work directly with the trauma, more deeply exploring the root of the pattern.

The individual body part may tell you exactly at what age the energy it is holding happened. It may reveal you have had it since you were twelve years old, or that it is from your mother. If it does not, or you wish to simply sit with discernment, you will slowly offer your body the different options as to the source of the energy:

- Is it inner child?
- Family or ancestral?
- Past life?
- In utero?
- Cultural?
- Archetypal, symbolic, or a part of myself?
- Something else? If so, what?

You will pause after each query—a positive response either being a sense of knowing that one of these areas has more significance than the others, or the individual area you are working with has a heightened or shifting energy.

If multiple responses are offered, it is often best to work with the “root,” or whatever came first. You may also ask your body deva for confirmation as to what need for healing would be best to work with.

## **STEP SEVEN**

You will then ask the body deva to bring forward the source (the inner child, ancestor, past life, and so forth) and gain a basic understanding of the trauma that occurred. What created overwhelm, pain, or difficulty? You want to get a solid enough understanding of what is going on and what may be distressing if you try to move forward. You do not need to engage in an endless saga; the purpose is to understand enough of the basics of the trauma to understand the beliefs or contracts that were created.

You may wish to use the “television screen” technique, working with resistance and using phrases such as, *Tell me more* and *If I could hear the answer to this, what would I hear?* in order to access more information.

Fully understand the beliefs that were created as a result of this trauma:

- What beliefs about the self were created?
- What beliefs about the nature of the world were created?
- What beliefs about people were created?
- What beliefs about men or women were created?

Reflect on the beliefs and see how valid they may be for you now. To best of your ability, acknowledge how these beliefs have affected you.

## **STEP EIGHT**

Ask your body deva or the person directly what they would need to be healed. Visualize the person receiving what they need. Some people choose to visualize a white or colored light (what seems intuitively appropriate) to offer healing support. If you are doing cultural or archetypal work, you may also wish to locate and interact with the opposing force.

The session is complete when you no longer notice the person you have been working with (they disappear). If they do not disappear, and you get a sense that the session is over, you will simply say thank you and move on to the integration and release.

## **STEP NINE**

You will now return to focusing on your present-day body and the area where the stuck or empty energy was. This area may have already been releasing, but you will ask the body consciousness of the area if it realizes your current age, and that you no longer need it to hang onto the beliefs and energies from (yourself, your ancestor, and so forth). Ask the individual body consciousness to release, change, or shift, this energy.

## **STEP TEN**

Ask the body deva to help release and integrate this work with your body as a whole. Say thank you to the body deva and take some time to rest before going about the rest of your day.

## **Aftercare**

It takes some time for this work to release and reintegrate, so be respectful of the fact that it is starting a process. In simple terms, this means that it will take the person on average three to five days to finish releasing, and

approximately two weeks to come to a new sense of homeostasis. All levels of the Self—body, mind, emotions, and spirit—must accept and work with the changes and shifts that have occurred.

After this work, and for approximately the next three to five days, emotions, memories, strange dreams, physical shifts and possible aches, and other signs of the body processing and releasing are likely to occur. After that time is when the rest of the spiritual and mental shifts occur. If you have done a small session, this may only take a few days. If you have released a core belief, or have significantly shifted something, it can take a month or so. After about a month, you will have the space and perspective to see how much that belief may still be affecting you, or how your body map has changed.

If this work gets to be too much, remember that we do not need to do the heavy lifting on our own. This is where experienced professionals and healers of varying types can help us to lift the proverbial boulder we are working with so we can return to our process of working with pebbles and large rocks. We shouldn't suffer alone, and we do not heal alone. *Shared pain is lessened pain*, and by finding another person to do this work with and to chat with, or a healer to help you with tricky patterns (or simply things you are stuck in or overwhelmed by), this process will go a lot easier.

We are so used to numbness that emotions, memories, or physical experiences arising after inner work that do not quickly shift us into more numbness or an outright “feeling better” state are deemed failures, or are quickly numbed. If we have been in a coma lying in a hospital bed for twenty years, our first stretch and walk down the hall is going to be uncomfortable. It is by understanding that this work is a process, as well as being conscious that after this type of work there will be shifting, that any fears of authentically feeling can be alleviated. I suggest telling yourself, *I bet that*

*this is from releasing those beliefs in my pelvis with my body deva*, so that the body can separate and will even lessen any symptoms experienced.

