

What does it Mean to Awaken Joy with Regard to My Shamanic Path?

Jamie Rogers

Southwestern College

Author Note

This paper was prepared on August 31, 2011 for Foundations in Human Sciences Research, CN AT 598-2, taught by Gabrielle Viethen.

**Abstract**

For several years now, I have been looking at the question of my life purpose. Two components that have become increasingly clear to me include awakening joy and shamanic practices, however I have not fully realized their relationship or meaning within my life. Thus, this paper seeks to explore this relationship and meaning. In doing so, different aspects are explored that directly or indirectly relate to my questioning of the meaning of awakening joy with regard to my shamanic path, resulting in greater clarity about how I will apply these components within my life and within my future work as an art therapist.

*Keywords:* joy, connection, soul intention, transformation, shamanism

### What does it Mean to Awaken Joy with Regard to My Shamanic Path?

My examination of joy in my life actually started in 2002, as my co-worker/mentor died of cancer and I was on the verge of entering mid-life. The presence of these events helped me to recognize two facts. First, I worked at a job that I had no passion for. Second, I had obtained the equivalence of the American dream by getting married, obtaining a job that paid well, and owning a large home on nearly an acre of land, but these milestones didn't bring all the satisfaction that I had expected.

Within two years of these revelations, as I continued my life without much change, I began to suffer from neurological disturbances that made it nearly impossible for me to continue working. In fact, I feared that I would not recover enough to ever successfully hold a full time job ever again.

With these factors at hand, I began to believe that my life was on the wrong path. I also began to believe that everything I had worked for was not my own vision, but the vision given to me by someone else, through my family or societal expectations. Thus, as part of my recovery process, I knew that I had to discover my own path, which would give my life meaning, joy, and improved health. In hindsight, however, I now see that the manifestation of my path has been perfection within imperfection. In other words, it has allowed me to learn in a certain way as to prepare me for and to provoke the next level of my life. So, what has seemed like a barrier is actually an asset, which has opened me to greater opportunities.

As these events began to instigate the search for my life purpose, three other pieces of information surfaced, which specifically directed me towards the concept of awakening joy. First, as I was utilizing different techniques towards finding clues about my life purpose such as meditation, journaling, shamanic journeying, and intention based energy work, I happen to try

walking a labyrinth. From this walk, I received information about art making and about making people laugh. At the time, the idea of art making was clear to me, but I didn't have a clue what it meant for me to make people laugh, since it wasn't a significant part of my character. Next, I attended an energy work course called "Life Mission I." Here again, amongst a multitude of reflective information that engaged many of my current thoughts, I received one particular piece of information that totally befuddled me. In response to the question: "If your life mission was a cartoon character, who would it be?" I answered with "Roger Rabbit," whose life purpose is to make people laugh. Then, as a culmination of the same idea being presented to me in different ways, I discovered my medicine name as "One Who Awakens Joy." This discovery was made during a vision quest after making several connections between previous events and my own self-reflections. Thus, the main part of my question is associated with finding out what exactly it means to be "One Who Awakens Joy."

The shamanistic aspect of my question came about as I started working with what it means to awaken joy. I was not particularly surprising by this, since recent events had been encouraging me to become more involved with shamanism. These events included: 1) recognizing myself as a medicine man and a psychopomp within a past lives, 2) understanding my increased awareness of our interconnectedness with sensitivity to the changes within that interconnected web, and 3) attributing shamanistic qualities to the images created within my character/destiny mandala. Adding this aspect also seemed pertinent, as I began to be aware of the fact that Native American perspectives were supportive of my own theories regarding a connection between derailed life paths and illness. As a result, the investigation of the meaning of awakening joy was narrowed to specifically include my shamanic path.

Accumulatively, these events and experiences have been directing me toward a specific path, but I have not fully understood their ramifications with in my life. Thus, within this paper, I hope to open a space for the clarification of what this does mean to my life, as well as to provoke the curiosity of what awakening joy might also mean to others.

