

Somatic Archaeology™
and
The Consequences of Remembering

Ruby Gibson

Masters Essays
Submitted to the Faculty of
Holos University Graduate Seminary
In partial fulfillment of the requirements
For the degree of

MASTER OF THEOLOGY
Special Emphasis in
Transformational Psychology

Copyright by Ruby Gibson, 2009

All Rights Reserved

The work reported in these Essays is original and carried out by me solely, except for the acknowledged direction and grateful assistance received from colleagues, mentors, Mother Earth, and the natural world.

Ruby Gibson

DEDICATION

To the legacy of Mother Earth

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

With great gratitude to all my teachers, seen and unseen, above and below, for their patience as I learn humility, right relationship, and accountability. I also warmly thank Bob Nunley for his gentle persuasion and support of my work and subsequent studies at Holos, and acknowledge Susan Davis for encouraging me to enroll at Holos University. My admiration goes to my Chairperson Ann Nunley, along with Berney Williams and Bob Nunley for their support, insights and wise assessment of this paper. I am also in debt to Marilyn McGehee and Vera Borgmeyer for bringing me under their wings and teaching me the ropes. Lastly, I wish to thank Rey Martinez for his unwavering encouragement of my efforts and his companionship on this incredible journey.

ABSTRACT

"We need to learn what is the message from our lineage, ancestry, culture, biology as well as to decipher the light language of our soul."

Carlos Warter

This essay on the Consequences of Remembering hopes to convey the origin, substance, means and outcome of generational and collective *looking back*. It is meant to inform and offer physical, psychic, and spiritual remedy, as well as to raise questions about the significance of our relationship to the Earth in our healing cycles and patterns. The objective is to develop understanding and tools to embrace the past and become accountable for our actions and life experiences; to explore a clear awareness of the embodiment of our personal archaeology in the present; and to chart a conscious, joyful path into the future that allows all of our relations to come full circle and reconcile suffering, or more specifically, to remember, evolve, and *look forward*.

TABLE OF CONTENTS	Page Number
INTRODUCTION.....	8
ESSAY ONE: Memory and the Earth	17
• Overview.....	18
• The Relationship Between Our Body and Our Earth.....	20
• The Myth of Duality and Healing.....	22
• Love of the Land.....	24
• Memory and Earth Vibration.....	26
ESSAY TWO: Memory and the Body	30
• Body Talk and the Language of Sensation.....	31
• DNA and Memory.....	35
• Neurophysiology, Stress and Memory.....	38
• Memory and the Brain.....	40
• Generational Memory and Historical Amnesia	43
• Sacred Memory.....	46
ESSAY THREE: Mending the Circle	50
• The Circle of Life.....	51
• The Medicine Wheel.....	51
• Somatic Archaeology Wheel of Suffering.....	53
• Somatic Archaeology Wheel of Healing.....	56
• Somatic Archaeology Wheel of Transformation.....	58
• A Circle Within a Circle.....	60
• Archaeology of the Soul.....	62

ESSAY FOUR: Somatic Archaeology.....	64
• Remember Your Story.....	65
• How We Reclaim Our Memory.....	66
• The Five Steps of Somatic Archaeology.....	67
• Healing the Suffering of Humanity.....	69
• Conscious Reconciliation of the Past.....	71
REFERENCES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	75
APPENDIX	
American Indian Ten Commandments.....	79
Indo-European Branches of the Language Tree.....	80
Somatic Archeology-Wheel of Suffering.....	81
Somatic Archeology-Wheel of Healing.....	82
Somatic Archeology-Wheel of Transformation.....	83

INTRODUCTION

There are no unsacred places;
There are only sacred places
And desecrated places.
~ Wendell Berry

In the summer of 2004, I had the amazing opportunity to interview 30 indigenous wisdom keepers from around the world about their tribal prophecies, traditions, and visions for a book I am writing. Two days before I left for the indigenous gathering, I had a dream. In my dream at least 200 people were circled in a cave, holding hands and chanting the word “Khonmadi” over and over. I woke up knowing that I must remember this word, and so I wrote it down phonetically, and went to research its origin.

In Barbara Walkers book, *The Women’s Encyclopedia of Myths and Secrets*, I found that Khon Ma was the “Tibetan name for Mother Earth, the “old mother” Goddess who rules over all spirits emanating from the earth element.”¹ The rhythmic pulse of chanting *Khonmadi, Khonmadi, Khonmadi*, I then surmised, must be the heartbeat of Mother Earth. I aptly gave my book the preliminary title, *Khonmadi, The Heartbeat of Mother Earth*.

I traveled to California to the Elder Gathering where people had come from all around the world to share their stories and teachings. One man in particular took interest in my book. Thaayrohyadi, the Spiritual Chief and Guardian of the Otomi wisdom from Temoaya, Mexico, immediately corrected the spelling of the word Khonmadi. He told me, “The word is spelled Jamadi

(pronounced Kamadi) in my language. It is a word of my ancestors, the Atlantean/Lemurian people, which means Cosmic Mother.”

Staring at him in disbelief, I asked with great respect, “You know this word? You *use* this word?”

His eyes shined astutely as he replied in broken English, “It is the word we say in our prayers as you would use the words Amen, Namaste, Mitakuye Oyasin, or All my Relations. Sometimes we gather in caves and pray to our sacred Earth Mother in this way.”

Without thinking, I jumped up and threw my arms around him, hugging him like a long-lost friend. I was simply astounded. Jitterbugs circled round my head and butterflies filled my belly. Something akin to Déjà vu was happening, as a deep connection and memory began to awaken in me.

Kajangu Kykosa, a wisdom teacher and poet from the Bashi people, and a professor at Southwestern University in Austin, Texas, was very interested in the vision and encouraged me to share it with all the elders. My dream was beginning to breathe, and for a moment I had the most profound feeling that I belonged. Not simply as an inhabitant of the earth, but to a larger collective weave of spiritual family that I had yearned for my entire life.

The following day, as I was speaking with the interpreter for the Bushmen of the Kalahari from Africa, I learned that the clan name for this particular group of Bushmen was the #Xhomani clan (# representing the clicking sound in their tongue that precedes the word). Xhomani San literally translated in their

language means “Born with vision”, and the interpreter explained that they chant this word in caves to bring vision to their people.

Grace enveloped me as I stared in awe at these humble people who, making their inaugural visit to the US, traveled across continents with the gentle ways of their spirit, preserving their instinctive memories and traditional stories that led us to this day.

Again I shared my dream and the brilliant smiles of the Bushmen came alive. The translator relayed as the Elder Bushman explained, “that having #Xhmani in my dream represented my ancestors coming to tell me that I will bridge together many traditions. Being led in a dream in this way makes the vision strong.”

A 2009 National Geographic special on *The Human Family Tree* confirms, “The San people of southern Africa and the Hadzabe of east Africa carry more ancient evolutionary lineages in their DNA than any other people, and exhibit a direct living link to our oldest genetic ancestor, ‘Scientific Adam’. The San people’s click languages could be the last remaining tongues similar to the original ones spoken by humans in Africa some 40,000 years ago.”²

I had stumbled upon a word—or a symbolic sound—that has cross-cultural, cross-continental, multi-linguistic meaning. Shared by many indigenous tribes around the world, this ancient sound seems to serve as a link to a memory that binds us as one, even to this day. Chanting this cosmic sound, just as in my dream, serves a higher purpose of communing with spirit and honoring the divine feminine.

Khonmadi did not appear to be as prevalent in Latin languages, but rather had a definitive place in the various tribes' indigenous languages, with some differences in pronunciation. For example, when I interviewed Lauro Hinostroza Garcia, a recognized shaman and healer in Peru, who carries in his veins the legacy of ancient Peruvian traditions like the Inka and Shipibo lineages, he explained, "that Kumari is the mythical big bear in Quechua language. The bear comes from the cave and stands with its arms upward, holding his burden with strength."

Mrs. Pauline E. Tangiora is a tribal elder from Aotearoa, New Zealand and her tribal affiliations are to Rongomaiwahine and Kahungunu. She is one of the 21 members of the Earth Council. With the simplicity of a child and the vastness of a sage, Pauline told me that in her language the word is pronounced Kumara. "Kumara is the sacred sweet potato that Mother Earth has given us for sustenance," she declared fondly.

Ove Svensson from Sweden is dedicated to teaching and re-weaving the traditions of both ancient and modern Nordic peoples with other multi-indigenous cultures. Ove explained that in his Nordic language "Ku means Cow, which is equivalent to the feminine". In addition, Comadre in Spanish means godmother and defines the relationship between godmother and parent. Kumari, in Sanskrit, means the living goddess, and Kumari also means 'Virgin', a name to designate Sita and Durga. In her book, *Dakini's Warm Breath*, Judith Simmer-Brown defines the symbol of Kumari:

While Kumari is a feminine figure, within her body was revealed the limitless expanse in which the mandala of peaceful and

wrathful deities could be seen . . . yet she takes feminine form in the realm of symbol. In one flash, she communicates that the world of duality is a perfect and only means of expression of that which is beyond duality. Because she is non-conceptual, she cannot be known as an object of experience; because she holds the keys to direct realization, she is an emissary of awakening. She represents the lineages of awakening traced all the way back to Buddha, but at the same time she represents personal awakening in the present moment.³

Khonmadi, a linguistic embodiment of the feminine, confirms my earlier studies of the origins of matriarchy and the creative blueprint of our beginnings. Archaeologist Marijjs Gimbutas conducted excavations and research in Italy, Greece, and the Balkan Peninsula that formed the basis of her theory of what she called the Old European culture: a peaceful, egalitarian pre-IE (Indo-European) civilization. Gimbutas interpreted figurines excavated here as evidence of a female or mother centered (matrifocal) culture that was conquered by invading IE Kurgan riders from the steppes. According to Gimbutas, these Kurgan cultures imposed their IE language and martial, hierarchical values on what remained of Old Europe. In the Introduction to *Language and the Goddess*, Marija Gimbutas writes:

Some twenty years ago when I first started to question the meaning of the signs and design patterns that appeared repeatedly on the cult objects and painted pottery of Neolithic Europe, they struck me as being pieces of a giant jigsaw puzzle—two-thirds of which was missing. As I worked at its completion, the main themes of the Old European ideology emerged, primarily through analysis of the symbols and images and the discovery of their intrinsic order. They represent the grammar and syntax of a kind of meta-language by which an entire constellation of meanings is transmitted. They reveal the basic world-view of Old European culture. Symbols are seldom abstract in any genuine sense; their ties with nature persist, to be discovered through the study of context and association. In this

way we can hope to decipher the mythical thought which is the raison d'etre of this art and its form.⁴

Khonmadi as a symbolic word, I then determined, draws forth the very essence of femininity and Mother Earth-centered reverence, and embodies the blueprint of our deepest memory of peaceful co-existence. Chanting this word conjures forward the healing destination or goal, allowing us to remember the source of original wisdom. Maria Gimbutas adds, “To understand our ancestors, we must understand their belief systems.”

My final elder interview was with Michael Ortiz Hill, co-author of *Gathering in their Names*, a kinship story he wrote with his spiritual brother, Mandaza Kandemwa of the Shona People from Zimbabwe; Mandaza is widely recognized in Southern Africa as a traditional healer (nganga). I revealed my story once again, and Michael looked at me oddly and reached into his pocket. He pulled out a slip of paper and roughly scrawled in pen was the name Kumari and a phone number. Michael explained the coincidence with a half smile. “I was just checking my voice mail, and I had a message from a woman I’ve never met. She said her name was Kumari. This is very strange, but I must tell you that Kumari is coming here.”

It was on the following day, during the heat of noon, that Michael came hobbling up the stairs, eagerly exclaiming, “Kumari is here, Kumari is here!” Slowly making her way behind him was an older African American woman, long roots (dread locks) swaying with her gait, a shyness hiding behind her eyes. I stood to face her as she placed her hands together in prayer, and bowing ever so slightly she said sweetly, “I am Kumari”.

Not knowing whether to laugh or to cry, I reached out and embraced her wholly. She was warm and round like the earth and I took a moment to feel her heart beating. The compassion in her eyes filled my soul and I instantly knew that my dream had come to life. The essence of Khonmadi / Jamadi / Khomani / Kumara / Kumari was no longer my dream. It was a collective dream that I had been given as a rare gift of remembrance that all people—all shapes and sizes, colors and nationalities, religions and languages—are united through the heartbeat of Mother Earth.

