From the book *The Shamanic Guide to Death & Dying* by Kristin Madden  
  
The shadow side is part of every human's Self. It is stored within our minds and bodies, and it contains all the characteristics and experiences that we keep hidden from society. Our shadows are all those things we don't want to admit, even to ourselves. This is where our fears, angers, weaknesses, and embarrassments lie. However, this is also where hidden strengths may be found through shamanic shadow work.  
  
When repressed and denied, the shadow side causes us to create external situations that mirror these secrets. The more we try to avoid them, the larger they become and the more often they will smack us in our faces. These external situations are usually experienced as suffering and hardship, but in truth, they can be tremendous opportunities for personal growth and self-knowledge. These are the projected manifestations of our own issues, externalized so that we might have a less personal look at them and hopefully learn from that.  
  
**Through the Shadow**  
  
Purify your energy field and the area where you will be performing this exercise.  
  
Breathe deeply and relax. Allow your breathing to carry you deeper and deeper into relaxation. Tensions and concerns drift away as you exhale. Ask your spirit guides to assist and protect you. Follow your breath into the center of your being.  
  
Deep within your center, you see a dark doorway. Pass through this doorway and into the deep darkness beyond. Become aware of your spirit guides surrounding you as you move deep into the darkness.  
  
You are comfortable within the protection of your guides. You know this is merely the darkness of your own self and it cannot harm you, unless you give it the power to do so.  
  
Images appear out of the darkness and pass you by. Recognize these as images and symbols of your own beliefs and experiences. Watch them without judgment as you move beyond them. Soon all you see is darkness.  
  
Now, you find you are standing on solid ground. Your guides are right there with you standing in absolute darkness. Call forth one image from the darkness. Ask that this be an image that holds a minor amount of discomfort for you and allow it to present itself to you.  
  
Take a good look at this image. Acknowledge this as a part of you that has been denied. Feel yourself become more complete as you integrate this experience. Now take a deep breath and blow all the feelings and judgments you have attached to this thing into a bubble of shadow. Take another deep breath and feel them leave your body as you blow them out into the bubble.  
  
The bubble is filling with light. It is expanding and transforming these attachments. It fills to overflowing with light and pops, releasing these transformed energies back into your center. These are enlightened energies that are now free of their bonds. You may now choose to use this energy as you wish.  
  
Continue this process with gradually more uncomfortable images (you may need to repeat this process with some images more than once).  
  
Be aware of any further communication from your guides. Feel the transformation of this process fully. Be aware of a new sense of strength and wholeness.  
  
Now become more aware of your breathing and allow that to lead you back out through the doorway. Follow your breathing back to your physical body. Thank your guides for their continued guidance and protection and return to normal awareness.