### **Data Collection Methods**

#### **Techniques**

Since the main focus of my question is very personal in nature, the data that follows encompasses a mixture of techniques that allow a deep level of self-inquiry. These techniques include: 1) body awareness, 2) meditation, 3) drawing, 4) journaling, 5) non-dominant hand dialoging, and 6) shamanic journeying that utilizes fetishes. Many of these techniques were used independently, but some were also used in conjunction with others. For instance, body awareness was used to understand the experience of joy for what is and is not, as well as to detect the meaning of a journal entry or a piece of artwork. Meditation, on the other hand, was not purely used alone, but was more commonly used in conjunction with creating artwork and journaling a response. In addition, non-dominant hand dialoging was more specifically used to interact with parts of myself that included my heart, my soul, my neurology, my child self, adolescent self, and adult self, but was sometimes also used in journaling.

#### **Collection Process**

The data collection process did not follow any set procedure, but I did intend to use all of the techniques listed on some level. Choosing a technique to use, however, did involve using muscle testing on myself and evaluating what seemed appropriate based on the data collected at a particular point. Additionally, specific parts or aspects of my question were broken down and examined separately to obtain a greater understanding and to allow the addition of information

regarding my shamanic path that was not originally part of the question. Thus, the progression of data collection did follow a pattern that flowed from lesser to greater complexity.

### **Resulting Data**

Overall, some techniques proved to be more fruitful than others. To begin with, the non-dominant hand dialoging provided the largest amount of useful information. Meanwhile, the use of meditation, artwork, and journaling provided more subtle details to reflect upon. Then, at the other end of the spectrum, my fetishes most often provided guidance about what to investigate rather than specific information.

### **The Data**

#### **Experiencing Joy**

Early within my inquiry, I decided I needed to have some knowledge about the joy that I was exploring the meaning of awakening. So, I began by searching my body for the location of joy, which I found to be expressed through sensations in my heart, throat and ears. But, as I thought further about how joy felt in particularly joyous situations, the main sensation I received was that of being tickled throughout my entire being. Geordie, my crow fetish, also offered that joy was a pulsing, circular, energetic light.

Using this information as a catalyst, I also journaled on what joy felt like, finding the main themes to be associated with connection, safety, and love. Other terms that came to mind included warmth, calm, resting, nurturing, conjoined, sweet, non-violent, and light. Additionally, I talked of the merging of energies between two people that made everything okay, that the experience needed nothing more than my presence, and that it seemed impossible for the experience not to be felt by all those involved without a complete lack of awareness.

To gain an even greater perspective of my experience, I continued my journaling by noting what it meant for joy to be absent. From this side, my words included unconnected, alone, isolated, sad, depressed, unmotivated, paralyzed and uncared for. Additionally, the concept of needing to shutdown emerged along with an inability change the situation without some type of interaction that could be received through a person, a spirit, or other creative activity.

Collectively, this data provided two different insights. First, the data serves as a baseline of my experience of joy. Secondly, this initial data already begins to show the main quality of joy, that of connection, which is an aspect that will become even more apparent throughout the data.

### **Meaning of Joy**

Exploring the experience of joy, however, still did not tell me what joy was all about, so I also worked to identify the meaning of joy. My journal entries on this topic described joy as something that provided direction, appeared when



Figure 1.

my experiences were congruent with my being, allowed me to know who I was, and allowed me to know when others felt, understood, and attuned with me. Additionally, I wrote in connection with a particular experience that:

Joy is heart connection – to the body it means a connection has been made to our oneness that we are not separate solid objects but permeable forms of dense energy – those energy particles of ourselves can decide to combine with the energy particles of others for the pure joy of being able to and for experiencing the moment of being one.

Then, as I journaled about my first drawing (Figure 1), I wrote that joy was “something contained within me that is contained by my soul, but also reverberates out. An entity that is part of me that can also be shared.” These ideas suggest that joy is a source of guidance that lives

within us, becoming present through the allowance of energetic connections that make us one. But, some confusion seems to exist within my mind about where joy exists, since I first identified it as being within my heart, throat, and ears and now it seems that joy may also exist within the soul.

