



Healing Trauma with Shamanism

Guest: Alberto Villoldo

Alex Howard So, welcome everyone to this session where I am really happy to be talking with Alberto Villoldo. And we're going to be looking at trauma from a perspective of, well a shamanic perspective and an energetic perspective. And I think this is a really important piece of the trauma jigsaw and I'm particularly interested to get into some of Alberto's personal background stories of fascinating life lived, going very deeply into these areas.

Just to give Alberto's professional bio for anyone that's not familiar. Alberto Villoldo is a medical anthropologist, psychologist and shaman who has studied the spiritual practices of the Amazon and the Andes for more than 30 years. While at San Francisco State University he founded the Biological Self-regulation Laboratory to study how the mind creates psychosomatic health and disease. Founder of the Four Winds Society, he instructs individuals throughout the world in the practice of energy medicine.

Dr. Villoldo has written numerous bestselling books, including *Power Up Your Brain: The Neuroscience of Enlightenment*; *Shaman, Healer, Sage* and the Wall Street Journal bestseller *One Spirit Medicine*. Alberto, thank you so much for joining me today.

Alberto Villoldo Thank you, Alex. Great to be with you. Great topic, one of my favorite subjects.

Alex Howard Fantastic. Well, I'd love to just start a little bit with your story. And I was struck in some of the research I was doing that you were the youngest clinical professor of psychology at San Francisco State University before you went off on a big adventure. So tell us what initiated that and how that came about?

Alberto Villoldo Well, back in those days, I was in the biology department and we were studying basically the brain. My laboratory was in the brain section in the biology department, which is the part of the building that nobody wanted to be in because it smelled so terrible. In academia, you're always struggling to find laboratory space, but this is the only space I could find and I had about 200 brains in formaldehyde all around me. Which was great, if I ever needed a second opinion, I could turn to anyone of these.

But we were studying to see if we could create psychosomatic health, because we knew we could create psychosomatic disease and we became experts in psychosomatic disease at the age of 6. When we didn't want to go to school that day, we could develop the symptoms of Ebola in 20 minutes and then the school bus would go by and we'd be ready to play again. But how do we create it? How do we use the mind to heal and not just to create disease?

And after a few years of study, I shut down my lab and I decided to go to the Amazon to work with the shamans, with the medicine men and women who didn't have technology, who didn't have MRI, or x-rays, or psych medications, but who only had the power to plant medicine and the mind to create health. And I spent the next 25 years studying with the Amazon shamans and eventually becoming one of them. If you do something long enough, you cut wood long enough, you become a carpenter. I studied shamanism long enough that I became adept in the strategies and the techniques of energy medicine.

Alex Howard Must have been fascinating going from a traditional medical psychological perspective to spending time in these different communities. As I was doing some of my reading on your work, I found myself thinking what an incredible adventure that must have been to be going on. What were some of those? Because there obviously would have been significant differences, not just culturally, but particularly attitudes even to things like trauma. What were some of the things that you really noticed perhaps that drew you that were in contrast to what you'd known at that point?

Alberto Villoldo Well, the first thing is that I arrived in the Amazon and I remember walking through the jungle with a medicine woman and her husband. And they said to me, "Alberto, walk across this clearing and see what happens." And I walked across the clearing, took the first step into the jungle, it was full of song with the parrots and the monkeys and the macaw's, and the second step and a third step, everything stopped.

And they came up to me and they said, "you see, they know that you don't belong in the garden. They know you've been kicked out of the garden." And I said, "come on." You know, because we have the only mythology in the West where we were kicked out of the Garden of Eden, nobody else in the planet was kicked out of the garden. They were given the garden to be the stewards and the caretakers of the garden.

So I said, "come on. You know, I'm a white boy from California. But, you know, you can't pull this one over me." I was convinced that the animals were smelling my deodorant, my toothpaste and my sweat, which is very different because of all the chemicals in our food. And there were two people, Indians, cooking their afternoon meal on a spit right by the edge of the river and they were collecting the boa fat, they were cooking a snake. And I asked them if I could have some of the boa fat.

