

**DREAMS AS WISDOM ADVISERS AND POWERFUL ALLIES:**  
**WORKING WITH DREAMS USING PROCESSWORK METHODS TO ACHIEVE**  
**CREATIVE FLOW**

A Final Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Diploma Program  
and Master's Degree in Process Work

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## **Abstract**

### **Dreams as Wisdom Advisers and Powerful Allies: Working With Dreams**

#### **Using Processwork Methods to Achieve Creative Flow**

**by**

**Dina Ostrovsky**

This diploma paper demonstrates Processwork philosophy and methods to work with dreams. It shows how dreamwork can be useful for cultivating creativity, developing a creative approach to life, and building a creative career. By describing my personal experiences and sessions with my clients, I show how dreaming can help modern people on their search for life purpose, building successful careers, and balanced relationships. The goal of this paper is to introduce Processwork ideas, basic terms, and methods to TERRApia school students and to the general public who may be interested in the coaching methods of Processwork and TERRApia school. In this paper, I use knowledge acquired during my Master of Processwork study, my experience of leading groups in TERRApia school, and my experience with other methods of personal transformation. I describe why these methods of developing emotional intelligence, adaptability, and creativity are so important in the present time and why Processwork is a great modality for this task. Further, I demonstrate how working with dreams using Processwork methods can help to develop neuroplasticity and ability to respond to the rapid changes of the times we now live in. I believe that when things are changing so rapidly, it is very important for each individual to master the ability to adapt new behaviors, opinions, and ideas into their life, not to just feel, but to embody the energy of change. Only then, instead of suffering, these changes can bring us creative energy, drive, and even pleasure.

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

This diploma paper demonstrates Processwork philosophy and methods to work with dreams. It shows how dreamwork can be useful for cultivating creativity, developing a creative approach to life, and building a creative career. By describing my personal experiences and sessions with my clients, I show how dreaming can help modern people on their search for life purpose, building successful careers, and balanced relationships.

Three years ago I started TERRA pia School of Transformation on the East Coast. I have created a year-long coaching program which is based on Processwork philosophy. This approach can be applied to personal growth, reaching life goals such as bringing more creativity and joy into personal, family, and community life, moving into creative careers, and balancing relationships.

The goal of this paper is to introduce Processwork ideas, basic terms, and methods to TERRA pia school students and to the general public who may be interested in the coaching methods of Processwork and TERRA pia school. In this paper, I use knowledge acquired during my Master of Processwork study, my experience of leading groups in TERRA pia school, and my experience with other methods of personal transformation.

In chapter 2, Processwork and Times of Change, I describe why these methods of developing emotional intelligence, adaptability, and creativity are so important in the present time and why Processwork is a great modality for this task. In chapter 3, Writer's Block, I describe my personal struggles with blockages to creativity, and how I use Processwork to address them. Chapter 4, Dreams as Practical Advisers, contains examples of working with dreams and applying that work to careers. Chapter 5, Childhood Dream and Life Myth, tells about personal mythology, the importance of a personal myth, and its connection with

childhood dreams. Chapter 6, Using a Dream to Help With a Creative Project, shows examples of how dreamwork can be integrated with a goal to move forward with a creative project. Chapter 7, How To Remember Dreams, is about that topic. My conclusion comprises chapter 8.

## **Chapter 2: Processwork and Times of Change**

Processwork, or Process-Oriented Psychology, is a school of psychology, personal development, and conflict facilitation. This school of thought is a descendant of Jungian psychology, and was founded by Arnold Mindell. This school concentrates not on an end goal, but rather on the process of personal transformation. Special attention is given to the direction in which your personal growth is currently headed. Processwork considers any obstacles, challenging relationships, or other troubles as a teacher and guide towards the next step of your personal growth. It not only teaches this idea, but also gives many practical, effective, and down to earth methods to assist in unfolding the underlying dreaming. One of the most effective methods of Processwork psychology is working with dreams and dream-like experiences.

Processwork pays special attention to dreams, and considers that they can show us the direction in which our unique personal evolution is leading us. Working with dreams has helped me master the art of small steps in my personal development. These methods have also helped my students, my clients, and my friends. Processwork does not operate on the idea of a stable state of being. It is based on an idea of constant movement and change ongoing in life. Processwork's approach does not put a limit on personal development. It creates a philosophical base for unlimited possibilities and growth. The process is like the flow of water. It is always moving the person toward new discoveries and/or beyond their boundaries, edges, and limitations.

One of the main ideas in Processwork philosophy is the process, which consists of the primary and secondary processes, the edge and the essence level. The primary process has to do with those states, behavioral patterns, views, styles of communication, and other

experiences, which are more or less known to us and are closer to our self-identity. The edge is that moment when our development and energy flow is stopped by ideas, energetic blockages, or traumatic memories. The secondary process is new unknown territory, where a person becomes more aware of the parts of themselves that are less known, but ready to emerge. This territory is full of untapped resources, where a person can discover new experiences, learn new styles of behavior, communication, and energy flow.

From Processwork's perspective, we are always in the process of going toward a new territory of awareness. At each moment of our life, this movement has a certain vector, just as a river has a certain direction. If this movement of exploration and conscious growth is blocked by limited ideas, memories of past trauma, or lack of experience on how to deal with a new situation, in other words—the edge—we can get stuck for a day, month, year, a decade, or for life.

Processwork has a set of theoretical ideas, and a profound number of practical methods on how to find the vector and direction of our development process, discover the edge, and move on into the unknown territory. In the next chapter we see an example of how we can use Processwork for finding new ways to respond to the ever changing challenges and demands of the world.

Personally, I have been living in a river of constant change for the past 20 years. I was brought into this river by personal troubles with health and relationships. My initial desire was just to feel healthy and not suffer emotionally anymore. I was looking for something to help me.

I studied with several schools that have very different views on how to approach change. The school of Tibetan Buddhism aims to develop a state of being that is beyond

suffering. In this paradigm, you emulate the model of a Buddha state which is beyond physical and emotional changes and troubles. The goal of this school is to reach enlightenment, and this is a huge goal. While working towards that goal, the student still has to deal with the ups and downs of their life, because they cannot maintain a transcendental state of mind all the time. This school does not provide the wisdom of what to do with your life next Monday to resolve the conflict with your boss or lover. I studied with my Buddhist school for 20 years, and will stay with them for the rest of my life. However, I was also looking for something that would teach me how to deal with the smaller troubles of my everyday life. I needed some guidance about how to approach and resolve these unique troubles which occur all the time.

Working with my Buddhist school satisfied me, until a point in my life when I decided to change my career and work with people. I wanted to help people. At this moment I realized that having huge long term-goals is not enough for working with everyday personal problems. I needed a new set of tools, to learn to create change step-by-step, as well as to adapt to each situation and personal story. I needed the wisdom to know what exact steps would work best in every individual situation. Every person is so different—they have their own talents, backgrounds, and ways of thinking. The same steps cannot possibly work for everybody. The school of Processwork psychology gave me the tools I needed to tailor a step-by-step approach for each individual case.

### **Levels of Perception in Processwork Philosophy**

Processwork's methodology has a simple and practical system to approach any individual case. It starts with identifying various levels of reality perception. Consensus reality level is our everyday perception, which is more or less similar for most of humanity. In

consensus reality, things are stable and solid. They are either good for us or bad, and do not change easily.

Dreamland is a territory of ideas, dreams, art, imagination, and mythology. The ideas of dreamland are not stable and can change and mutate with time. Let us say that in a dream, a wolf is chasing me. In the next moment, I can easily change that scene and hunt the wolf instead. Dreamland is not material and exists in the personal and collective imagination, but it does directly shape consensus reality. After I hunt the wolf in my dream, it is much easier for me to go and confront an abusive boss.

Essence level is the place where there are no boundaries in between us; we are all interconnected by the field of consciousness. In various cultures people call this state god, dao, that which cannot be explained, Buddha nature, or rigpa. Arnold Mindell (2010) came up with the term Process Mind. He also suggested the idea that dreams arise from the essence level, then we can catch them in dreamland, and then unfold them and become aware of their energies and resources in consensus reality.

### **Times of Change: Dreamwork as a Great Tool to Develop Adaptability**

Through the last 3 years I led a school of transformation, based on dreams. What I learned from this experience is that many of my students were looking to change their career into a more creative path, or to successfully develop already existing creative careers.

Working with dreams and using other Processwork methods, we achieved a great result— from the 2018 group of 18 students, 14 people changed jobs to something more desired. Some of my students secured jobs in the most famous internet companies, and others now work for movie stars.

This achievement prompted me to research the current changes in society in the area of creative careers and education. I researched the necessity of process-oriented education in the area of emotional intelligence. In this paper, I demonstrate how working with dreams can help to develop creativity, ability to change and to bring new ideas, energies, and/or styles of behaviour.

Before I start to describe working with dreams, I would like to talk a little about specific demands of our present time and why the ability to follow change is so important. We live in a time of rapid change. When I say this to my friends, they sometimes disagree with me—it is always a time of change. There were wars, disasters, and rapid changes in technology, in many parts of our planet throughout all known history. Yes, human history is formed by changes and transformations of various qualities. What is different about our times?

### **Speed of Change**

The speed at which all aspects of human life are changing right now is unprecedented. This fast development of technology jumps to a new level every 5 years. The ability to exchange information around the world has never been as available to people before.

The whole Earth has become very connected. Any idea that comes to someone in China can become available to someone in Russia or the United States within hours.

### **Ability To Access Information**

Any information which has some potential to affect people's lives travels through the internet at the speed of light. Scientific news, politics, and social movements spread around the globe and affect people of various age, education, and social status.

For example, I recently had a session with an 8-year-old and his mom. His mom is my student in TERRA pia school of transformation. The boy was refusing to go to school for several weeks. His mom asked me for a session with her and her son, to help understand his feelings and reasons. During the session, I suggested to the boy to do some roleplay with fairytale animals who should be going to school. The boy loved the roleplay, and he was able to show us the moments when he feels fear and anxiety. The mom and I participated in the roleplay and were happy with our insights. However, to our surprise, at one moment the boy took a piece of paper and drew a schematic of the brain with signals coming through it. He claimed that is what happens with him, and that is why he feels bad. The picture pretty closely resembled a diagram of the brain. This child chose to use a neuroscience example instead of fairy tales to explain his feelings to adults.

Where did he learn this information of how the brain looks? There could be a million sources: the internet, science cartoons, or books. I was quite shocked with his choice of images. A hundred years ago, only the science elite had access to information about the brain's structure, but at this moment an 8-year-old child has access to an unlimited amount of scientific information, and can use it to explain his own process.