Dialogs with my heart (Table 1) and my soul (Table 2) don't clarify the location of joy, but they do bring up some interesting aspects regarding what joy is about. For instance, my heart suggests that joy is not only a guidance system for the present time, but also across my lifetime. Additionally, my heart implies that joy is associated with preparing me for future actions that unfold in a particular way. My soul, on the other hand, seems to say that restrictions have been intentionally placed on me, which can only be lifted by joy under certain circumstances. Thus, joy seems to guide me by controlling the restrictions within my life.

Dialoging with my child (Table 3), however, brings in a new twist to this situation. Here, joy is described as its own entity, which can only be experienced through a direct or indirect relationship with it. In other words, my child implies that joy can only be present as a part of a connection. Furthermore, that connection creates a new entity, which joy is a part of. This information brings joy to a different level of understanding than had previously been thought of, and yet it seems to fit with the idea of joy as a guide or lifetime controller.

Then, as a final source on the meaning of joy, my neurological part (Table 4) offers the physical consequences of joy. Of particular interest, here, is the implication that relationships lacking joy become held in the body. This information gives some indication of how joy might be involved in the process of creating restrictions as was suggested by my soul. However, it also specifically notes that joy is not present in this event.



<b>Heart Dialog – Meaning of Joy</b>	
<i>Heart, please tell me the meaning of joy.</i>	Joy helps you to handle your life conditions, pacing yourself so you are prepared for what is next.
<i>Pace myself? What do you mean?</i>	To be productive with your methods of learning.
<i>Sounds like right timing and right action?</i>	Yes, and also about being in the right place at the right time.
<i>How does joy do that? Handle timing?</i>	By awakening at the right intervals to make you take action.

Table 1.

<b>Soul Dialog – Meaning of Joy</b>	
<i>Soul what do you have to offer about the meaning of joy?</i>	Joy comes to you when you need it to based on the experience that you have been having and the people you are coming in contact with. Its purpose is to free you from past restriction that have been intended for you learning.

Table 2.

<b>Child Dialog – Meaning of Joy</b>	
<i>So tell me what joy is.</i>	Joy is that part that awakens with the expression of who we are in connection with others
<i>So, joy is relational rather than existing on its own?</i>	Yes, but it does have form of its own when the relationship occurs joy is formed.
<i>And then becomes an entity?</i>	Yes, or does anything else that comes into relationship. A new entity is formed not just two entities interacting together, but a whole new entity to interact with.
<i>Anything else you would like to offer?</i>	Be careful about trying to put joy in a box for it is a different entity for each individual relationship.
<i>Child part can you tell me more about joy only occurring as a relational entity? Does it also exist as a universal energy?</i>	Joy does exist as a universal energy that can be transforming in different ways, but you will not experience it until you are in relationship with it.
<i>Why did you say before that it didn't exist on its own?</i>	Because nothing truly exists on its own, but certain things like joy can become present and then pervasive within the collective consciousness.

Table 3.

<b>Neurology Dialog – Meaning of Joy</b>	
<i>Neurological function what do you have to offer about the meaning of joy?</i>	Joy enables more balance and functioning the more joy present the less brainpower required and everything flows smoothly. The less joy the more that resources will be compromised for particular functions. There is only so much to go around. Therefore joy is an energy conserver.
<i>So when joy is not present or limited the energy for normal functioning is used up and then the brain has to try other strategies to maintain functioning?</i>	Yes, but those strategies are attempts to get the situation rectified rather than a fix they only cause problems when left unattended for too long.
<i>What will be the first indications of a lack of joy? Will it always be the same?</i>	No, it is based on the type of relationship that is lacking joy and where this is held in the body. Normally we do not hold relationships in the body, but when joy is not present the body has to store it because the energy has no place else to go.

Table 4.

Although some of the information presented is somewhat conflicting, most of what is offered seems to define joy in terms of a life guiding entity whose presence exists within our lives only through connection. It is unclear, however, as to how joy actually decides on the direction of guidance and on the approach to take for providing that guidance.

