

A Personal Journey to Heal Cancer

by J.P. Tindell, M.S.

There's no being ready for a cancer diagnosis. It couldn't possibly happen to me, who'd been physically strong and without any serious health issues for forty eight years! Until I had lumpectomy surgery followed by radiation, I'd never been in a hospital overnight. I happily made the important five year mark without any recurrence, and thought I was done with cancer.

Then at year eight, precancerous cells appeared in the same area as before. Mastectomy was the only option. What I had learned since the first occurrence helped me get through the second one especially well. I was off prescription pain medication two days afterward, and ready to return to work in two weeks. No followup tumor suppression medication has been needed, and I am now considered 96 percent cured. The physical healing process has completed without complication.

Since surgery, all my personal health care practitioners, both traditional and nontraditional, and many friends and associates note that I "look" better than I ever have. I know this is less about my fifty six year old physical self and more about "seeing" my renewed Luminous Energy Field as stronger and brighter than it's ever been. I feel genuinely reborn, with a vitality that I've never before experienced. I credit shamanic knowledge and practices for this level of healing success. I am blessed to have succeeded in this "healer, healer thyself" quest.

FACING DEATH

In my extensive reading over the years on shamanism and other spiritual traditions, I recalled stories about native medicine people where a crisis of death and rebirth was to be expected as part of the life initiation of a shaman. Joan Halifax's book *Shaman* is subtitled *The Wounded Healer*.¹ "The shaman is chosen by the spirits, and in the central experience of initiation is often symbolically killed by the spirits and reborn."² Some traditions assert that healers also earn their credibility by surviving severe tests and trials.³

Cancer was a dismemberment for me, and my rebirth (survival) was part of my initiation into healership. This and all the other challenges of my life have been essential to developing in me strength, humility, empathy and compassion, all qualities essential for service to others as a healer.

SHAMANIC HEALING HELP

I knew I could take full advantage of what western medicine had to offer, but would also have to use every spiritual and healing tool I had been exposed to over many years of spiritual seeking and study. From shamanism, I can suggest the following:

Trust Inner Wisdom and Spiritual Guidance: I took in the information from surgeons, radiologists and oncologists, but let my body's innate wisdom tell me what medical advice to take. For example, my body expressed a definite "no" to chemotherapy. I also

consulted with other “seers” to get added perspective on how to heal and the higher level spiritual causes of the illness in my body.

Ask for Help: Ask shamanic practitioners to journey in your behalf to seek answers to your questions—it’s sometimes easier for another less invested party to secure the spirits’ wisdom for us. Journey frequently yourself to ask for help with the desired healing from the benevolent spirits.

Tell as many people as you feel comfortable with about what you're going through; ask for their good thoughts, energy, intentions and prayers. This is an act of power in your own behalf that brings empowerment benefits. Let them accompany you physically or at least spiritually to doctor appointments and medical procedures, and to care for you post-procedure. We are not alone in the human experience, and receiving the kindness of others (human or non-human) is healing for both giver and receiver.

I called together a group of friends and fellow shamanic practitioners to conduct a community healing circle for me. The power of group work is beyond measure. I journeyed in advance for instructions on how to conduct this event, and enlisted the help of fellow practitioners to facilitate. The circle drummed to call in powerful helping spirits, helped with extraction of diseased tissue while taking care to avoid energizing cancer cells, and witnessed my dance of empowerment and rebirth.

Pursue Power Augmentation: This can be done in the spirit world or with the assistance of other shamanic practitioners in our behalf. Take journeys to augment your personal power as needed. To combat my own terror, anger and depression, and to help keep my “spirits up”, I sometimes journeyed multiple times a day and for extended periods of time. I asked my spirit helpers to take away my fear and heal me. When feeling especially challenged and depleted, I did not return from a journey until I felt a palpable shift to a more positive state. Make time for dancing with your power animals and other spirit helpers to “power up” and re-energize.

Work at Multiple Levels: Based on the concept of levels of reality,⁴ I encourage clients to pursue healing at multiple levels: physical, mental, emotional, energetic and spiritual. For example, change how you treat your physical body. Perhaps more exercise and eating differently is warranted. I also believe that, while we should pay attention to and take responsible care at the physical level, focusing too much at this level can actually amplify our physical issues. Try to focus more on the healing than on the illness.

Mentally, developing the ability to observe and change our thoughts, particularly away from fear, guilt and attack, will be beneficial. Emotionally, we need to allow our honest feelings to be let out in a safe place. I sought the help of close friends, sacred circle and licensed psychotherapists to cry, express being scared, and be reminded we’re not alone. Organized support groups are also often available for those going through similar experiences.

