

# What Is Your Pain Trying to Tell You?

## *Understanding Your Energy Ecosystem*

By Mara Bishop, MS, ThM, CSC

**W**e invest tremendous resources in pursuing the alleviation of emotional and physical pain. Of course no one should suffer needlessly; however, pain can be informative. Immediate relief from pain, without ascertaining its source, can be hazardous to the bigger picture of health. Pain of any kind can signal that something needs to change. If a physical or energetic imbalance is present it can help guide us to what is needed to restore health.

The pain conveys, "This needs attention." I had a client who was quite good at ignoring the messages her body was sending her in the form of pain. As her back sent her increasingly urgent messages of distress, instead of listening, she disconnected from her body, and therefore from the hurt. While she coped with the pain in the short term, she created a larger problem. She needed to make some changes, which involved adjusting the structure of her life to accommodate some basic self-care. Despite the messages that were trying to break through to her, she did not make those changes. Her back condition did not ease, and instead developed into an acute crisis, which landed her in bed and forced her to stop altogether.

From the shamanic perspective, any kind of illness or imbalance—be it emotional, physical, or mental—has its origin in the spiritual or energetic system. Having a deeper understanding of our spiritual or energetic bodies is one way to understand how we relate to pain so we can learn from it more effectively. Pain can result from a clash between our innate energetic personalities and the way we interact with other people and our environment. The energetic aspect of individuals, relationships and environments is what I call the energy ecosystem. It can be *physically* painful for sensitive people to be in certain situations or around certain people. For example, one client described feeling nauseous whenever she went into a work environment that had become hostile, and another developed migraines whenever he was around a family member with whom he did not feel safe. Many of my clients are empathic and tend to take on the emotional pain of the people in their lives. Discordant energy is created when we are with



people or in environments that our energetic body perceives as toxic. This can translate into physical pain, or emotional pain, such as depression and anxiety.

### **ADDRESSING ENERGETIC SOURCES OF PAIN**

By taking a series of steps to address the energetic nature of the sources of discomfort, we can shift the dynamics that are causing the pain response. The first part of the process is to understand your energetic

personality. What is your innate spiritual makeup? Learning to sense your own energetic body helps you develop more discernment and control over your personal boundaries. Knowing which types of situations and personalities are most challenging for you allows you to prepare for them. How you are affected by other people and the different environments that make up your life becomes clearer as you see energetic dynamics more astutely.

It can also be helpful to employ shamanic healing methods as appropriate, both for pain relief and to address the underlying causes of imbalances. Clearing energy from your system that doesn't belong and reconnecting you with parts of yourself that have been disconnected during times of trauma are common techniques

in this process. Creating new ways for you to recognize the beauty of who you are at your spiritual core is an important principle for the work as a whole. Through a deliberate progression of steps that fit their personal energetic identity and life experience, many people are able to transform their lives in a way that transcends pain relief (as gratifying and important as that can be) and moves into the realm of personal evolution. ❧

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