Returning to our human origins, remembering times when we were peaceful, agricultural, and creative earth-centered communities, before the advent of war and conquest, is at the heart of the blueprint we all share. Our ancestors are crying out to be heard, and by breathing life into their memories, words, and symbols, hope for a harmonious future is kept alive. We can choose to come full circle and resonate to a new paradigm that is encoded in our somatic archaeology as memory. This is the full consequence of remembering.

On the last day of the gathering, I watched as the elders assembled in a circle, a hoop of hope donning multi-colored wraps, ponchos, and turbans. Many spoke of the suffering their indigenous group has had to endure, of the hardships that have passed and continue to inflict their people. Many spoke of the prophecies that have been protected and hidden from view that have guided their people for many years. And many expressed that now the time had come, like a tree coming into flowering, for these truths, teachings, and sacred words to be shared. The sun had set on this gathering, and now I was standing, feet fully

planted, in the hoop of hope with them. This is my story. I am honored to share it with you.

Endnotes Introduction

¹ Walker, *The Women's Encyclopedia of Myths and Secrets*, 501.

² National Geographic Special: The Human Family Tree, 2009.

³ Simmer-Brown, *Dakini's Warm Breath: The Feminine Principal in Tibetan Buddhism*, 286.

⁴ Gimbutas, *The Language of the Goddess*. xv.

ESSAY ONE

Memory and the Earth

One of the challenges of the next decade or so is to try to draw together some of these disparate strands of interest and enthusiasm through a more rigorous and tightly argued set of propositions about what exactly memory is and what it has been in the past. The only fixed point at this moment is the near ubiquity of the term. No one should delude himself into thinking we all use it the same way. But just as we use words like love and hate without ever knowing their full or shared significance, so are we bound to go on using the term "memory," the historical signature of our own generation.¹ -Jay Winter

Overview

Every body is born with a story, one that is wise and profound and mysterious. The beauty of our individual stories stretches from a time far before us, and travels to the future far beyond us. As a parable fabricated from the myths of humanity, these stories help us to develop, test our character, and validate our truths. Our stories construct the reality that we experience and they help us invent our future.

Stories are the footholds of the past that mold us, and they design our days. Stories can blind us and bind us to repetitive circumstance, as well as embolden us to rise above adversity. Some are sweet, some tragic, but all stories are teachers and have hidden meaning for us to explore. When we embrace and understand our story, our path to personal healing and recovery is greatly enhanced. Potent and accessible in our bodies, we can remember our stories, uncover their trail, and find their origin with Somatic Archaeology.

Although it may appear that the words somatic and archaeology are an odd combination, they weave together into a model of healing that impacts our past, present, and future. Our body, like the Earth, is a warehouse of memory. Just as the Earth contains the historical library of life in its ruins, graves, trees, rocks, and oceans, our body inherits the archives of our ancestors in its DNA, cells, neurology, blood, and bones. We become what we've inherited, what our family has modeled, what our teachers have taught us, and what Earth rhythms have provided for us. Our Earth, our body, remembers all.

When we wish to examine how we evolved as a culture and a species, we dig in the Earth. The Earth is the link to times past and is the battleground for our

personal evolution. The Earth stores the symbols, the skeletons, and the shadows of our lives. Excavating the information the Earth stores helps us to piece together our lineage and illuminates for us our timeline of evolution, the wisdom of the ancients, and the fruits and folly of our forefathers.

When we wish to examine how each of us evolved as an individual, or as a family system, and to explore the social and spiritual influences that have shaped us, we excavate our body. Our body provides the link to our inherent wisdom, cycles, and perfection, and as well storing the symbols, skeletons, and shadows of our personal lives. The stories in our body furnish us with understanding to witness the imprints of memory that have manifested into our accomplishments, struggles, addictions, emotions, beliefs, and limitations, as well as our tenacity, courage, and potential.

In an archaeological excavation of our body, we find that the search itself is as valuable as the artifacts that emerge; that our desire to know more about our self is the true driving force. History may predispose the future, but *examining* history gives alternatives to the future. The remains in our bodies directly influence our personal health, thoughts, relationships, and actions—and unearthing these memories can eventually lead to our greatest well-being, and hence, to social change and global harmony. Where we have been can tell us much about where we are going. The great Chinese thinker and philosopher, Confucius tells us:

The ancients who wished to illustrate illustrious virtue throughout the Kingdom, first ordered well their own states. Wishing to order well their states, they first regulated their families. Wishing to regulate their families, they first cultivated

their persons. Wishing to cultivate their persons, they first rectified their hearts. Wishing to rectify their hearts, they first sought to be sincere in their thoughts. Wishing to be sincere in their thoughts, they first extended to the utmost their knowledge. Such extension of knowledge lay in the investigation of things.²

The Relationship Between Our Body and Our Earth

Every story has a twist. The Earth spirals and bends her story everyday as weather patterns come and go. Floods change the landscape, fires burn old forests, winds sweep debris from the sky and trees, and earthquakes shake our foundation. The same thing happens inside of us. Our emotions flow and cleanse our hearts, anger burns up our fears, thoughts remodel the design of our lives, and our bodies continually replace cells that alter our structure. Our bodies adapt to circumstances and environment each moment as we meander through our story line.

Joseph Campbell, in his renowned book, *The Power of Myth*, contributes, “We have today to learn to get back into accord with the wisdom of nature and realize again our brotherhood with animals and the water and the sea. To say that the divinity informs the world and all things is condemned to pantheism. But pantheism is a misleading word. It suggests that a personal god is supposed to inhabit the world, but that is not the idea at all. . . . if you will think of ourselves as coming out of the earth, rather than having been thrown in here from somewhere else, you see that we are the earth, we are the consciousness of the earth. These are the eyes of the earth. And this is the voice of the earth.”³

If we are agree then, that we are part of the consciousness of the Earth, it

may be plausible that our health, thoughts and beliefs impact the Earth, and that the Earth's energies influence our wellbeing. Defining this type of reciprocal relationship may be almost impossible to qualify and quantify, yet it is the basis for all indigenous beliefs, is validated by our survivalist propensity, and provides the template for the very existence of humankind. Visionary, scientist, and author Gregg Braden's teachings show us that the key to our healing our future lies in understanding the wisdom of our past and our relationship to Earth:

Viewing our bodies and the Earth as mirrors of one another, they suggest that the extremes witnessed in one may be considered metaphors for changes within the other. This thinking relates to destructive weather patterns and storms, for example, to the unsettled consciousness of people where the storms occur. At the same time, such holistic views suggest that the extremes of earthquakes, life-threatening storms, and disease may be eased, or even eradicated through subtle shifts in our belief system.⁴

Braden emphasizes that we are one family of humans, much as an entire field of brush is one plant connected through an expansive root system, and that the "experience of one member is shared by some degree by all the others."⁵

It is important to explore the origin of our disconnection from nature in order to understand how to heal it. In his book, *In the Absence of the Sacred*, Jerry Mander shares this point of view, "The assumptions have been gaining strength for thousands of years, fed both by Judeo-Christian religious doctrines that have de-sanctified the earth and placed humans in domination over it; and by technologies that, by their apparent power, have led us to believe we are some kind of royalty over nature, exercising divine will. We have lost the understanding that existed in all civilizations prior to ours, and that continues to

exist on Earth today in societies that live side by side with our own; we have lost the sense of the sacredness of the natural world. The new technologists don't accept this notion; they live in a world that is removed from it; they themselves have lost touch with the source of that knowledge. They find it silly.”⁵

Although we have been taught to behave with a sense of entitlement that the Earth perpetually provides and humans incessantly reap, our negligent rate of consumption reinforces a common myth of duality with dire consequences. Remembering the “give and take” principles of any healthy relationship, it is hypothesized that the adjustment of our lifestyles, thoughts, and behaviors help establish external harmony, and will then, theoretically, be positively received by all of our relations; animal, plant, mineral, and human. In order to thoroughly modify our present and change our future, we must look at the historical beliefs that brought us to this day.

The Myth of Duality and Healing

The myth of duality is the baseline for our current human story, emphasizing right versus wrong, good versus evil, yin versus yang, science versus spirituality, and hero versus villain. In the words of Ram Dass, “The heart surrenders everything to the moment. The mind judges and holds back. Across planes of consciousness, we have to live with the paradox that opposite things can be simultaneously true.”

Unifying these polarities—a theory that is central to many religious teachings and spiritual systems—is thought to liberate human beings from their

own suffering, by bridging divine and human, or feminine and masculine, together for the purpose of self-realization and enlightenment. Although our dualistic thinking establishes the disconnection between body and earth, it also is the stimulant that fuels our inner determination for balance. As Claude Levi-Strauss reminds us in his famous book, *Structural Anthropology*:

Myths are structured in terms of "binary oppositions" where meaning is produced by dividing the world into mutually exclusive categories such as culture/nature, man/woman, black/white, good/bad/ and us/them. The purpose of myths is to make the world explicable, which is accomplished by resolving these binary contradictions. Mythical thought always progresses from the awareness of oppositions toward their resolution...the purpose of myth is to provide a logical model capable of overcoming a contradiction.⁶

This myth also sets the stage for our modern healing dynamic of mind versus body. We have been raised in a culture that fractures the aspects of human experience into four quite distinctly different quadrants: physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual. Over time, we have developed a medical system that encourages this separation by teaching specialized education in one quadrant and relying on professional partners in the other categories to fill in the blanks of knowledge and expertise; e.g., oncologists, psychologists, podiatrists, neurologists, and physical therapists.

This myth of human division has also created the platform for the healing of our story: most of us proceed down the road of recovery acting as if we can only heal one aspect of ourselves at a time, or assuming that we are not educated enough to trust our own instincts without the assistance of a trained professional, or believing that *our* story has nothing to do with *their* story, or Mother Earth's

story, or feeling that we are, in fact, not whole. And so the myth is perpetuated and we learn to approach healing in a fragmented way.

We manifest body splits that separate our right side from our left side, above from below, physicality from luminosity, and mind from physical affliction. We are afraid to link our intuition to our power, or our past to the present time. The big picture gets lost in the fractionalization, and we disregard our relationship not only to our bodies, but also to the Earth as a primary measure of wholeness.

Wholeness happens when we unite our dualistic parts, consciously merging hemispheres of our brain, blending left and right into the centerline of our bodies or, on a larger scale, observing Earth changes as they parallel our diagnoses and spiritual awakening. Simple somatic awareness skills, augmented by prayer and intuition, allow us to get out of the way of needing to know how to blend ourselves with our world or our story, and then we can simply allow the inborn rhythms of our body wisdom to rule our healing experience and bypass our fractured conditioning.

Love of the Land

Chief Luther Standing Bear, Teton Sioux, born in 1868, tells us, “The old people came literally to love the soil, and they sat or reclined on the ground with a feeling of being close to a mothering power. It was good for the skin to touch the earth, and the old people liked to remove their moccasins and walk with bare feet on the sacred earth. Their tipis were built upon the earth and their altars were made of earth. The birds that flew in the air came to rest upon the earth, and it

was the final abiding place of all things that lived and grew. The soil was soothing, strengthening, cleansing, and healing. This is why the old Indian still sits upon the earth instead of propping himself up and away from its life-giving forces. For him, to sit or lie upon the ground is to be able to think more deeply and to feel more keenly. He can see more clearly into the mysteries of life and come closer in kinship to other lives about him.”⁷

In the book, *The Woman's Dictionary of Symbols and Sacred Objects* by Barbara G. Walker, she writes, “Egyptians, Babylonians and other ancient peoples considered it essential to step on sacred ground with bare feet, so as to absorb the holy influences of Mother Earth, or from the floor of the temple built over her shrine. That is why God commanded Moses to take off his shoes, “for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground” (Exodus 3:5).”⁸

Barbara Walker continues, “Reverence for the earth as a living mother was characteristic of prepatriarchal societies, which seemed to understand more clearly the importance of preserving their environment than later, male-dominated civilizations did. Tacitus related how Germanic tribes locked away their weapons and put an end to all warfare during the sacred season of honoring the Earth Goddess. For Western civilization, then, the Goddess Earth became mere matter (mater), “without any psychic significance for us,” Jung says. “How different was the former image of matter—the Great Mother—that could encompass and express the profound emotional meaning of Mother Earth.”⁹

Just as we love our biological mother, the sentimental reverence for our Earth Mother resides deep within our bones and memory patterns. Establishing

resonance with the source of our nourishment provides not only profound safety and respect, but also allows us to access memories that have long been forgotten or overlooked. By establishing a love for the land, and a requisite love for our body, we align with energetic vibrations and common affiliations that give us access to the information we seek.

