



Creating the Talisman

The Transformative Art of Healing Dolls

A Guided Process Making Art Dolls for Self Awareness, Discovery and Healing

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ONLINE COURSE
April 1, 2016—March 31, 2017

Talisman

Coming into the Light

Purpose: To transform the pain; to move toward positive outcome

A talisman is an object marked with symbols that have meaning for the person who creates it. It's considered an image of power and protection. This doll will be a symbol of your intention, of what is on the other side of the wound, or the Scapegoat. It symbolizes your goal or dream, perhaps what you are ready to give your attention to so you can move forward beyond the pain of the past.

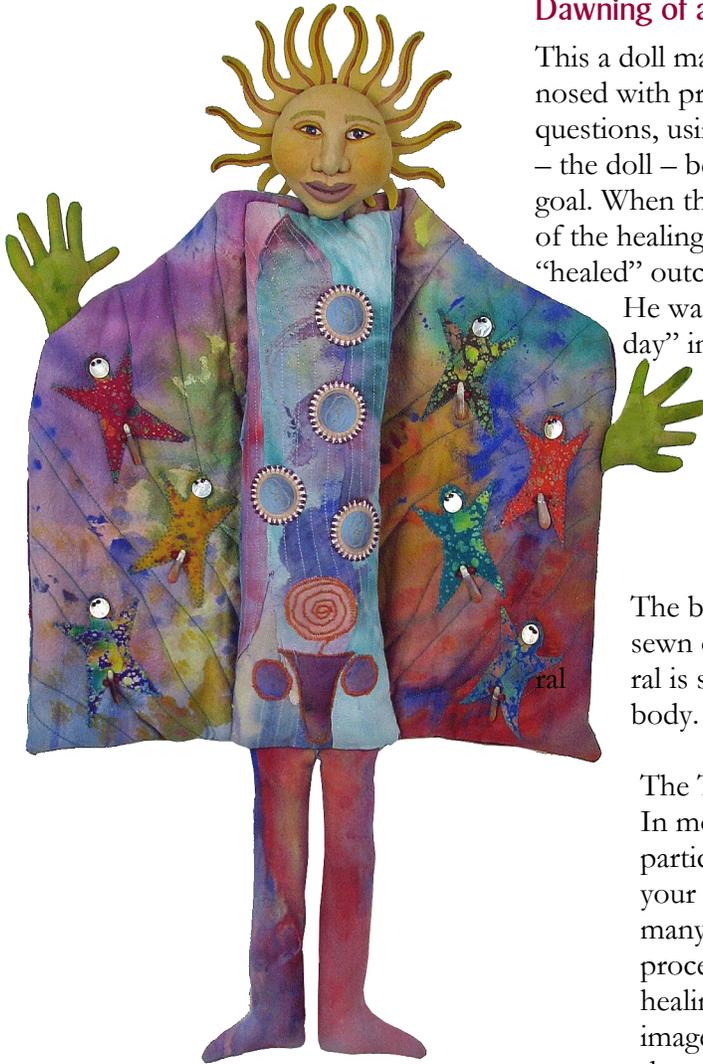
The Talisman represents a more positive and peaceful way of reacting to what the Scapegoat represents. Imagine sending the energy of compassion to your Scapegoat. Perhaps you would begin a different relationship with it. In my creative journey game, a healing process where participants create symbolic board games and small dolls that are game pieces, the Talisman represents the place in your journey where you claim your reward.

Here are some examples of Talisman themes:

Healing	Change/transformation
Hope	Forgiveness
Where you want to be	Mercy
Health	Grace
Letting go	Learning
Self-love	Spirit
Gratitude	Celebrating a developmental stage
Encouragement	

Once complete, your Talisman will stand as a symbol of this intention, and when witnessed by others, it will gather their creative energies in partnership with your goals. Barbara Ganim calls this stage of the healing process the “re-envisioning.” She says this means you look at the image of the stress-producing emotion—the Scapegoat—and imagine how it would need to change so it would feel better, be less stress producing and more positive. She states, “You can use this transformed image to serve as a guide to help you see new directions or choices.”





Dawning of a New Day Barb Kobe

This a doll made for one of my brothers who was diagnosed with prostate cancer. I asked him to answer the 10 questions, using the answers to design the doll. This symbol – the doll – becomes a healing metaphor for the healing goal. When that person looks at the doll it will remind them of the healing crisis they moved through and the positive “healed” outcome.