### **Changes in Business, Careers, and People's Career Goals**

The huge speed of information exchange, and the possibility to establish stable communication with almost any part of the world, has dramatically changed the idea of profession and career. Forty years ago, when I was a teenager there were certain common ideas about professional careers:

- You study a certain profession in college, and then you use that knowledge for the rest of your life, or at least for a big part of your life.



- If you chose a practical career and study well, you will find a job in some big company and can spend many years there. You will get good experience and move to another job, which requires the same set of skills.
- You do need some good personal qualities to be successful: an ability to present your ideas, be a good communicator, have decent discipline, and some ability to handle stress and avoid conflict. If you have those qualities, you could feel confident in a big organization. Your psychological comfort and safety was established and protected by the hierarchical structure of the company. It meant that strong conflicts and big changes were managed by bosses at the top of the hierarchy.

There was always a creative elite class who were able to sustain and flourish in life by organizing their work around their creative passion. Many of them became role models for the younger generation. However, not many people were able to, or wished to follow this path. With the speed of new technology development, old ideas of career and profession are rapidly dying.

For the last 3 years, I interviewed around 100 young people ages 20-28, who are finishing college or have finished it recently. Most of them have the intention to earn a living by sharing their creativity with the world, in a couple of companies which offer them this possibility, or in their own business. Many of my friends have shifted their careers into a more creative direction using the unlimited possibilities which were given them by the internet. They work with international teams of employees and collaborators.

As an example, my friend Karina runs a company which sells animated advertisements. She runs a five-person team, with three of her employees in Ukraine, and two

in the US. She sells her product to clients in China, Russia, and Poland. Her designer lives in Mexico. Karina needs a lot of psychological maturity to manage this international team. She spends a big chunk of her time and money on conflict facilitation and personal growth training. She reports that being able to create space for the diversity of her employees and clients, leads to her company's success.

TERRA pia school student Julia is a mother of two teen boys. Julia works on Wall Street, and is a middle manager for a big financial company. She is really concerned about the future of college education and a gap between the knowledge which college provides and real world demand. We have successful role models like Steve Jobs and Sergey Brin who did not complete their college education. Big companies like Google, Yahoo, Facebook, and others, recently published a statement that a diploma is no longer a requirement for employment. Based on her observation that technology is changing every 5 years, and that many of the jobs which require a high level of information processing will go to robots, Julia is sure that teaching her boys emotional intelligence and developing their psychological and spiritual levels will ensure their future careers.

I present those stories to demonstrate that in the future, the demand for psychological maturity, creativity and ability to learn, ability to handle inner and outer conflicts, will grow. The education systems of the future will need to respond to it. In this paper, I demonstrate how working with dreams using Processwork methods can help to develop neuroplasticity and ability to respond to these rapid changes. Neuroplasticity can be viewed as a general umbrella term that refers to the brain's ability to modify, change, and adapt both structure and functions, throughout life and in response to experience.

When I look at this picture from an outside point of view, I see that Spaceship Earth is now making a giant turn. As the passengers of this ship, we may more or less notice this changing trajectory, but sooner or later everyone will see that we are traveling through new territory. I believe that when things are changing so rapidly, it is very important for each individual to master the ability to adapt new behaviors, opinions, and ideas into their life, not to just feel, but to embody the energy of change. Only then, instead of suffering, these changes can bring us creative energy, drive, and even pleasure.



### Chapter 3: Writer's Block

Before I start to describe Processwork ideas and my experience in working with dreams, I would like to share some insights on my creative process and my struggle with writer's block. It takes the form of giving birth to creative ideas.

Here is an example of some creative writing. In the accompanying italicized words, I describe altered states which happened around trauma in the writing.

*I have this feeling like I am pregnant all the time. I have all the signs of pregnancy—I am heavy, dreamy, and moody.*

*I am not at childbearing age anymore. I am pregnant with creative ideas. My birth channel connects my dream realm with the magical womb of the Universal mother—the source of creativity. Through dreams, vision,s and inspirations, those ideas shake me and tease me with the richness of their potential. They want to materialize, to become a form and presence here on Earth.*

*The problem is that I am not ready yet. I need to stay pregnant for a while and nurture myself, to build my birth channel muscles and to prepare the space for ideas to go through me and to land on this Earth.*

*So I ask my big plans for programs and future books to wait. I exercise my creative motherhood on small projects. They are scouts for the main army. They test if I can receive them, shape them and nurture them, and give them a material body in this world. I try my best to serve as a welcoming host in this dance with the Universe. My abilities are very limited though—fighting, running away and saying “fuck you” are quite comfortable actions for me, building and maintaining require much more effort.*

*I am challenged with written expression in both languages I speak. I am impatient. I am also not very loyal and try to attend to several of my babies at the same time. But still something happens from time to time. A seminar idea, an exercise, a small article, or a poem goes through. Every time when I am able to give birth to some baby of my creation I feel super proud as a mother. I did it, the baby is here! They are tiny and probably will not have a long life. Most of them are mayflies, which can live only for several hours. However, I am joyfully proud of them, and I hope to shape my creativity birth channel to catch bigger prey.*

### **What Is Writer's Block?**

Three years ago, when I started to contemplate my Processwork diploma paper, I had an idea to extend this diploma paper into a book. I loved this idea. If I write a book, it could help my career and business. TERRA pia school students can benefit from this book to repeat the material which they have learned before, during school seminars. I would also love to educate people from my community and beyond, about Processwork. I would love to share with people my personal views and style, as a guide on the path of change.

I am a good storyteller. I know people like to listen to my journey's stories. I also have the clarity and ability to present knowledge with structured, fun, and creative energy. I have run my school for 3 years, completed 30 weekend seminars. By this time I am quite sure about my capacity for being a teacher and bringing my ideas to my public. I have tons of experience with traveling and deep diving into several esoteric and alchemical traditions. However, at the moment I sit myself down at a laptop and start to write, I lose all my confidence, my storytelling abilities, and my creative flow. At this moment I experience a big loss of energy, usually feel hungry, and switch my enthusiasm from writing to cooking meals. That is how I welcome an old friend—my writer's block.

## **My Personal History With Writing**

When I was 7 years old I wanted to become a writer. I wrote poems and long essays about nature. I was also super creative with other media—I did a lot of craftwork with my younger brother, I organized and directed family puppet theater performances on holidays. Then I went to school.

Soviet Union education was highly ideological and limiting of personal opinion. The ideas you put into an essay needed to comply with communist ideology. I do not remember all the details of my early school years. I just remember one scene, when I received my essay back, with a bad grade. I felt highly confused and disappointed. The scary shadow of dictatorship and my teacher's criticism affected me strongly. By the time I was in high school, I was writing my essays by combining quotes from books and old essay samples. I got away with it—my school was mostly concerned with math.

I had a similar story with visual arts. At some point I realized that I am not that good at crafts and drawing—I lacked the capabilities to produce a good copy. I actually was not able to copy anything. Since that seemed to be the goal set by society, I stopped drawing and making crafts. This is my personal story, but many of my clients have a similar childhood history with arts and creativity.

I did not lose my creativity just by quitting arts and writing. I created a computer training center in Ukraine. Then, at age 32, I moved to the US and directed my creative flow by diving deep into several esoteric traditions and travelling. I was also making my living as a programmer, and was able to use at least a tiny part of my creativity for my work.

At some point I felt a call to bring my knowledge in spirituality, travels, and my creative flow, to my community. Then, I started my first creative business—Ursa Travel

Club. My business partner and I were inviting groups from Russia, and leading tours around magical natural places of the U.S.—Arizona, Utah, California, and Hawaii. To promote this business, I needed to write travel blogs. That was the moment I realized that I was completely unable to write. I could tell a story, but the moment I tried to write it down, I would lose all my inspiration and energy. Instead, I would feel sick, hungry, or angry. I imagined a huge concrete wall, which stood in between me and writing. The first set of stories for the Ursa Travel website was written by my business partner. I was not able to write any of my travel stories and I felt stuck and miserable.

At the same time, I was helping to organize events and seminars. I invited a Processworker from Russia—Irina Zingerman—to lead a seminar on dreams and body symptoms in New York. I loved discovering Processwork theory, methods, and style, as they totally went along with my spiritual practice background.

Two years later, in 2011, I took a Processwork winter intensive course. By that time I knew some of the Processwork practice and theory. The turning moment happened for me at Amy Mindell's art therapy class. We did some exercises on our leadership style. As a result of the exercises I made a clay figure representing my ideas on my workshop leadership style. After those small exercises with Processwork methods and crafts, I found myself in an unusual state. I was full of joy and desire to create, and at the same time in a mode of high concentration. I was in the creative flow.

A week after this event, I was able to write a thank you letter to Amy Mindell without borrowing sentences from the internet. This letter of 20 sentences was the first independent writing I had probably completed in 20 years. I cried while writing that letter. This was when I made the first hole in the concrete wall of my writer's block. This was only the first step of



my writing battle. Seven years later I still have the block, and I have developed a number of exercises and methods to get over it. I have used Processwork, art therapy, and my Family Constellation practices. Next, I describe those methods from a Processwork perspective.

### **Using an Unoccupied Channel To Get Into Creative Flow**

What had helped me during the Processwork intensive course was Processwork exercises together with visual art expressions. Later, I found out that making an art project with the intention to express my present state, making a mask or drawing a mandala, can lead me over the edge to a state where I can finally write down some of my ideas.

Why was making visual arts such an effective method in my case? We have this theory about the unoccupied channel in Processwork. When a Processworker researches the personal process, she pays attention to the way a person perceives and presents information. We usually obtain and digest information through the limited human senses—we see, hear, smell, feel sensations, and so forth. In Processwork we describe them as channels through which we experience the process. In this paper, I show you how we use visual, or audio, or movement, or the proprioceptive channel, or the most complicated channel of relationships. I describe how the channels work in more detail later, in the section A Homeopathic Dosage of Dictatorship.

Arnold Mindell (2000) showed that when we add other channels to the unoccupied one, it brings more energy and creates a path to get over the edge. As an example, I tried to express my creativity in writing, which in my perception is closer to the audio channel. When I added to my effort a visual channel, making crafts, I was able to pass over the edge and to write. I show examples of the masks later in this paper. The idea of the channel can relate to the momentary process, or to big life-long processes. My observation of my own, and my

clients' processes, is that there are often life-long processes which unfold in one or two channels. There are also often some channels which are underloaded through life, unoccupied. This unbalance of more developed and less developed channels creates a huge potential for increasing creative flow and for overcoming creative blocks. From my own struggles, I learned the power of developing creativity and removing creative blocks by working with a less occupied channel.

I am a good storyteller, and I talk a lot. My auditory channel is developed and occupied. I have ambition in writing. I want to create writing for professional goals. I have a strong inner critic figure, which stops my energy when I try to write. On the opposite side, my visual channel is underdeveloped. I have poor eyesight, bad visual memory, and no ability to visualize in my mind. Even after 20 years of practicing Tibetan Buddhism, I have not been able to draw a Tibetan letter A, which is one of the main visualizations in our everyday practice.