Feeling is not a bad thing, however. Even if it is grief, anger, or pain, the authentic expression of such things is so repressed in the modern world that we have grown incredibly distanced from ourselves and one another. Many of us are so numb that we are simply living out the unhealed wounds, loops, and stockpiled emotions that we have accumulated or that have been given to us. For anyone to actually and authentically wake up, to seek within, and to release what is held there, is incredibly courageous.

It also takes some effort. This work is cumulative. Accepting that your inner six-year-old may come up during twenty different healing sessions is difficult because we want things to be fixed—now, ideally, with as little effort on our part as possible, and with no difficult emotions or anything but positivity happening as a result of it. Engaging with your body deva does take time, and is like building any relationship. You will know yourself better through this work in six months than you will today.

But know that each belief, each restriction, each aspect of you that is healed creates greater freedom. It creates further embodiment, more joy, more capacity to see and interact with the world with clarity and grounding. It creates wholeness, self-worth, and the ability to move forward in this world, understanding not only the deepest essence of who you are but that you can move without restriction or hesitation.

## **Prompts**

You can work with the body deva on anything you may consider out of balance in your life. Here are a few prompts



that may be helpful for further exploration:

**RELATIONSHIP TO MONEY:** Ask your body deva where you may be holding restrictions or unhealed patterns with regard to money and financial success.

**RELATIONSHIP TO FOOD:** Ask your body deva where you may be holding issues related to food, such as fears, attraction to specific foods, or even allergic or sensitivity responses. You can also engage the body deva by eating a specific food item and asking or sensing if the body is enjoying that food while you are eating it. The difficulty with this is that we utilize food for anesthetic, in response to unhealed energies, so initially we may find that our bodies do seem to enjoy the donuts or fried food item we are eating. Even in a healed state, we may deeply enjoy an occasional donut. By interacting with the healed and whole body deva, we will be able to discern what our bodies crave in a healthy manner.

I caution you to approach working with food carefully if you have a background of extremely disordered thinking and eating. There is no need to create further obsession, or to use something like the body deva to fuel unhealed trauma.

**CREATIVITY AND PASSION:** Which area in your body does not feel creativity, passion, or vitally alive? This may reveal many places, and you will inquire as to the one that would be best to work with today, or would provide the most healing.

**SEXUAL BLOCKS AND RESTRICTIONS:** Where is your body holding any restrictions around sex or the sexual act? Where are you holding wounding in regards to your sexual orientation? Where are you holding wounding in regards to

what sexual partners you have had? What parts of you may not enjoy sex?

**MIRRORING:** The people as well as the situations we react to can be an incredible catalyst to inner work. The thought behind mirroring is that the outer world shows us our wounds, and what we react to shows us where we need to heal. Every person we react to points to something that is “shadow” (repressed or unconscious) within us. Every person we react to can show us which parts of ourselves remain frozen and unhealed.

Mirroring is an incredible tool. Outer experiences and people can be presented to the body deva to find where we hold this energy in our bodies. We would then want to ask the body deva, or the individual consciousness of the body part, how this person represents something unhealed within us.

Not everyone is a mirror for us. If someone harms us, or we have experienced something negative or traumatic in our lives, it does not mean that we attracted it, out of some sort of New Age ideology that seeks to blame the victim. If someone is unkind, violent, threatens your safety, or is just simply a jerk, that does not mean you need to heal your inner jerk.

It is always helpful to use our experiences and how we react to them as a catalyst for inner work, and would be especially indicated if you find yourself ruminating about the person or the situation far beyond when you experienced the friction or annoyance. If we get cut off in traffic, we may momentarily get angry and even want to flick off the other driver, and that would be in the reasonable category of reactions to someone who threatened your safety. If you are thinking about this person hours later, it indicates that they may be a mirror for you, or at the very least may be tapping into your “anger” stockpile.

**CAREER AND PERSONAL BLOCKS:** If you feel blocked in your life or career, ask for this imbalance to show up in your body. What would this block look like? What is preventing you from being in a career you feel called to or would enjoy? Move to the resistance and blocks chapter to work with any energies that may be blocking you.