Memory and Earth Vibration

As we will investigate in the following essay, there are scientific, somatic, and neurological means to understanding the process of holding and recalling memory, but this proof is only part of the picture. The esoteric and innate senses within a person that cannot be logically confirmed hold promise for future studies. It is difficult to articulate the often-nebulous sea of somatic memory fragments that do not fit sequentially into a method or time line. The mysterious nature of memory requires that we utilize all of our sensory skills to establish the proper environment and awareness to explore what I refer to as “the atmosphere of the invisible”. During a discourse in August 2009 with my good friend and teacher, Boe Bvshpolawa Glasschild of the great Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma and author of *The Shores Within*, he explained:

“The Earth holds memories and actions as vibrations. Our Earth connections both enhance and erase our ability to retain and/or release experiences we process as memory. Our connections to Earth Mother are far more complex than the superficial physical interaction of our feet upon the soil. We extend into our sacred Mother through a divine thread below us known as our

root chakra. This connective chord is sensitive to the lower Earth vibrations that move too slowly to be perceived by our waking senses. This is akin to a spider's webbing. It vibrates to call our attention to any unseen activities within our personal space. As most two-leggeds are functioning on auto-pilot, this connection is almost always overlooked or disregarded.”¹⁰

Developing the sensitivity to *feel* our memories, rather than *think* about the past is the key to accessing sensory information, and therefore the means to a successful somatic excavation. *Feeling* requires that we quiet our mind, decelerate our breath patterns, trust our instincts, and effectively slow down to the pace of the Earth's rhythm. From here we learn to resonate with the mystery of creation and develop a “knowing” that links our body memory to the Earth's memory. Gregg Braden emphasizes:

Sometimes the great mysteries of life become clear only when we stop thinking about them. Though we may *know* information in our minds, the meaning of a mystery must be *felt* before it can be lived. In the innocence of the moment, sharing the experience of another sometimes becomes the catalyst to awaken new understandings within ourselves.¹¹

“The ability to recall events is directly relative to our Earth relations,” shared Boe Glasschild. “When we are actively engaged in honoring our relationship with the many children of Earth Mother, we move from existing on auto-pilot to being on manual control. When on this manual mode, all of our body's equipment functions at a high state of efficiency. We see, smell, experience, and perceive at levels only accessed by our ancestors. This was the natural equipment we were gifted with for survival. And, when all of our

equipment is really functional, we can access the Earth's wisdom by just being present. We can feel through the Earth the harmony or discord of any location. We KNOW the history of our locations because we can access the knowledge held by the stone people, the plant kingdom, and the bones beneath our feet. We connect to the vibrations of past events [that we catalog as memory] as our equipment is no longer desensitized from being separated from the true Earth. The vibration of our ancestors is always present, we just become more sensitive to receiving. We become reborn again and truly alive."¹²

Endnotes Essay One

¹Winter, *The Generation of Memory: Reflections on the "Memory Boom"* in *Contemporary Historical Studies*, closing paragraph.

²Confucius, from *The Great Learning*, main text.

³Campbell, *The Power of Myth*, .

⁴Braden, *The Isaiah Effect*, 217.

⁵Mander, *In the Absence of the Sacred*, 187.

⁶Levi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology* (1968)

⁷ Standing Bear, Chief Luther, quote found at <http://www.spiritalk.net/nature.htm>

⁸Walker, Barbara G., *The Woman's Dictionary of Symbols and Sacred Objects*, 309.

⁹Walker, Barbara G., *The Woman's Dictionary of Symbols and Sacred Objects*, 339. {Jung, Carl Gustav, *Man and His Symbols*, 95.}

¹⁰Glasschild, Boe, personal conversation, August 2009.

¹¹Braden, *The Isaiah Effect*, 216.

¹²Glasschild, Boe, personal conversation, August 2009.

ESSAY TWO

Memory and The Body

"I can't think of a more sacred place than our bodies."

- Debra Harry, executive director of the Indigenous People's Council on Biocolonialism

Body Talk and the Language of Sensation

Our bodies do not speak in English or a modern language; the language of the soma is sensation. This is a physical feeling, sometimes vague or general, and sometimes distinct and reoccurring. Sensations can be subtle or demanding, as loud as a yell or as soft as a whisper. Sensation holds a profound amount of information when we feel it and respond to it. Somatic dialogue ensues when the conversation goes both ways—our body talking and our consciousness listening. Our body is always speaking, but we need to pay attention and listen with sensitivity and mindfulness.

Peter Levine and Maggie Kline agree, and help us to understand the difference between sensation and emotion in their new book, *Trauma Through A Child's Eyes, Awakening the Ordinary Miracle of Healing*. “Although both sensations and emotions are referred to as “feelings,” sensations are best described as the sense of the physiological happenings inside us. Developing an awareness of them and purposefully attending to their details helps sensations to change and move out of fixed state so that we can feel more alive and alert. Sensations simply describe the physical way the body feels (its ins and outs), free of interpretations and judgments.”¹

Sensation can be defined as a perception associated with stimulation of a sense organ or with a specific body condition. It allows us to feel or perceive an indefinite, generalized body feeling; to have a vague, distant knowing; or to experience a specific, familiar quality. Receiving sense impressions happens through hearing, seeing, touching, smelling, sensing, and knowing; and kindles an immediate reaction to an external stimulant or internal recall. When we are not

“tuned in” to our body, we may have no reference for the sensation. Yet, when we are internally resourced, we can attach meaning and symbolism to the sensation which allows us to access a specific memory, or trail of experience.

Our body communicates its story to us through sensation that is translated into symbols, pictures, colors, patterns, and feelings. Images create a living link to a feeling that is encapsulated in a memory. Because each person has a unique perspective on the information they have recorded, they catalogue it according to their capacity to process and integrate the information, and decipher their own symbols and images.

Neurologist Robert Scaer affirms this in his groundbreaking book, *The Trauma Spectrum: Hidden Wounds and Human Resiliency*. “Reality is in the eye (or nose, skin, ear) of the beholder. The entire function of the brain/mind/body continuum will therefore be altered by the nature and quality of the sensory information that the body provides.”²

While symbolic information is typically in alignment with cultural imprints and conditioning, we each draw on our own spiritual and life experiences to create meaning out of symbols. Consequently, many variables occur. Marketing consultant, John Fraim, suggests, “The essence of symbolism involves expression of context rather than representation of content.”³

We also share many common experiences and memories that link us symbolically and emotionally to our environment, families, communities, and ancestors. Joseph Campbell conveys the macro-view, “You’ve got the same body, with the same organs and energies that Cro-Magnon man had thirty

thousand years ago. Living a human life in New York City or living a human life in the caves, you go through the same stages of childhood, coming to sexual maturity, transformation of the dependency of childhood into responsibility of manhood or womanhood, marriage, then failure of the body, gradual loss of its powers, and death. You have the same body, the same bodily experiences, and you respond to the same images.”⁴

To explore the context of a memory, one must first make contact with their soma. As in any archaeological dig, we naturally begin with what is most apparent or accessible; what is on the surface, the top layer. We do this by noticing where physical movement is stifled, blocked, or restricted. This is usually most apparent as pain, inflammation, tension, anxiety, or contraction. A repetitive injury site, the location of a chronic disease, or a distressed area is a telltale sign. An area where we feel discomfort is our body telling us, ‘This is a good place to begin an excavation.’

We can facilitate the connection to the sensation with focused or guided breathing. Breath is the vehicle of awareness. Where one’s breath goes, their consciousness also goes. Taking full, deep breaths along with guided visualization draws ones attention to the sensation. Inhaling and exhaling fully while exploring the texture, size, and qualities of sensation provides information on the content. Feeling one’s body *from the inside out* is a good way of explaining the process. The longer we hold our attention on the sensation, and develop curiosity about it, the more information we can receive. The Five Steps of Somatic Archaeology, outlined in the next essay, create a measured and paced

somatic inquiry that allows for a deeper connection, revealing the historical content and emotional counterpart of the memory.

Giving our body a voice through words, sounds, or sights further uproots buried memories. Tension moves and unwinds through our spine and neurology as we shudder, shake, contract, relax, thaw, scream, and expulse it out. Each time we encourage movement, we shift how we are holding onto our story, supporting an internal swing from the flight/fight/freeze response of the sympathetic nervous system into a parasympathetic state of relaxation, thawing, and safety. Our body will organically follow an instinctive rhythm of empowered release if encouraged to do so, which allows for inborn wisdom to guide the interpretation of the buried memory. By allowing the subconscious content of the soma to become conscious, we neurologically release trapped memory and translate it into meaning. Scaer describes the process of healing traumatic memory as follows:

Healing the wounds of trauma inevitably demands altering the meaning of memories and thereby altering the memory themselves. It involves disconnecting the elements of these memories—separating the component parts, including those linked to conscious, declarative processes and those contained in conscious and unconscious somatic perceptions. It requires restoration of the subtle and automatic perception of what is past and what is present. For healing to take place, the tangled, kindled, and expanding web of learned associations must be teased apart and broken. If one attends only to the verbal and visual content of the traumatic event, the unconscious procedural matrix of body-based memories will continue to intrude and resurrect the trauma. Unless one extinguishes the automatic response of freeze/dissociation in the face of subtle arousal states, the trauma will inevitably and progressively express itself in the somatic symptoms, syndromes, and diseases of trauma, even in individuals who have “dealt with” their traumatic past.⁵

DNA and Memory

The National Human Genome Research Institute defines DNA, or deoxyribonucleic acid, as a molecule that contains the biological instructions that make each species unique. DNA, along with the instructions it contains, is passed from adult organisms to their offspring during reproduction. DNA is tightly packaged in the nucleus of a cell, and is found in bones, muscle, organs, tissue, teeth, hair, saliva, mucus, fingernails, etc. ⁶

In *The Trauma Spectrum*, Scaer relies on the study of genetics and DNA to understand how patterns of behaviors are passed on generation to generation. “[This] genetic template is hardwired and is the product of genetic legacy. There is evidence, however, that life experience and exposure to environmental influences may alter the degree to which the expression of those genes occurs.”⁷

Scaer states that several factors may affect our genetic inheritance, such as the changing nature of environmental threats and survival skills. “Genetic instinctual patterns of behavior and learned conditioned behavior are part of well-established brain pathways . . . nevertheless are subject to many challenges . . . researchers now believe that threatening life experiences in early childhood may especially alter genetic expressions of what we consider to be personality or character. Such experiences may override genetic influences and create dysfunctional personality traits that may threaten long-term survival.”⁷

Scaer continues, “Genes therefore ensure that different parts of the brain have been designed in advance to perform specific functions. The parts of the brain that regulate emotion are also located in specific regions, and their functions

are also genetically based. Impaired function due to injury to these regions may cause symptoms that we interpret as mental illness.”⁸

Scaer goes on to emphasize how our relationship to our maternal figure impacts our DNA.

“Harlow’s (1958) studies with monkeys raised in the absence of a nurturing maternal figure dramatically illustrate how such early alteration of survival instincts may lead to lifelong dysfunctional behavior that is harmful to survival. The nature versus nurture, genes versus experience, debate continues to rage in the field of psychology . . . The mother/caregiver may contribute to the development of personality in many other ways, creating a layered and relatively permanent structure upon the genetic template of inherited patterns of temperament. Dysfunctional patterns of behavior of the caregiving mother are often based to a great extent on her own mother/caregiver’s patterns of nurturing . . . which may actually lead to dysfunctional brain development sufficient to contribute to the development of psychopathology in the adult.”⁷

While Scaer implies that the maternal figure is human, I deduce that the idea of nature versus nurture also applies to our relationship with the Earth Mother. Our survival instincts, personality and pathologies, along with our generational and genetic memory, can be positively impacted and reinforced through our physical and energetic relationship to earth energies. And vice versa, simultaneously influencing our past, present and future.

Gregg Braden’s concept of the divine matrix, as reflected in his book by the same title, reinforces the point that through the hologram of consciousness: a little change in our lives is mirrored everywhere in the world.