And I stripped down to my shorts and started smearing the boa fat on my body, convinced that the animals were going to smell another boa slithering back into the jungle. And they were looking a little strangely at me and I said, "it's okay, I'm an anthropologist." And I made my way back into the rainforest, butt naked, smeared in boa fat. And the first step, it was full of song, and the second step and the third step, everything's stopped except for about 200 flies that I had around me. And it wasn't until 10 years later that I was able to walk back into the rainforest and have a continuous singing around me.

Alex Howard Wow.

Alberto Villoldo Having them not recognize me as a predator or recognize me as someone who did not belong in nature, who was disconnected from nature. And that required that I heal that original trauma of being kicked out of the garden, of being left. Because not only were we kicked out of the garden, but as we're being kicked out, there is a voice that says to the woman, "and curses the earth because of you woman," and to

the man, the voice says, "and you will take your fruit from the earth, and it will grow thorns and thistles for you." The voice didn't say that the earth will grow mangoes and papayas and pineapples for you, but thorns and thistles.

So right in page one of our mythology we're banished from the garden, and we develop a terrible relationship with the feminine. And we learned there are mothers not going to feed us or support us, Mother Earth. So that was the original trauma that every Westerner carries with them. And in shamanism, you want to focus on healing that original trauma, being left motherless, disconnected from the feminine and cast out of nature. And if you can work on healing this sacred story and making your way back to the garden, tremendous healing follows after that.

Alex Howard There's something about that reconnection with the earth, with nature, which has a very, I'm sure we'll come more into this, but a very grounding and a very healing quality to it. But often the way that we tend to try to deal with that, that original trauma is by disconnection. It's almost like the more that we feel the pain and suffering of that, the faster we go in life, the more we try to use external ways to try and change how we feel.

Alberto Villoldo It's coming back to not only to Mother Nature, but to our own nature. What is your own nature and exploring what your own nature is about instead of trying to dull the pain or run from it. But let me introduce another thought here, the shamans that I met in the Amazon and in the high mountains believed that trauma is not what happened to you. That trauma is the way the story lives within you, not the events. But the way the story of what you believe happened to you continues to live in your soul or in your psyche or in your mind.

So the way to heal trauma is to change the story. Is to create a more original story, one where you derive lesson and medicine and power from it and not just simply wounding. So this is an important concept that trauma is now what happened, but the story that we have wrapped around an event that occurred at some point in the past, a smaller event or a big event.

Alex Howard And we can of course become very attached to those stories, they can become our identity. And I guess the question people are gonna have is, how do we loosen the grip of those stories? How do we begin to start? Or as you put it, how do we begin to find a new story?

Alberto Villoldo Well these stories, I'm going to give you two answers. One is going to be the perspective of brain science and the other one is what the shamans believe. The shamans believe that you can only write a new story by going through a rite of passage. You have to go through an initiation where you change the story from there being a victim to the hero's story, a hero's journey. But to do that, you need to go through a ceremony because the story's scars are embedded in ancient regions in the brain of a very, very ancient brain called the limbic brain, that is the Neanderthal brain. It's the brain of the emotions, lot of emotion around these stories, a lot of trauma. And this is the emotional brain and this is the brain where we have our fight or flight system.

So what happens is that the fight or flight system gets locked into the on position and we cannot reset it. And everything reminds us, reminds us of that original story or we keep superimposing the story in people we meet and situations that we encounter, and we're

trapped in fight or flight. And of course, the third element of fight or flight is freeze. So we're frozen, we can't change it, we can't change the story, we're stuck in the story. So we need to reset fight or flight and curiously, the human brain is the only brain in all of nature that cannot reset the fight or flight system.

And just to take you into a little bit of brain chemistry, if we can go there, fight or flight is basically the pituitary adrenal hypothalamic, the HPA axis. And the fight or flight system produces the stress hormones of adrenalin and cortisol. And it's regulated, the thermostat that regulates fight or flight is the hippocampus. And the hippocampus will tell you if something is dangerous and will send it down to the lower brain so you can fight or run. Or if it's an opportunity and then it'll send it to the higher brain so you can look at the opportunity. And if your thermostat is set very low, everything's going to be very threatening and you're going to be producing cortisol and adrenalin. And the hippocampus is rich in cortisol receptors and it gets damaged and it'll begin to shrink. And as it continues to shrink you'll be triggered into fight or flight so much more rapidly until you live in a state of fear. And then as you get older, you become an angry old person because you're stuck and unable to come up with any new learning, any new responses to situations that life presents to you.

