

Is a Lack of Energetic "Skin" Care Contributing to Anxiety and Depression?

By Mara Bishop, MS, ThM, CSC

In my practice, I see the effects of an accumulation of energy that does not belong. This residue contributes to anxiety and depression, decreased cognitive functioning, headaches and stomach aches, and despair, fear, and isolation. I'll share an example of how I address this in one-on-one sessions, and also methods you can do on your own, but first let's clarify the premise of energetic "skin" care.

Often energetic concepts have correlates in the physical body. Let's think about your skin as representing your energetic boundaries for a moment. The skin is your largest organ. It defines your physical parameters, keeping what is fundamentally "you" on the inside. It is flexible, adapting as you grow and move about. One of its primary jobs is to protect you from external things that are not healthy for you, like bacteria. In order to help it function optimally, you (ideally) clean it regularly and protect it from outside factors that can weaken it, like the sun.

If you didn't wash your skin for a long period of time, what would happen? You'd get grungy. A little dirt isn't a bad thing, but as it accumulates it takes its toll. Your pores would clog and get infected. You'd get pimples, your body's way of responding to outside substances that don't belong. The pimples might be painful, affect your self-confidence and willingness to engage others, or even leave scars. A build-up of grime on the skin also prevents the skin from rejuvenating itself. The skin cells that naturally slough off get trapped, compounding the problem. Your complexion would likely become dull or patchy, maybe grayish. It would certainly lose its natural glow. You would age faster.

CONSEQUENCES

If your protective skin is not cleansed of what doesn't belong, it becomes overloaded, doesn't function well and gives you uncomfortable symptoms. The same is true for your spiritual "skin," the protective border of your energetic body; it needs care and attention too. We are not used to thinking of the care of our energetic skin, however, so we tend to neglect it. Energetic grime builds up and we can experience emotional, physical and mental symptoms.

And, not everyone has the same skin type. Some people can get away with the minimum of skin care; a little soap and water periodically and off they go, looking great. Sensitive skin is as lovely as low-maintenance skin, but it needs attention to keep it that way. Without care there tends to be consequences—a rash, inflammation, breakout, or dryness.

There are different energetic types as well. "You're so sensitive" has often been used as a criticism, but sensitivities can be turned into

SHAMANISM WITHOUT BORDERS

As a leader in the newly formed Shamanism Without Borders program, I will be facilitating groups to work on behalf of people, animals and places that have experienced collective trauma. Please contact me via email if you are interested in participating.

**More information:
www.WholeSpirit.com,
mara@wholespirit.com, (919) 419-1074**

strength. What is currently causing a sense of overwhelm in your body and emotions means that you likely have a lot of receptors. Those receptors help you perceive the world around you. When used with discernment and control, they allow you to gather information about people, places, and situations that less sensitive people may not pick up on. When perpetually on the verge of overload, these receptors lose the ability to convey information with the level of subtlety that is necessary to be useful; they become like on/off switches rather than dials able to pick up and distinguish many different broadcast signals.

A client came in recently with a general sense of anxiousness, and feelings of despair and sadness. After an initial assessment, I understood her to be a sensitive personality type, accustomed to feeling—and accommodating—the extreme and unpredictable moods of the people in her life. Her intuitive senses were strong, and could guide her in decision-making, but they were often drowned out by the overwhelming intensity of the troubling emotions she was feeling. She ignored or second-guessed her instincts.

We did energetic clearing work to help remove energy that was not hers that had been inundating her. That helped immediately. After several sessions she was at a more baseline state. She could sense her own clean "skin" without the build-up of energetic detritus she had accumulated because of her open and porous energetic type. We talked about how she could perceive and translate the intuitive messages she was receiving in order to make better decisions, and about ways to have more control over her own energetic boundaries. After a series of sessions, her sense of despair and anxiety has mostly lifted and she has reported being more confident and optimistic about steering a course into her future.

PREVENTING ENERGETIC OVERLOAD

A good thorough energetic cleansing from an experienced practitioner is often necessary to shift out of intense emotional states, like



Mara Bishop is a shamanic practitioner, intuitive consultant, teacher, author, and artist. In her Personal Evolution Counseling™ practice in Durham, she combines shamanic healing, intuitive consultations, and energetic healing. She works with clients locally, nationally, and internationally. She is the author of Inner Divinity, Crafting Your Life with Sacred Intelligence, and the companion CD of guided meditations.

She holds master's degrees in Energy Medicine and Theology and a bachelor's degree in Art and Communications. She is a graduate of the Foundation for Shamanic Studies Three-Year Program in Advanced Shamanism and Shamanic Healing, Sandra Ingerman's Shamanic Teacher Training program, and advanced training with Betsy Bergstrom. Mara is the only Harner Certified Shamanic Counselor® in North Carolina.

anxiety or depression. And of course, energetic healing work is not a substitute for medical or psychological treatment. The more you can do to help prevent energetic overload from happening in the first place, the easier it is to maintain a healthy state.

Here are some ideas for taking care of your own energetic skin:

- When you are cleaning your face in the morning, envision that anything that is not healthy for you energetically is gently washed away.
- When you put on lotion or sunscreen, envision a layer of protection from any external emotion or energy that doesn't serve you.
- When you wash your hands, intend that any physical interactions that you have be healthy and energetically clean.
- When you take a shower or bath, ask that any energetic grime that has accumulated from your day be gently neutralized and washed harmlessly away. **hll**