Despite all these weaknesses, when I focus my attention and action into the life-long unoccupied visual channel, I am able to create some decent looking craft, and reconnect to my unrestricted childhood river of creativity. This original river is strong, and it exists without any of the dams which were built later by hundreds of big and small educational traumas. This river is mighty enough to take me over the wall with my writing.

I use this method in TERRA pia school with great results. By the end of the program, most students begin taking lessons in previously un-attempted arts—visual, dance, or singing. This action feeds the flow of their creativity and they can direct this flow into their creative business.

This method of using visual art as a way to engage an unoccupied channel and to go over the edge worked only partly to help with my writing. With this method I was able to write only poems, or small articles. After a while, the edge appeared again, and the flow was not strong enough to write consistently and with structure. This method took me over the edge, but I needed to work more on the edge itself.

### **Dictator Mask: Breaking Through Writer's Block With an Art Exercise**

Here is an example of some creative writing written before I made a mask. I offer more examples with masks and mandalas in the appendix. I created this mask after some contemplation on my writing. In the accompanying italicized words, I go into the history of my childhood trauma. I describe altered states which happen around trauma in the writing.



*Figure 1. Mask.*

*My teacher told me that I am a young spirit. I am.*

*Several years ago, I rediscovered in myself the 5 year old girl from Odessa. The adults told her sometime in 1970, that she needs to be quiet and not to tell others what she observes or*

*thinks, because it was dangerous. They were right. They were experienced adults.*

*They also told her, that she does not have any talent for writing, painting, or music. She believed them as well. The adults were friendly.*

*Then this naive and super creative girl got upset and went into a coma for the next 40 years. I woke her up recently, and told her that I am an adult now. I told her that she can do all of the above, and I will always support and protect her.*

*She has jumped into the truth speaking and making arts with the naive enthusiasm of a 5 year old. She is growing up in me. She is approaching teenage years now.*

*I am young. I am. I am also ancient.*

*I carry the stories and pains of many people.*

*I am the Inca priest, who sits proudly on the top of the pyramid, watching thousands of war prisoners killed painfully in the name of an ancient god. He looks at this scene with sharp clarity, totally perceiving the illusory nature of reality, but without a drop of compassion.*

*I am the alchemist of the Middle Ages, full of love for God and hopes for humanity, who had been tortured and killed by the Inquisition.*

*I am a shaman woman in Mongolia, ecstatically dancing with the pack of wolves.*

*I am a Native American medicine man, screaming and crying in the guilty agony of losing his tribe, because of the unknown disease, brought by white people.*

*I am a peasant in South France, who spent her simple life in a peaceful love union with her land and her family.*

*I am a Jewish child, killed with her mother in a village of Belorussia.*

*And I am Ekaterina the Great, celebrating her youth, her sharp mind, and her power over her huge barbaric country.*

*I am not those people, and I do not believe in a straightforward reincarnation, but somehow, I carry their stories, pains, and wisdom in my body.*

*I am ancient. I am.*

### **Internalized Figures Around Writer's Block**

When I work on writer's block, I uncover several figures that exist at the edge between the primary and secondary processes. Descriptions follow.

**Inner critic.** The first step in my struggle with writer's block is to encounter my inner critic. The inner critic idea is widely used in psychology. From a Processwork perspective, the inner critic is a dream figure that appears at the edge and holds critical messages. The inner critic holds family, community, and societal limitations about certain topics. It is actually a necessary figure. When we live in a society, we need to be aware of the situation around us. The critic figure seeks to control our behavior in order to be competent in our surroundings.

We start to build this controller figure in childhood with criticism from parents and teachers. While we grow in age and development, our abilities and the requirements of our surroundings change, often completely. The inner critic continues to deliver old, ineffective messages in a destructive style.

Through those years I taught a lot of seminars on the inner critic. I came out with simple rules on how to check your personal relationship with this internalized figure. You write a statement on how you criticize yourself, and then check with the simple inner critic test. The inner critic must be

- Polite
- Bring truthful messages with exact examples

- Be a friendly, but strict adviser.

When I analyze my inner critic's messages around writing, they are boringly similar all the time, and for many years.

- I am not a good writer in either English or Russian, because I make a lot of grammar mistakes.
- I do not have anything new to tell to the world, all that I want to write has already been written.

I have heard those ideas for a long time and know the answers. I do work with an editor, who checks my writing. I know that people from TERRA pia school or prospective clients will be interested to read my work, and these are enough reasons to write. After I deal with my critic intellectually there is a next step we do in Processwork to overcome this edge—embody the energy of the critic. I describe the process of shapeshifting later in chapter 4. Here, I just say that I shapeshift into my critic. To my surprise the figure I find behind the critic is hard to hold, process, or integrate—it is a dictator.

**Inner dictatorship and internalized oppression.** I grew up in the Soviet Union. During my childhood the most scary communist dictator—Stalin—was gone, but the whole atmosphere of oppression and fear was quite present. People were sent to Siberia for reading a book or writing a poem. Some of the most admired poets and writers during my young years were killed or humiliated publicly.

The history of dictatorship, mass killing, and oppressive fear was a big part of Soviet Union history. The atmosphere of fear, oppression, and dictatorship is present in my family and my community of emigrants from the former Soviet Union. This history of growing up in

the atmosphere of oppression has been internalized as a strong fear, which I experience when I need to express my ideas in writing.

I work with this fear of expressing opinions in my school, where we hold group processes and Family Constellation practices related to this topic. I know that it is somewhere in my field and I am able to notice this energy and to embody it in practice. When I embody the inner critic dictator figure, I can shapeshift into the dictator, walk with this energy, and move it. I can draw a mandala or create a mask. I am not able to write from it. It is too strong, too stiff, too dry. The essence of this figure is a protector and a fighter. It gives me structure and power to step into the world and to be a fighter, a protector, but not the energy to sit calmly and put my words into writing. I work with my inner dictator, walk it through the room, dance it, make a small drawing, and go farther.

**The trickster.** Another figure is the trickster.

*I am so much in love with my own trickster and with all the tricksters, which dance around me.*

*The trickster is the one who always plays and breaks all possible rules.*

*He laughs when he's sad, and is sad when at the circus.*

*He never goes to school and sings all songs out of tune. He is always hungry and steals food.*

*He steals out of curiosity and then loses stuff and goes to play with something else. He has sex in inappropriate places with inappropriate people.*

*He jumps outside the box as soon as he sees a crack.*

*He is the child, the fool, the protector, and the greatest saboteur. I am so much of the coyote and I recognize this trickster in others right away and happily go into play.*



Figure 2. Trickster.

*The coyote, the trickster, the fox brings these sparkles into the water of life and makes it drinkable.*

After I unfolded the internalized figure of the dictator, I notice a new dream figure, which is dancing on the edge. The next voice tells me—hey, do not take life so seriously. Life is short, and you know from your spirituality that this is just a game of interconnected illusions. There is no point to load yourself up with writing. Let us go eat, laugh, and play.

Me and people from my community grew up in a dictatorship country. For us the trickster is the figure which always follows the dictator. It is the sense of humor which livened up and lightened our life in Soviet Union. We told anecdotes and jokes about our government, we traveled with backpacks in the woods, sung songs, drank vodka, and broke rules whenever it was possible.

The trickster is a great helper when you need to lighten life, and also a big saboteur because it distracts us from going deeper, staying with one task, and bearing tension. I love my trickster and know this part of myself well. I embody this figure by dancing the trickster dance. I jump and swirl and sing silly. This is a great counterpart to the oppressive dictator energy.

I do the practice of balancing polarized energies. After doing the dances of both the heavy straightforward dictator and the light spontaneous trickster, I feel that my energies become balanced and my writer's block momentarily calms down. I can sit and write. I explain the method of integrating polarized energies in *A Homeopathic Dosage of Dictatorship*.



## **Addictive Tendencies Around Writing**

A direct experience connected to writer's block is my addictive tendency. After I started to write, I noticed that when I write I have a permanent desire to eat. I usually chew on some nuts or fruits. It calms me down and helps me to concentrate. I decided to explore this part of my writing adventure. Here, I use Processwork's method of working with addictions and addictive tendencies.

Addictions or addictive tendencies happen around the desire to reach certain states, which are really attractive. We use substances or some activities to reach the state. The substances or activities often have negative effect on our health and relationships. In this case, the Processwork method is to try to emulate the desired state without using a destructive way to reach this state.

I imagine that I am writing and I want to eat something at the same time. I imagine that I put a piece of fruit in my mouth. What happens? The moment I did it, I totally concentrate on the taste in the mouth and my body sensations. I feel the sweet taste in my mouth and pleasant, releasing sensations are going through my body. I go deeper into sensations and I try to bring some visuals which go along with them. I find myself back in my old city, Odessa in my childhood. I am sitting in the kitchen with my mother and grandmother and cleaning sour cherries for a pie. The smells are delicious and the cherries, which I put in my mouth, are intensely sour and sweet at the same time.

With this memory I suddenly realize that there was plenty of creativity on the female side of my family. My grandmother and mother sewed and knitted and the things they made were beautiful. They cooked delicious meals and put a lot of their soul into house decorations. I grew up in a super creative environment! This is a different type of creativity, one which is

not looking for social success but maintains a warm, joyful, comfortable atmosphere where you want to be happy. I know I am able to create this atmosphere in the groups I teach, people mention it often. Can I create this atmosphere for myself, when I write? How can I put this feeling of smooth, warm female style creativity into my writing? I dance a smooth dance of my grandmother's creative flow and make intention to knit this atmosphere in the complicated patterns of my writing. Now that I have addressed my writer's block, I feel able to go into the content on dreams and dreaming which I begin in the next chapter.

## Chapter 4: Dreams as Practical Advisers

All I know for sure is that dreams are the pictures of states wanting to turn into processes. Dreams are maps of the beginning of an otherwise uncharted trip into the unknown. They are pictures of the unknown which appear in many channels. Because Process Work is body-oriented, I put a stress upon feelings, but dreams are not pictures of just feelings; they are pictures of the way the unknown is showing itself in a given moment. (Arnold Mindell, personal communication)

In this paper I want to show how dreams can become your personal helper, as they can give very specific advice based on your current situation. Dreams show you the things about yourself you do not notice. In order to understand what they are saying, you need to learn their language. Dreams have their own style of communication and a unique sense of humor. They talk in roundabout allegorical ways. Dreams can give advice and information on what is needed to be changed. They can also lead us beyond mental ideas, to learn through many various channels such as movement, proprioception, and relationships. Dreams can coach you into a new style of behaviour, communication, and action. Your dream is your own personal trainer that works only for you, no one else. It models behaviors for you in the safe space of the dream, which you can practice and eventually adapt to your life.