So we have to reset the fight or flight system, and shamans discovered how to do that energetically. We know that we can also reset fight or flight nutritionally. So if, for example, the DHA Rich Foods, the omega 3 fatty acids will help to repair the hippocampus which will repair in about six weeks and then you can reset, fight or flight.

But remember, humans are the only creature that cannot reset the fight or flight system because it's a feed forward system, it's not a feedback system. Every animal in nature is able to have this kind of shaking, quivering response where they will move that fear through their body and reset fight or flight. But humans can't do that, we actually can until about the age of six weeks and then the brain is too complex for us to be able to do that. So that's step number one, rest fight or flight.

Alex Howard And you mentioned about there were two parts of this, coming from the points of view of the brain side. The kind of shamans side or I guess also you mentioned ceremony. I guess that's a piece that particularly in Western culture is very easily neglected or ignored of the importance.

I just think about my own marriage to my wife, and I know a few friends of mine, male friends of mine said the same thing. That it was like, oh, it's just something that, it's like it doesn't really mean anything, being married means something, but the ceremony doesn't mean anything. And actually how enormously powerful that experience was of going through that ceremonial process. So perhaps a little bit about how ceremony supports that process of healing trauma or of not becoming necessarily traumatized in the first place.

Alberto Villoldo Yes. Oh, absolutely. Ceremonies were developed historically from this ancient brain, this ancient limbic brain, this Neanderthal brain needs ceremony in order to change, it needs the rites of passage for becoming a man, manhood or womanhood. And in olden times and until recently, it went through a rite of passage to become a woman, or you went through a rite of passage to become a man, but those initiations are gone, they're lost now. Marriage is such an important rite of passage. If you don't go through the ceremony, then you revert back during crisis to an earlier age.

So if you missed for example, I have a friend of mine that just got married two years ago, I went to his wedding, beautiful wedding ceremony. Now he's convinced that the wedding ceremony means that his wife is not able to mess around with other guys, but that didn't really apply to him. So he did not go through the rite of passage. He did not go from being an individual looking after himself only, to becoming part of a couple that develops a new identity as a couple.

He's still solo and part of him is still wondering, did I marry the right person? And he's got his eye open, maybe he missed out on something, that fear of being left out. So if you don't go through the rite of passage and whenever he has an argument with his wife, he reverts back to being a 13 year old that's pouting. Because he never went to his rite of passage to manhood either. And today many of us men and women, have not gone through these rites of passage and we're not able to enter the next stage in our lives.

Alex Howard And it's interesting. I was just going to say that I think there's something about the importance of those developmental milestones and those ceremonial processes, to support avoiding ending up in a state of trauma or disconnection. But also, you touched on a bit earlier the potential of ceremony as a way of resolving trauma or healing trauma. Perhaps say a little bit about how that can work.

Alberto Villoldo Absolutely, the avoiding of trauma is important because there are incidents that we don't know how to respond to. I was driving on the freeway the other day and this guy cut me off and I was so upset because he startled me. I was angry and I was still upset when I got back home and I was upset two days later. So this can result in an incident. I was going, I should have done this or I should have responded in this way, I'm still reliving it in my mind. What I might have done to come out a hero and not a victim.

Well, what happens during ceremonies is that you recreate, you have a reenactment of a situation. You meet a tiger and this time the tiger doesn't eat you, but you stand face to face with the shaman who's in the tiger's outfit. And you say to the tiger, what have you come to teach me? What power and what lessons do you bring to me? So the ceremony allows the patient or the person to learn the lesson so that they don't need to continue learning from life in that way. So you discover what the gift is and not just how to heal, but how to take this as a step and an invitation to grow, and then you practice forgiving. The elements of a ceremony is that you have to go through a death to who you have been, and a process of birth into who you're becoming, as a result of this experience.

