

SABBATICAL SUMMARY

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During my sabbatical I had many activities planned, and most of them I completed. The focus of my sabbatical was alternative and traditional healing methods. The following is a summary of what I learned and experienced during this amazing journey.

I don't even know how to summarize my experience and journey so I will just state the ideas of what I did in the following paper.

The first practice that I spent a whole year processing and developing was core shamanic practices. I did a year long intensive training that began in January and ended in November. I had to start this process early because it is only offered one time a year. During my course of study, I learned how Divination can help in protection of disease and illness. We can accumulate intrusions or carry negative energies that can affect our energetic bodies, emotional bodies, and physical bodies. I learned techniques on how to help others and myself heal from such energies. The power of Divination, the focus of intent or energy, can be healing and help in the prevention of disease and illness. Learning how intrusions can create illness, we practiced and learned the techniques of extraction to release and heal the unneeded energies that we had been carrying in our bodies. This technique took me into a "shamanic trance" in which I could observe and feel over the body the intrusion and where it was located. This was a very powerful and amazing experience. I then learned about Celtic Shamanism and the simple tools of using healing practices of nature to symbolize strength and power that each one of us as an individual can obtain. We used the power of voice and drumming to accomplish this. We also used "journeying" or an alternate state of consciousness to bring back nature powers for each other to use when we need it in healing ourselves and assisting others on their healing path.

Soul retrieval, is an amazing experience and healing method that shamans use to help individuals who have lost or had parts of their soul stolen in their lifetimes. We all do this in our lives, and sometimes those pieces we lose or give away create a hole which can bring on illness and disease. There is a great book written by Sandra Ingerman call Soul Retrieval, the Fragmented Self that explains this process in depth. We spent four days performing rituals and healings for ourselves and each other in this process. We then went on a vision quest for 3-4 days. I chose to go on the quest for 3 days. On the quest, I focused on my teaching and how I could assist and teach my students how to help themselves grow, heal, and learn in the classroom and in their lives. This was an incredible experience. I learned many skills and tools and implemented most of them into my classes. What it gave me was time to focus and really listen to what the students needed based on my experience of teaching at Lane over the past eight years. During the vision quest, you are out in nature by yourself, with very little or no food. You do get to have water. You take very little if anything with you and you endure all that nature has to give you. It is a time of growth and reflection, listening and expressing, loving and being present.

I then did work around death and dying. This connected into the other part of my sabbatical with the Hospice training and volunteer work that I was able to do with my time away from Lane. I experienced the gloriousness of death, and how death is an amazing rebirth of our consciousness and soul. I experienced in a journey what the after death experience was like for me. I learned skills on how to assist individuals who are ready to die but can't seem to let go enough due to fear, responsibility, etc. My experiences with the dying and the tools of being present and open with each person resides in my heart with profound impact of enjoying every moment of life, but realizing that life continues after this physical body does not exist anymore.

I then spent a whole weekend working with the wondrous powers of nature and how just being in nature is a healing and spiritual experience in itself. Lastly, I was involved in a solstice celebration and a power dance. This was a time of celebration that our advanced training was complete and the spirits of the universe were gifting us with the power of song and dance.

The shamanic training experience led me to the path of Peru. I spent 16 days studying with a shaman of the Andean Tradition. The learning of this experience would take me decades to write, so again I will just summarize my experiences.

The intention, which has been the focus of most of my sabbatical work, was release and healing. Through the teaching of ancient civilizations, I learned how to release all that I don't need into the mother earth. This process allowed me to heal my physical, emotional, and spiritual body. We worked with the energies called "Picchu" or vortexes. In Peru they honor the Apu's or mountain spirits that represent the energy vortexes. This is apparent all over the country, but Machu Picchu (the great vortex) is a popular area to feel and be present in the vortex. With Machu Picchu there are many sacred areas for release. Ancient civilizations encouraged release as part of their everyday life as it allowed for harmony and balance within each person and within the whole of the community. This type of practice is still used today in Peru. There is also a belief that releasing unnecessary heavy energy becomes "compost" for the mother earth or Pachamama as it is transformed to positive and healing energy when she receives it. White light contains seven photons of energy, basically the colors of the rainbow. We as humans, plants, animals, etc. absorb the photons of light which creates healing within our bodies. The sun called "Inti" in Peru is honored as a God as it brings all life to the Pachamama. We performed many exercises using the light of the sun for healing within in own bodies. These exercises I have shared with some of my students and they find them very helpful and healing.