It’s estimated that the average human has between 50 and 100 trillion cells in his or her body. Each of those cells holds 23 pairs of chromosomes that contain an individual’s DNA (life code). When we do the math, this means that people carry

somewhere between 2,300 trillion and 4,600 trillion copies of DNA in their bodies. Just imagine how long it would take to make a change in someone's DNA if we attempted to update each copy, one cell at a time. But when DNA does modify the blueprint of a species, it doesn't have to do so in a linear fashion, one strand at a time. Because of the holographic principle, when the DNA is altered, that change is reflected throughout the whole. From the DNA of our bodies to the atomic structure of the world around us to how memory and consciousness work, we appear to be holograms of a greater existence that we're only beginning to understand.⁹

In his book, *Nature Via Nurture*, Matt Ridley explores the idea that genes are "switched on" by nurture. Scaer highlights this statement in *The Trauma Spectrum*: Ridley writes that, "Genes are cogs in the machine, not gods in the sky. Switched on and off throughout life, by external as well as internal events, their job is to absorb information from the environment at least as often to transmit it from the past. Genes do more than carry information; they respond to experience."¹⁰

In the introduction to his book, Ridley adds, "Genes are designed to take their cues from nurture. To appreciate what has happened, you will have to abandon cherished notions and open your mind. You will have to enter a world where your genes are not puppet masters pulling the strings of your behavior but puppets at the mercy of your behavior; a world where instinct is not the opposite of learning, where environmental influences are sometimes less reversible than genetic ones, and where nature is designed for nurture."¹¹

Nature designed for nurture is at the heart of this essay, and reflects not only the inherent wisdom of creation, but as well highlights the need for

reconnecting to nurturing feminine earth-centered principles. Instinct and biology, after all, may be the cure for what ails us.

Neurophysiology, Stress, and Memory

Experiences that hold charged, intense and unresolved fear-based emotions are the landmarks of neurological recall because of the stress associated with them. In the burgeoning field of trauma recovery, researchers are exploring the mechanisms of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and other adaptations to threatening experiences.

In an article first published in the Harvard Review of Psychiatry in 1994, Bessel van der Kolk, author of *The Body Keeps the Score: Memory and the Evolving Psychobiology of Posttraumatic Stress*, writes, “Ever since people’s responses to overwhelming experiences have been systematically explored, researchers have noted that a trauma is stored in somatic memory and expressed as changes in the biological stress response. Intense emotions at the time of the trauma initiate the long-term conditional responses to reminders of the event, which are associated both with chronic alterations in the physiological stress response and with the amnesias and hyperamnesias characteristic of PTSD.

“Continued physiological hyperarousal and altered stress hormone secretion affect the ongoing evaluation of sensory stimuli as well. Although memory is ordinarily an active and constructive process, in PTSD failure of declarative memory may lead to organization of the trauma on a somatosensory level (as visual images or physical sensations) that is relatively impervious to

change. The inability of people with PTSD to integrate traumatic experiences and their tendency, instead, to continuously relive the past, are mirrored physiologically and hormonally in the misinterpretation of innocuous stimuli as potential threats. Animal research suggests that intense emotional memories are processed outside of the hippocampally mediated memory system and are difficult to extinguish. Cortical activity can inhibit the expression of these subcortically based emotional memories. The effectiveness of this inhibition depends, in part, on physiological arousal and neurohormonal activity.”¹²

According to psychotherapist Craig E. Geis, it is not only severe or traumatic stress that invokes an inhibition to memory. “Prolonged stress or depression leads to elevated levels of cortisol, a stress hormone produced by the adrenal glands. This in turn appears to shrink or atrophy the hippocampus, the sea horse-shaped part of the brain associated with many kinds of memory and learning. New research shows that stress and depression may cause some forms of memory loss.”¹³

We know that with the intensification of stress, our ability to remember is diminished. Cortisol levels remain slightly elevated as long as one is depressed. Geis explains, “This moderate but constant drip-drip of the cortisol faucet appears to wear down the hippocampus.” Relative to the healing process, can it also be true that reduction of stress improves memory function? Geis’ article is encouraging, “Research shows that when depression is treated, cognitive function, including memory, improves. The earlier we can recognize the symptoms, the more likely we are to arrest or slow down the degeneration of the brain.”¹³

Key to an effective somatic excavation and memory recall then, would be the reduction of active life stressors, perceived stress, or threat. We remember and we heal when we feel safe enough to do so. Security, sobriety, and choice provide a sense of control over one's environment and lifestyle and are fundamental to recovery. Decompressing the nervous system with deep exhalations, peaceful visualizations, interaction with nature, nurturing experiences, fragrant aromas, and spiritual connection are prerequisites that allow the brain and hippocampus to reveal the past.

Dennis H. Novack, M.D who studies the link between emotions and health at Drexel University College of Medicine in Philadelphia, shares his recent research, "The new study demonstrated that there is no such thing as a separation of mind and body—the very molecules in our bodies are responsive to our psychological environment."¹⁴

Memory and The Brain

Our three-pound brain can store vivid reflections of childhood, school, music and aromas. We can remember the physical details of a historical experience, but may have forgotten the emotions that went along with it. Sometimes we have body memories with no pictures at all. Flashbacks may be accompanied by the feelings that were felt at the time, or by visual pictures. Due to factors such as age, dissociative tendencies, stress, misperceptions, or drug/anesthesia use, we may not always be able to recall specific events just as they happened.

These variables occur because the process of storing memories is complex and very individual. We store different experiences in the right and left halves of our brain. The left-brain stores the sequential, logical, language-oriented experience; the right brain stores perceptual, spatial experiences. When you attempt to retrieve right-brain information through left-brain techniques, such as logic and language, you some times hit a blank. You are simply not going to remember all stories in a precise, orderly way.

The left brain is logical, theoretical, detail-oriented, and factual. It communicates with words and language, and stores linear information such as applies to math and science. This hemisphere of the brain comprehends well, acknowledges information, and perceives through order and pattern. It is reality-based, can form strategies and is pragmatic, goal-directed, and practical. The right brain is feeling-based, “big picture” oriented, and imaginative. It communicates with symbols and images and stores information that is emotional and non-linear. The right hemisphere is philosophical, non-rational, and aligns with spiritual beliefs. With this perspective we know how to appreciate, perceive spatially, and have compassion. It is fantasy-based, presenting a variety of possibilities, and is creative, intuitive, and impetuous.¹⁵

Professor Masud Mansuripur from the University of Arizona believes that “the sophisticated tools and techniques employed by Nature for storage of information stand in stark contrast to the primitive and relatively inefficient means used by” humans:

Within the human brain, a piece of information is more than just a rigid set of connections among certain neurons. The sounds, images, scents, events, ideas and intuitions residing within the confines of a given skull are interconnected. In some instances they help to reinforce one another, in others they give rise to logical inconsistencies and absurdities that the conscious mind attempts to resolve. Once resolution occurs some of the memories gain prominence at the expense of others. This is a dynamic, self-

propelled environment, which is constantly gaining knowledge, combining and restructuring the existing memories, discounting or forgetting some previously held beliefs, and initiating actions that result in new explorations, further acquisition of information, and so forth.¹⁶

Somatic Archaeology relies on the right side of the brain to evoke generational memories in a non-linear manner that can then be resolved by the left side of the brain. Deactivating the nervous system through deep breathing and brain integration visualization reduces stress, allowing the barriers to memory to soften. We can access emotional memories directly in the soma without having to detour through the intellect. Our mind is selective, but our body appears to remember almost everything. According to an 1989 article by van der Kolk and Ducey,

When people receive sensory input, they generally automatically synthesize this incoming information into narrative form, without conscious awareness of the processes that translate sensory impressions into a personal story. Our research shows that traumatic experiences initially are imprinted as sensations or feeling states that are not immediately transcribed into personal narratives, in contrast with the way people seem to process ordinary information. This failure of information processing on a symbolic level, in which it is categorized and integrated with other experiences, is at the very core of the pathology of PTSD.¹⁷

When it comes to memories there is also a big difference between women and men. “Women remember more detail. It is in fact the biggest difference between how men’s and women’s brains operate,” noted John Gabrieli, PhD professor of psychology in the neurosciences program and in radiology at Stanford University. “When people in a brain scanner look at pictures that spark emotion, for instance if

they are frightening or tragic, men end up storing the information on the right side of the brain where they can separate the emotion from the details. Women keep the memories on the other side. For women, there is much more of an integration, literally in the brain, physically in terms of brain anatomy, where emotional feelings and emotional memories occur.”¹⁸

As our understanding of the neuroscience of emotion and cognition grows, it is increasingly apparent that the myth of division which branches human behavior into two separate categories—emotion and cognition—is not as clear as previous philosophical and psychological investigations have suggested. The mechanisms of emotion and cognition appear intertwined at all stages of stimulus processing, and their distinction can be difficult. This is once again a reflection of the necessity for therapeutic techniques that honor the intrinsic wholeness of our body, mind, spirit and earth.

Generational Memory and Historical Amnesia

When we suppress or forget where we’ve come from, we cork up a very turbulent and explosive energy that ripples in many directions. Historical amnesia creates inner pressure and external conflict as our soul demands self-expression but our heritage demands compliance. This dynamic is the source of most generational suffering. Often, we receive love and acceptance within compliance, but our unique self-expression threatens the mold. Most of the time, we instinctively choose love and acceptance and follow in the footprints of our grandmothers and grandfathers.

We may experience inherited obligations and patterns in many forms, finding that we are predisposed to certain lifestyles, diets, relationship patterns,

customs, and ideas. Our body memory establishes a concept or belief about reality, inhibiting our ability to experience life in a new or different way. When we crave change and try to find our own path we are really seeking to exhibit our true destiny—one that is not clouded or compromised by the expectations of others. It takes courage to break the mold. Change is often scary and challenging because the memories, the secrets, and the subtle designs do not want to be exposed. Therefore, we can stay stuck in familial dynamics in order not to challenge the status quo, and then we cease to progress. Fear of confronting old models makes it difficult to advance, and instead we adapt and forget. Historical amnesia then anchors us into the very thing we attempt to avoid—repeating history.

In an article written by Claudine Attias-Donfut and Francois-Charles Wolff about the interplay between generational memory and family relationships, they assume “that individual perception of one’s generation history lays at the intersection of family memory and historical peer group memory. Historical generations are shaped by family generations and by intergenerational relations. What has been lived by one’s parents can also be part of one’s life since it has become part of family memory. For each generation, the historical inheritance from the previous generation is added to the objective current conditions. The infant years, where the impressions are strong and durable, coincide with the youthful years of parents, which is a significant and decisive period in their life course. Each generation has one foot in the history which formed its predecessor, and one in its own history and time. The knowledge of history transmitted

through the family has a special tone, as distinct from history learned through the media, books, or school. It is a vivid history, embodied in family members and ancestors. The family circle is a ‘memory milieu’, which plays a central role in the continuity of History.¹⁹

We must keep in mind that cognitive memory fragments may be veiled due to familial secrets, lies, covert behaviors, addictions, or social impositions. This is particularly true with native peoples, who are actively working to free themselves from the impediments, association, and legends of Western European influence, and their loss of homeland. The forced assimilation of aboriginal and indigenous children from the late 1800’s to the mid-1900’s into Christian religion, doctrine, education, and language was intended to “erase the Indian in the child,” and is the type of genocidal tactic that created “Residential School Syndrome”, a form of PTSD with a special cultural impact.²⁰ The pain and consequences of cultural annihilation has yet to be fully recognized, acknowledged, or made manifest. The patterns of grief run deep, as we not only lose our familial memory, but our sacred awareness of our relationship with Earth Mother and all of life.

A 2007 news story from the *Moscow Times* exposes Russian President Vladimir Putin’s determination to re-write history. Putin said the following:

“Many school books are written by people who work to get foreign grants. They dance to the polka that others have paid for. You understand? These books, regrettably, get into schools and universities.” Putin demanded new history textbooks that “make our citizens, especially the young, proud of their country” and reiterated “no one must be allowed to impose the feeling of guilt

on us.” Putin specifically noted that the history of World War II and Russia’s history after 1991 are wrongly interpreted and must be rewritten. Today Stalin has again been rehabilitated as a leader who made mistakes, but still secured victory over Nazi Germany.²¹

Sacred Memory

“Beyond our bodies, sacred sites are all around us, most in extreme danger. These sites — such as the petroglyphs outside of Albuquerque, N.M.— contain a sacred memory,” write Patrisia Gonzales and Roberto Rodriguez, journalists and professors of Mexican/American studies. “Once destroyed, that memory is distorted and its spirit becomes desecrated. Memory and creation are linked. Yet in a country that, in effect, celebrates historical amnesia, little wonder that any memory remains at all. Go to the Library of Congress and ask for the Native division. There is none. Nothing was here prior to the founding fathers. That’s the consciousness of this nation. Or is it that the memory of this continent is too painful to remember? Destroy sacred places, and the spirit of humanity itself is desecrated.”²²

Recalling sacred memory is necessary when ones heart is in turmoil. Depression, unexplainable anxiety, grief/loss, anger, confusion, guilt/shame, apathy, and hopelessness are inherited from years of accumulated suppression, denial, and loss of spiritual value. Although efforts are made by governments and churches to appease the First Nations loss with apologies, monies, the naming of historical sites, and the establishment of museums, the fundamental cure is through one’s reconnection to sacred lands.