So whenever there's trauma, there's a little part of you that dies that needs to be let go off and there's a new part that you want to birth. And if you don't go through this death and rebirth process, what occurs is soul loss. A part of you that was so hurt, that's not able to remain actually leaves and you lose part of your vital self, of your vital life force. And then the shaman has to do a soul retrieval, the ceremony is not enough. Then you've got to go into an intervention.

Alex Howard Something that comes into my mind as you're speaking, just thinking about the current situation with Coronavirus. I'm thinking about it and it may well be true of other countries. There are some stories, certainly been some stories in Italy, but some also in the U.K., we're taping this at the end of April, of people dying alone in hospitals because they don't want other people to become infected. And so the loved ones are not able to be there in that death process and obviously the trauma person dying alone. But also the impact on the family and also funerals happening without

physical contact with only a few people able to go, or funerals happening many weeks later. And just comes to my mind that the interruption to that normal ceremonial process. I imagine that will be very traumatic with some people.

Alberto Villoldo Yeah, two people can have this exact same experience and one of them is traumatized and the other one is not. Because if you're not traumatized, you create a context in which you can receive a blessing or a gift and it's not only unfinished business. It's done only, I didn't get to say goodbye to mother. I didn't get to tell her how much I loved her. I wish I had asked her to forgive me before she died. Well, what you can do is you can create a ceremony where you write a letter to mother, where you hold her in front of you, or you call on her spirit to be present as you light a candle and as you light some incense.

Remember, it can not only be a mental event if it's all in your head only it's not a ceremony. You need to have fire, you need to have water, you need to have flowers, you need to have beauty around you. And then you summon your mother's spirit and say, Mother, I want you wherever you are. I want you to know how much I have loved you and how much I thank you for all that you brought to me. Even the challenging and difficult times. You come to closure, if you tell her mom, I'm still angry with you because. That's not closure, that's not healing.

Alex Howard You mentioned having an intervention and you mentioned a soul retrieval process. Say a little bit about that and how that would work.

Alberto Villoldo Okay, so we talked about the brain, how the brain could not reset itself the fight or flight system, we end up frozen and then our immune system is frozen. We talked about ceremony that also happened that allows that old brain, that limbic brain to move forward and to learn from the experience.

Now, the intervention, the soul retrieval is an energetic intervention where the shaman will actually journey on your behalf to the past. They will track along your timeline to the past to find out what was it that caused soul loss and what was the story that you took on. And they will find that lost soul part, which is a quanta of energy, of life force that you've lost and coax that soul part to comeback.

And if they are able to find it and coax it to come back, they have to ask the soul part, what must my friend or my patient learn in order to be able to invite you back? How did they have to grow? How did they have to protect you? What gifts do you bring to them? And the soul part might say, well, here's a laundry list of how their life needs to change. I'm not going back, look at his life. He wants to have more fun, she wants to have more intimacy, but doesn't have any time for it.

So they'll come back with a laundry list that the shaman will give the client of things that they need to change to be able to welcome this soul part back. And it's a soul part that is innocent, and there needs to be protected, and that needs to be integrated, and you need to go into dialog with to see how you can welcome the gifts that it brings to you in your life. The technique is where the shaman will actually blow the soul part back into one of the chakras of his patient or her patient. But then the integration has to happen. It's not a magic pill. It's a deep transformation.

Alex Howard It's beautiful. One of the things that comes to my mind as well as your speaking, is the importance of these different ways of working, not just being a cognitive

or an intellectual event. And what it makes me think of is something you touched on a bit earlier around the disconnection from the earth, which is such a prevalent thing in the western way that we tend to live. And it strikes me, thinking back to your own adventure of going from the very intellectual environment, to a very embodied and physical environment. I just wonder where that disconnection from the Earth. What impact that has on the nervous system, but also on our ability to digest and metabolize the shocks and traumas of life?

Alberto Villoldo Well, a couple of things. First, we can talk about this, but I want to go back to the importance of resetting the fight or flight system.

Alex Howard Sure.

Alberto Villoldo That is the key, absolutely the key. The shaman always begins by creating a safe space and helping their patient live in a world that is safe, that is not dangerous. And once you reset, fight or flight, once you get the cortisol and adrenalin production to attenuate, then the brain will begin to produce the bliss molecules.