He wanted the doll to signify “the dawning of a new day” in his life and “a new compassionate and considerate” person he would become after being healed. He described colors and images that represented exotic places with lots of water and sunshine. So the fabric used on the doll is hand painted with tropical colors and the face represents a shining sun.

The body of the doll has several symbols of T-Cells sewn on it. T-Cells are the cancer killing cells. A spiral is sewn where the prostate is located on the male body. I put this here to represent healing energy.

The Talisman is your totem, a symbol of recovery. In most cases, making this doll creates a shift for participants. The Talisman is powerful, a symbol of your ability to activate your healing response on many levels. The more involved you are with the process of making this doll, the more possibility for healing and reaching your goal. You will unravel the images and symbols of your healing intention as they come to you, placing your wishes and desires upon the doll. Your feelings of pain, unearthed during the creation of the Scapegoat, will dissipate, and new feelings of hope, peace and creative celebration will emerge.

This man had prostate surgery and healed. He is one of the most compassionate and considerate people I know. He visits colorful, exotic places near water and lives where the sun shines almost every day.

Dr. Carl Simonton, an oncologist who specialized in mind-body connectedness for cancer treatment, discovered that patients who focused on what they did *not* want were not as successful in reaching their healing goals. In this same vein, you want your Talisman to represent a symbol or energy capable of eliminating what is blocking you, so you can focus on what you *do* want.

You want to make this doll more powerful than the Scapegoat. Many times, forgiveness enters into the process between the Scapegoat and the Talisman. When you made the Scapegoat, a big load of resentment and anger may have come to the surface. The Talisman allows you to forgive these feelings. You may even want to make a small forgiveness doll or shrine in addition to the Talisman. This would be as if you were saying good-bye to the Scapegoat. The Loving Kindness may serve this purpose. You might consider making a Loving Kindness and Forgiveness doll.



Belinda's Talisman - Grace

On her chest is a dove and a scrap of lace from my mother's wedding dress, and an image of a child on her hip. The dove

Brenda describes her experience of making the Talisman doll.

I am completing my Talisman. It was difficult getting started with her; embracing my shadow was a very difficult process for me. One of the things I am finding interesting is that in making the Talisman I find myself more accepting of the Scapegoat/Shadow. For some time, after completing her (Scapegoat/Shadow), I didn't want it in my home. I felt a need to burn or destroy it. I no longer have that need.

I resisted working on Talisman because I didn't know where to go with it at first. Her name is Grace, because that is what I have learned and have gained. I feel washed in Grace—my own and others'. And I am able to feel more gracious toward others. Grace, although I cannot define it in words to you, is overwhelmingly healing. It is like a soft shower, a soft warm shower followed by a warm towel. Grace came out of the "doll a day" suggestion. After working on Scapegoat/Shadow, I was exhausted and didn't really quite know where I was going. I had a lot of conversations about her—with my witness, my husband, and my therapist. One of the things that came out of those discussions was that if I could not hold/accept that part of me, could I ever accept that in others? WOW!! Light bulb!!

I let that churn while I worked on doll heads in polymer, not sure of what I was doing or where I was going. I cut felt and tried different things, and then one day Grace spoke to me. It was pretty darn amazing.

As I continued to work on Grace I began to think quite a bit about my mother. My mother and my mother's mother were both very traditional religious women (although I am not). This was always a source of contention for us. The Virgin Mary was a woman of great significance for both of them. I realized that Grace (my Grace) had Madonna like qualities. So I allowed her to take that form. I let her be.

I love that the three of us have come together in Grace who resembles so much their Madonna. I know that they can appreciate the irony and humor of it and that they too have been a part of this washing, this healing. So it comes to this—that my healing has to do with the three of us and our relationship. Babies really do need to be with their mothers.

Here's my story of making a Talisman. A friend of mine was asked by her friend, a woman with ovarian cancer, to have a healing doll made by Barb Kobe. I asked what would this doll represent. The woman with cancer said, "New Beginnings". I made her a doll called *Winter Solstice* (to the left). This is a time of the year that acknowledges that there is love, hope, and healing in the world as long as you make the space and time for it. It is the promise of the future. There is magic to this sacred time...take time and believe.



Meaning of the Symbols

- Halo – communication with self
- Holly – blessing for the new year
- Pine Tree – prosperity, magic and growth Talisman of prosperity, anchors the blessing
- Silver Spirals – Moon energy – healing energy
- Sun and Moon – passive and active forces of nature
- She holds small sticks symbolizing connection with Mother Earth. She has symbols on her abdomen of the ovaries and uterus that reflect light inviting focus and prayer.