Even if the dream has archetypal images in it, it still holds personal messages as well. As an example, many people have a dream about a huge tsunami. I myself worked more than 20 times on this dream type with different clients. The dream has a common theme of fearing a huge uncontrolled Earth power, much stronger than any human. However, at the same time every time, the client was able to find some personal messages and energies which were relevant to them at this particular point of their life journey.

A dream is often described as if it was an external and independent spirit that gives you visions. Dreams are also your own personal wisdom, arising from the depths of your own consciousness. In this paper, I present several examples of working with dreams to help the

client with their tasks in personal business. Before I move to those examples, I wish to share my ideas on present changes in career and education and why Processwork methods could help people to be successful in this time of change.

### **A Homeopathic Dosage of Dictatorship: Using a Dream to Master a New Style**

In this section, I describe the basics of Processwork theory. Basic terms are defined and we see how they are used in dream work. I also show you how they can be used in personal transformation. Before I define all the terms, I want to share with you my personal story of how working with a dream has helped me to take a big step in my career.

In 2011 I was invited to my dream job—working at a holistic clinic in Samara, Costa Rica. This clinic used modern as well as traditional medicine and psychology, nutrition, yoga, acupuncture, chi-gong, art therapy, and more to help people with addictions. As a holistic therapist, I used all my knowledge from psychology and shamanism, travels, art, and nature. I loved the work environment and my clients. The clients were mostly young people, who were often interested in spirituality and transformation, but had gotten caught in the trap of addiction. Most of my private therapy sessions took place on the balcony of a beautiful villa, on a hill overlooking the Costa Rican jungle, sand, and ocean. When I did a Processwork session in this beautiful environment, we would sometimes dance or yell with clients, and the local howler monkeys would join us in a chorus.

I adored this work and put a lot of effort and heart into it. There were many interesting professionals working there, and we got along well and learned a lot from each other. Staff members were people from all over the world—there was a doctor from Russia, a psychologist specializing in addiction from Spain, a yoga teacher from Costa Rica, and an administrator from the United States. It was not easy to make up a team from all these

different backgrounds and attitudes, but as the therapist, I had a good relationship with all. We had a fun and creative atmosphere in the team.

After about 6 months, our founder decided to move on to another project and he offered me to take on more responsibility as the director of the clinic. The reason for this was not wholly due to my experience (there were staff with longer careers), but also because the director was an old friend and trusted me. This would be a position of much more power, responsibility, more money, as well as opportunity to be creative in bringing in more types of healing. After some hesitation, I accepted it.

At this point all things went sour. Before this, I was an equal to my coworkers. After this appointment, our working relationship grew worse, discipline in the clinic fell. Everyone had different opinions on how to run things, staff were arguing and trying to get their own way. I got into a public fight with our yoga teacher and felt like a total failure afterwards. I had been unprepared to be thrust into the role of captain with a ship about to mutiny. My small haven of tropical creativity had become a terrifying jungle, and the screams of the howler monkeys now sounded ominous.

During this rough time I had a dream—I was sitting in front of Russian President Putin and teasing him. At some point he noticed my teasing and I decided to run away. That was the whole dream. This simple dream helped me to successfully resolve the conflicts around me. This is how I worked through this dream. From Processwork theory, I know that all figures in a dream are “me,” and the most useful is usually the figure that seems to be farthest away from my own identity. To me, Putin represents a powerful dictator who uses his power to suppress freedom, and someone to fear. So, this is the figure I tried to become. To be clear, I did not go on Wikipedia to research Putin’s biography and try to emulate him. We are

talking only about the particular figure and feelings as they appeared in my dream from within my own self. I found the qualities of my “dream dictator” to be distant, powerful, firm, and unafraid of anyone. I imagined I am a dictator and tried to walk around the room in a way that the president of a powerful country would walk. I paid attention to how my walk changed from how it normally felt. I stretched up, straightened out, began to walk with a spring in my step like a confident man, and look at everyone from above.

To imitate my “inner Putin” I used various channels—movement, proprioceptive, visual. When I engaged those channels to shapeshift into the Putin figure, my psychological state changed a little to match my new attitude, and now I could look back at my conflicts or problems from the point of view of this role. Of course I did not become Putin, but I brought a homeopathic dose of Putin into my own world view.

While still in this transformation, I gave myself advice from Putin’s point of view regarding this small bit of power that was causing discord at work. The dictator suggested to stop being afraid of this authority I had been given. The dictator looked at the figure of “me” that had been teasing him in the dream.

In this dream, I associated myself with a light-hearted trickster who was afraid of his freedom being taken away by power. I told the trickster, “Don’t be afraid, I won’t limit your freedom, happiness, and lightness, we can both live in this body and consciousness together, and share this space. I will make sure to preserve your freedom, but you need to let me use my power and authority with a wise and firm hand to do our job well.” This was my way to give respect to both of my dream figures and both of my processes: the primary process—the trickster who loves freedom, as well as the secondary process—the dictator who wants to succeed in his career.

This was the way in which I worked on this issue. It was a very important dream in my life. I could not realize my talents of leadership before this. I felt the dictator in the dream symbolized that part of me that can lead. He was very relaxed about it, he used force when necessary in small quantities, and made people listen to him. This inner dictator was not evil, just self-confident, calm, and assertive.

The very next day, I called a meeting of all staff. This dream gave me the ability to speak with my coworkers in the rehab confidently and calmly, show them that I am not afraid to use my authority, and everyone relaxed. After this, things calmed down and I was able to use that power for developing new projects instead of putting out fires with coworkers.

The techniques I used to work through my dream have been developed and named by Arnold Mindell (2000, 2001), the founder of Processwork. Next I explain some of the basic concepts within the methodology.

### **Primary Process**

Primary process—qualities, actions, and behaviors that you associate with your own self. These are qualities you know well, accept as your identity, and are comfortable with. In dreams they often show up associated with the dreamer.

In the dream I was a free, playful figure. This is my trickster part—I tease the dictator, but am too small to be noticed, and I can run away to my playful freedom when I am noticed. I know this part of myself well. I built it up and nourished it for a long time. For several years before my move to Costa Rica, I lived a life of a free spirited trickster, leading shamanic groups in places of power, coming home to NY to lead a seminar, and then moving on with new adventures. Half a year before I got the offer in Costa Rica, I started feeling that this part

of my identity had developed enough. I began to look for more stability in my life and in my work as a Processwork therapist. That process resulted in my move to Costa Rica.

### **Secondary Process**

Secondary process—those qualities and behaviors that are less known and often unidentified with. They may be less familiar or totally unfamiliar to the self, usually are associated with disturbing events and other people, and in dreams are hard to control consciously. As an example, the dictator from my dream was representing my secondary process—to use my power and authority consciously. These lesser known qualities are usually the ones that need to be discovered and explored for further personal development. People often experience these as scary or negative because they do not yet know how to use them consciously in a meaningful way. They may have never yet acknowledged the deeper qualities of these figures as being part of the self. For example, the figure of the dictator in my dream was more secondary for me, and I had difficulties integrating the dictator's power.

### **The Edge**

The edge is associated with disturbing behaviors or things unaccepted by the person. This is the barrier a person throws up between “myself” and “other” in their own dream. The edge can exist as a result of views and past experiences relating to personal trauma, family, or archetypal story. It keeps people from accepting the useful advice their own psyche may be bringing to them in the shape of the uncomfortable secondary process images.

No one wants a dictator in their dream, but it may not be so bad once you become the figure and get to know it from the inside, get past the edge and look at the dream through the dictator's eyes. In my Putin dream, the edge was represented by my childhood trauma, growing up in a dictatorship, as I grew up in Soviet Russia and was part of the Jewish



minority. From the very beginning, authorities and people in power represented a danger to myself and my family. I was faced with bureaucrats who tried to limit my freedom and access to education. Since that time, I felt I could never be part of official power and leadership. I had many negative examples and few positive examples of official leadership. When I had to take on a leadership role as an adult, I was unable to. This is a good example of how the edge operates.

This dream came to me to uncover these causes, and teach me how to move forward. What methods did I use to understand what the dream told me? I first did what many modern psychologists suggest. They say that dreams are just reflections of the processes of your own psyche. I used shapeshifting to embody dream images, to feel their experiences, and use them for myself.

Some of these processes are closer to you, and in your dream you may associate them with yourself and other figures like you. Other sets of qualities which are farther from the self can take on disturbing or even nightmare forms, because they are farther from our idea of self as we know it. I was not comfortable with being a leader, and that is why my psyche gave this idea a form that was unpleasant to me—that of Putin. These can be animate or inanimate objects—they can come in the form of a zombie, or a car, or a lake. Inanimate forms can be worked with in the same way as with animate objects in the dream. When working with dreams you can become the object or ask the inanimate object such as a lake for advice in the same way that you would a person.

### **Channels**

Here I would like to introduce the Processwork concept of channels. In our human body we perceive reality and express our feedback through a limited number of channels.

Channels can relate to our normal senses, but also to more complicated concepts. Simple channels are as follows:

- Vision—images, drawing or imagination.
- Audio—sound.
- Movement—kinesthetic.
- Proprioceptive—body feelings such as cold or warm, a sharp or cutting sensation, feelings of lightness, and emotional experiences.
- Taste and smell—much rarer in dreams than the other channels, but there are some people in whom these channels are developed. There really are people who dream with tastes and smells!

Composite channels are as follows:

- Relationship channel—something that happens between two people, two roles.  
Example: Zombie chases person, person runs away. Putin pays attention to me while I taunt him.
- World channel—what happens in the world in response to your transformation.

For example, I had several nightmares with fire and destruction right before Russia started a war with Ukraine in 2014. I was not watching the political situation at that moment, as I was busy with a Processwork diploma program residency, but the energy of war got into my dream through the World channel. In Processwork, we use the different channels to understand different messages that come to us in dreams.

### **Shapeshifting and Roleplay**

**Shapeshifting.** Find the dream figure that is the least “you” in the dream and shapeshift into it. In order to do this you can use channels—sound, movement, and so forth. In

Processwork we think that all parts of the dream, whether alive or not, represent processes in our self. We use shapeshifting to understand the process, energy, method, or teaching it has. We transform into one of the forms present in our dream. It could be an object, a person, a hero. We can receive lessons from a Hollywood actor, a cat, a bear chasing us, a forest, or even a table. To shapeshift we use different channels such as movement, visual, and others, to be as much like that form as possible. We then use roleplay to really develop that state.

**Roleplay.** This incorporates channels, actions, and interactions between dream figures. Shapeshifting into different roles within your dream, you communicate between them with the help of role switching. A second person or therapist could help in role switching, but that is not necessary. You can set up a chair to play the role of a second character.