Once you attenuate the stress molecules the bliss molecules begin to be produced by the higher brain, by the pineal gland. And the pineal gland will take serotonin, which is a neurotransmitter, and tweak it into melatonin every night so that you can sleep. And one of the signs of stress and trauma is that you sleep but you don't rest, you're not able to rest deeply, to renew.

The pineal transform serotonin into melatonin, but once you take the cortisol and the adrenalin out of the equation, it will actually take serotonin and turn it, which is a tryptamine and methylated into dimethyltryptamine, which is a very powerful psychedelic. It is like Ayahuasca. The brain produces the bliss molecules, and this is the higher brain. And the higher brain is the one that understands your connection with nature and with all things. So you cannot experience that reconnection until you switch up to a higher brain.

And then you experience these states of deep communion, it's inevitable. Then meditation comes naturally. People ask me, Alberto, how long do you meditate? I said, well, "I've got it down to about twenty three hours a day." That allows you to find inner peace, but that requires attenuating the stress hormones, resetting the fight or flight system, this is absolutely essential. And then your ceremony has value. Then you're open to a new direction. You can go, Oh, thank you for the teaching, I never, ever want to learn this way again. And this is what my life will be like henceforth from here on.

Alex Howard I find it really interesting the way that your integrating the shamanic way with impacting the neurology and the biology of the system, that really makes sense.

Alberto Villoldo Well, we have the language today, we have the brain science and we have the ancient shamanic medicine, because shamans were masters of working with the energy field. With a luminous energy field that surrounds the physical body and that organizes the body and that actually organizes your experiences in the world as well. The people you're going to meet you interact with to attract to you or to repel.

So they were masters at energy medicine and the energy field this what today we know is the quantum field, that in turn where we're all interconnected with each other through

the field. And the shamans it the aura, they call it the light body. They have many, many mythological names for it because we didn't have quantum physics back then.

Alex Howard And of course, the traumas that we experience are held and stored within that field.

Alberto Villoldo This field is an information field. It's an information field that you keep upgrading through nature, nature is what upgrades the quality of your field. So let's bring it back to our times that we're living in with this coronavirus, the way that the immune system learns is by you getting sick. So you never get the same flu twice. You get sick and then the immune system learns. Well, what if we could upgrade the field so that we did not have to learn by getting sick, but we could download the codes for immunity in our field? That could then provide that immunity, train our immune system through information transfer.

Well, Sharman's believe that this is possible, this is how they survived many of the epidemics of old, but not all, they were decimated by smallpox, for example. When the Europeans came ninety five million Native American people died. Ninety five percent of the population of the Americas because they had no immunity. Because in Europe, if you had smallpox, they would lock you and your family in your house and set all of you on fire, even if you weren't infected.

In the Americas, if you got sick, the shaman and the family would gather around you. Of course, that was the perfect setting for the spread of smallpox that decimated the Americas. But the task here is how do we upgrade the quality of the field so that we can upgrade the quality of our health? How did we clear the imprints of disease or trauma? That in the Amazon they recognized that these are not only individual, but they run in families, they called them generational curses, that are in your information field. How do you clear those so you don't have to manifest heart disease, or manifest any one of a number of conditions that it can express itself as? So you can prevent diseases instead of having to treat disease.

Alex Howard So I think that prevent piece is really important, but even for those that have not been able to prevent. Say, a little bit about how one might work with those generational curses or those, in a sense, traumas or those hereditary or collective traumas that are being held within one's system.

Alberto Villoldo Absolutely. Yeah. There's the collective traumas like we have in our mythology of being cast out of the garden, of not being stewards of the earth. Every other people in the world were given the garden to be their caretakers, the stewards, the earth keepers. And we are the predators, the earth predators. But at the family level there are also traumas that we inherit. So a couple of years back, I woke up one morning and I looked at myself in the mirror and I said, "oh, my God, I've become my father:".

Alex Howard I'm not sure I was supposed to laugh. But I can imagine thinking the same thing myself.

