

Soulcraft Apprenticeship & Initiation Program

Introduction

It's time for the Western world to return to a life rooted in soul and nature. The Soulcraft Apprenticeship and Initiation Program (SAIP) is designed for those ready to make a commitment to learning, co-developing, and utilizing an authentic, contemporary, Western, nature-based path to soul initiation. SAIP provides an in-depth study of soul-encounter practices and skills. This creative learning opportunity is for men and women who have been called by Mystery to serve their people as nature-based underworld guides and who are ready to say YES to their souls — the unique, individual mysteries with which we each were born. We seek trainees who have no doubt the Western world needs to make fundamental shifts in values and way of life and that this can happen most authentically and effectively through the soul-rooted life choices of initiated adults.

SAIP is a professional development opportunity, equivalent in scope and depth to a graduate-school masters program. It is also a contemporary path to personal soul initiation and later stages of growth. You may enroll with any one several intentions, including the desire to guide soul-oriented vision fasts, to lead other forms of soul-encounter programs, to develop a strong foundation in soulcraft work to weave into another professional path, and (only in partnership with one or more of the previous intentions) to deepen your own soul-initiation process. SAIP can be completed at your own pace — with an average range from 5-7 years and 3 years likely being the shortest amount of time required.

SAIP is rooted in an Animas seed vision of where nature-based soul work (beyond psychotherapy) might go over the next 100 years. The vision fast is only one component. The greater need in the Western world is for a full set of developmental processes and initiatory rites, commencing in early childhood, that lead to soulful adulthood and authentic elderhood — a life of joy, service, and fulfillment. We are beginning to see what the nature-based people have always known: in order to reach true adulthood, we must, after proper preparation, embark upon the terrifying beauty of the underworld journey to soul.

SAIP is dedicated to developing modern cultural formats that can help the Western world shift from a patho-adolescent emphasis on material wealth, escapism, and personal security toward a mature orientation of soul-discovery, authentic service to others, and true membership in the natural web of the more-than-human world. These goals go well beyond those of traditional psychotherapy.

Upon enrolling, you create an individualized program of study that includes eight core soulcraft™ practices and four electives. The program also supports you in your own initiation journey as you find and deepen your appreciation of your soul image, story, and powers — and your chosen means for embodying these gifts.

"Soulcraft" is a registered trademark of William B. Plotkin.

Overview

Eligibility Requirements: (Must be met prior to applying for SAIP)

- At least one 3- or 4-day vision fast (need not have been with Animas).
- Nature and the Human Soul Intensive (online or in-person)
- At least three Animas in-person programs from this list: Wild Mind Intensive, Soulcraft Intensive, an Animas Quest (this would fulfill #1 as well), Coming Home to an Animate World, Council and Mirroring Intensive, Soulcentric Dreamwork Intensive, Deep Imagination Intensive, or any Advanced Offering. At least one of those three programs must be an Advanced Offering from the following list: Advanced Soulcraft Intensive, Advanced Quest, a Yearlong Immersion, Sweet Darkness, or a Soulcraft Journey.
- Have read at least two of Bill Plotkin's books.
- A recommendation letter from one of your Animas guides encouraging you to apply for SAIP with a bit about why. (Please note that applications will not be reviewed until a recommendation email is received from an Animas guide.)
- You must have already achieved deep clarity about your mythopoetic identity and be able to express this in your application.

The SAIP objectives are to:

- provide high-level and deep-rooted training in soulcraft skills and practices.
- support trainees in their personal path to soul initiation and later stages of soulcentric growth.
- support the career development of people who are called to guide others toward soul.
- support people working to shift Western culture from one of the most destructive that has ever existed toward one that is rooted in the mysteries of soul and the more-than-human web of nature (Please note that SAIP training does not necessarily lead to employment as an Animas guide.).

Two SAIP Tracks to choose from (choose both if you wish):

- **Soulcentric Vision Fast Guiding:** learning to design and guide vision fasts with a primary emphasis upon the quest as a doorway into the underworld and the encounter with soul — including methods of ecotherapy, but moving beyond them into the facilitation of soul initiation. Please note: *You do not need to be enrolled in SAIP in order to apprentice to the Animas Quest.*
- **Soulcraft Leadership:** learning to design and guide a variety of contemporary, nature-based soul- encounter experiences (retreat center based as well as wilderness-based programs)

SAIP Requirements

All SAIPiens need to complete the following requirements over the average 5-7 year course of the program.

If you believe that you have already achieved full competency through another context of study in any of these areas, you may write a petition requesting credit for that requirement. Send a letter to the SAIP Coordinator describing the work you have done, and the SAIP Coordinator and SAIP Director will take your request into consideration.