### **Awakening Joy**

As the information from the experience and the meaning of joy have alluded to, one of joy's major aspect is connection. Within this connection, something also seems to be happening that indicates a sharing of energy towards a specific purpose. In fact, my journal entries with regard to awakening joy refer to: 1) needing the right opportunity to be available that makes these energies want to get together, 2) needing the energies to be compatible and loving, 3) allowing boundaries to drop and nurturing cords to be created that support one's life purpose, 4) allowing energies to intermingle, and 5) allowing a transmission to occur, which follows back to life conditions occurring around a certain timing and being in the right place at the right time,

which was suggested in dialoging with my heart (Table 1). In addition, awakening joy seems to be about creating space for the right circumstances that would allow the connection that invites joy to be present.

Keeping with this theme, a dialog with my heart (Table 5) extends these concepts. To begin with, the idea of relational application is introduced as a way to awaken joy. In other words, it seems my heart is suggesting that, as we create successful relationships that coincide with our life purpose, the culmination of those relationships will continually awaken joy. Then, as we become accomplished with applying our relational knowledge, our soul can also transfer this knowledge to others in an energetic fashion, which is similar to transference that was also brought up as I dialoged with my neurology (Table 7).

From here, my soul (Table 6) dialog introduces information regarding this transference of energetic information. Although the suggestion has been made that joy is a guide and director, my soul is now suggesting that this is not quite true. The suggestion here is that my heart and my soul are co-directors, with joy functioning as a translator of information regarding relationships from the energetic state to the physical body. So, joy is more of an enabler within the process of guidance coming from the heart and soul, but does not in and of itself provide that guidance.

Finally, from dialogs with my neurology (Table 7) and my adolescent (Table 8), an indication is given regarding the level of difficulty required to awakening joy. First, my neurology sees non-joyful relationships, held in the body, as becoming systematically intertwined with the other functioning parts, producing symptoms that are not necessarily related to the relationship being held. Secondly, from my adolescent's point of view, these relationships were not created in isolation, so they cannot be fixed in isolation. Thus, the process of awakening

joy requires a deep level of inquiry in terms of the physical symptoms and the extending relational circumstances.

<b>Heart Dialog – Awakening Joy</b>	
<i>So the meaning of awakening joy is to allow one’s guidance to be experienced?</i>	You will experience joy of being when your life lessons come to fruition and you are ready to apply them in a relational fashion.
<i>This implies that only adults have joy. What about children?</i>	Children have the joy of understanding their guides until they are turned away from them.
<i>So people who have made it through life maintaining their joy never lost their guidance and are continually able to apply their lessons relationally?</i>	Yes, and they have the power to teach others through their thoughts and senses.
<i>Their soul can teach this by being in contact with another person?</i>	Yes, as <name withheld> has taught you and now you must in your own way leaving your heart open to him for further information and communication.

Table 5.

<b>Soul Dialog – Awakening Joy</b>	
<i>Then awakening joy is about the utilization of things learned and the preparation toward a new phase of life?</i>	Yes, but it can also be spontaneous and represent smaller changes too.
<i>It feels deeper and more unconscious than what people normally identify as joy.</i>	Yes, joy is an entity that guides your existence to experience her makes you feel happy.
<i>But, don’t you and my hear guide my existence?</i>	Yes, but joy makes it possible for this information to be received and translated into the language of the body.

Table 6.

<b>Neurology Dialog – Awakening Joy</b>	
<i>So is awakening joy about working to release the connections within the system that has been created in this non-joyful relationship?</i>	Yes, but it gets very intertwined once there. Awareness of the origins is very hidden and can make it look like many things physically.
<i>What else do you have to offer with regard to the meaning or awakening of joy?</i>	Joy can also be used to work with the non-joyful relationship, not as an application but as an outside helping relationship whose energy can influence the blocked, infused, non-healthy relationship. Thus, your relationship to them. <name withheld>’s relationship to you. Transference through the relationship of joy.

Table 7.

<b>Adolescent Dialog – Awakening Joy</b>	
<i>Ok, so what does it mean, to you, to awaken joy?</i>	It means that we all need to work together to put the pieces back together that were destroyed not just the responsibility of the individual that holds the lack of joy because they are holding this for all of us not just them.
<i>Anything else to offer?</i>	You should also think about how awakening joy will affect you, because it won't necessarily be joyful. As the cancerous-like cell begins to break apart your client will protect that part for dear life at that time and not hold the value of facing and moving through it as you do.