**OVERALL HEALTH AND WELLNESS:** What parts of you feel really unwell? What parts of you feel as if they could never be healthy or well? Where are you holding past sickness or trauma from that sickness? What is interfering with you feeling physically well?

**SEPARATION AND TRAUMA:** Which parts of you do not want to participate in this world? Where do you hold energies that cause you to feel separate, isolated, or unloved? Where do you separate from yourself? Where do you separate from others and the world? What parts of you are unwilling to offer love to others in fear of rejection, abandonment, or not being loved in the same way you offer your own love? What needs to be healed within you so that you can have strong, stable boundaries? What needs to be healed so you can feel free to say no to others? What needs to be healed so that you can offer yourself nurturing or say yes to yourself? What needs to be healed so that you can truly offer yourself to others?

*What parts of me feel disconnected?*

*What is preventing me from becoming a more  
conscious individual?*

*What is preventing me from feeling love for myself?*

*What is preventing me from feeling love for others?*

*What is preventing me from feeling joy?*

*What is stopping me from feeling free?*

# Closing Thoughts

**W**e are consciousness. Our body has consciousness. Our big toe has consciousness. Whether we are connecting to the consciousness of our bodies as a whole or an individual part, or even to the consciousness of a cell within ourselves, we are taking the journey to knowing ourselves, and healing ourselves, in a way that few choose to.

The degree to which those connections to Earth, to the Divine, are opened is what allows our connection to a consciousness greater than ourselves. The degree to which the connection from the heart is flowing is what we are offering of ourselves to the world. In what ways are we flowing? Are we willing to be sustained by something other than ourselves? Are we willing to be sustained by Earth, by Spirit? We can decide to make the unknown known, to heal the emotional, mental, spiritual, and physical imbalances that we carry.

I realize in stating this it is easy to take this concept overboard, to engage in the black-or-white resistant thinking that with this work you will be fully healed and will achieve immortality, gain riches, and achieve enlightenment. If we do consider and heal what we carry, we certainly become lighter. Our constricted views open, our wounds heal, and the emotions stockpiled within us and the psychic weight of the patterns and constrictions of our ancestors and families, past lives, and society can be less heavy.

If we allow ourselves to do so, we truly can move beyond what we believe and know to be true about ourselves, our bodies, and the world. Doing so allows us to achieve a sense of peace in our lives that otherwise may not

have been possible. It is by taking personal responsibility for ourselves, for what we carry, that we can not only make our own lives better but the world a better place to live in. The world needs more “adults”—those who have moved past having a legion of small children internally guiding their choices and creating chaos for themselves and others in this world.

In the book, I suggest doing this work gradually. This is because many of us carry such weight that it is like we are carrying a million suitcases. It would be too freeing to simply dump all of those suitcases over a bridge and be done with it. The person would go into a tailspin and beyond their current adult capacity to deal with it. But we can all make that luggage lighter, releasing one suitcase and then another.

Whatever weight or “luggage” you are able to release as a result of this work, whatever compassion you are able to show yourselves and what lies within, whatever voice you are able to give to what previously was unconscious within you is the extent to which you can move beyond simple emotional reactivity and acting out of what is unhealed—the “loops” that we all move through again and again, seeking healing.

It is easy to look at an illusory end point for this work—that as a result of this work, you will become a beam of light, ascend to another realm, or have all of the difficulties that inherently come from being in a human form and the relationships and connections that come and inevitably go no longer come to pass. I would encourage you to look at this work as a process, one that can be continually engaged in. Never lose your curiosity or willingness to question. And never believe in your own resistance—it is either telling you that you suck or that you are now perfected and no longer need to do any inner work. Both are illusions.

What happens through this process, through any in-depth spiritual and meditative process, is that what is within us reveals itself and is then worked with through whatever means the person finds. There are, of course, some methods and tools that are better than others, but it is helpful to keep in mind that it is easier to carry 2,000 suitcases than a million when engaging in processes like this. In time, it becomes easier to let go of the rest of the suitcases because what is resistant in you is really what is unhealed.

After you have cleared out the five-year-olds and the screaming toddlers and the Goth teenager and the twenty-something who drank too much, as an adult you find that you don't want to carry this baggage. You will gradually move from resisting inner work to actively engaging in it because you know how deeply healing it is to experience more freedom.