Four Required Advanced Intensives:

Soulcentric Dream Intensive

Deep Imagination Intensive

Sweet Darkness Intensive (Shadow, Projections and the Loyal Soldier)

Coming Home to an Animate World: A Way of Ceremony and Conversation Intensive (CH Intensive must be guided by Geneen Marie Haugen)

Two 5-day intensives of SAIPien's choice (not including Soulcraft Intensive, Wild Mind Intensive or Nature and the Human Soul Intensive)

Or

One 5-day intensive of SAIPien's choice (not including SCI, WMI or NATHS)

And one Focused Mentorship (Focused Mentorships can be in the area of NATHS, Self-designed Ceremony, Conversations with the More than Human World, or another topic approved in advance by the SAIP Coordinator. See further information on Mentorship topics below.)

Six Trainings

Soulcentric Dreamwork Training (Soulcentric Dreamwork Intensive is prerequisite)

Deep Imagination Training (Deep Imagination Intensive is prerequisite)

Shadow Training (Sweet Darkness is prerequisite)

Mirror Training

Nature and the Human Soul Training

Wild Mind Training Program Residential (WMTPR)

Two Soulcraft Intensives and/or Soulcraft Journeys and/or Wild Mind Intensives

Annual 5-Day SAIP Residential

The Residentials are designed for the SAIPiens and guides to come together once a year for advanced training and personal soul work, and to create a forum for lively and in-depth questions and conversation around the work of underworld soul initiation guiding. The Residential is an essential opportunity for meeting one another and exploring together all of the soulcraft skills.

All SAIP Residentials are required, with the option of one "free" absence every 4 years (no excuse required). Any other Residential missed would be for emergencies only and must be approved by the SAIP Coordinator in advance.

SAIP Annual Dues will include the program fee for the SAIP Residential. The Residential program fee portion will be forfeited for unapproved absence from the Residential. On years where "free" absence is chosen, the portion of the annual dues designated for the Res will be credited to your account. Unapproved absences may result in suspension from SAIP as well as forfeit of the Res program fee portion of Annual Dues.

2 Advanced Intensive Apprenticeships

These must be for Soulcentric Dreamwork Intensive, Sweet Darkness, Deep Imagination Intensive, Way of Council and Art of Mirroring, Yearlong Immersion (will count for 2 apprenticeships), or Animas Quest.

Animas Quest Apprenticeship will only count for this requirement for SAIPiens not on the Soulcentric Vision Fast Track. Those on the Soulcentric Vision Fast Track will have a requirement to complete 3 Quest Apprenticeships (see below), so for the advanced intensive apprenticeships, they must choose other than quest apprenticeship options.

In the case of apprenticing on 5-day intensives, the SAIPien must have previously completed the intensive and the related training.

Choice of a third Apprenticeship or a Focused Mentorship

Focused Mentorships can be in area of NATHS, Self-designed Ceremony, Conversations with the More than Human World, or another topic approved in advance by the SAIP Coordinator.

If a third Apprenticeship is chosen, it may be for any AVI program other than SCI or WMI as long as the corresponding training, if existent, has been completed. The SAIP Coordinator, SAIP Director and guides of the program to be apprenticed must agree that the SAIPien is ready for the apprenticeship based upon training level achieved and demonstrated. Of 3 apprenticeships, only 1 may be for an Animas Quest.

My Own Way Project

The My Own Way Project is an exploration of how to integrate previous or whole life experiences with the SAIP course of studies and practice and/or how to express your unique and authentic way of being a soul initiation guide in action. This supports you to creatively explore unique forms of soul initiation guiding beyond the models embodied by Animas or variations and extensions thereof. This is to be completed toward the end of your time in SAIP, generally during the final year. Talk with the SAIP Coordinator about your idea for a project and which Animas guide might best mentor you. The MOW Project generally takes from 3 to 6 months to complete. Prior to beginning the MOW Project you must write a brief proposal and receive written approval from the SAIP Coordinator.

Practicum

With the support of a mentor, design a program (or other form) that embodies your own way of being a soul initiation guide and promote, produce, and guide this program/offering. This offering may integrate previous life experiences with what you have learned in the SAIP. The Practicum is to be completed toward the end of your time in SAIP, generally during the final year. Talk with the SAIP Coordinator about your idea for a practicum and which Animas guide might best mentor you. The Practicum generally takes from 3 to 9 months to complete. Prior to beginning the Practicum, you must write a brief proposal and receive written approval from the SAIP Coordinator.