Table 8.

From this information, awakening joy then becomes a process of creating or reforming relationships in a manner that successfully aligns with one's life purpose. To do so, however, requires creating an appropriate space to enable this and looking beyond surface manifestations.

**Death in Relation to Awakening Joy**

Upon the suggestion of Anathea, my wolf fetish, I also looked at awakening joy from the perspective of the allowing death and rebirth, with particular regard to the non-joyful relationships being held in the body that need to be freed, transformed, or allowed to die such that something greater can live. My second drawing (Figure 2) seems to create a visual description of the non-joyful relationship in the body. Although the image appears cancerous, my journal entry notes that “small instances of joy that are somewhat hidden or just emerging – not all parts of the cell are



Figure 2.

troublesome – some parts contain information that can transform the cell” and “joy is protecting the cell.” Thus, the non-joyful relationship seems to contain within and around it what it needs to transform itself.



Figure 3.

My next drawing (Figure 3) seems to show this possibility for transformation, with my journal entry lending greater insights. Journaling I state:

Help has come in to break the confinement and pull the tendrils of darkness back into an earlier form. Part of the self that is scared, lonely, and unable to connect, but the healthier aspects/tendrils provide options for transformation. One [tendrill] provides a particular pathway from darkness into beauty the transformation of darkness into light as the meaning of awakening joy.

This drawing and associated journal entry brought me two realizations. First, that the cell contains many options for transformation and that only one of those options needs to be opened for transformation to occur. Second, as I thought about what I said and I sat in the position of the dark form in the image, I came to understand that this dark form represented shame. Suddenly I realized that it was shame that causes relationships to become trapped within the body. Later, as I journaled about love as the connection that creates joy, I would come to find one potential way for transforming the shame as I a wrote:

Allowing connection is an agreement between two people out of love, then they decide between them how they will connect and which shame blocks can be dismantled. No, connection creates love, which then can bring joy in. Joy is a flowing entity unless blocked. So, where I am flowing joy I can dismantle those blocks in you and where you are flowing in joy you can dismantle those blocks in me.

By studying death as component of awakening joy, a greater understanding of the nature of joy was obtained. Shame seemed to be present in the non-joyful relationship, but joy was also there, sitting dormant until the right time for its awakening occurred. Love, on the other hand, may be the key for transforming the relationship, which could occur within an instant.

### **Breath, Heart, Soul, Mind, Body Connections**

As I was in meditation one day, attending to my question, I became more closely aware of my breathing in relation to my heart. Journaling I wrote:

Finding the space where breath is easy and peaceful. When the breath is at ease the heart will bloom, allowing joy to flow when connecting to the universe. The more the breath is

able to come into the body fully the more ease, which leads to heart blooming and joy flowing instead of anxiety.

Immediately after this, I created another drawing (Figure 4), which resulted in the following journal entry:

Energy around the heart supporting and encouraging something to bloom in response to the energy coming in. Layers of emergence. Orange is the universe cradling the heart. The heart has a part of the universe inside it and then grows its own response to that universal energy. The combination of the two grows something entirely new in response to the direction of the soul. The universe coming in through the breath and extending into the heart whose creation is nurtured by the spiritual realm, which is the source of all things for which our soul is part of.

From these entries, I began to think of joy as a universal energy flowing through me, which I can be in relationship with through my breath. These thoughts were then further expanded as I inquired and journaled about how awakening joy relates to maintaining balance. My journaling on this



Figure 4.

topic was quite extensive (See Appendix A) and ended up yielding a diagram (Figure 5), showing the process that occurs. As this diagram attempts to illustrate, the heart, soul, and mind also become involved in the relationship with joy, but the soul still determines whether this relationship will flow through the physical body or become trapped there.