The irony of such things is that releasing all of the baggage is an illusory end point. You will find mini-suitcases to work on, as well as purses and the occasional duffel bag when you are done with your regular luggage.

Once you move past the resistance, you will be willing to search for this luggage, though. It makes you want to look for it, because you realize that the more you heal yourself, the less engaged you become with the chaos that surrounds you; the less reactivity you have, the more stillness you will embody, and the more your tornado of chaos will dissipate. Your relationships will deepen and clarify. There are still emotions, but at a certain point there is a distinct willingness and even joy that comes from doing inner work, because you realize that delving in will bring even more clarity and peace into your life.

This is a continual process. Nobody ever reaches the end of it. Allow yourself to let go of an illusory end point, or

the unkind thoughts of needing to be someone different right now. Have compassion for yourself in this process, and realize that your openness will guide the process. By continually allowing yourself to heal, to lighten your load, to release your baggage, you will increase your capacity for more flow, more connection, and greater understanding of yourself and the world.

*Whether you take one step forward and remove one  
bag,  
or release all of your luggage and begin looking for  
carry-ons,  
I thank you for doing this work.*

# Further Resources

If this book has created interest in bodywork, consciousness studies, or spiritual exploration and evolution, here are some recommended resources to further your studies. All of these works have either been influences for this book or will provide further insights to unhealed or unconscious material that can be worked with utilizing your body deva.

***The Spiritual Awakening Guide*** by Mary Mueller Shutan; Findhorn Press, 2015

***Managing Psychic Abilities*** by Mary Mueller Shutan; Findhorn Press, 2017

***The Complete Cord Course*** by Mary Mueller Shutan; Create Space, 2015

For further information regarding Mary's work, visit [www.maryshutan.com](http://www.maryshutan.com)

***Craniosacral Therapy, Zero Balancing, Energy Work, and Talking to your Body Your Inner Physician and You*** by John Upledger; North Atlantic Books, 1997