When we are small we learn about the world through roleplay. Children practice adult behavior in this way. We play doctor, astronaut, mom and dad, we feed medicine to our dolls. In the first few years of life a person processes and acquires more new skills and behaviors than in the rest of their life, and very quickly as well. In Processwork we turn to roleplay to help us internalize, and incorporate dream revelations into our behavior. Roleplay is an important aspect of working with dreams.

When my dream sent me the message of being more assertive, I did not immediately run off to yell at my coworkers. When I first realized that I needed to wield my power, I was mad at my coworkers and afraid that I would ruin the relationship if I acted out. Instead of running out and acting on these emotions, I used roleplay as a buffer. Roleplay helped me to integrate this new feeling of authority with the feelings of freedom that I already associated myself with. I used roleplay to feel as Putin using all the channels—I used the movement channel when I walked like Putin, I used the proprioceptive channel by changing my posture

and straightening my back and stretching out vertically, I also relaxed and felt more grounded. I used the visual channel to imagine myself dressed and looking like Putin. I roleplayed this new character until I felt confident wielding my power calmly and assertively without hurting the other trickster part of me. Only then was the work done and I was ready to apply this new behavior in my life.

### **Exercises: Shapeshifting Into a Dream Image**

Think about your life, and the kind of tasks and problems you are currently faced with. Decide which one you would like to work on. Take a recent dream and rewatch it like a movie. If it is a long dream and has several scenes, find a point in the dream which has more emotion, the one you remember most vividly. Which figure in the dream do you most associate yourself with? This image is probably closer to your primary process. Now find a dream image or figure which is the farthest, or opposite from your own identity, it can be alive or inanimate. For example, if in the dream you drowned in a lake, the lake would be the dream image you are going to use.

Start to shapeshift into this image. For example, if you have a wolf chasing you in the dream, you can start to run or walk the way that wolf would. You can growl like that wolf. You can imagine how it would feel to have fur. Try to become that specific wolf from your dream. Keep this going for at least 5 minutes and notice the changes in your body. Notice how your posture changed, the position of your shoulders, the tension in the solar plexus and stomach, position of the neck. Notice the attitude with which you walk and touch the floor, what is the difference between this and how you usually walk? Do you see things around you differently?

When you feel that you have completely shapeshifted into this role, notice what quality is held in this figure that you might not usually notice. What does it do well that you do not? It could be very specific like, “the wolf can smell for miles around itself and be totally aware of a large surrounding area.” See how this quality can help you resolve your task or problem. Embody this figure, and see how this figure would approach your task or problem. In this example—how would your dream wolf deal with the problem your human self is now facing?

### **Nightmares**

We have worked with some unpleasant dreams before this, but I wanted to discuss nightmares specifically. This is an example of working with a nightmare, using Processwork methods.

I was leading a dream workshop at a beautiful New Age festival in the forest. We were sitting in a circle discussing dreams, and a lovely woman asked me, “How come, even though I feel so comfortable in this place, with the friendly people and nature, I still had a nightmare?” Nightmare dreams usually hold strong emotions like fear and anger. When we are able to work with a nightmare at the stage of dreaming, there is a chance to integrate it through a playful dreamwork session.

During the festival, we went to my tent and she told me her dream as follows. In this woman’s dream (let us call her Karina) she sees that her boyfriend has turned into a zombie. He chases her. Karina is really scared and horrified by this and runs away. She woke up trembling and sweating. Before we began working with the dream, I observed this woman. She seemed to be very delicate, soft, and feminine. I asked her about what she is doing in her life. Karina replied that she is a clothing designer and has a boutique in Manhattan where she

sells her clothes. I told her that since the dream is about her boyfriend, then maybe she recently had a relationship conflict with her boyfriend, or someone else who is close to her. She tells me that her relationship with the boyfriend is in a good spot right now, but there is another relationship that is on the brink of a fight. Karina explains that she has a business partner sharing the boutique space with her. She is very happy to have someone share the expenses, but feels that this partner woman is not sharing the space evenly. This woman has a pushy attitude, and has taken over more than half of the store space with her products. Karina does not know how to confront this woman without ruining the working relationship she has with her as a partner.

Now that we know about this relationship, we can go back to the nightmare. From the previous chapter, you may already have an idea of how I wanted to work with this dream. To find the resources Karina needed, I guided her to shapeshift into the dream zombie. I first asked her to tell me about this zombie, what kind of zombie is it? She said that it is a scary unconscious power which wants to eat her. Next, I tried to help Karina shapeshift into the zombie. It was not as easy for her, as it was for me to turn into Putin. A zombie is a gross thing, and it took Karina longer. She was hesitant and did not want to do it. So I helped her to do it gradually, by bringing in channels one by one. Since the zombie is chasing her in the dream, I brought in the kinesthetic channel and asked her to chase me around the tent. Then we brought in the sound channel, and I asked her to make a zombie sound. Karina was now running around and growling. Bringing in the movement and sound helped her shapeshift into the zombie figure from her dream. Karina chased me for a while, and I noticed that she was having fun imitating the zombie and chasing me. I asked her how she felt in this role. To her surprise, she liked it. She said the zombie is very strong and powerful.

Karina growled at me a bit and suggested that it did not feel like a zombie anymore, it felt more like a bear. As Karina's process unfolded, the energy she had experienced as a zombie started to become clearer and more acceptable to her. The zombie image was scary and totally foreign for Karina, but when her process moved, the bear idea appeared as a better representative for that energy. Karina felt much better about the image and idea of the bear.

I encouraged her to become even more like this bear, to move, growl and dance like a bear. We were both jumping around in my tent dancing a shamanic bear dance and growling, having a lot of fun. Karina did not look like her usual delicate self anymore. She was dancing and totally enjoying this primal bear energy. In this dance we both went into a deep shamanic transformation. We felt we were not playing a role of the bear anymore, but that the primal bear energy was coming out through us.

After we stayed there for a while, I stopped the dance and decided to help Karina integrate this energy into her present life. I asked her where she could use this new bear energy in her life? Is there a danger that she will now bring it into the relationship with her boyfriend and start troubles and fights? Karina answered me pretty confidently that she does not need this bear energy in her romantic relationship, but she would happily pour it into her business. This powerful energy would make her business stronger and larger. She also realized that she probably needs more bear energy to be more assertive in the relationship with her business partner. However, she was still wary, because Karina did not want to start a fight and end this relationship. Karina's primary style of dealing with people was soft. She did not know how to bring her bear power into the relationship with her business partner, without breaking the relationship. (I explain more about how we can combine these concepts, in the next section.) We decided to concentrate on this question in the next step of our dream

work. I suggested a Processwork exercise that can help Karina to combine her delicate style of communication with the bear's power.

### **Dance of Polarities**

We continued the exploration of Karina's dream. I shared my favorite Processwork exercise with her—creating a dance out of two polarized energies. First, I suggested that she do the bear dance again. We paid attention to the rhythms, energy, and sounds. It was a heavy, stomping kind of dance. She held up her “claws” and sang a shamanic “Oo-wa, oo-wa” sound with each step. We remembered this dance for later. Then I suggested that she do another dance which reflected her delicateness, softness, and femininity. We called it the Fairy Dance. It started with light twirling ballet movements. Karina floated around the tent waving her hands and singing softly. Then I suggested switching between the two dances. Karina did a few heavy steps with “oo-wa” sounds and then a few light twirling steps with soft singing. I led her to alternate between the two dances until it turned into a pattern itself. From these two dances we created a new dance which blended both energies into a new one. The Bear and the Fairy blended into a new figure that Karina named the Queen. The Queen had the best qualities of both figures—the feminine softness and delicateness of the Fairy, but also the power and strength of the Bear. The Queen was very comfortable representing both sides of Karina's polarities.

Next, I helped Karina with her real life conflict resolution by using roleplay. I took the role of her pushy business partner and pretended to start hanging my clothes on her side of the store. The Queen Karina knew exactly how to deal with this situation using softness and delicacy, but with a feeling of personal empowerment. She found the perfect firm yet polite words with which to remind her partner about how they had agreed to split the space. She



found the most elegant queenly style with which to do it. We practiced this moment a few times and then I felt my work was complete.

The next week Karina wrote me an email. She said that she had had the most elegant and peaceful conflict resolution with her business partner. The partner had immediately understood her request for fairness when it was delivered with Queenly energy. Both were again sharing their shop space evenly. Karina invited me to visit her shop and select one of her clothing items as a gift.

### **Exercise: How To Work With Nightmares**

Tell a story about your nightmare dream. If you have a scary figure in a dream, try to imagine a cartoon, a movie, or a fairytale that can have this figure. For example, if you see a scary witch in your dream, what cartoon can it be part of? Perhaps this a witch from *The Little Mermaid* or from *The Wizard of Oz*? If it is a killer, maybe it is a persona from a James Bond movie? Try to shapeshift into this character. You can try to walk as this character. You can explore how this character express herself in various channels—movement, proprioception, audio.

When walking as this character, notice how your body posture and stride changes. How do your feet touch the ground? Are you more grounded or less grounded than usual? What are your shoulders doing? Check in with your whole body and notice how your body holds these new experiences.

Roleplay the scene from your dream. Amplify and unfold the dream figure. What kind of powers does this character have which you do not have? How does this character use those powers? Why do those powers become negative? What would you do if you had those powers in you? Can you imagine a positive character with the same powers?

## **Working With Polarized Energies in Your Dreams and Your Life**

I wrote about this dream 3 years ago. I recently found my writing and realized that this dream's story still plays an important part in my life. In a dream, I was sitting in a room with a good friend and drinking tea. There is a cliché that Russians always drink vodka. In fact, we always drink strong black tea, usually when we chat to friends about life, philosophy, and news in the community. So, in the dream I was drinking tea with a friend, when I noticed a white feather floating in the air. I admired the lightness and smooth movement of the feather. After I watched the feather for a while, the skylight window in the room opened, and a huge tiger jumped from the ceiling . . . and caught the feather.

In the dream I was shocked and disturbed. I screamed to my friend, "Look! A tiger is jumping from the roof!" My friend from the dream calmed me down. He told me, "Do not worry. This tiger always lives on the roof and does not mess with us, but when it sees the feather it jumps down to play. The tiger is not dangerous, it just wants to play with the feather."

How do we work with this dream from a Processwork perspective? We can work with associations first, as most dream workers do. Years ago, when I worked with this dream, I was able to unfold some of the dream messages. Me drinking tea is my normal self, the part of my personality which is easy going, nice to people, likes friends and community. From the Processwork perspective, this personality is closer to my primary process.

Then I look at the feather. The feather is white and light and airy. It does not stay still much, and easily changes direction. I also know this part of myself. I feel that this dream image represents my sensitivity, lightness, and ability to be flexible.