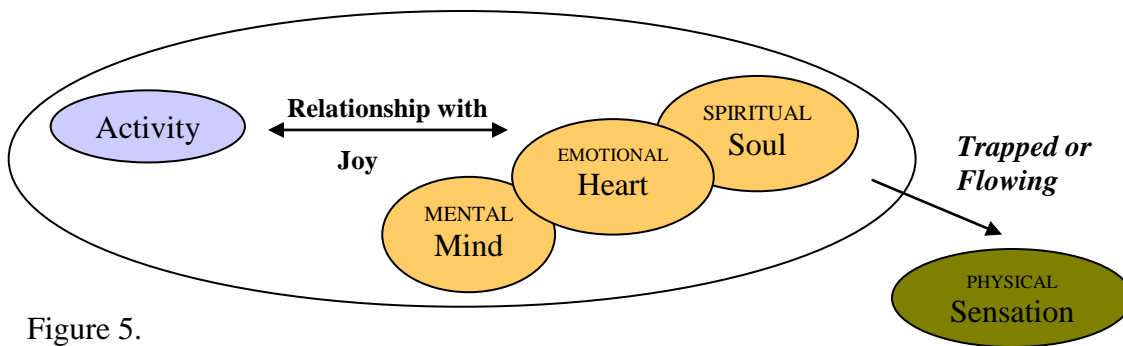


Figure 5.

These journal entries and the associated artwork and diagram, allow an increased understanding of the aspects involved within a relationship that may either flow through us or become trapped. Furthermore, with the realization of joy existing within the breath, I could feel the ease of identifying joyful versus non-joyful relationships. Finally, with the acknowledgment of the connection of joy to the breath and the soul, I was able to see potential for working with the awakening of joy on different spiritual levels.

### **Shamanism and Spiritual Practice**

The final piece of my question was, of course, to investigate the meaning of awakening joy with regard to my shamanic path. With respect to this, part of my inquiry led me to ask what it means to be a walrus spirit, which is my main power animal, who awakens joy on a shamanic path. As I journaled on this, I said:

Able to use sensory information that comes in connection with another person. Interacting with the joyful entity or the non-joyful part to find the bridge towards transforming it. Feeling the entire presence of a person and narrowing in on what doesn't feel congruent. Honing in on the body language when a person speaks, creates art, moves, or is silent.

Within this entry, the important characteristic seems to be that of using sensory observation to evaluate incongruencies and to seek bridges or pathways for transformation. In fact, within my dialogs, my soul (Table 9) and my adolescent (Table 11) bring up using shamanism for locating the truth within the spirit. Additionally, my child (Table 10) and my adult (Table 12) bring in the need to use spiritual guidance as a source for deciphering what aspects to work on. Furthermore, my soul (Table 9) also talks of needing to find ways of opening up new pathways that are in alignment with the soul's intention.

Surrounding these suggestions, my soul (Table 9) also emphasizes the need to follow a pace that is appropriate to the soul being worked with. Additionally, my child (Table 10)



introduces the need to be playful, allowing balance, meaning, and grace to flow within the transformations of life. Together these ideas reinforce the need to stay present with the soul’s intention and to provide appropriate assistance with that regard.

<b>Soul Dialog – Shamanic Path</b>	
<i>Soul, we’ve talked about awakening joy some, but can you tell me more specifically the meaning of awakening joy with regard to my shamanic path?</i>	Your path is about finding ways to open new pathways within a person’s life. The shamanism will be a strong source of guidance for you, but be careful not to force people to go too fast, faster than their soul intends for this life and for their processes.

Table 9.

<b>Child Dialog – Shamanic Path</b>	
<i>Ok, then what does it mean to awaken joy with regard to my shamanic path?</i>	Playfulness and purpose to move life into its natural balance, making a person’s path meaningful and more gracious and enabling the flow of life rather than dramatic jarring events.
<i>What about dramatic jarring events that are meant to be of ones path?</i>	You will need to decipher the ways that you work with someone in a non-biased regard as a partner on their path, choosing which blockages to work with when in accordance with your spiritual helpers.

Table 10.

<b>Adolescent Dialog – Shamanic Path</b>	
<i>Do you have anything to offer with regard to awakening joy and my shamanic path?</i>	Your path of shamanism is a tool for finding the truth within a person’s spirit, which is in denial about the non-joyful parts that they are carrying than need transformation.

Table 11.