During my 2004 interview with Roy Seshana, the elder Bushman of the

Kalahari from Africa, I noticed that he was wearing a headpiece. I respectfully pointed to the headpiece and asked, “Can you tell me what medicine you carry here?” He replied, “I don’t have any medicine.” So I asked “The animal, what medicine does it carry?” And he replied, “It doesn’t have any medicine, it is dead.” Everyone listening laughed. Confused I inquired, “Then why do you wear it?” He told me, “I want to show people what I am fighting for. I wear it to remind me of my land and my sacred responsibility. Those are ostrich egg shells, and the ostrich is from the land also.” I smiled humbly and said, “You look like a warrior for your people.” And he replied, “Yes, it is working.”

I learned that the #Xhomi Bushmen were removed from their lands because of gold mining, and placed on government land that is unfamiliar to them. Their people are dying because they do not know how to live there, to eat there, or to pray there. Dying from disease, alcoholism, and laziness from government rations, they had no water or faith, so journeyed to the U.S. to raise money for lawyers. Sacred memory was what Roy Seshana is fighting for, because it is all he has left.

If we have lost our connection to Mother Earth and her stories, been uprooted from ancestral lands, dulled our mystical spark with addictions, or forgotten our destiny; spiritual amnesia may result. This causes feelings of isolation, emptiness, or powerlessness. The tools of Somatic Archaeology can help one to remember and reconcile spiritual or sacred memory that may repeat patterns of suffering for many generations.

It is important to bear in mind that we also hold body memories that are

positive and spiritually uplifting. These are typically more accessible in the body, but they may be buried under fear-based memories. Stories that are filled with devotion, passion, and happiness cause our soma to feel alive with possibility and freedom. These memories promote health, soothe wounds, and create generational patterns laced with abundance and honored traditions. Follow sensations that are tingly, expansive, and full of mobility and infused energy to reveal where joy lives in your body. Humans are connected through stories of love, as much as they are bound through stories of suffering. Joy and suffering are embodied side by side, establishing the duality of lives. Your body holds all memories as sacred; whether they are light or dark, following your body talk will lead to illumination.

Endnotes Essay Two

- ¹Levine & Kline, *Trauma Through a Child's Eyes*, 112.
- ²Scaer, *The Trauma Spectrum*, 15.
- ³Fraim, *Symbolism of Popular Culture*, chapter 8.
- ⁴Campbell, *The Power of Myth*, 44.
- ⁵Scaer, *The Trauma Spectrum*, 254.
- ⁶Web definition, www.genome.gov/25520880
- ⁷Scaer, *The Trauma Spectrum*, 18.
- ⁸Scaer, *The Trauma Spectrum*, 82.
- ⁹Braden, *The Divine Matrix*, 110-111.
- ¹⁰Ridley, *Nature Via Nurture*, 229.
- ¹¹Ridley, *Nature Via Nurture*, 4.
- ¹²van der Kolk, *The Body Keeps the Score: Memory and the Evolving Psychobiology of Posttraumatic Stress* article, 253-265.
- ¹³Geis, *New Stress Studies* article.
- ¹⁴Novack, cited in article, *Researchers uncover link to emotional strain*.
- ¹⁵Diamond, *The Human Brain Coloring Book*.
- ¹⁶Mansuripur, *DNA, Human Memory, and the Storage Technology of the 21st Century*.
- ¹⁷van der Kolk & Fisler, *Dissociation and the Fragmentary Nature of Traumatic memories: Overview and Exploratory Study*. v(van der Kolk & Ducey, 1989).
- ¹⁸Gabrieli, *Memory: Pandora's Hippocampus*, 39-48.
- ¹⁹Attias-Donfut and Wolff, *Generational memory and family relationships*, 2.
- ²⁰Furniss, *Victims of Benevolence: The Dark Legacy of the Williams Lake Residential School*.
- ²¹Kiselyov, *Worthy of a True, Old-Time Soviet Polemicist*, 9.
- ²²Gonzales & Rodriquez, *Sacred Spaces, Sacred Sites*, 2003.

ESSAY THREE

Mending the Circle

*When people run around and around in circles, we say they are crazy.
When planets do it, we say they are orbiting.
Clouds just keep circling the Earth around and around.
And around. There is not much else to do.
—Author unknown*

The Circle of Life

The circle has always been a symbol for change in our lives. Shaped as a wheel, a circle is representative of movement as seen in the cycle of seasons or the roundness of the sun and moon as they choreograph our day. The circle was associated with the idea of protected or consecrated space, where all participants are equal. Barbara Walker tells us in her book, *The Woman's Dictionary of Symbols and Sacred Objects*, "The famous cliché, 'God is a circle whose circumference is nowhere and whose center is everywhere,' was cribbed from a Hindu catechism concerning the deity called the One."¹

Somatic Archaeology draws on the revolutionary power of the circle to initiate a process that ends where it began and always repeats itself. The 1948 Nobel Prize in Literature recipient, T.S. Eliot eloquently writes, "We shall not cease from exploration, And the end of all our exploring, Will be to arrive where we started, And know the place for the first time."² Based on ancient models of problem solving, we can utilize the circle to remember, to alter our attitudes, shift our perspectives, and find peaceful resolution to the many problems that we face in our communities and our world. We can all find our place and speak our truth while remembering the mosaic of life.

The Medicine Wheel

The sacred Medicine Wheel is an ancient symbol of life, harmony, and evolution. It is considered a major symbol of peaceful interaction among all living beings on Earth, and its principles are primary in the oldest teachings of

First Nations people. Ancient Native Americans actually had their own ways to use the Sun and Moon to measure time. Changes in the positions of the stars and the Sun throughout the year told them when to plant crops, return to hunting grounds or hold religious ceremonies. To measure the Sun's position exactly, they build medicine wheels. **In the practice of Somatic Archaeology, the medicine wheel provides the organizational template that marks movement, and gives methodology to healing generational patterns.**

The Medicine Wheel represents all aspects of our life—human, animal, mineral, and plant—and is symbolic of Mother Earth, holding the container for every experience. The four cardinal directions of the wheel are depictive not only of North, East, South, and West, but of the seasons (winter, spring, summer, autumn), the elements (air, fire, water, earth), the four hills of life (elder, infant, youth, adult), the four colors or races of man (white, yellow, red, black), and the four stages of creation (birth, growth, death, regeneration). (See Appendix for diagram.) Note: The placement of these attributes on a medicine wheel may differ from tribe to tribe, based on cultural and environmental differences.

Joseph Campbell writes in his book, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, that among the Pawnees of Northern Kansas and southern Nebraska, the priest, during the ceremonial of the Hako, draws a circle with his toe:

“The circle represents a nest,” such a priest is reported to have said, “and it is drawn by the toe because the eagle builds its nest with its claws. Although we are imitating the bird making its nest, there is another meaning to the action; we are thinking of Tirawa making the world for the people to live in. If you go on a high hill and look around, you will see the sky touching the earth on every side, and within this circular enclosure the people live. So the

circles we have made are not only nests, but they also represent the circle Tirawaatius has made for the dwelling place of all the people. The circles also stand for the kinship group, the clan, and the tribe.”³

Truth can be experienced when we align with each direction, including the center of the wheel, which allows us to feel and understand many perspectives and aspects of life. The foundational teachings of the Medicine Wheel present a sensible and all-inclusive model for human behavior and interaction, and its wisdom offers a model for walking the Earth in a harmonious and good way. It has been used to view self, society, relationships, and the balance of nature. A Medicine Wheel can best be described as a mirror in which everything about the human condition is reflected back.

It is from the many diverse viewpoints that one can truly experience the fullness of life. The cyclical dance of the wheel guides us to recognize that balancing the four aspects of self—mental, spiritual, emotional and physical—creates a dynamic thrust for personal accountability and constitutional healing, and is the antidote for the myth of duality. With a holistic spin of the wheel, all energy encounters an alchemical exchange and equilibrium. Which is why the circle must be central to healing, remembering, and the practice of Somatic Archaeology.

Somatic Archaeology Wheel of Suffering

“To state the obvious,” writes Robert Scaer, “the existence of a species or individual is dependent upon survival—its ability to avert or live through a life-

threatening event and to remember what it learned from that event so that it can avoid similar situations in the future.”⁴

This mechanism allows for the innate reaction: fight, flee, faint, or freeze. When we are incapable of successfully doing something that removes us from danger and results in a loss of control, we find ourselves in a state of helplessness. Within this state we lack the power or resources for self-protection, suffering sets in and fear incubates.

The Wheel of Suffering begins with a primary origin such as this, defined as a loss of self-love and a separation from spirit, and displays how the event becomes somatically fixated. (See appendix for diagram page 80.) The experience(s) may be generations removed, or in our recent past. Once embodied, we tend to loop or repeat the past experience in an effort to remedy it. Suffering inevitably seeks resolution. Into our lives we bring our own healing—re-experiencing painful dynamics in order to bring fears up to the surface, like a splinter that has festered deep under the skin seeking relief, we instinctually replay old stories over and over again, exposing our inner conflicts, driving us to find spiritual union, safety, and self-love—which is apparent when we have the objectivity, sobriety and awareness to recognize it.

In his book, *The New Earth*, Eckhart Tolle defines this looping pattern as part of our Pain Body. “The pain-body is a semiautonomous energy-form that lives within most human beings, an entity made up of emotion. It has its own primitive intelligence . . . and its intelligence is directed primarily at survival. Like all life-forms, it periodically needs to feed—and the food it requires to

replenish itself consists of energy that is compatible with its own . . . any emotionally painful experience can be used as food by the pain body . . . it thrives on negative thinking as well as drama in relationship . . . and is an addiction to unhappiness. Emotion from the pain body quickly gains control of your thinking . . . and your thinking becomes negative . . . to the pain-body, pain is pleasure . . . a vicious circle becomes established . . . every thought feeds the pain-body and in turn the pain-body generates more thoughts . . . blaming, accusing, complaining, imagining . . . for a young child to witness the emotional violence of their parent's pain-bodies . . . becomes the nightmare of daily existence . . . and is the main way in which the human pain-body is passed from generation to generation.”⁵

Remaining in repetitious, dysfunctional, or abusive relationships and environments characterizes the hypnotic effect of the Wheel of Suffering. The clockwise cyclical pull draws us deep into the vortex and narrows our perspective. Choices seem minimal, hopelessness is evident, and we experience an emotional payoff or teaching within this self-defined reality. Our beliefs are confirmed by our relationships, environment, and physical state of being, and we continue to attract people and circumstances into our life to confirm our deepest fear that our perspective is accurate and we will always remain a victim of circumstance. When caught in the cycle of suffering, we may express sensations such as being caught in a spin, or that life is spinning out of control. We may feel heaviness, pain, or a burden in our body.

Somatic Archaeology Wheel of Healing

Suffering always seeks resolution, which means that we draw into our life our own healing. Cyclical or annual patterns such as deaths, births, anniversaries, historical events, religious holidays, seasonal changes, and planetary celebrations can have a great influence on our memory. They trigger feelings such as grief, longing, depression, appreciation, or joy. They bring dreams that awaken our spirit; and they facilitate movement in our psyche that heightens awareness of buried traumas or illuminates current circumstances. Pay attention to these patterns for they open the door to the Wheel of Healing, and give texture and meaning to the unwinding process.

In the Wheel of Healing, (See appendix on page 81.) we begin in the center of the wheel with a blossoming awareness of our intrinsic wholeness. Fear begins to release as we remember what it feels like to be unified. The Wheel of Healing spins counter-clockwise, pulling energy up and out of the cycle. Whatever has been forced inward with the repetition of suffering now expands outward with love, awareness and expression. A gradual unwinding occurs, allowing us access to our inherent wisdom and truth.