The tiger represents my wild power unrestricted by society. I love my power and I admire the tiger's strength, health, and beauty. However, my everyday self, the one which drinks tea with friends, is afraid that this tiger will break up my house and my usual self. My friend, representing my wise educated self, calmed me down with the message that this power is for play and for pleasure, not for destruction. The tiger is here to play.

So that is the explanation of the dream. How can I go further from here, and turn this dream into my personal coach who can teach me more power, more lightness, and more balance between those two polarities? Let us use the method of shapeshifting to try to learn more from this dream.

First, I decided to use the image of the flying feather. I shapeshifted into the feather and tried various channels. First I used the visual channel. I imagined that I am the white fuzzy superlight feather. Then I added movement—I start to move super slowly, lightly moving my hands to imitate a feather moving in the air. This dance put me into a light trance, and I felt the changes in my body sensations. I used the proprioceptive channel to go deeper into this experience. I felt extremely light, as though I lost all my weight. In my normal everyday state, I am a heavy woman. I do not feel light at all. I am also strong and sharp in my expression and communication style.

While dancing my feather dance, I enjoy this quite different sensation. I imagine how I would act in my present life situation from the point of view of this feather state.

- I probably would be easier on myself and not take on so many tasks at the same time.
- I would move in a slower tempo, and be more conscious in my business activity.

- I would move between my tasks more easily and lightly. I would approach this heavy load of writing a diploma paper in a lighter way, like the feather dance.
- I would adopt a lighter, freer, attitude to life.

While dancing as a feather, I notice that my present body symptom, neck pain, is gone.

Instead, I feel like I have big wings. What a pleasant feeling! I decide that I need to do a little of the feather dance every day to bring more of those qualities into my life.

After being with my dream feather for a while I moved to the tiger. I shapeshifted into the tiger using the movement and audio channels. I jumped and moved as a tiger, and I roared to feel the mighty power of this dream image. I recognized some of my everyday qualities in my dream tiger. The tiger is heavy and aggressive. It is also fast; it jumps and reacts immediately. I know those qualities in myself, but they are not integrated, as I am still learning how to use my power wisely and consciously. In some situations I may act fast and be quite aggressive. I like the power of my tiger, but it is unpredictable and scary. I do get into troubles, when I am in my tiger mode.

The tiger represents my relationship with my personal power. I know about my power and I use it, but it is still a secondary process, more complicated and further from my awareness than my peaceful self. That is why I was afraid of this tiger in my dream. These unpredictable aggressive jumps of my inner tiger have destroyed some of my relationships.

At some point I decided to stop analyzing and criticizing the tiger and to shapeshift into it instead. I dance and jump and enjoy the power of my body, the speed and strength with which I am able to move. The deeper I go into my tiger, the more I feel my inner power. In this moment, the tiger energy is fully embodied. I notice it has loosened, there is no more aggression in my dance and emotional state, only flexibility, strength, joy, and playfulness. I

start to enjoy my tiger fully. I also realize that when I embody this state consciously I can use my power more consciously. I can hold this aggressive tiger power in my relationships. I can bring just some part of it, enough to put boundaries, but not enough to destroy. I can play with this feather.

At the last part of the dreamwork, I decided to explore my flexibility and ability to move with awareness between two polarized states—the feather and the tiger. I use the dance between polarities as a method. I dance the feather dance for a minute, and the tiger dance for a minute. I practice switching from one dance to another. This switch is not easy in the beginning. It is hard to move from playing a big massive tiger to a light feather and back, but after several switches back and forth I master it. I really enjoy this game. The tiger loves to play with the feather. Through this dance I become more conscious of my extremes. I teach myself to notice when I am at those states and learn not to get stuck there, but consciously move from one state to another.

How can I use this ability in everyday life? I use it to balance myself and to move in between states fluidly and consciously. I also use it to help my clients who may be stuck on either side—too light, flexible, and not able to show their power, or the opposite—too heavy. I use it with groups where people of different characters and states come together, and as a group facilitator I need to be aware of my polarized energies. I also use the heaviness and power of the tiger when I need the group to follow me, and the lightness of the feather when I want people in the group to follow their own direction and not be restricted by the presence of the teacher. I use this dance for my own healing, when I feel that I need to balance my polarities. When I am in touch with both sides of myself, my creativity fully opens.



## Chapter 5: Childhood Dream and a Life Myth

I am a traveler. For a while I earned my living by leading spiritual adventure tours in Death Valley, the Grand Canyon, and Hawaii. I like to view life as a journey that starts with your birth and ends with your death.

Throughout this big journey, there will be many smaller journeys through different landscapes. Some of the paths lead us through open plains, sometimes we cross a river, or go up into the mountains. Sometimes we find ourselves caught in a blizzard, or in a scary jungle with wild animals.

When our life is quiet and easy, we do not think much about what is ahead and just enjoy the trip. However, there are some times in our life when a crisis comes and our path is full of sharp turns. In these times, it would be nice to have a map to find the right direction, and to ration your resources according to how much farther you still have to travel until the next campground.

In Processwork we use the idea of the personal Life Myth as such a map and organizing principle. Processwork founder Arnold Mindell developed the idea that childhood dreams which are still remembered in adulthood, contain the main roles, energies, and ideas which form your life myth or hero's journey (personal communication).

Our Life Myth can help us in our contemplation of big life questions. These are the questions of “Where do I come from?”, “What is the purpose of me living this life?”, “What are the big lessons I need to learn here?”, “What is my role in serving others?”, and “What is my relationship with those forces larger than me—with the divine, with the universe, with the eternity of time?”

Most people do not often ask themselves those questions. Some people ask them all the time, and I call those kinds of people Wanderers. Even if you do not ask those questions often, there are times of crisis or change when those questions become vital. During times of sickness, divorce, dealing with death, growing up or aging, changing career or life path, and many others, people seek answers to these questions.

### **Hawaiian Creation Myth**

Here, I want to share the Hawaiian creation myth, to show how mythology affects our relationship with the world, community, and ourselves. Myths and legends were one of the ways humanity used to answer big existential questions. Myths from each different culture answer these questions in their own way, and by that answer, set a pattern of behavior for all who live with that myth. Spiritual myths define the culture and reflect the dreaming of the people. The creation myth of the Hawaiian people, for example (personal communication with Hawaiian Kahuna Aunty Mahealani), tells the story of how all humanity was created.

First, the gods of the sky and the land created the Hawaiian island chain. Then they had their first baby, which was born dead, so they wrapped it up and buried it in the soil. It grew into the Taro plant. The second child of the gods was healthy and became the first Hawaiian person. All Hawaiians know that they are descended directly from the sky and the land, they are children of Earth. The Earth provides everything that they need to live. The older brother Taro is the edible root which is the staple crop of the Hawaiians. As the older brother, it takes care of the younger ones, and feeds them. The younger siblings must in turn respect the older. The Taro plant is the Hawaiian people's direct link to their gods and spirituality. The dinner table is not complete without taro, and when taro is on the table, there must be no fighting out of respect for the elders and the gods. This myth defines the Hawaiian



relationship to the gods, nature, to food, as well as family relationships of respect, and even etiquette at the table.

### **How Mythology Shapes Our Lifestyle and Views: Comparing Tibetan and Western Creation Myths**

Next, I offer two other examples to illustrate how mythology can shape the main life purpose and direction for people. I introduce these as a reflection on how mythology relates to the idea of life myth in Processwork.

Tibetan Buddhist mythology (Norbu, 1986) states that humanity has existed on earth for several hundred thousand years. Back then, humans were advanced creatures with a 10,000-year lifespan, they were able to travel between worlds and dimensions, and had other supernatural powers. Since then, the human lifespan and spiritual power have been decreasing, and now we are living in the age of Kali-Yuga (degradation; Norbu, 1986) with a short lifespan and very limited capabilities. Tibetans also believe that the lifespan and the ability of humans will degrade even more in the future (Norbu, 1986). This particular mythology defines the way people who follow it look at life goals. Because the material world is impermanent and is constantly degrading, not much can be done to improve it. They consider spiritual practice the main life purpose, which leads to enlightenment or to reincarnation into a more spiritually advanced realm. The physical world is taken care of only as far as necessary to sustain life and health, which allows further spiritual improvement.

In contrast, the mythology of life purpose in the Western world arises from a different source and develops different goals. Advances in science and the theory of evolution create a trajectory of constant improvement. We have developed from simple unaware monkeys to the

intelligent and mighty human civilization possessing a sophisticated material, as well as inner world.

In this paradigm, the goal of life is to continue improving the surrounding physical world and society, and through this action also developing the intellect and inner world. This is the cultural belief system or myth most of us live in, and it encourages us to develop our individuality through our career, creativity, and social relationships.

### **Collective and Personal Myth**

Described above are the big collective mythologies, which create some structure around the existential life questions and motivations. Why then do we need a personal myth?

My view on the history of collective myth is that until about 50 years ago, the collective myth was enough for most people. You followed whatever tribe you were born into, and the path given to you by your birth and parents. Only the most unique individuals could or even wanted to break through these boundaries and make their own path. However, in the present world, society values this sense of uniqueness. Much more choice is possible and desirable for us. In most cases, we can now choose our profession, place to live, religion, views, and beliefs. Modern progressive society has begun to welcome diversity in gender and sexuality.

From working with my clients, I have observed that people in modern society are all looking for their own unique life path unrelated to the fate of previous generations. To support that idea I did a small survey of the 20-something college student population. I asked, what is the most burning life question for them right now? Is it relationships, as it was for my peers, or is it money, career, spirituality? To my surprise, their most burning questions were “How

do I find my own unique life path that will make me happy and fulfilled?” and “How can I follow my calling to go beyond my own limitations and those of society and money?”

As the collective myth defines how we evolve as a community, the personal myth sets a large scale life goal for the individual. It helps the individual make choices in life, break through limitations, go through life crises, and develop big goals. It helps you to look at the whole life journey from a bigger perspective. Because the life myth is your own, you can work with it, improve it, change it, and blend other mythologies into yours.

What do we need in order to evolve, change, and shape our personal mythology? Where do we begin? Arnold Mindell (personal communication) developed a theory that our first childhood dream contains the base material for building our personal myth. The images from our childhood myth represent contradictory, polarized energies which we encounter in our life journey. These energies manifest throughout our journey as obstacles, lessons, relationships, and crises. Some of these energies are closer to our identity and represent the primary process, while others are farther, and represent the secondary process. A good understanding and awareness of both of these energies can help you on your personal journey, during life challenges and sharp turns.