<b>Adult Dialog – Shamanic Path</b>	
<i>Adult part of me, what can you tell me about the meaning of awakening joy with regard to my shamanic path?</i>	It is not your job to make everyone happy and free from suffering, but it is your job to be present with those desiring this path for it is not for you to judge another person’s chosen experience for their lifetime. Only they know why they have come and what they want to experience in this world. So, be present and prepared to find a pathway when asked to do so.

Table 12.

But, as I was attending my question, I also came across Cowan (1996) saying that “at the root of disease, illness, accidents, and general misfortune is the loss of one’s spiritual power, and at the root of shamanic healing procedures is the reunion with spiritual power” (pp. 8-9). This

statement intrigued me enough to question myself in dialog about the meaning of awakening joy in relation to spiritual practice. The result here (Table 13) indicates that spiritual practice allows the connection with the soul, an entity which preceding data has suggested is in control of whether a relationship flows through the body or gets trapped within it. The lack of spiritual practice, therefore, can cause a person to be disconnected from the guidance that the soul is providing with regard to the relationships being trapped within the body, causing confusion about how to transform them.

<b>Self Dialog – Spiritual Practice</b>	
<i>So, what does it mean to awaken joy in relation to spiritual practice?</i>	Spiritual practice is a source of guidance and connection with your soul. Joy will be lacking if you are not connected and can't find meaning for your life. Spiritual connection lets you remember why you decided to come and what you wanted to accomplish and learn while you are here. If you don't have this connection, then you are lost.

Table 13.

From this discussion, it becomes clear that awakening joy on my shamanic path will include the aspects of observing, creating pathways, engaging spiritual guidance, and bringing people back into their spiritual power. But, it also sounds like I need to do this in a joyful way. That is, I need to do it lightly, playfully, and in accord with my own soul's intention.

**Concluding Discussion**

As I began asking my question about the meaning of awakening joy with regard to my shamanic path, I already felt the relationship between being on the wrong path and a lack of joy. I wasn't sure, however, about how this related to shamanism. But, Mehl (1988) sums this up quite nicely for me in saying that:

Healing involves returning the clients to the path of their own lives. When we walk too far afield from our own true nature, illness arises as an alarm that we must get back onto our own path of destiny. Healing produces that return. The body is wonderfully wise. It reacts immediately when we stray from our path. It is modern culture that has taught us to

ignore our body. Shamanic treatment requires listening to the unique wisdom of each individual body, not blindly following rules made by the mind (p. 137).

Combining the information from Mehl's statement and the information I gained within my inquiry, I now see my intended path regarding the use of shamanism in relation to awakening joy. Thus, for myself and those I will work with, awakening joy on my shamanic path means: 1) creating the appropriate space that will allow connection and transformation, 2) connecting at the heart level to obtain information and allow healing, 3) using the breath to understand the existence or absence of joy, 4) using shamanic practices for information gathering on a sensory and spiritual level, 5) using shamanic practices to find alternative pathways for transformation and to determine which of these pathways can be opened in accordance with the soul's intention, and 6) assisting with the development of spiritual practices that enhance soul connection.

**References**

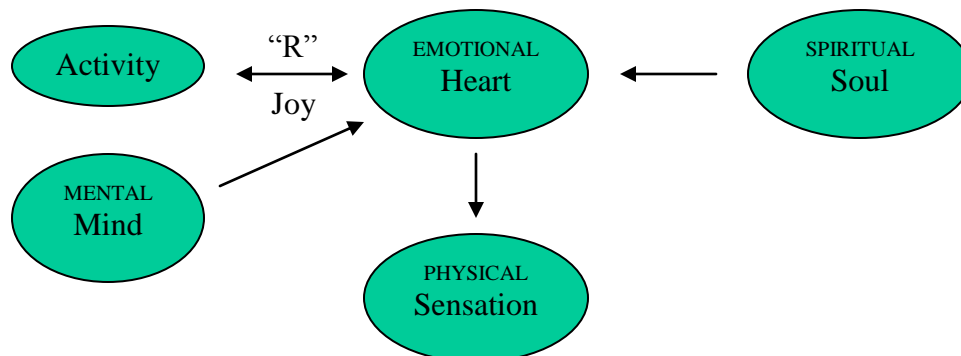
Cowan, T. (1996). Shamanism as a spiritual practice for daily life. Berkeley: Crossing Press.