We may have to spiral around the wheel many times in order to break patterns that have been instilled. Each counter-clockwise revolution encourages more empowerment and sustained safety, and thus more unwinding and awakening. The Wheel of Healing is steady, measured by our dedication to the process. The speed of healing is dependent upon the severity of our suffering, the accumulation of toxic patterns, and the resources available to us.

The first step in healing suffering generally comes in the gift of a spiritual awakening or shift. It feels akin to waking up from a trance. This shift may come unexpectedly or can be the outcome of deliberate intent. Many times an awakening occurs during another parallel event, such as the loss of a loved one, giving birth, getting married/divorced, etc. Again, anniversaries or cyclical events encourage movement and memory.

Shifts in perception awaken our authentic self. Reconnecting with our creative impulse and our deepest dreams, we learn to find our voice and reclaim our ability to experience pleasure and power. It is common to rebel at this juncture, rethinking imposed limitations, fighting familial obligations, refusing to accept disrespect or abuse, and changing roles. We yearn to define our *time* and to find our place on the wheel of life, reconsidering our dualistic thinking while connecting above spiritually, and below elementally. We come back to that which sustains us.

We exit the Wheel of Healing as we embody the warrior archetype and undergo a rebirth of our authentic, empowered self. The cycle closes with a sense of soul infusion; embodying our spirit's legacy and creative potential. Freedom is the outcome, joy the reward! Edward Tick explores the concept of warrior identity as an initiation process, a symbolic form of death and rebirth in his compelling book, *War and the Soul*:

The formula is simple: the preparation is specialized training; the proving ground is battle. Risking death for the protection of one's people transforms boy into warrior. Successful completion of the transformation makes him a man. This pattern is so universal that in the portrait of the human psyche evolved by deep psychologists the warrior is a recurring motif recognized as an

archetype . . . {and} propels us suddenly and immediately in a survive-or-die manner, out of innocence and into the biting realities of experience. Traditionally, those who had the skill to survive and grow from the experience then took their place in society as warriors.⁶

Concluding the initiatory steps of self-excavation and self-determination, the layers of familial story, personal chronicles, and cultural amnesia can be more clearly seen. Objectivity is developed as we come into relationship with the whole, the before and the after. We feel into the flow of life that established our reality, and optimally develop a compassionate heart for all that has transpired. Forgiveness and acceptance of self and others allows us to deepen our prayers and recycle our losses into behaviors that benefit all of our relations and our earth. The hallowed myths and persuasions of ones forebears can now be the fertilizer that coaxes us into the third, and final, phase of Somatic Archaeology—the cycle of transformation.

Somatic Archaeology Wheel of Transformation

The Wheel of Transformation bridges the Medicine Wheel and the Five Steps of Somatic Archaeology into a revolutionary ribbon, or pathway, for conversion on all levels and in all worlds. (See appendix page 82.) It bears a horizontal figure eight, or infinity symbol that stands for the unification of masculine and feminine, and the life flow that is crucial for harmony in nature. This wheel heals the myth of duality, and allows for body evolution—a natural and gradual progression of recreating ourselves while in this physical form. Across cultures and religions, the number eight, and its continuous infinity flow

are honored as a healing symbol for not only self, but for community, gender, and race.

The Métis flag bears the infinity symbol, representing the coming together of two distinct and vibrant cultures, those of European and indigenous North America, to produce a distinctly new culture, the Métis. The Métis are known as the “mixed bloods” and are people descended from marriages of First Nations people to Europeans, mainly French.⁷

In Buddhism, the number eight represents the Noble Eightfold Path to overcome suffering.⁸ The eight immortals are Chinese deities,⁹ and members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints believe that humans are responsible for their actions by the age of eight.¹⁰ In Islam, eight is the number of angels carrying The Holy Throne of Allah in Heaven.¹¹ In neo-paganism, there are eight sabbats, festivals, seasons, or spokes in the Wheel of the Year.¹¹ In Hinduism, eight is the number of wealth and abundance.¹¹ The Jewish religious rite of *brit milah* is held on a baby boy’s eighth day of life, and Hanukkah is an eight-day sacred Jewish holiday.¹¹

The infinity symbol signifies completeness, composed of a male, solar, right-handed circle matched with a female, lunar, left-handed circle. The figure eight on its side reflects the divine sexual union and perfection of duality (two becoming one). Since neither circle lies above the other, the infinity implies equality between male and female powers, leading to balance, self-intimacy, and knowledge of the infinite self. Follow this circular infinity path for illumination, healing, and transformation in life, family, and tribe—past, present, and future.

A Circle Within a Circle

Each person's story is a circle of life within a greater circle of life. This Earth life is impacted and preceded by your spiritual lineage, a larger circle of stories that come from previous or future life experiences and oversee the evolution of your soul. This gradual progression of enlightenment is not dictated by linear time, but rather moves in concentric circles, interlaced with the lives of others—much like the movement of the stars and planets revolve in alignment with the common axis of creation.

Within this life are the remnants of other timelines, reflective of an unwinding story choreographed to provide learning situations to test, challenge, or promote your spiritual goals. As Alberto Villoldo, Ph.D. tells us in his book, *Courageous Dreaming*, “If you hold onto your story even after the facts and circumstances change, you create imprints in your luminous energy field (LEF) as well as energetic cords that tie you to players in the drama . . . an energy tie that binds you to someone else . . . We can even remain energetically tied to other people after they die, remembering the pain they caused us instead of the lessons they taught us.”¹²

As storykeepers, it can be difficult to mentally comprehend the expansiveness of the circle of spiritual life. Again, we can turn to our body for clarity, as it holds not only your family lineage, but also the memories of our spiritual history. Eckhart Tolle reminds us of this in his celebrated book, *A New Earth*. “What is arising now is not a new belief system, a new religion, spiritual ideology, or mythology . . . The change goes deeper than the content of your

mind, deeper than your thoughts. In fact, at the heart of the new consciousness lies the transcendence of thought, the newfound ability of rising above thought, of realizing a dimension within yourself that is infinitely more vast than thought . . . the awareness that is prior to thought, the space in which the thought—or emotion or sense perception—happens . . . complete identification with form . . . results in a total unawareness of my connectedness with the whole, my intrinsic oneness with every “other” as well as with the Source. This forgetfulness is original sin, suffering, delusion.”¹³

As with personal or familial memories, the spiritual memories most commonly carried forward are those that convey a high degree of emotion—birth or death experiences, tragic memories, un-reconciled power issues, and fearful patterns—and therefore are held as contracted energy in our luminous field. These memories can be unearthed as corresponding present time memories are brought forward, or as the result of digging deeper. The world is made up of both large and small circles, and all are valued and vital to the greater movement of the whole.

Each moment is a choice, and each choice creates a cause and effect. Coming to terms or completion with the forces and influences that have an impact on us takes the burden off the whole of humanity to manage our stories for us. We become part of the solution when we claim responsibility and account to our lineage, adding a harmonious circle of energy to the great hoop of life, benefiting seven generations behind us and before us, the earth below us and the spiritual world above us.

Archaeology of the Soul

I believe that we were each brought to this life or this planet for a reason, a higher purpose that gives meaning to existence. As we get to know our story, we may catch glimpses of this purpose. The more and more we relieve our selves of limiting beliefs and impressions and traumatic imprints, and embrace our lineage with compassion and understanding, the more able we are to define and embrace this purpose.

Have you ever seen someone who you thought was doing exactly what they were supposed to be doing, who was right on track and seemed to be in their perfect element? Did you notice how their entire being was aligned and the air seemed to clear around them and they flowed easily and effortlessly? This is someone who has matured into spiritual destiny. It is a beautiful sight and feeling, and is available for all. This is archaeology of the soul.

“What is necessary just now is to create peace in ourselves that we, ourselves, become examples of love, harmony, and peace. That is the only way of saving the Earth and ourselves.” - Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan

Endnotes Chapter Three

¹Walker, *The Woman's Dictionary of Symbols and Sacred Objects*, 4.

²Eliot, *Selected Essays*.

³Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, 34.

⁴Scaer, *The Trauma Spectrum*, 11.

⁵Tolle, *A New Earth*, 146-148.

⁶Tick, *War and the Soul*, 49.

⁷Métis of Maine website, <http://www.metisofmaine.org/pages/mission.html>.

⁸The Big View website, <http://www.thebigview.com/buddhism/eightfoldpath.html>

⁹China Page website, <http://www.chinapage.com/8-immortal.html>.

¹⁰Wikipedia website, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Age_of_accountability#.

¹¹Wikipedia website, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/8>.

¹²Villoldo, *Courageous Dreaming*, 56-57.

¹³Tolle, *A New Earth*, 21-22.

ESSAY FOUR

Somatic Archaeology

If our outer world does in fact mirror our beliefs and values, is it possible to end the pain and suffering of Earth through choices of compassion and peace made in our lives? –Gregg Braden, The Isaiah Effect

Remember Your Story

The practice of Somatic Archaeology, simply stated, is the process of becoming whole by curing our amnesia and re-membering, or piecing together the puzzle of our life story. When we dig, we remember, and when we remember, history is revealed, and when history is revealed, we clearly recognize the trail of stories that formulate our life. This knowledge affords us choice and restores to us the power to manifest our unique destiny in a conscious way. Life exists as a mirror image of our efforts, influenced by those around us, those before us, those above us, and the Earth beneath us.

This essay outlines Somatic Archaeology's step-by-step method of creating a healing relationship with one's body and stories. Each step leads into the other organically as we emphasize our attention on the sensations occurring in our body. What is most important in this process is that one engages with oneself. In many therapeutic modalities, we allow others to heal us, to take our pain away, to figure us out, to become an expert on our body. The goal with Somatic Archaeology is different. We must become the expert on our own body and on our own story. Otherwise we will continually be looking outside of ourselves for cure.

When we witness our stories face to face, the truth of our past and the potential for our future are undeniable. There is no substitute for self-recognition and fully knowing oneself. When we do this, we source our own creation. This is the way out (or the way in), the key to spiritual awakening and the path of the mystic or sage. Following a somatic excavation, what rises to the top is our

capacity to acknowledge and embrace the fear and the love that reside within our body and our heart. This allows us to remember who we are, what we are passionate about, and how to find meaning in our life.

How We Reclaim our Memory

Bessel van der Kolk's article, *Clinical Implications of Neuroscience Research in PTSD*, appears in *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*. This article suggests that "effective treatment needs to involve (1) learning to tolerate feelings and sensations by increasing the capacity for interoception, (2) learning to modulate arousal, and (3) learning that after confrontation with physical helplessness it is essential to engage in taking effective action."¹

While this course of action is conceptually outlined, the method of genuinely achieving this goal is more complex. Taking what we have learned from clinicians, therapists and doctors, and applying the principles that lead gradually to recovery can only be validated by the actual practice of this theory. When applied to the concepts presented in this essay, a compelling bridge is revealed which I have termed this process The Five Steps of Somatic

Archaeology:

- (1) connects emotion and sensation with ease;
- (2) awakens and tracks the neurophysiology according to the wisdom inherent in the body; and
- (3) deliberately reinforces reconciliation, empowerment, and spiritual understanding.

The Five Steps of Somatic Archaeology

These are the steps to excavate, heal and embody our personal, familial, and cultural stories. Follow this flow for significant awareness to occur. Do not bypass any step. Jumping from noticing to interpreting, we may have more information, but nothing will change. Transformation occurs when we sense and feel. Attempting to analyze a symptom before experiencing it may shortcut the process with little result. When we apply our body's wisdom and emotional movement to mental understanding, we illuminate our spirit. Gather information from all aspects to create the unwinding movement necessary for change.

1) I notice. Tune into the overall state of your body. What do you notice? Scan for particular areas where you feel congested or where you have chronic pain. Notice where you house repetitive injuries or symptoms. Pay attention to the favored parts of your body, as well as the places you avoid or dislike. Notice any patterns you have that are similar to your siblings, aunts, uncles, parents, or grandparents. Your body is constantly communicating to you, sending up flares and hoping you will notice your symptoms. Pay attention.

2) I sense. Drop into your sensory perceptions. This requires that you decelerate to the pace of your body, to the rhythm of the Earth. Bring your awareness out of your head, and take three deep breaths into your body, connecting yourself from head to toe. Slow down. Take time for yourself to create a connection with your body. Do not think about how it feels to be in your body, but rather feel it.