Personal Mentorship with AVI Guide

This Personal Mentorship provides the SAIPien with an Animas guide as mentor who will track the soul initiation and guide development processes throughout the years of training. The mentorship is intended to support the SAIPien in their relationship with their mythopoetic identity and also to provide a model of soulcentric mentoring, which the SAIPien may draw upon as they begin to mentor others. A minimum of four meetings per year is required. The SAIP Coordinator will assist and advise you regarding your choice of mentor. The fee for the Personal Mentorship (four sessions) is included in the SAIP Annual Fee. If additional sessions are desired, the SAIPien will negotiate directly with the mentor.

Annual Online Meeting with SAIP Coordinator to review progress and plan for coming year

Meet with the SAIP Coordinator at least once per year to review your progress and make plans for the year to come. The SAIP Coordinator is also available to support you whenever questions about SAIP arise.

Two-Year Probationary Period and Review Process with SAIP Coordinator to determine SAIPien's "fit" as Soul Initiation Guide as well as general progress through the training

The first two years of SAIP are considered a probationary period during which the SAIPien and guide-trainers are assessing the SAIPien's calling as a Soul Initiation Guide (SIG). Because it is sometimes difficult to know at the beginning of one's time in SAIP whether one's mythopoetic identity (MPI) is truly resonant with soul initiation guiding, the two-year review process is meant to consider the alignment of the MPI with soul initiation guiding. If it appears that a SAIPien's MPI is not deeply aligned with SIGing after two years of training, the SAIP Coordinator and SAIPien will discuss options such as leaving SAIP or remaining in SAIP without the goal of becoming a SIG.

Additional Minimum Requirements for each Individual Track

Soulcentric Vision Fast Guiding Track:

- At least one personal vision fast *during the course* of the SAIP (with Animas, an approved non-Animas quest, or an approved self-guided quest). Approval is obtained from the SAIP Coordinator.
- Three Animas Quest apprenticeships
- Although not required to complete SAIP, we strongly recommend that you do not guide quests until you obtain proficiencies in camping skills (including leave-no-trace, wilderness travel, and survival), wilderness first aid, orienteering, search and rescue, and emergency communications. Animas does not offer comprehensive training programs in these areas, but we are happy to make recommendations.

Soulcraft Leadership Track:

- A total (including requirements completed in general SAIP program) of at least four Soulcraft Intensives, Wild Mind Intensives or Soulcraft Journeys, including at least one Soulcraft Intensive and at least one Soulcraft Journey. The Soulcraft Intensive (SCI) and

Wild Mind Intensive (WMI) are retreat center or car camping-based programs with a set format. In contrast, the Soulcraft Journey (SCJ) is a 7-day backpacking program that has a flexible format. In it, the guide makes customized choices in program content and processes based on weather, environmental situations, and the needs of the participants. The SCI, the WMI and the SCJ offer unique training opportunities for nature-based soul encounter experiences.

- Perform two of the following. The SAIP Coordinator must approve you as ready for these roles. These qualify toward the total of four listed in the first requirement above.
 - Assistant clan leader or clan leader on a Soulcraft Intensive
 - Assistant clan leader or clan leader on a Wild Mind Intensive
 - Apprentice on a Soulcraft Journey

About Focused Mentorships

With the help of the SAIP Coordinator, you select an Animas guide as mentor to help you design and complete an extended, personalized course of study in a focused area. The focused mentorship generally takes from 3-6 months and may include four or more meetings with the mentor.

The SAIPien might choose topics such as the following for a focused mentorship. Choice of study area will depend upon personal interest and needs for best expressing one's mythopoetic identity. These are studies of soulcraft practices designed to cultivate a skill or set of skills new to you and to integrate this into your soul initiation guiding repertoire. These mentorships include a *demonstration* of how you are integrating such soulcraft skills into your guiding.

- ❖ Nature and the Human Soul
- ❖ Conversations with the Wild Others
- ❖ Self-designed Ceremony
- ❖ Trance Dance and Rhythms
- ❖ Soul Poetry
- ❖ Animal Tracking and Nature Observation
- ❖ Signs and Omens
- ❖ Mythology and Storytelling
- ❖ Journal Work
- ❖ Symbols and Sacred Objects
- ❖ Symbolic Artwork
- ❖ Confronting Death
- ❖ Befriending the Dark
- ❖ Wandering in Nature
- ❖ Art of Being Lost
- ❖ Developing a Personal Relationship with Spirit
- ❖ Authentic Movement (or other embodiment practices)

When you are considering a focused mentorship, first contact the SAIP Coordinator, who will support you in choosing an Animas guide as mentor. When you and the SAIP Coordinator

have agreed on a mentor (and the mentor has agreed), you then send the fee to the Animas office.