Energetically, I got periodic acupuncture treatments to help free up blocked energy meridians. I regularly use dancing and drumming in circle to re-energize. In the spirit world, I asked for healing of my Luminous Energy Field.⁵ My seeing in the spirit world has always included these Energy Fields, and where blockages, distortions or intrusions

occur within the chakra system. We can ask our spirit helpers to bring healing to our Field, including in the areas of the physical body where the illness has manifested.

Work at multiple levels and study of Energy Anatomy⁶ also led me to understand that the effect of emotionally having my heart “broken” at a very early age contributed directly to the appearance of breast cancer at the level of my heart chakra. I focused on grieving this loss to help wholeness of heart to be restored.

Work In Your Sacred Garden: In the Middle World, we can go to and work in our personal place of power and healing, our Sacred Garden.⁷ We can locate, take care of and modify the parts of our garden that represent our physical body. Changes we make there should contribute to shifts in our outer life. We can remove from our garden what we are shown represents disease, and work with the spirits to replace that with healing.

Take Time in Nature: I found myself wanting to spend more time in Nature than usual. I sought places for calm, peace and solace. Even as a child, I felt consoled and comforted in the arms of a favorite tree or by lying on the earth. Nature holds the power of the Universe in physical form, of which we are also made. I experience this power more easily when I am physically proximate to living nature—our souls need this connection and relationship. The spirits of nature are extremely powerful allies for personal change, empowerment and healing.

I went to the woods and the river to journey. I could draw the energy of the elementals (air, fire, water, earth) into my body with the aid of my drum, rattle, or breath with a focused intent. I sought out places with water so that anything I wanted to release could be neutralized and carried away. I have given to the fire what needed to be shed in Fire Ceremonies, followed by a dance of wholeness and self renewal. I have used rocks to transfer what’s unwanted out of my physical and energy body and into them, offering them then to a body of water. I also find drawing energy up from the red molten hot center of the earth and down from the stars very powerful.

Intend Healing: Nothing beats a burning desire for life and healing. The Toltec Warrior tradition first broadly shared by Carlos Castaneda speaks of the mastery of Intent.⁸ I often tell clients that one thing we must bring to personal healing work is a fierce desire to be whole, healed, empowered. I have shared with others on their healing journey the importance of knowing that you have more to do, give and share in this life. Consider declaring to yourself and others what you have to live for. I also believe that, when the time comes for profound healing, we have to want our healing more than anything else in our lives. Sometimes we are working to literally save our own life, no small or ordinary task.

Address Likely Soul Loss: Serious illness of itself can be a symptom of soul loss. Knowing that soul loss would be likely during my healing process, I periodically had Soul Retrievals performed by practitioners with this expertise.⁹ I have also used an instruction from Sandra Ingerman given years ago in a Foundation for Shamanic Studies Workshop on Death, Dying and Beyond—looking a loved one in the eyes before major medical procedures and promising to come back. This establishes a cord of intention and energy to support a full return to body and soul. It helps counteract the potential for soul parts to go lost from the effect of general anesthesia and body trauma.

After major medical procedures/surgery, you can journey to the spirit world to ask for the return of any soul parts (overall and for the specific body parts that have been affected). While both my breasts are gone physically, my energetic field does not experience anything missing. I eventually realized that I succeeded in great measure by getting through double mastectomy surgery without feeling that anything went missing.

THE GIFT OF INITIATION

The real gift I have received from this personal healing journey is clarity about what I most want to invest my precious life force energy in—what work, what relationships, what creative endeavors, what acts of service. I can speak from personal experience and authority as a living example that it's possible to achieve profound and miraculous healing.

I also know very personally that physically surviving a life threatening illness like cancer is not as important as the deep personal experience of real magic available from the Great Mystery and the joy of service as a healer. I received so much healing at multiple levels through this process that continuing physical life or transitioning out became secondary. Physical death can be part of the path of healing, and certainly will happen eventually. And I now have the daily gift of knowing I am a walking miracle. I am so grateful for the miracle of every day, and for the opportunity to share with others what this journey has taught me.

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J.P. Tindell, M.S., has been a student of shamanism since 1995, serving others as a healing practitioner for twelve years. She is founder and leader of The Shamanic Healing Collective (www.shamanichealingcollective.org) in Auburn, California, offering teaching and healing in the tradition of classic shamanism.

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