3) I feel. Express your emotions. E-motion is energy in motion. You are

intending to create movement. It may be as simple as a deep exhalation, or a shudder down your spine. As emotions express, you may feel anger, grief, embarrassment, shame, resentment, regret; or possibly relief, joy, gratitude, bewilderment, shock, or astonishment. Articulation of emotion can also take the form of physical movement, such as tears, laughter, shaking, trembling, kicking, yelling, sobbing, tingling, or numbing.

4) I interpret. Make sense of the information gathered. Now that your body has unearthed memories and emotions have purged, new knowledge is made available to your mind. Bring subconscious patterns to your conscious mind, and offer sagacity and significance to the memories and myths that are illuminating. Whether you had a little awakening or a profound shift, the newfound realizations create a foundation for empowerment and hope upon which you can take further steps. Each step is important; even the baby steps. As you grow and practice, the process will become easier and more succinct. Stay present with your body and return often to continue the excavation of your body, and the sifting of rubble.

5) I reconcile. Accept your experiences (it is only stuff), reframe the dynamics and envision a new way of being in life. Redesigning your myth requires that you remove the limitations of fear based thoughts, and augment them with spiritual principles and values. Center your spiritual goals and visions around principles that allow you to have a direct relationship with the divine. Your mind and spirit have the ability to form ideas and images of things that have never been seen or experienced. This freshness, combined with the wisdom earned from your current and historical experiences, could be the recipe for

innovative change and empowered living.

In order to complete the Five Steps, visualize resolution in the form of protection and empowerment, as well as the infusion of love and tenderness. Imagine getting what you need, then and now, implant it into your memory fields and into every cell in your body. It all comes down to being able to take love in and to give it out. When you are able to do that without restriction, you will generate a new myth that will feed your soul and heal generations of suffering.

Envision, as well, a new collective story. This requires outside-the-box thinking. We must think big. We must think inclusively. We must think with love. Responsible and affirmative action will change the world. Imagine being dedicated to the preservation and care of our beautiful planet, respecting all life that inhabits her terrain.

Healing the Suffering of Humanity

The process of remembering is deep and precious work, requiring dedication to finding the truth. For what other reason do we choose to remember? We remember in order to take ourselves back to an experience when we felt whole, that encompassed harmony, when the world was intact with an ebb and flow of sacred balance. We have stumbled and meandered our human way to the present moment, fragmenting our past into tidbits of meaning and streams of knowledge that informs us and collapses us. We have built holy places in which to remember, and each generation has successively built on top of it a new shrine,

devoted to the religious devotional calling of the time. One layer built upon another, adapting and losing conscious touch with the past.

We remember the past by digging through the precious stratum with devotion and hope of finding a remnant that will remind us what we are, that will reveal the truth; creating an informational and spiritual link to the bones of the Earth, the rocks and stones. This skeleton we have built our lives upon is the great teacher of the future, for the bones do not change; evolution occurs when we reshape the meat of substance, the outer, visible skin of the present. Reaching deep under the surface of our Earth, akin to the skeleton of our Body, we access the blueprint of human suffering and centuries of spiritual negotiation that gives perspective to the human journey, and fuels this paper's dialogue of our place in the wheel of life.

Although we are born carrying the burdens of the past, we also inherit an obligation to heal our ancestral heart by giving a voice to what is unspoken, to witness that which is remote or forgotten, and to choose to reconcile the illusion of separateness. This act of courageous love is what aligns us with the Great Mystery, unifying past and present, shadow and light, and seen and unseen.

We inspect the past when we wish to remember, and we remember in order to feel whole; and when we feel whole, we can witness and become the macrocosm that effectively and dynamically heals all of our relations, and then, and only then, can we come full circle to the truth. The consequences of remembering are far reaching, and therefore invite us to pause in reflection, to take a deep breath into the magnitude of our work, the scope of its potential, and

the simplicity of divine labor. For with remembering comes accountability and responsibility to reconcile the misbehavior of our ancestors.

It is my belief that although we may have veered from our morals, made mistakes, or squandered our precious resources, an innate harmony binds each heart to the forces of creation. The perfection of our transgressions, however large or small, historical or current, will be revealed as a process of creation. The forces of the past propel us full circle to the source of suffering – those moments or experiences that are infused with fear. Excavating all the way to the origin of fear, personal or inherited, will provoke the awakening of love and compassion. Like a great mother of countless children, our Earth Mother has woven a web that holds us accountable to our choices; and even in the advance of technology, we cannot remove ourselves from the cycles of Earth and creation.

Conscious Reconciliation of the Past

My Khonmadi dream reminds me that the memory of oneness is alive and well in the underground heartbeat of Earth, a vibration or sound that echoes through the cave, or sacred womb from which all life has emerged. I am reminded of the sacred responsibility this dream brought to me to be a bridge from this world to the next.

In Barbara Walkers *Woman's Dictionary of Symbols and Sacred Objects*, she defines the symbol of caves historically. "Caves were the great natural womb symbols and Mother earth images worshiped by primitive peoples. According to Porphyry, before there were temples, all religious rites were conducted in caves.

In Sikkim the Gods and earth spirits were established in the Four Great Caves, oriented to the four cardinal directions . . . The place of Jesus' birth, too, was originally a cave . . . In folk and fairy tales also, Paradise, or the land of magic wish-fulfillment was found in a cave, like the cave of Aladdin.²

Can it be that our symbolic paradise is found in caves? Can the embodiment of my dream and life work be found in a cave?

In September 2009, I traveled to Canon de la Cueva, a canyon of caves north of Santa Fe, New Mexico to visit with friends. The soundless cries and magnetism of horses running and screams of massacre flowed thickly through the air, and danced secretly amongst the rocks and trees. What we could not see, we could feel, sense, and know. It was in this place that we practiced Somatic Archaeology on the Earth, consciously reconciling the horror and suffering of the people who once called this land their sacred home. We cried for them, honored their struggles, and witnessed their pain. Through the unspoken dialogue of our hearts, we felt their burden lift as our acknowledgement let them know that they did not go unremembered. In a very intangible way, we set them free to again find peace among the warm caves and gentle bluffs. This was where they began, and where they choose to remain.

The following day, while meeting with Shanadii, the granddaughter of the famous Apache warrior Geronimo, I told her of our experience. Shanadii shared that two weeks prior they had just done an Apache Ancestor Ceremony that had not been performed for 500 years, and that now was the time for healing the past. But not only to remember the suffering, but to once again connect to the days

when the clear water flowed and the people lived in harmony with Earth, animals, plants, stones and all people.

I then shared my Khonmadi story with her. She smiled with delight, and revealed that in her language, the language of the *People of the Before Time*, that there was a similar word. “Kahmaru”, she spoke softly, “means ‘all that is’.” And with a deep breath she gazed at the meadow spread out before us and said, “I am not sure if I am looking at yesterday or tomorrow.”

Endnotes Chapter Four

¹van der Kolk's, *Clinical Implications of Neuroscience Research in PTSD*, 1-17.

²Walker, *Woman's Dictionary of Symbols and Sacred Objects*, 335-336.

REFERENCES and BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Avila, Elena, R.N., M.S.N. *Woman Who Glows in the Dark*. New York, NY: Jeremy Tarcher/Putnam, 1999.
- Bentov, Itzhak *Stalking the Wild Pendulum: On the Mechanics of Consciousness*. Rochester, VT: Destiny Books, 1988.
- Braden, Gregg *The Isaiah Effect*. New York, Harmony Books, 2000.
- Campbell, Joseph *The Hero With A Thousand Faces*. Novato, CA, New World Library, 2008.
- Campbell, Joseph *The Power of Myth*. New York: Anchor Books, 1991.
- Confucius, *The Great Learning*.
- Diamond, Marian C. Ph.D., Scheibel, Arnold B., M.D. *The Human Coloring Book*. Oakland, CA: Coloring Concepts, 1985.
- Draaisma, Douwe *Why Life Speeds Up As You Get Older: How Memory Shapes Our Past*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
- Ehlers, Anke, Clark, David M. *A Cognitive Model of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder*. Department of Psychiatry, University of Oxford, Warneford Hospital, Oxford OX3 7JX, UK Received 4 July 1999 *Behaviour Research and Therapy* 38 (2000) 319 + 345
- Eliot, T.S. *Selected Essays, 1917-1932*. Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1932.
- Fraim, John *Symbolism of Popular Culture: Dynamics of Leading Brands & Entertainment Genres*. Online book, unpublished work.
<http://www.symbolism.org/writing/books/spc/home.html>
- Furniss, Elizabeth *Victims of Benevolence: The Dark Legacy of the Williams Lake Residential School*. Vancouver, Canada: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1995.
- Gabrieli, John D.E., Ph.D. "Memory: Pandora's Hippocampus," *Cerebrum: The Dana Forum on Brain Science*, vol. 6, no. 4 (Fall 2004), pp. 39-48.
- Geis, Craig E. *New Stress Studies*. http://www.ctihome.com/New_Stress_Studies.pdf
- Gibson, Ruby *My Body, My Earth: The Practice of Somatic Archaeology*. Bloomington, IN: iUniverse, 2008.

- Gimbutas, Marijia, *The Language of the Goddess*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1989.
- Houle, Robert *The Spiritual Legacy of the Ancient Ones*. The National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, 1992 (from the catalogue for *Land, Spirit, Power*, The National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, 1992)
- Levine, Peter A, Ph.D., Kline, Maggie, M.S. *Trauma Through a Child's Eyes: Awakening the Ordinary Miracle of Healing*. Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books, 2007.
- Levi-Strauss, Claude *Structural Anthropology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1983. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Structural_anthropology
- Mander, Jerry, *In the Absence of the Sacred*. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books. 1991.
- Mansuripur, Masud *DNA, Human Memory, and the Storage Technology of the 21st Century*. Optical Sciences Center, The University of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona.
- McNally, Richard J. *Remembering Trauma*. Cambridge, MA & London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University 2003.
- National Geographic *The Human Family Tree Special 2009*.
<http://channel.nationalgeographic.com/episode/the-human-family-tree-3706#tab-facts#ixzz0PUoWBaSS>
- Novack, Dennis, M.D. Cited in article, *Study confirms that stress helps speed aging: Researchers uncover link to emotional strain* by Rob Stein Nov. 30, 2004 <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/6613721/>
- Pope, Harrison G., M.D. *Psychology Astray: Fallacies in Studies of "Repressed Memory" and Childhood Trauma*. Boca Raton, FL: Social Issues Resource Series, Inc. 1997.
- Ridley, Matt, *Nature Via Nurture: Genes, Experience and What Makes Us Human*. New York: HarperCollins 2004.
- Rodriguez, Roberto, Ph.D., Gonzales, Patrisia, Ph.D. *Sacred Spaces, Sacred Sites*. Column of the Americas, June 27, 2003.
- Scaer, Robert, M.D., P.C. *The Trauma Spectrum: Hidden Wounds and Human Resiliency*. New York & London: W. W. Norton & Company 2005.

- Simmer-Brown, Judith, Ph.D. *Dakini's Warm Breath: The Feminine Principal in Tibetan Buddhism*. Boston, MA: Shambhala Publications, Inc., 2001.
- Kiselyov, Yevgeny *Worthy of a True, Old-Time Soviet Polemicist*. Moscow Times, Wednesday, June 27, 2007. Issue 3686. Page 9.
<http://pda.moscowtimes.ru/article.php?aid=177700>
- Starhawk, Reed, Donna *Signs Out Of Time*. Video Documentary, Belili Productions, 2003.
- Tick, Edward, Ph.D. *War and the Soul: Healing Our Nation's Veterans from Post-traumatic Stress Disorder*. Wheaton, IL: Quest Books, 2005.
- Tolle, Eckhart *A New Earth, Awakening to Your Life's Purpose*. New York: Penguin Group, 2005.
- van der Kolk, Bessel, M.D. *The Body Keeps The Score: Memory & the Evolving Psychobiology of Post Traumatic Stress* article. First published in the *Harvard Review of Psychiatry*, 1994, 1(5), 253-265. Note that this online version may have minor differences from the published version.
<http://www.trauma-pages.com/a/vanderk4.php>
- van der Kolk, Bessel, M.D. *Traumatic Stress: The Effect of Overwhelming Experience on Mind, Body and Society*. Guilford 1996.
- van der Kolk, Bessel, M.D. *Posttraumatic Stress Disorder and Memory*. *Psychiatric Times*. Vol. 14 No. 3, March 1, 1997.
- van der Kolk, Bessel, M.D. *Clinical Implications of Neuroscience Research in PTSD*. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*. 2006.
- van der Kolk, Bessel, M.D. *Dissociation, Affect Dysregulation & Somatization*. (The complex nature of adaptation to trauma, Invited paper in honor of John Nemiah *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 153(7) This paper originally appeared in the *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 153(7), Festschrift Supplement, 83-93. Note that this online version may have minor differences from the published version.)
<http://www.trauma-pages.com/a/vanderk5.php> Dave Baldwin's Trauma Information Pages
- van der Kolk, Bessel, M.D., Fidler, Rita *Dissociation and the Fragmentary Nature of Traumatic Memories: Overview and Exploratory Study*, 1995.
- Villoldo, Alberto, Ph.D. *Courageous Dreaming: How Shamans Dream The World Into Being*. Carlsbad, CA: Hay House, 2008.