Mehl, L. E. (1988). "Modern shamanism: Integration of biomedicine with traditional world views." In G. Doore (Ed.), Shaman's path: Healing, personal growth and empowerment (pp 127-138). Boston: Shambhala.

## Appendix A

How does awakening joy relate to maintaining balance?

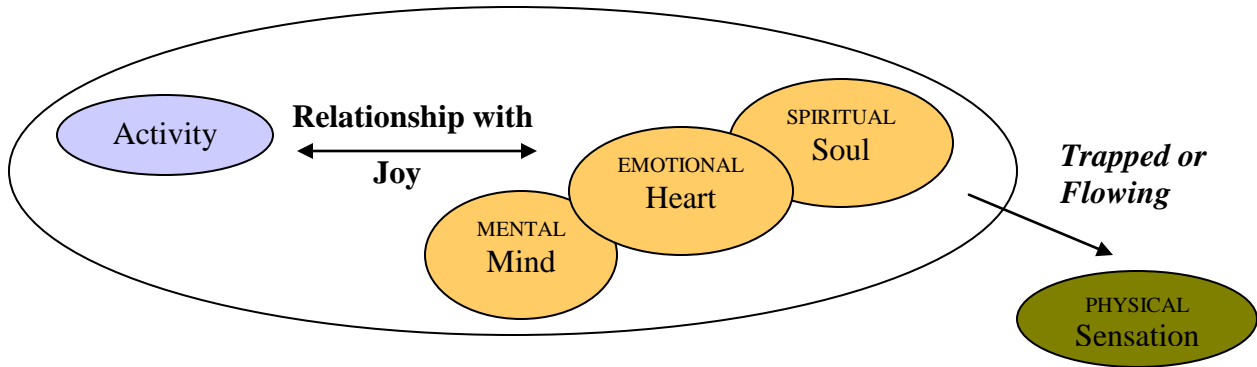
- It gives information about which activities allow the flow of joy through the body and through ones life. If the activity is not in ones highest interest for maintaining balance, then the slightest indicator will be held in the body giving information about the decision to do on thing or another. However, this requires attendance to the sensations within the body and having a sense of the meaning of those sensations, knowing when the signal is being given that a particular activity is not in alignment with one's highest interest. The body will tell when listened to.
- Highest interest activities allow the flow of joy? Joy is then interacting with our heart (or soul) as it passes through us? We create a relationship with joy as we encounter our thoughts about an activity. Parts of us interacting with the imagined activity. So what parts of us go into that relationship? The soul gives information and direction with regard to a person's life path or purpose while the heart evaluates the resulting relationship and sends messages to appropriate parts of the body (relays sensations or sends the signals that create bodily sensation). The "R" relationship representing joy and the expression of joy = connection with something which is initialing neutral until mental, emotional, and spiritual aspects of the individual are applied.



- If joy is just connection or relationship, then its is just an energy that holds the space for creative expression. It is the energetic existence of the imagination. So, awakening joy is allowing it to flow. That is to create the relationship allowing the message to be sent to the body and then leave. Joy is not meant to be held. The relationship between the heart and the activity is not meant to be held. If it is the energy of joy is trapped and cannot flow. It is trapped by the conditions that surround it, including the emotions and the associated activity which the heart then stores in the body (this relationship) without connecting with the soul and the mind. Every time this activity happens I get the same result so I don't need information from the soul and the mind. Ok for shaming activities, but what about the things that gel with us. Just sends the signal. What tells the heart to hold the relationship. The soul tells the heart to hold

certain relationships for our learning that need to be worked through before they can be released of flow from us, so the trapped joy has emotion, soul, and mind aspects.

- But joy is always present except when it gets encased and held in the body



- If the soul decides to trap joy and the soul is representative of the spiritual realm, then working with someone on the spiritual realm seems pertinent to awakening joy or getting the soul to provide information that allows the release of trapped joy. So, how does this relate back to shaming or shame being stored or creating the trapped joy? Shame is the resulting emotion that triggers the soul to trap the joy. So, working with the soul about what needs to be learned from the shameful relationship is also pertinent to awakening joy.