You must receive advance written approval of any Focused Mentorship from the SAIP Coordinator.

Yearlong Soulcraft Immersion

Participation in a Yearlong Soulcraft Immersion program counts as credit for a Soulcraft Intensive and an Animas Quest.

Apprenticeship on a Yearlong Immersion counts as 2 apprenticeships – one regular and one quest. Or Apprenticeship on a YL Immersion may count as one apprenticeship and one SCI Assistant Clan Leading experience.

SAIP Graduation

SAIP culminates with a recommended celebratory and confirmational vision fast on one of the regularly scheduled Animas Quests, on a special SAIP quest, or on a self-guided quest. Upon graduation, a certificate of completion is awarded.

Leave of Absence

In the event that the demands of life dictate that you need to take a leave of absence from the SAIP program, when you are able to come back into the program you will need to re-apply. This does NOT mean that the programs you had taken previously would be negated. It simply means that together with the SAIP Director and Coordinator, we will re-evaluate what your intentions are, what you are moving forward into, and if the SAIP program and you are still a good match.

Minimum Required Training Components Each Year

1. Attend the annual 5-Day Residential
2. Participate in two Animas Intensives (note that the Yearlong Immersion counts as a Soulcraft Intensive and an Animas Quest) or one Intensive and one Focused Mentorship.
3. Complete any two of the following: Focused Mentorship, Apprenticeship, Assistant Clan Leading or Clan Leading on SCI or WMI, Advanced Training (note that apprenticing on the Yearlong Immersion counts as 2 apprenticeships)

SAIP Program Costs and Discounts

Start Dates

New SAIPiensi will pay a pro-rated annual fee the first year. The annual SAIP fees are \$1265. This includes 4 required personal mentoring sessions with an Animas guide, the SAIP Residential fee and administrative costs.

NOTE: Please let the Program Coordinator – Sage Magdalene, Spider Gateor gatebetweenworlds@gmail.com --know whenever you sign up for a program and when you have completed it, so she can track your progress and help you to stay on course.

Annual Fee:

\$720 Total: \$320 for Sage's work as SAIP Coordinator + \$400 for **four** SAIP mentoring sessions throughout the year.

-OR-

\$1,120 Total: \$320 for Sage's work as SAIP Coordinator + \$800 for **eight** SAIP mentoring sessions throughout the year.

-PLUS-

Yearly SAIP Residential (Approximately \$1400)

Vision Quest Apprenticeships:

1st	\$1000
2nd	\$850
3rd	\$700

*These are the guide fees; there will be an additional, variable logistics fee as well

Optional, Recommended Final Graduating Quest: \$600 for an Animas quest (plus logistics fee)

SAIPiens pay regular program costs for the first 4 programs; this includes any qualified programs completed prior to enrolling in SAIP.

SAIP Discount: After four programs have been completed, all guide fees for Trainings, Intensives, and Animas quests will be discounted 20%.

Please note: SAIP discounts do not apply to:

- Quest Apprenticeships (which are already discounted)
- SAIP Residentials
- Mentorships and Electives
- Special Focus programs, such as *Courting the Muse*
- Retreat Center room and board fees or camping fees

Apprenticeships on Advanced Intensives (including the Year Long Soulcraft Immersion): SAIP trainees receive a **30% discount** of the guide fee.

The **Yearlong Soulcraft Immersion** counts as two programs and no SAIP discounts apply to it.

Scholarships:

Due to a generous donation, we currently (2019 through 2021) have scholarship funds available for SAIPiens. You will be invited to submit a single annual application for desired funds, rather than applying on a program-by-program basis.

How to apply to SAIP

If you have questions, please contact us at 800-451-6327 (in U.S. only) or 970-259-0585, or at soulcraft@animas.org. If you are ready to apply and have met the eligibility requirements, then complete and return the application form available on our [website](#). Upon receipt and review of your application, the SAIP coordinator and/or SAIP director will contact you. Together, if accepted, you will develop a plan of progress.

THE OPENING OF EYES

That day I saw beneath dark clouds the passing light over the water and I heard the voice of the world speak out, I knew then, as I had before life is no passing memory of what has been nor the remaining pages in a great book waiting to be read.

It is the opening of eyes long closed. It is the vision of far off things seen for the silence they hold.

It is the heart after years of secret conversing speaking out loud in the clean air.

It is Moses in the desert fallen to his knees before the lit bush. It is the man throwing away his shoes as if to enter heaven and finding himself astonished, opened at last, fallen in love with solid ground. — David Whyte