

All the World's a Stage

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15 Dec, 2009

I attended a workshop on the weekend called "Play of Life"

The training program is run by my very dear friend and her husband who designed and created it. It's a program that grew out of the disciplines and philosophy of psychodrama.

where the client can "show" rather than "tell" issues and life situations they need to deal with. By "showing" their current and ideal situation utilising a 3-D stage/play of small figures and props, they see for themselves the role, relationships, dynamic and often the first step to making it better.

It reminds me of the old fashioned sand-play, but taken to the next level. The program involves various techniques. One of my favourites was a technique to envision the ideal solution to a problem then envision what helps you move towards it and what enables you to move away from it. You strengthen one, and lessen the other. By using a series of well structured investigative, diagnostic questions a person can glean greater insight into their own patterns, roles and limiting behaviour.

We spend so much time creating our stories and narratives. And part of that creative work includes filling in the untenable gaps in life and our ideals. We plug up the holes with addictions, defence patterns, and often unrealistic mental constructs. For me, drinking my way through grief was better than facing the black hole of loss.

With this program I could "show" myself and another (witness) what was really going on. I could get out of the area of talking/telling /language and go straight to where the emotions and memories live. That's why it's so powerful - one can't lie (that is if you're serious about fixing the problem.)

For me, the wealth of the program can be encapsulated into the 2 main insights I took away:

1. That we can only change our own behaviour and we can often begin that change with a small step.
2. That we play roles in life -some helpful, others not so helpful. Once we are able to describe that role and see it for what it is – we can change it, just as one assumes and drops a role on a stage.

I love workshops that enable learning – specifically if that learning is going to make my life more loving and expansive. With my love and background in theatre I loved this sort of learning especially. I'd also done psychodrama before with very helpful results and so I was surely in my element.

The group was comprised of insightful, humble, loving individuals. These learning groups always are. People that want to grow are invariably interesting. The group were a microcosm of society and a rich mix of types, some introverted and extraverted. Some were willing and able to externalise their insights in the feedback sessions – no matter how painful. Others were able to witness someone else's work, without having an opinion – not interpreting, just reading the signals and signs. We all loved it.

Mainly because the 2 days were facilitated by a delightful individual – a friend to many of the group. He is a young man – committed to caring and enabling the growth of others. A man who'd found a great vehicle for insights into his own process, the meaning of why we do what we do, and a way he can help. He was getting his trainer "P" plates, and he passed with flying colours – and well deserved.

The first night of the weekend, I was so exhausted I virtually collapsed asleep as soon as my head hit the pillow. And I dreamt.

I dreamt of a stingray threatening the safety of my twin sister and myself. We were swimming in unclear, opaque water, and I warned her of this hidden threat. To avoid contact with Stingray, I urged her to scramble onto a pier out of the water. My sister, though, remained in the water and was touched as the Ray nudged past and around her. Instead of dying, or being stung, my sister rode on the back of this huge magnificent beast – as if were a flying carpet. And as she did, the Stingray morphed into something less ominous and more graceful. It grew a neck and head of a swan, which my sister caressed.

I took the memory and elements of that dream into the 2nd day of the workshop. On this day I set up my ideal future - including the chance to love someone again, and to live in a fuller way. My intention, in this play of life, was to shed the role of *fearful resigned loner* and assume a new role of *courageous giver and lover*.

For me the Stingray's beautiful transformation was testament to this desire. Change and growth were possible.