### **Childhood Dream and Personal Myth**

Here, I describe how my personal myth appears in my childhood dream. In the first dream that I remember having as a child—I am flying. In this dream I already know how to fly well, and I can push off from the ground and fly low and steady. I choose not to fly high in my dream, and stay close to the ground in a stable flight. In this dream I am teaching other people to push off the ground and achieve stable flight like me.

The primary energy in this dream is my flight, which is stable and low to the earth. Which do you think is the secondary and more challenging energy in the dream? There are actually two of them. One is represented by the other people learning from me. These are characters that do not yet know how to fly. The second energy comes through the experience of flying, as in my dream there is a possibility to fly up into the cosmos without any limitation or specific trajectory. How does remembering and connecting to this dream help me write a book? First, I need to keep in my awareness that all parts of my childhood dream are representations of my own potential.

Somehow, writing is hard for me. I often feel stuck, confused, hopeless, criticize myself, and doubt the validity of my work. This is a crisis that needs to be resolved before I can be productive. When I feel like that I take time to contemplate my childhood dream and it supports me through this rough patch. When I remember the feeling of stable and masterful flight from my childhood dream, my energy stabilizes immediately. I visualize my stable flight and also try to feel this dream physically. I get up and move or even dance through the motions of flying.

This exercise brings back my clarity and inspiration. In writing this paper, my goal is to teach the readers to use their dreams to help fly gracefully through their life challenges. Knowing that this goal is a primary part of my life myth gives me a lot of power and joy. I also look at the other secondary parts of my childhood dream. When I think that in the dream I am not only flying, but also teaching other earthbound people to fly, I remember my potential readers. In this moment I phone my students, friends, and clients. I interview them, asking their opinions about which information and methods can help them in their lives.

Feeling that I am not alone with my writing, but am in a relationship with people who can benefit from it, inspires and supports me in my struggle with creativity.

Remembering who I am, connecting to the image of one who knows how to fly and has methods to teach others, is my primary process. Then, I take some time to meditate on the other secondary energy in my dream. Farther from my identity in the dream, was the idea to fly high up and far away from earth into space. When I meditate on that idea, I go into a trance state where I feel free to move, dance, and sing. I start to write poetry. I realize that this paper does not just have to be useful and educational. Through this energy I can make it more poetic and magical. This was one example of how I use my childhood dream to support my work activity. Let us see other examples of childhood dreams that reflect life journeys and challenges.

### **Cutting Through Obstacles: Mark's Childhood Dream**

Mark is a client with whom I have been working. He is a sweet, gentle, spiritual guy in his late 30s, who likes playful relationships, adventures, and joy. Mark has struggled with headaches for the past 10 years and through trying to heal himself, he became a craniosacral therapy healer, and now helps others. He is concerned with succeeding in society and would like to build his own healing center one day. However, whenever he starts working on his projects, he becomes really tired and low on energy, is bothered by headaches, and cannot make any progress. I offered to discuss Mark's childhood dream and look for some organizing principle that would help him move towards his vision.

This was the dream Mark remembered from when he was around 4 years old. Mark dreamed that he was at an amusement park, there were many rides and everyone was having fun. A big crowd was lining up for a popular attraction, so he lined up too. As the line was

getting shorter, Mark could see something odd happening and was not sure if he wanted to go on the attraction anymore. He could see that people were lining up for a guillotine and getting their heads cut off one after the other. That was the attraction that everyone was in line for. They all seemed pretty excited, but Mark did not think that looked like a good idea, though he was not scared either. He considered leaving the queue, but felt that he ought to do what everyone else was doing. Finally Mark decided to only get SOME of his head cut off instead of all of it. At the guillotine, Mark positioned himself so that only the top of his scalp got cut off. It did not hurt, and he felt fine after, but it was bleeding a lot. Mark went to the nearest water fountain to rinse all the blood off his wound, the water felt cool and really nice running over his head. Then he patted the wound down with a paper towel to dry it and felt all better.

We discussed this dream, and how it connects to Mark's current life journey, victories, and struggles. First I asked Mark his own ideas about this dream, and what it meant to him. Mark said he often remembered that feeling when he wanted to leave the queue of the attraction. He thought that it was a message for him not to follow the majority opinion or the path society set out for him. This is how he has been living his life, and that scene in the dream meant a lot to him. Although it was an important part of Mark's dream, we looked further in order to unfold more meaning.

When we looked at other details, we noticed right away that in the dream Mark was trying to heal his head under a flowing water source. This resonated strongly with Mark, as he has been trying to heal his chronic headaches for the past 10 years. The method of craniosacral therapy which has helped him to heal himself is very gentle and has a flowing feeling like water. I also pointed out that the setting of the dream is an amusement park with many fun rides and adventures. It made Mark smile, he recognizes and loves this part of his

life. He is an adventurous traveler who just returned from a trip to Peru and was planning his next trip to the Himalayas. He was happy to realize that his desire to have a playful and adventurous life was a huge part of his personal myth from the age of 4. Being a healer, adventurer, rebel, are roles that are comfortable for Mark. They are a big part of his journey and life myth, and belong to his long time primary process.

Next, I suggested that Mark look at the most challenging image of his dream—the guillotine. The image of a guillotine is negative, but I offered an association of it being sharp, cutting through obstacles and through mental limitations. I suggested that Mark try to imitate guillotine movement and see how this “cutting through” energy could help him deal with obstacles at work. Mark tried to become a guillotine by making cutting or chopping motions with his hand. He did not like how this movement made him feel. He felt weak and got a slight headache from this shapeshifting. In Processwork we call this moment “Dancing at the Edge” (personal communication with Arnold Mindell).

I asked him, “Why is this energy so hurtful for you? Where in your life have you met this sharp cutting energy before, and how did it harm you?” Mark said, “My father was a strict and abrupt person, he had this sort of energy, and as a child it was painful for me.”

Hearing this, I realized that Mark was hurt by this energy in the past, and may not have a model for using such energy in a positive and constructive way in his life. I asked Mark, “Could harnessing this energy help you to move forward with your projects?” He liked this idea. Then I asked Mark, “If you were to use this energy, would you be afraid of hurting people around you the way your father’s abruptness hurt you?” Mark smiled, “No, I am not afraid of that. I have studied the art of communication a long time and I am conscious of my relationship with people. I am not afraid that I will cut up people’s feelings.” After this

realization, Mark relaxed. I saw that Mark had overcome this edge and we could continue the exercise. I suggested for him to try the motion again, but more carefully, slowly and consciously. Mark tried doing the cutting motion slowly, and it began to look like a very controlled and purposeful karate chop. We tried using this movement as a dance—moving around together and doing slow karate chops. We both had a lot of fun with this exercise. Mark felt empowered and energized. The image of a guillotine had previously made him depressed and tired, but by turning it into a conscious karate chop, Mark gained access to his life myth's secondary power. Mark felt like this was that persistent and strong ability to move through obstacles which he had been needing in his career and business projects. Doing this movement with awareness connected Mark to his power—the ability to move stubbornly through obstacles, without getting sidetracked by doubts.

We finished the session. I gave Mark a homework exercise—every time he gets stuck with a business project to stand up and dance this karate movement. In a week he texted me: “I am doing my slo-mo karate, and my work is flowing like a river.” By working with a childhood dream in this way, we were able to develop Mark's personal myth to help support his progress and success in business.

### **Using a Dream To Help With a Creative Project**

Lina is a yoga teacher. She has developed her own style of exercises for women, and has been teaching it for a while in groups, or with private clients. At this moment she is in the process of developing her online program for women. When she started filming her webinar, she got stuck and lost all her passion. She came to me for a session, complaining of losing her energy and a sudden lack of interest in her webinar idea.



From my own experience, and experience of my students, I know that the moment we step from a comfortable environment into the public light, the worst inner criticism is unleashed. Let us look at the messages from Lina's inner critic. The first message is that she is not worthy to present anything, and her place is to help others, not to be a leader or presenter. This self-critical message comes from Lina's family culture. We also connected Lina's creative block to the harsh history of her birth country, the Soviet Union, where many bright and creative people were killed by Stalin's regime. We understand the roots of Lina's creative stagnation, but how to help her?

Lina recently had a dream related to her creative block. We decided to look for resources in that dream. In the dream Lina was travelling in another country. She left her hotel, went for a walk in an unknown city and got lost. She did not know the way back to her hotel. She was wandering through the streets and saw a street actor, who was doing a wonderful magical performance. The crowd on the street applauded and cheered the actor. Lina filmed his performance on her mobile phone. Then, she was wandering the streets again and met a local woman who knew the city. This friendly woman invited Lina to her house, and then guided her back to the hotel.

When we analyzed the dream, Lina noticed the atmosphere of confusion and feeling of being lost, which followed her in the dream. She recognized this feeling. This was the exact feeling she experienced when she thought about her webinar project. In the dream Lina was a person who is lost. In Processwork terms we can say that Lina's primary process during this dream is this state of being lost.

We decided to work with both figures from the dream—the street artist and the local woman. I suggested that Lina shapeshift into the street artist. We started the process of

shapeshifting with the movement channel. Lina stood up and pretended to be juggling with colored balls and other artist's items. To help her shapeshift better and really get a feel for this role, I added the relationship channel. I roleplayed the audience and enthusiastically cheered her performance. It helped, and Lina was able to go deeper into the street artist role. She envisioned the wonderful and unusually colorful patterns that the artist created with his juggling balls. She added the visual channel to her shapeshifting process. Lina imagined that the artist used magic to make his performance more impressive. She fantasized that he is not only an artist, but a magician as well. We decided to call this role "the magician artist."

While playing this dream figure, Lina went into a joyful and energized state. She reported that she recognized this state—this is how it feels for her to be in a creative flow. We decided to use this new state to get some insights on the webinar project. From this role of the magician artist Lina felt totally able to create the webinar. As a magician artist she knew that her input is needed and the public is waiting for her webinars. She can just step out on a street and do it. Lina was able to maintain this state for a while, while talking about her detailed plans for the webinar, but then she felt a block in her throat. Her inner critic raised its voice again.

When we stepped into the artist magician role from the dream, we unfolded Lina's secondary process—mastery and excitement of being in creative flow, ability to go out, to show her talents to the public, and to receive admiration and money for that. We also found an edge which showed up in this session as a body symptom—the pressure in Lina's throat. We decided to step out from the magician role and to explore the second figure from the dream—the local woman—to see if this part of the dream may help us deal with the edge of self-criticism and fear.

Lina remembered how the woman looked in the dream, and used her visual channel to shapeshift into the woman. She imagined herself as an older and stronger woman in a business suit. Lina's body sensations changed as well. She felt more stable and heavy. She remembered that in the dream this woman knew this city and the right way to the hotel. I suggested that Lina use movement and she walked around the room in the role of this business woman.