Walker, Barbara G. *The Woman's Encyclopedia of Myths and Secrets*.
San Francisco: Harper Collins 1983.

Walker, Barbara G. *The Woman's Dictionary of Symbols and Sacred Objects*.
San Francisco: Harper Collins 1988.

Winter, Jay *The Generation of Memory: Reflections on the "Memory Boom" in
Contemporary Historical Studies*. *German Historical Bulletin* 27 Fall
2000 www.ghi-dc.org/publications/ghipubs/.../b27winterframe.html

Claudine Attias-Donfut and Francois-Charles Wolff *Generational Memory and
Family Relationships*. [http://www.sc-eco.univ-
nantes.fr/~fcwolff/wolff/articles/CHAA05.pdf](http://www.sc-eco.univ-nantes.fr/~fcwolff/wolff/articles/CHAA05.pdf). August 2003.

APPENDIX

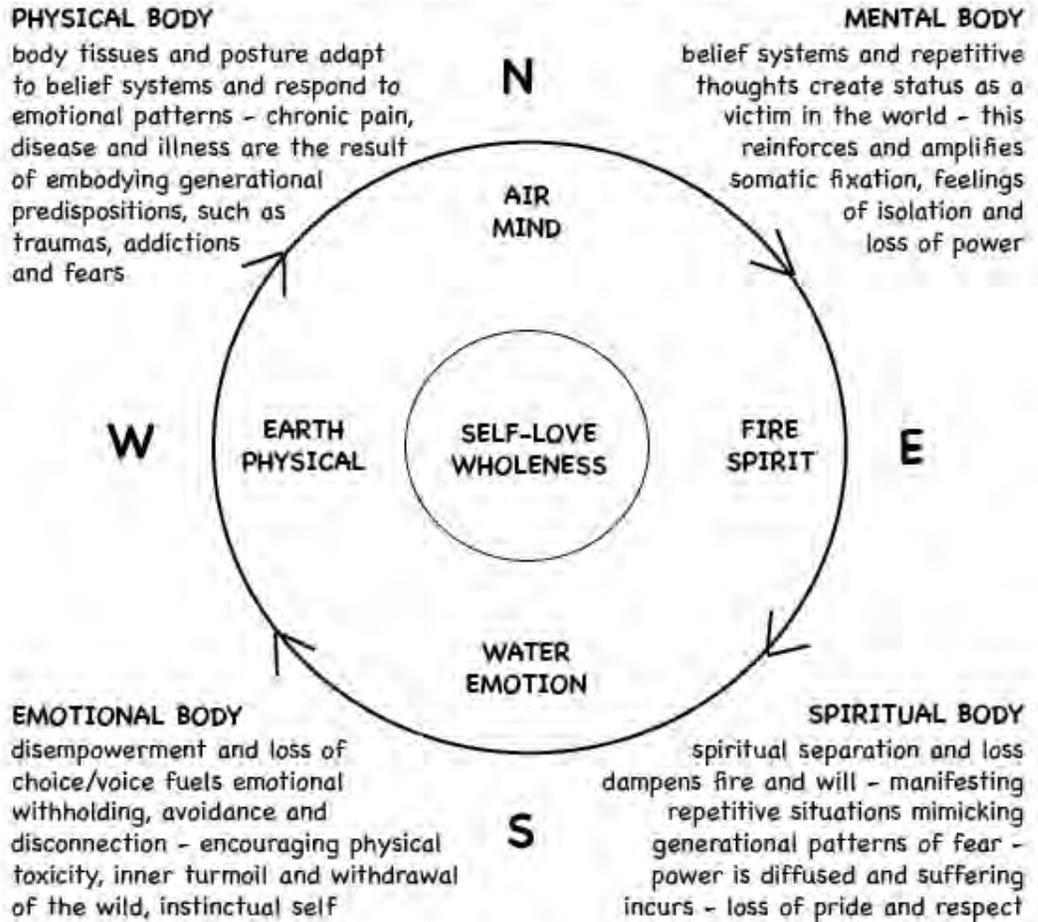
Native American Ten Commandments

Sacred Instructions Given By The Creator To The First Humanity

At The Time Of Creation

1. Treat the Earth and all that dwell thereon with respect.
2. Remain close to the Great Spirit.
3. Show great respect for your fellow beings.
4. Work together for the benefit of all Mankind.
5. Give assistance and kindness wherever needed.
6. Do what you know to be right.
7. Look after the well being of mind and body.
8. Dedicate a share of your efforts to the greater good.
9. Be truthful and honest at all times.
10. Take full responsibility for your actions.

**Somatic Archaeology™ Wheel Diagram
Wheel of Suffering**



The origin of the Wheel of Suffering generally begins at the center with a loss of self-love, detachment from wholeness and the onset of fear due to a feeling of separation. Trauma to any of the four aspects of self can induce a felt sense of suffering and establish patterns of somatic holding. A loss of accountability for ones actions, as well as historical amnesia, keep this wheel spiraling inward. This is displayed in a clockwise motion reflecting a pervasive and repetitive cycle of entrapment and a loss of joy in all the aspects of self.

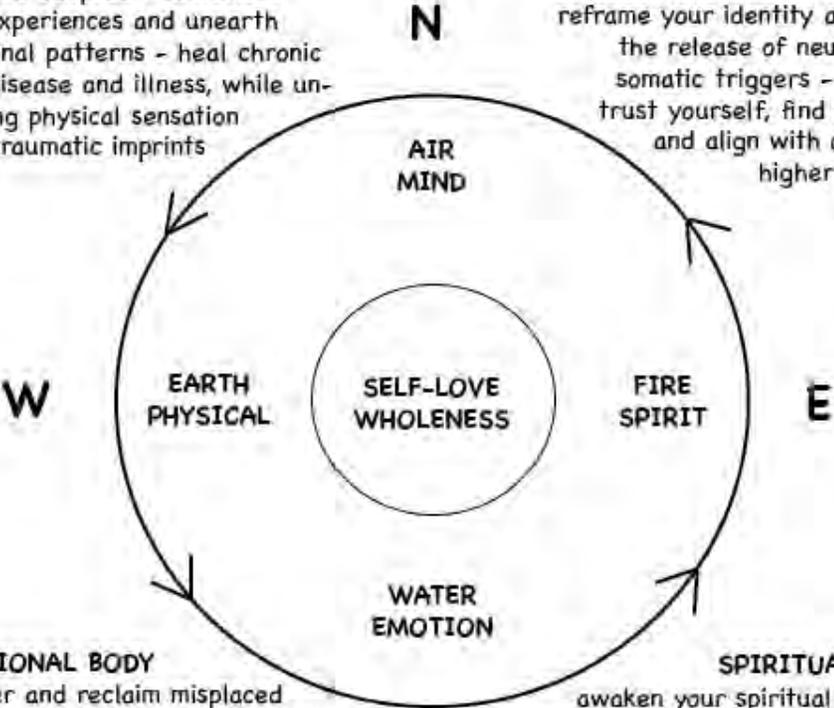
**Somatic Archaeology™ Wheel Diagram
Wheel of Healing**

PHYSICAL BODY

wake up your soma and have a felt sense of the somatic patterns you have adopted - remember past experiences and unearth emotional patterns - heal chronic pain, disease and illness, while uncoupling physical sensation from traumatic imprints

MENTAL BODY

shift your perception as you unravel belief systems and establish harmonious thoughts - reframe your identity and allow the release of neurological somatic triggers - learn to trust yourself, find strength and align with others in higher purpose



EMOTIONAL BODY

uncover and reclaim misplaced power, regain your voice and choice to establish safety and boundaries - allow emotional expression and release to support physical unwinding and mental recapitulation - express your wild, instinctual self

SPIRITUAL BODY

awaken your spiritual fire and memory - unification and self-knowing will create empowered opportunities to demonstrate creativity and self worth - manifest your destiny and heal for seven generations, reclaiming wholeness and peace for all

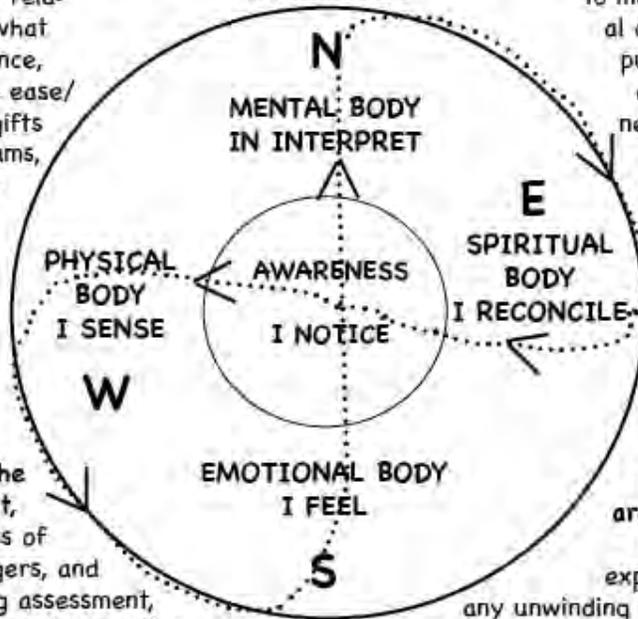
You can enter the Wheel of Healing from any of the four directions. Healing suffering also begins in the center of the wheel through compassion and the rekindling of self-love - becoming aware of your wholeness. The release of somatically fixated fear creates a feeling of safety and unification. Somatic unwinding occurs in a counter-clockwise motion reflecting a gradual and progressive healing cycle. Access to your inherent wisdom and truth is found in all aspects of self with accountability of action, and recognition of cause/effect.

**Somatic Archaeology™ Wheel Diagram
Wheel of Transformation**

1. Begin in the Center of the Wheel, I Notice: feel your overall state of mind, body, emotion, and spirit: general awareness of life experiences, relationship patterns, what is in or out of balance, struggles, conflicts, ease/disease, inherited gifts and memories, dreams, regrets, and intent. What is ready to transform?

4. Move upward to the North, I Interpret: illumination of memories: "light bulb" moments that reorganize pieces of your story, shift negative thought patterns, break contracts, receive inspiration, and catalogue events. What is true?

5. Move clockwise around to the East, I Reconcile: reframe life experiences: imagine who you are when free to manifest your spiritual destiny and creative pursuits without fear, dream out loud with needs met, heart full, and love flowing, visualize an infinity bridge connecting all your bodies into one whole. What is real?



2. Move left on the wheel to the West, I Sense: awareness of somatic cues, triggers, and patterns: breathing assessment, painful areas, tension, injury sites, physical traumas, areas of movement, expansion, contraction, and fluidity. What is stuck?

3. Move clockwise around the wheel to the South, I Feel: expression of emotion: any unwinding movement including cleansing breaths, sound/noise, tears, laughter, kicking, shaking, releasing somatic memories, making room inside. What is thawing?

The Wheel of Transformation begins in the center of the wheel and follows the **Five Steps of Somatic Archaeology™** creating a clockwise figure eight, or infinity, design. Infinity (commonly represented as the symbol ∞) comes from the Latin: infinitas or "unboundedness." It refers to several concepts linked to the idea of "without end" which arise in philosophy, mathematics, and theology. The infinity symbol signifies completeness, being composed of a male, solar, right-handed circle matched with a female, lunar, left-handed circle. The figure eight on its side reflects the divine sexual union and perfection of duality (two becoming one). Since neither circle lies above the other, the infinity design implies equality between male and female powers, leading to balance, self-intimacy, and knowledge of the infinite self.