The woman who requested the doll passed the day before the doll was ready for delivery. The doll is now displayed at the hospice she was in when she died.

Madisyn Taylor writes about talisman, from www.dailyom.com.

“For millennia, mankind has found peace and solace in objects of significance. When cleansed and consecrated through ritual, such objects - be they gems, amulets, herbs, or written words - become talismans. A talisman is any item imbued with a specific power by its bearer to serve a specific intention. Ancient Egyptians used massive stone tablets as healing talismans while the Greeks and Romans used lead talismans to communicate with the spirit realm. Traditionally, a talisman acts to anchor energy in the physical plane. That energy may be protective in nature or may be intended to draw abundance, wealth, or a wide variety of blessings to its user. Today, a talisman may be made of wood, metal, paper, stone, or natural elements such as plants. Often, talismans are small enough to be easily worn or carried, and they may be marked with words or symbols that the talisman’s owner deems meaningful.



Gena's Talisman Journal pages

Creating and owning a talisman can reassure you and also serve to aide you in attracting what you want in life. You may use your talisman to help you attain health, security, or good luck. Or you may simply want to carry an object with you that will remind you of your search for soulful tranquility. In order to create a talisman, you must first determine its physical properties. This can be as innocuous as a strip of paper bearing the word “Love” and carried in a wooden box or cloth sack. You may prefer a more visible talisman, such as a metal amulet or a gemstone worn as jewelry. Before your object becomes a talisman, however, it must be charged. This can be done by cleansing the object with water or with incense and holding a ritual of your own making. Or, you can leave the object in moonlight or sunlight or bury it in the earth for a time. To preserve its effectiveness, talismans should be reconse-
crated regularly.



Gena's Talisman Doll

Almost any object can be transformed into a talisman of protection, good fortune, health, love, or serenity. It may be strung on a cord and hung around the neck, worn on a belt, or carried in a purse or pocket. But the physical properties of the talisman are not as important as the intention of its bearer. If you are grounded in your desires, your talisman will give you a focal point that you can concentrate on to affirm your intention and help you achieve your goals. “

Most of what she says makes sense to me. Can you see how a healing doll can serve as a Talisman?

Would you create a ritual “bless” your Talisman doll?



Patty's drawing of Talisman and doll



Sue's Talisman



Growing Toward the Light Barb Kobe



Collecting Her Blessings Barb Kobe (right)

Healing Doll Muse—Talisman



CREATIVE ACTION

*Do a mind map, writing the word *Talisman* in the center of the page, then write words or draw images that come to you when you think about your *Talisman*. Write your original intention on the map. Maybe your intention has changed since first you wrote it. Write the new or revised intention statement on the map.*

Draw or collect images from magazines, then collage talisman images and symbols. Choose one that most resonates with you. Don't spend too much time on this. Usually the first image you thought of is the best.

What images and symbols will she/he be holding and wearing?

IMAGES that may be added to or incorporated in a TALISMAN

- Animals, Power Animals
- Rocks, crystals, items from nature
- Angel images
- Sacred figures like a saint, person from a holy book —Buddha, Tara, Kwan Yin
- Jewelry
- Religious medals, cards
- Something that has a certain colors, scents, symbols, pattern, words

TALISMANS CAN BE A:

- A three-dimensional doll
- A paper doll
- A purchased image from a store, thrift store, etc.
- A mixed media figure
- A photograph

Make your talisman doll now.





Linda's Talisman

Linda's Talisman

I decided that the doll I wanted to make was to show me in the arms of God, being held. I wanted the face to show serenity, the feeling of arrival (mine). The body is made out of sunflower batik material and it is just a rough representation of a torso, head and arms. In the arms (crossed upon the chest) is a heart with bead embroidery on it. The heart is me. I played around with the arms a bit, I wanted the arms to be firm but relaxed and not clutching or holding (as in I can't escape) but hugging...resting. On the bottom of the torso hangs letter beads that are the words I wanted to go with this picture. The first is *safe*, the next is *heard*, followed by *cherished*, *loved* and finally *home*.

I have come to see this process as my "journey" home. Not the home I grew up in, but the home I needed as a child and still need as an adult. I have recognized that the story of the Odyssey resonates with me very strongly, I have monsters to fight and a destination to arrive at. My husband pointed out that on the bracelet I wear has the name Athena printed on it. I wasn't even aware of this and I believe that it is no coincidence that my guardian doll that I made is called Athena too.