Alberto Villoldo I swore I would never want to be like my father. I was going to raise my kids differently, not the way that I got raised, I was going to be different, I was going to live different, I was going to have different values. So these are generational traumas that are transferred, they were not able to be healed by the previous generation that are now

transferred to the daughter or to the son, from mother to daughter, or father to son in the hopes that maybe we will heal it. So we need to clear those, those who are in the field.

Now, if you go to your doctor, they'll tell you, well, you know, heart disease runs in your family and Alzheimer's and dementia runs in your family. Those are the symptoms, those are the expressions. The source are the stories, the unhealed traumas that we were handed down from one generation to the other.

Because when I was a medical anthropologist in the Amazon, I found that, I was funded in my research by big Swiss pharma originally. They were looking for the big breakthrough cure for Alzheimer's or cancer or heart disease, because the Amazon is nature's pharmacy. And all of the villages that I went to and I went to backwater villages where they had never seen a light skinned person. The kids would come running to me and they would rub my arms to see if the white dirt would rub off.

And I came back empty handed because they had no Alzheimer's, no Parkinson's, zero dementia, no cancer, no heart disease. These are the illnesses of the West. They only run in your family for the last two or three generations. But the generational curses, these traumas that run in families go back centuries, and we have to clear them from the field so we don't somatize it into disease.

Alex Howard Say a bit about some of the process of healing and clearing those traumas. I'm guessing it, we've touched on some of this already, talking about some of the ceremonial peace.

Alberto Villoldo We have a lot of information in our website about things that you can do from diet, to shedding belief systems, to fire ceremonies that you can do at home. Or you could put some of these generational stories into a toothpick and set it on fire in a candle, so that you release it from that ancient brain and then you upgrade your field. You upgrade the quality of your energy field by connecting to nature, by going out for walks in nature, by going to Mother Earth, saying "mother, I know that you want me to be well and I'm recommitting myself to you as your steward, as your caretaker."

So I'll tell you a funny story, I was having dinner and a significant amount of wine with some friends from Harvard. Harvard researchers, and they were saying to me, "Alberto, you've read the science about probiotics haven't you?" Just came out of Harvard. And I go, "Yeah". "You know probiotics are useless, it's a waste of money. Thirty billion dollars Americans spend on probiotics is useless." And I go to my friends and I go, "you know, bad science." They go "What do you mean bad science? This is Harvard." "Yeah, bad science." He said, "What do you mean bad science?" Worst bad design, your probiotics, you've got to remember that the mind of Mother Earth of Gaia is bacterial. The bacteria were here long before we were 2 thousand million years ago. We've only been here for 2 million years and they'll be here long after we're gone. But the mind of Gaia of the planet is bacterial and the planet understands, knows that humans are a parasite that's committing a kind of matricide, we're killing our own mother.

So when you take your probiotics that are bacteria and you've got to talk to them. You've got to tell them, look, put them in a little bit of water for five minutes and tell your probiotics I'm part of the solution. I'm not part of the problem. I'm a steward of the earth. I am coming back to my mother. Because otherwise they might recognize you're just another parasite and try to do you in. So they went out and bought me another glass

of wine and said, "you better." But I totally believe that, that our going back to nature has to start with your gut, with your probiotics, it has to be with your food. I don't bless my food I ask my food to bless me. And it has to be with your attitude, with your own inner nature. Who are you asking those big questions? Who am I? What did I come here to do? How can I serve? How can I become, bring a little more beauty and healing in the earth?

And then Mother Nature will respond to you and will recognize you as one of her children and will not cast you out anymore. She will not grow thorns and thistles for you, but will grow health and healing medicine. And you will have made your way back to the mother and you will have healed that ancient trauma that we have all inherited in the West.

Alex Howard Much of the suffering that we experienced and you just touched on it very beautifully there is at least in part a result of this disconnection from the earth. And this increasing overvaluing of intellectual cognitive ways of approaching things, as opposed to experiential and embodied and felt ways of experiencing things. For somebody that's watching this or listening to this, that perhaps is fully consumed by that kind of disconnection, and is realizing that they need to start to reconnect to Mother Earth, and to start to come more into themselves. Where do you tend to start with people? So someone was new to your work and something is really resonating for them. What are some of the starting points?