***Cell Talk*** by John Upledger; North Atlantic Books, 2003

***The Heart of Listening*** by Hugh Milne; North Atlantic Books, 1995

***Understanding the Messages of Your Body*** by Jean-Pierre Barral; North Atlantic Books, 2007

***The Polarity Process*** by Franklyn Sills; North Atlantic Books, 2001



***Being and Becoming*** by Franklyn Sills; North Atlantic Books, 2008

***Polarity Therapy Vol 1 and 2*** by Randolph Stone; Book Publishing, 1988

***Inner Bridges*** by Fritz Smith; Humanics, 1986

***The Personal Aura*** by Dora Kunz; Quest Books, 1991

## **Psychology, Trauma, and Mind-Body Relations**

***When the Body Says No*** by Gabor Maté; Vintage Canada, 2004

***The Body Keeps the Score*** by Bessel Van Der Kolk; Viking, 2014

***Drama of the Gifted Child*** by Alice Miller; Basic Books, 1996

***A Little Book on the Human Shadow*** by Robert Bly; Harper, 1988

***Fear of Life*** by Alexander Lowen; Bioenergetics Press, 2003

***The Language of the Body*** by Alexander Lowen; MacMillan, 1977

## **Spiritual Studies-Mind, Body, Energy and Spirit**

***How to Practice Self Inquiry*** by Ramana Maharshi; Freedom Religion Press, 2014

***Talks with Ramana Maharshi*** by Ramana Maharshi; Inner Directions, 2001

***Tao and Longevity*** by Huai-Chin Nan; Weiser Books, 1984

***The Doctrine of Vibration*** by Mark Dyczkowski; State University of New York Press, 1987

***Kundalini: Energy of the Depths*** by Lilian Silburn; State University of New York Press, 1988

***Vijnana Bhairava: The Manual for Self Realization*** by Swami Lakshmanjoo; Munshirm Manhoharlal, 2001

***Into the Heart of Life*** by Jetsunma Tenzin Palmo; Snow Lion, 2011

## **Further Spiritual and Cultural Studies**

***How to Know Higher Worlds*** by Rudolf Steiner; Steiner Books, 1994

***The Knee of Listening*** by Adi Da Samraj; Dawn Horse Press, 2007

***Prometheus Rising*** by Robert Anton Wilson; New Falcon, 2010

***Initiation into Hermetics*** by Franz Bardon; Merkur, 2001

***Programming and Metaprogramming in the Human Biocomputer*** by John Lilly; Three Rivers Press, 1987

***Mind: Its Mysteries and Control*** by Swami Sivananda; Divine Life Society, 1994

***Shamans, Healers, and Medicine Men*** by Holger Kalweit; Shambhala, 1987

***The Mermaid and the Minotaur*** by Dorothy Dinnerstein; Other Press, 1999

***The Wise Wound*** by Penelope Shuttle; Grove Press, 1988





**Also of interest from Findhorn Press**

# The Spiritual Awakening Guide

Kundalini, Psychic Abilities, and the  
Conditioned Layers of Reality



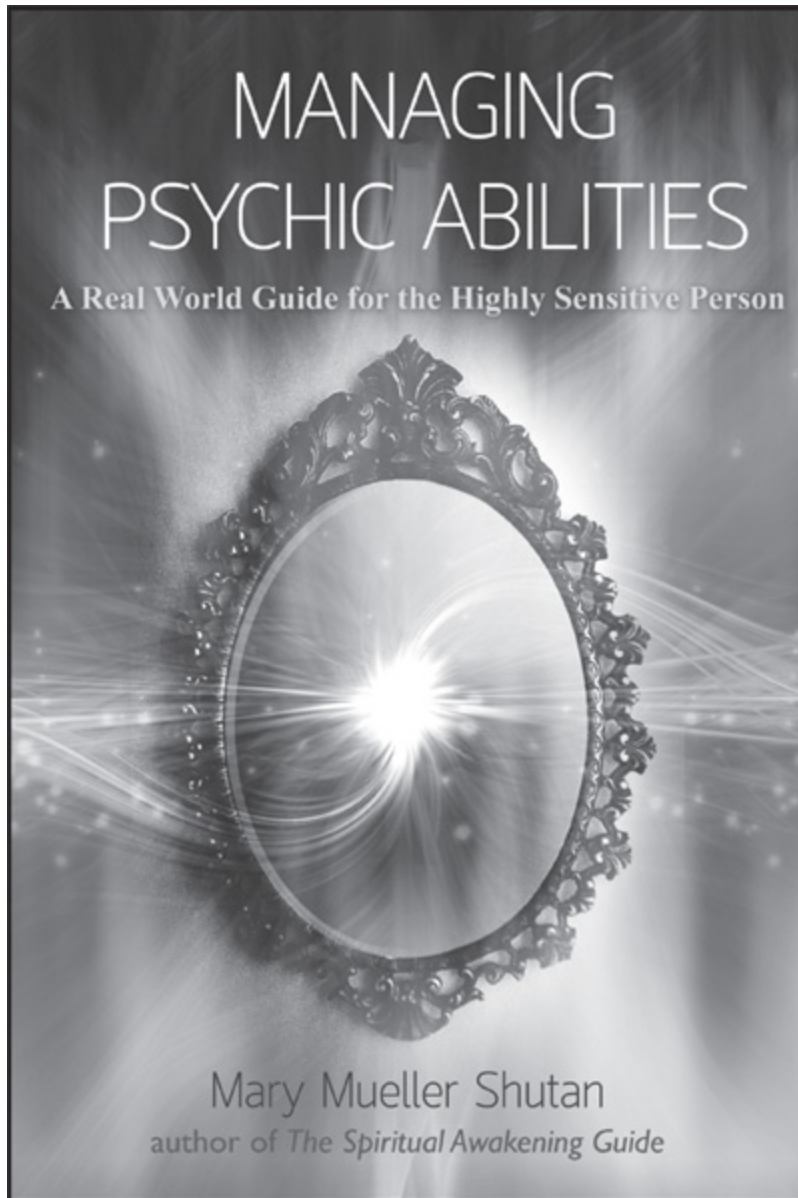
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This guide proposes a look at the possibility of leading a grounded, earthbound life of work, family, friends, and other experiences in an awakened state.

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***by Mary Mueller Shutan***

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sensitivities are a burden, causing overwhelm or even physical ailments. You don't want to become even more sensitive but know how to manage your life as is.

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