Linda's Guardian, Athena



Talismans and Spirit Dolls by Sharon Riley

www.whisperofspirit.com

<http://joyfulnessence.weebly.com/blog/sharon-riley-whisper-of-spiritcom>



Lisa's Talisman

I feel this is a watershed moment for me as I share with you my Talisman doll who has been two years in incubation. I think of all the dolls she has been the most challenging yet most rewarding. As Barb has said many times, the Talisman is so because you are asking for what you really want, and how many of us have done that so easily??

This doll has taught me many things, including strength (how to manipulate wire, testing my "mettle"), persistence (it's ok not to finish a creation in one or two sittings), independence (how do I stand on my own two feet? physically, emotionally, spiritually), playfulness and the true meaning of power. She possesses original medicine; personal power that is not duplicated anywhere else on the planet. She is in her medicine and is able to bring healing to mother nature and all her creatures.

An ode to the earth mother goddess:

She stands as tall as a tree,
Feet firmly planted,
grounded and alert
connecting heaven with earth
she has panoramic vision
sees with the eyes of the spirit
what needs to be done to bring healing to this
place.
Her gift, her medicine
is the yellow bird of creativity
held in her right hand ready to fly
and the green bird, the mindful witness
of all that is.
Clothed in soft bark
that grows and sheds
continually
her flexible, instinctual protection.
Her power is her dignity and self worth
which radiates from her centre
Heart open to the world,
she is the scapegoat transformed.

<https://lisafam.wordpress.com/>



This prayer from Australian aboriginal elder Betty Pike was shared with me, as I was creating her, and I would like to share it with you;-

"To all who walk this land,
May you stand as tall as a tree
Be gentle as the morning mist
As strong as the earth under your feet
May the warmth of the campfire be in you
And may the Creator Spirit always watch over
you".



Tamara's Healing Doll Story

Using SoulCollage© Cards with Healing Doll Making

Intention: To heal areas of my body that have caused me discomfort/pain chronically to include my anxiety, sinusitis, chest tightness, acid reflux, pain in my ribs and solar plexus area, jaw tightness, and muscle tension, pain, and/or heaviness in my neck, shoulders, legs and feet.



Grandma Mable

Tamara was moved to create a tender, loving, supportive Grandmother energy who would always have her back and who loved her unconditionally. She had created several SoulCollage® and paper dolls with this energy and even named a “Council of Grandmothers” to include Grandma Madge, Grandma Millie, Grandma May, and Grandma Mable, each with different life stories and energies. This doll has energies of Mable and Millie.

She used the body of a stuffed snowman that she used when she had taught baby sign language. First, she cut off the snowman's head. The center of the body was made from a slinky and was hollow, so she added a plastic heart with a “diamond” and a plastic Mardi Gras King Cake baby to the inside. This symbolized the Grandma Guardian's big heartedness and her unconditional loving of as well as Tamara's connec-

tion to her “Inner Child”. She covered the doll's body with a doily, added a rose earring, sculpted the face out of clay, painted it, added grey yarn curls, make-up, and pearl earrings, and put a doily hat on her head as well as wire glasses on her face.

Masked Warrior

This guardian is a fierce masculine protector that Tamara created out of a clay mask that was placed on a doll form on a stand. She added a robe made out of an old shirt, an owl ring for an amulet, and created a lance with a stick, a flicker feather, a seashell necklace, and glass piece. The masked warrior is filled with mysterious medicine man energy and is unnamed.





The Scapegoat

Tamera started with an extremely heavy rock and added a face created from a necklace. She painted a big, fake, red smile over the warrior's grimace, and added prickly balls (from trees in Mexico) to represent her arms/hands and legs/feet-areas of chronic tension. She put a handcuff bracelet around the neck, added a prickly ball on it's head to symbolize her irrational beliefs.

There is a black "snake-like" object at the belly area...something Tamara found on the ground at a Rosh Hashanah celebration in the mountain years ago. She painted a red esophagus in the shape of an inverted tear and added a heart-shaped rock, put red tears on it with a marker and then glued a series of yarn "cords" all over the body, mostly emanating from the head and heart. These "cords" represent "dread locks" (notice the spelling-it is intentional). Until I added them, I thought my Scapegoat was ugly and hard to look at, after that she looked infinitely cooler but still foreboding.

She placed a green sack of heavy rocks on her back, each representing a burden that I have carried. She called this her "baggage" or her "S" cape. She felt that releasing them was her only avenue of escape. She then placed "Bertha" on a stack of dark shadow SoulCollage® cards that I have been creating since 2007.also felt moved to create.