From within this role, Lina reported that this woman is much more sure of herself than everyday Lina. She knew local maps and roads. She also had a lot of experience in business. I suggested that Lina could give herself advice from within this role, about her webinar project and her problem with fear and self-criticism. From this woman's role Lina had an interesting new idea—she needed somebody to support her in filming the webinars. We decided that she can ask a friend from the school who really liked Lina's lessons and exercises. This friend can help her to film the webinar.

### **Integration of the Dreamwork**

If you have some experience working with dreams, you know that they have a tendency to disappear from memory. To remember the dream we sometimes need to make some special effort, like writing it or repeating it several times. The states and experiences that we discover while processing the dreams are also dream-like. This means that the sensations may be really intense while we practice them, but have a tendency to disappear from our attention. That is why it is very important to use integration practices which will help to anchor those experiences.

We decided that it is very important for Lina to be able to step into the role of the magician artist easily. This way she can connect to her creative flow whenever she needs. To

help her with this, we decided to create a magician's dance. Lina went back into the role and from this role created a dance of a successful, happy, creative, magical artist. She plans to use it to step into her flow. Following is the picture Lina created to help her remember the magician artist's creative flow.



*Figure 3.* Lina's picture.

## Chapter 6: How To Remember Dreams

“I don’t have dreams” is the statement I often hear when talking with my clients or friends about dreams. From a scientific perspective, our sleep time is divided between different stages (Live Science, n.d.). Dreams happen during the REM stage, and it is a normal part of any healthy adult’s sleep. Our society does not value dreams as something important, so we have a tendency to forget them. Many scientific sources describe dream images as random pictures—information garbage which pops up in our mind while our brain rests.

Here, we are going to learn a very different attitude towards dreams. We approach our dreams with great respect and fascination. Dreams could be an inner guru leading you to spiritual realms, or a wise teacher who points out your mistakes. Dreams can show unused resources and give precious advice. Before we learn how to use our dreams, we need to remember them. To remember dreams, let us follow these simple steps.

- Make it important. With our upbringing, we learn to consider that dreams are not very important, so we do not pay attention to them. To change this attitude I usually ask clients to bring a dream to the next session or class as “homework.” This assignment makes the person responsible for remembering their dreams, and even by itself often helps them to pay attention and to catch the dream images.
- Intention. While lying in bed at night before going to sleep, set an intention: “I need to remember my dream. First thing in the morning when I wake up, I will think about my dream.”
- Careful waking. When you are waking up, and are in the state between sleep and wakefulness, remember your intention about dreams. Try not to move much or roll your head. Remember a small scene, an image or idea from your dreams. Play this

part of your dream in your head 5-10 times as a movie, until you remember it well. As you replay the scene you can recover more from your night's dream and create a story.

- Recording. After you have played it in your head many times, you can get up and write it in your journal, or audio record it.

If you are still having problems remembering your dreams, or if you urgently need advice from your “inner guru” you can use dream herbs. I use two of them.

- Mugwort (*Artemisia vulgaris*)—1 spoon for a cup of hot boiled water. You can drink it twice a week, not more (Sher, n.d.)
- Calea Zacatechichi, Mexican dream herb—1 spoon for a cup of water. You can drink it three nights in a row, and then take a break. It is very bitter, but I got used to it and actually like the taste. It is good for your liver and gives you very visual dreams (Bautista, n.d.).

## Chapter 7: Conclusion



*Figure 4. Image from a dream.*

Eight years ago, during the winter Processwork intensive, I had a night dream. I dreamed that Amy Mindell invited me to her house. Here is the dream.

I am sitting in a room which is partly a kitchen and partly an alchemical laboratory. Amy left to go somewhere and I sit alone in this room. I have noticed that the really healthy meal which was cooking in the alchemical flasks, overflowed and is spilling onto the floor. To save this precious food, I have started taking the meal from the flasks and putting it into small bowls.

I think I am living out this dream by applying Processwork methods in developing practical goals for creative career development. In this paper, I have shared my personal struggles with creativity and edges around creativity, my approach on how to present Processwork ideas to the general public, and my experience of working with dreams and Processwork methods in the area of creative careers. I have demonstrated examples of how

Processwork methods of working with dreams can be used to develop new styles of communication and new ways of approaching challenges in career and business development. I believe that these examples of practical approaches can help readers of this paper to grow and be successful in times of change.

There are many other Processwork techniques to cultivate creativity, which I have not named here as that has not been the focus of my paper. My specific interest has been on Processwork methods to work with dreams. There are also many other approaches to dreamwork, which I did not mention. I realize that what I have described in this paper has room for further development and that this may be a limitation of this project. I look forward to going further with my ideas and applications in the future.



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## Appendix A: Examples of Art for Dreams, and Dream Figures' Integration

### Working With Body Symptoms Through Art Expression: My New Crazy Teacher



Figure A1. Miss Poison Ivy.

*For the past 20 years of my self-development marathon I have met plenty of teachers.*

*Some teachers were nice, others were not. Some became my good friends and collaborators. One teacher became my life long root guru. Others I try to avoid at any cost. Some came in human form, others were not.*

*Exactly 1 month ago I met the most crazy and wrathful teacher. I encountered her by chance—after leading a deep transformational and challenging seminar in Boston, I wanted to work in my garden to ground myself.*

*She was modest and meek. I did not notice her. I stepped on her territory without any respect.*

*Her name was Poison Ivy.*

*The meeting with this simple, but powerful creature was followed by a month of disastrous consequences:*

- *Burned skin on hands and legs*
- *Huge waves of dry poisoned fire going through my body for several weeks*
- *One month delay on all my projects*
- *Loss of sleep.*

*While going through all this pain, I hated this crazy Poison Ivy spirit with all my revolutionary passion. But at this moment, when this 4-week transformational journey is completed, I am more objective, and I am able to see tons of positive results:*

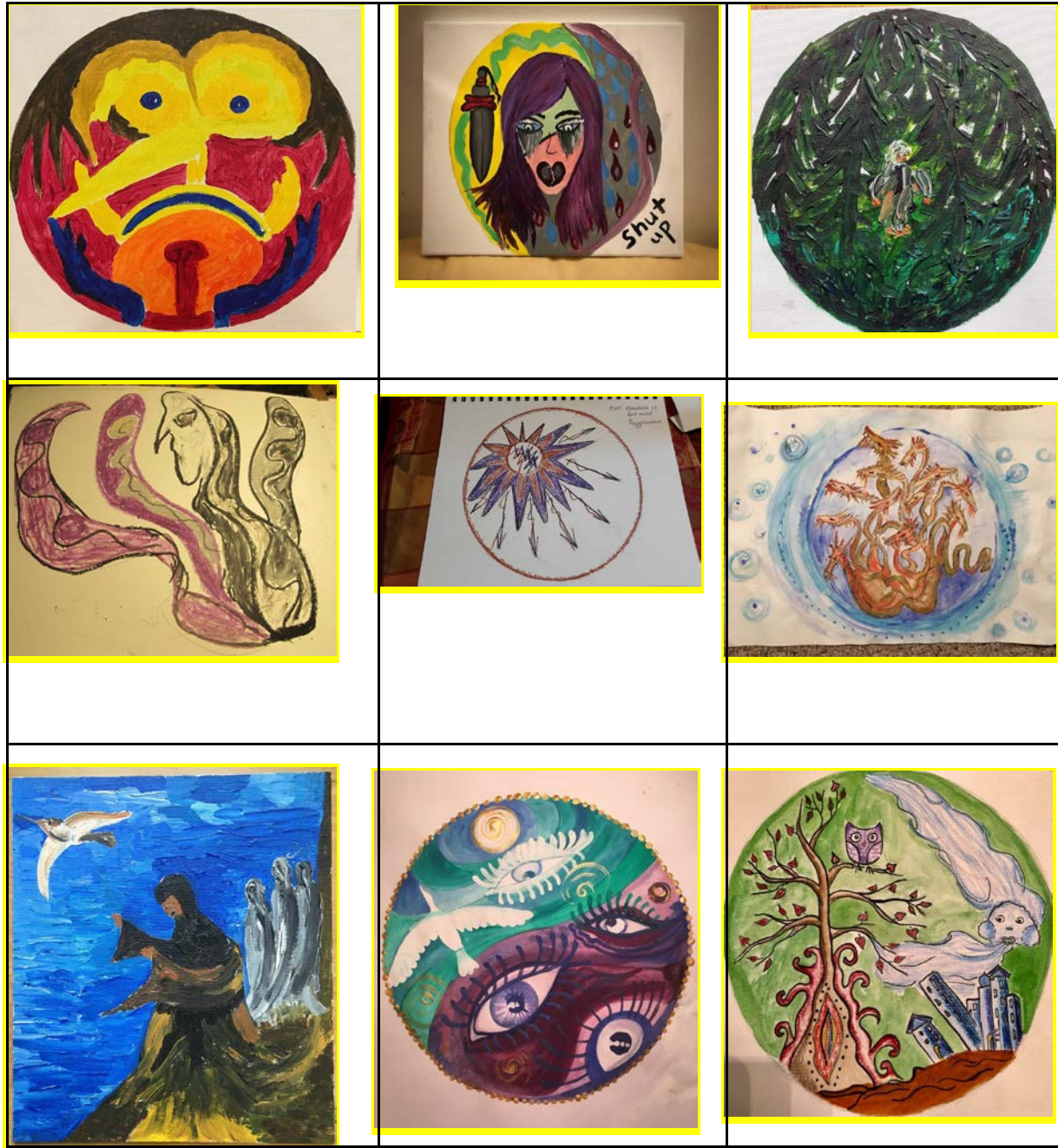
- *I have survived one of the most irritable moments of my life and I have noticed that people, even my close relatives do not irritate me anymore.*
- *I gained tons of insight on boundaries, protecting my own territory, and aggression.*
- *While working on myself, and on my autoimmune allergic reaction, I had some positive experience of stopping the allergy with my conscious will. I got some insights on psychological and energetic mechanisms of allergy and autoimmune reaction. I am sure in the future I will be able to help my clients and students with those cases.*
- *I lost weight and now I am wearing a dress which has been waiting for me for 2 years.*
- *I have created my first real art mask.*
- *And the most important—the painful block in my neck, which bothered me for the last 4 years and caused a lot of weakness and health problems has disappeared! This poisoned heat has melted it down! At this moment I feel much more powerful, grounded and stable than a month ago.*

*Therefore, I officially put Miss Poison Ivy in my pantheon of teachers. I hope I have passed her exam and I will not need to repeat this class ever in my life.*

*I am grateful for her teaching and healing, and I am happy to introduce her to my friends.*

*Please, meet my new teacher—the meek and the mighty Poison Ivy!*

**TERRapia Students' Inner Critic Mandalas**



*Figure A2. Student inner critic mandalas.*



Figure A3. Student inner critic mandalas (cont.).