We also used plant medicines to heal. We used the plants of San Pedro and Ayahuasca to maintain an altered state of consciousness in which we were able to heal our bodies on all realms of our being. We put our intentions into the plant and the plant communicated and assisted us on our journeys of release and healing. We also used plant medicine to protect our bodies from the common cold, pain, fatigue, and many other conditions. Plants such as, eucalyptus, cinnamon, and oregano were used and discussed.

One of the most profound healings I had in Peru though came from the people and the land. The people carry an amazing love and gratitude toward the earth and each other. They give gratitude for everything they obtain in

their everyday lives. They have celebrations for the solstices, the rain season, the dry season, and many others. In honoring the earth, they have a bountiful of foods and wealth of “Anyi” or reciprocity. They receive this from each other and from the earth. The shamans perform “despachos” or prayer bundles and ceremonies in which the earth, the Apu’s, the animals, the four elements, and the ancestors are honored. The despacho becomes a beautiful array of colors and gifts given to the mother earth. It is then burnt or buried for her to consume. We did this at the beginning of our journey to keep us safe and to place our intentions in the prayer bundle for healing. The gifts of the people and the land reside in my heart today and continue to heal me along my journey. What I learned about the most is that intention is everything. Being in a pure state of consciousness using the photons of light to create a place of peace and harmony in my heart was a true gift of healing.

My studies then took me down the path of Herbalism. I studied locally with a physician and naturopathic doctor named Rene. She has been a physician for many years including in Australia. She is also a shamanic practitioner and uses the spiritual realm and the plant medicines together. Our work began with touring her garden and praying to the plants and the earth for the gifts that she has given us. We asked permission to take from the plant, and just enough to keep the balance the plant needed for future growth. We then studied each of the major systems of the body such as, the cardiovascular, nervous, digestive, endocrine, lymphatic and many more. We identified signs and symptoms of disease process in each of these and discussed what plant medicines may be appropriate for them. We then made tinctures, salves, teas, and ointments. We discussed homeopathic use of other plants that cannot be used in the above listed forms. The experience was very enlightening and helpful with the student population that I work with. Many of my students turn to alternative medicines for healing and understanding the common plants and the methods of use was very informative.

I also studied many techniques involved in massage therapy. I am a licensed massage therapist and I feel massage is a great tool for healing. I wanted to understand a variety of other techniques so that I could help my students choose the right modality for their healing. There are so many

methods out there but I focused on Functional Indirect Technique, Biovalent Systems, Myofascial Release, and deep tissue. In my studies and practice I have learned that all of these methods are very helpful in healing. They are specific to the type of injury/disease process and the individual person. I feel educated in my ability to help others find the appropriate modality for them.

In my time studying, I also felt it was important to study with local physical therapists to help me review my current practices in the classroom. This opportunity allowed me to “catch up” on what is going on in the field of rehabilitation. I was able to observe and assist the physical therapists with treatment, exercise protocols, and home programs for their clients. It confirmed for me that what I am teaching in the Therapeutic Exercise Program and the Fitness Training Program are up to date and current with rehabilitation standards. It was a great learning experience and I appreciate what our local physical therapists do to help with healing.

My time as a hospice volunteer has been the most precious and rewarding. As a volunteer I get to dedicate my time to being present with families and clients that are dying. I have experienced losing clients, but understand as I stated earlier that life does not end when we leave our physical bodies. This experience has given me the gift of love and gratitude for the dying and for life. I have gained insight on the beauty of death and the gift of re-birth. I have been attending meetings and also sharing personal growth and healing exercises with other volunteers. We have had many heart-felt conversations with laughter, tears, joy, and sadness in our times together. This has allowed me to help myself and others heal on their last days of their life in this capacity. I am so grateful to have had the time to spend with all my clients that I have lost this past year. They have taught me truly how to live each day.

The last project on my sabbatical was to take the lead in developing a new program. This program is the Physical Therapist Assistant Program at Lane. I was the lead faculty member in developing this program. I put together an advisory group and ran the meetings and assisted on developing the curriculum and getting it approved by the Board of Education and the State of Oregon. I also assisted with equipment and budgetary needs and the hiring of our new program director. Since the hiring of our director I have

assisted with the accreditation documents to allow our program to be approved by the American Physical Therapy Association. I will be continuing to work with this program for the school year of 2008-2009. I am very excited about this program as it meets the need of the community and the students. With our health care industry in crisis, it will help in assisting others get appropriate and much needed rehabilitation for their healing.

What I learned from this experience is the only way to help others along their path, is to heal ourselves first. Healing comes in so many pathways. Finding harmony and balance, living in the moment through your heart and being present is the best present. Your intention leads the way for assisting yourself and others to heal. Remember that healing comes from the mind, body, and spirit.