The Talisman - Sienna Ryann

Years ago Tamara chose this name to represent my highest). She found a wooden, drawing model form to which I added a clay face with paint and glitter, a ribbon for her head, a crystal costume jewelry earring she inherited from my Great-Great Aunt to symbolize her heart, a feather skirt, a cape created out of an orange cloth napkin and a "mantle" that is beaded and was a necklace. She placed a metal butterfly ring around her neck so that she has butterfly wings at the base of her neck/top of her back in the area of her fifth chakra (throat-where her inner voice emanates). She is holding a metallic orange yarn thread to represent the new stories she is spinning as she claims her wholeness and restores her Soul Essence. She then placed 50 hand-made orange and purple cranes of peace (origami)

at her feet. She spray painted the form copper and added glitter to the bottom. There is a small blue charm with the word "Acceptance" under the feather skirt. Tamara's chosen word for 2014 was acceptance, and now my Talisman has a belly filled with it!



The Inner Healer - “Anam Cara”....Soul Friend in Gaelic

Tamara’s Inner Healer’s base was going to be a blue vase; however, she decided to use a pillar candle instead that would symbolizes her inner light. She added other “holding energy” touchstones within the candle for including a metal charm with the word create, a heart rock, a sea shell, a crystal, a feather, a green and crystal marble, a clay moon face, a metal sun, a game token, and a pink button (to represent ancestral wisdom-it belonged to my great-great aunt). She used an old curtain from my daughter’s bedroom with a blue ribbon to create her robe and hood. She molded her face with a clay mold and added extra clay to carve spirals into with an old earring (which she attached to the right side with a peacock feather). For Tamara, this balances the right side by adding feminine energy. She painted her face bronze metallic and purple and added lime green glitter. She found a small, hand-beaded purse at the thrift store that had small crystals inside, so she added that to her shoulder. Then she placed a lime green butterfly (for vibrancy, vitality, and growth) on her forehead.



Tamara’s Healing Doll Story Process

When I look back at the SoulCollage® cards I have created since 2007, there are many that embody the energies of these four dolls. I also started making paper dolls some years ago and have several of those that depict the guardian, healer, wounded, and talisman/healed energies. I have also created a lot of cards that have different depictions of dolls in general. I started to create “Spirit Dolls” July 1, 2013, and quickly birthed about 20 of them. They came from found objects...mostly natural things like wood, shells, leaves, moss, etc. In looking back on them, I could see that many fit into the four types of medicine dolls that Barb was encouraging us to create. My creative process happens to be a lot of percolating and then a fire storm of chaotic creation that happens fast and furiously. This time was no different. I visited Cat Caracelo in her home, and she shared her medicine dolls (she has taken Barb’s e-course). I came home and birthed these four in four days. They were all created from objects I already owned and repurposed except for the grey yarn used for Grandma Mable’s hair. I created the Scapegoat and Talisman somewhat simultaneously, and then followed with the Guardian and Inner Healer.

Tamara choose to share this ritual:

Guardian Scapegoat Inner Healer Talisman- A Ritual for Release and Claiming

Step One: Create an altar and light a candle to start the ritual.

Step Two: Remove the “S”cape off the Scapegoat, remove the rocks, and throw each of them into a moving body of water while reciting what burden they represent and what I am releasing. When I have released all of the burdens (rocks), I will tie the “S” cape back on. The “S” has transformed from meaning scared, self-obsessed, and self-sacrificing to strong and soft, serene, and sacred self-care.

Step Three: Take a ritual, salt and lavender bath to cleanse the old energies.

Step Four: Look at all of my shadow SoulCollage® cards and select those who can be “retired” to my archived SoulCollage® deck.

Step Five: Build a bonfire and put paper with what I am claiming into the flames to send the energies to the Heavens.

Step Six: Look at the SoulCollage® cards I have created representing a “lightness of being” and “claiming wholeness” and feel each of those energies in my body.

Step Seven: Dance spontaneously creating the energies of my journey and traveling through the Guardian, Scapegoat, Inner Healer, and Talisman embodiments.

Step Eight: Create a piece of art depicting this journey.

Step Nine: Read a writing describing the energies you are claiming.

Step Ten: Write a poem about this stage of my journey.

Step Eleven: Listen to deeply moving music in a meditative state.

Step Twelve: Symbolically act out claiming my mantle, my crown/hood, my crytalline heart, my belly fully of acceptance, and adopt a posture to use as I move forward. Then dance a victory dance....

Aho! Blessed be.....

You can read more about Tamara and see her other healing art at

<http://restoryingmylife.weebly.com/healing-dolls.html>