Alberto Villoldo Alex, I don't do much work with people that are new to this, because those are the initial baby steps that people will take frequently when they're in crisis. But today we're all in crisis and today we're really all taking baby steps. But I'd begin with the body, I'd say to people, look be mindful of what you eat. Thank the earth through your food, practice gratitude and eat organic, keep natural, restore your flora, balance your bacterial overgrowth through your system so that, for example, North Americans in the United States today we eat about 200 pounds of sugar a year. A hundred years ago, we ate five 5 pounds of sugar per year per person.

Alex Howard Wow.

Alberto Villoldo And I don't know who's eating my chocolate chip cookies, but what happens when you eat that much sugars, is you have a bacterial overgrowth, you have candida taking over your gut and not the good bacteria. So you can be eating good food, but you're not absorbing nutrients. Now, Candida has a purpose. Candida is a yeast, it's not a probiotic, but candida is huge and it will take over, will colonize your gut and it will not let you get nourishment, your mother will not be able to nourish you. So you've got to eliminate the candida and the purpose of candida, everybody should have a small amount of it, is that when you die, it ferments you. It's nature's recycling program, it gets rid of you, but you don't want that to happen a day too soon.

So I start with people saying, restore your gut, eliminate the candida. We have resources in our website of how you can produce your own probiotics that will eliminate candida very quickly, naturally. We know how to do that. Then I tell him now you've got to eliminate limiting beliefs about what you came to do here in this world and what your relationship to the earth is. And then accompany that with walks in nature and then create a ceremony. Take a candle, light a candle and place in the fire all of those limiting beliefs that no longer serve us. Including today we have to place the collective wants in the fire, including greed, including manipulating the earth for our benefit only, including

unsustainable practices, including what we consider wealth. What is real wealth? Put those beliefs in the fire.

And there's a very simple fire ceremony you can do with a candle, a match and a toothpick or two, and blow into a toothpick those parts of you that have died that you need to let go of today. And then light that toothpick and hold it in your hand, don't get burned, and imagine that belief being recycled. And in that way your ancient brain is able to change, but if you don't create ceremony around it, it's going to be a mental practice only. Of course, we know we need to change our lifestyles, we know we need to become more sustainable, there's enough over-thinking happening about this. Now we've got to take it into ceremony and into recommitting ourselves to becoming healer, becoming shamans, modern shamans, caretakers of the earth and of each other.

Alex Howard That's beautiful, Alberto for people that want to find out more about you and your work. What would be the best way for them to do that?

Alberto Villoldo Well, one of the books that I've written is called Grow a New Body. Grow a New Bodies, this is the time, the prophecies of the shamans say that this is the time that a new humanity is appearing on the earth. The old humanity has died and is dying. We're becoming a new human that's called homo illumines, not homo sapiens, not thinking man anymore, but illumine, illuminated man.

So start with the body, grow a new body, create resource of how you can change your body, grow new body through your diet. And by activating systems that we have available to us in our higher brain to create health. Those who visit our website, we have a lot of free resources on how you can repair your gut, it's TheFourWinds.com or GrowANewBody.com and begin with the body, change your body, change your mind and create a sacred journey in your life and this is what we can do today, very quickly.

Alex Howard Fantastic, Alberto Villoldo, thank you so much for your time and your contribution. I really appreciate it.

Alberto Villoldo Thank you, Alex, blessings, thank you for the beautiful work you do, and let's write a new story that we can heal through trauma together.

Alex Howard Thank you. Little bonus resource for people, Alberto's just offered to do a short fire ceremony people can do. So Alberto over to you.

Alberto Villoldo Thank you, so you can do this at home with a candle and a small stick, a toothpick and blow your prayers into it. Whatever it is that you're ready to let go of. Bite off more than you can chew. This is a time that circumstances are inviting us to let go of everything that has not worked, and then hold it as it burns. And this reprograms that ancient brain, that Neanderthal brain that only changes through ceremony. As you are letting go of and burning away all of those beliefs and stories that no longer serve you. And after you let go of those stories, you can get down to the business of writing, not becoming the story but the storyteller, writing a more original tale than your children's children can tell around the fire.