

FINDING YOUR DIRECTION, FOLLOWING YOUR SOUL

Process Work Certificate Project

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Finding Your Direction, Following Your Soul
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Part I

“A Cup of Chai with Jay” The Story Behind Finding Your Direction, Following Your Soul

Our best conversations are had over a cup of chai at Starbucks, more specifically over Venti Soy Chai Tea Lattes with a pump of chocolate (;-). We talk through lots of ideas and ventures over our chai's.

Who is “we” you ask? Ah, let me catch you up on the story.

One of the “we” is me, Barbara, the author of this paper, and a student in the Process Work Certificate Program. The other is my partner and soulmate, Jay, who has been a part of my life for the past seventeen years. We help each other with lots of things, and often that happens during our talks.

Jay is helping me get past my edge in writing this paper. How, you ask? Well, for one, he is a character in my script, and second, he was also a willing participant in my workshop, which made him a great candidate for getting feedback about the experience, another vital part of my project.

And so here it begins...

[The setting] It's mid-afternoon on a sunny Friday in Boulder, Colorado. We're sitting at Starbucks, Soy Chai Tea Lattes in hand.

Jay: So Barbara, tell me again, how did you choose the topic for your process work project? And what brings you to this edge you're experiencing today?

Barbara: We might need another Chai to get through these questions. (I smile at him with a chuckle.)

I began this journey with a desire to connect my years of experience in bodywork and spiritual direction with the intriguing world of process work. I had questions and wanted to find connections.

What is “the soul” that I've been listening to all these years?

How do I/we experience the soul in our bodies?

How does this relate to the process work levels of reality?

There is something about the concept of the *soul* that captivates me. The soul, for me, is the deep core and essence of who we are. Thomas More popularized the soul in his book, Care of the Soul. Carl Jung wrote about psyche and soul. Parker Palmer, author and educator, talks about uniting one's soul and role in his book, The Hidden Wholeness.

As I pondered the soul in relation to process work, I've come to see that is synonymous with what Arny Mindell calls **sentience*. Sentience is the deep eternal, cosmic part of ourselves, the part that is within us (local) as well as being connected

to everything and everyone else (nonlocal). This is very similar to many world religions. While growing up Catholic, I learned that we are all a part of God and in God we are all connected.

As I explored my soul, my sentient level, I realized that it contains the seed and organizing element of who I am. As I reflected on my relationships and the synchronicities that happen all the time, I could see how I am connected to everyone else, intermingled with all of life happening at this moment. It is both personal and cosmic, one and all, mystery and reality, occurring simultaneously.

There's more that inspired my creative process pertaining to the body and movement. Authentic movement, for example, speaks to how we experience the soul in our bodies. Reading Mary Whitehouse and Janet Adler, as well as experiencing this type of movement, was very powerful for me. It is based on exploring the unconscious through movement, and following that movement through to its completion, in the presence of the therapist who witnesses your emerging and unfolding. It's quite similar to process work. My brief experience with authentic movement provided me with a major insight into what blocks me at times. During my movement, I came to a halt and just couldn't move anymore. I stood there, paralyzed. Then I heard the words, "you can't." I knew it was the voice of my parents telling me all the things I wasn't allowed to do. "You can't do this. You can't do that. You can't...you can't...you can't..." Wow! What an eye opener!

But perhaps the most influential piece of this project was my experience at the Process Work Intensive. I learned so much! And the primary learning came through my body. For example, when I was simulating a stuck experience, I watched how my hands knew very quickly how to get unstuck. It shocked my partner and I. Rather than continuing to push against the hands holding me in, I quickly brought my hands together inward and jumped outside the hold. It startled both of us! We did it again just to see what happened. My body had wisdom that my conscious mind was clueless to. It was so invigorating and amazing!

I could go on and on. Want another Chai?

Jay: Sure, this is fascinating!

Barbara: There was also a poem that called to me as I began my certificate work. It's by David Whyte from his book "Fire in the Earth," entitled Self- Portrait. I love David Whyte's poetry. The line that grabbed my attention is this:

"... I want to know if you know
how to melt into that fierce heat of living
falling toward the center of your longing."

Wow! The line of this poem disturbs me, and calls to me simultaneously. Melting into the fierce heat of living! Falling toward the center of my longing! It speaks of extreme allowing, of liquefying, of dissolving. It speaks of yielding to what lies deep within me as well as how I live everyday life. It even connects to an experience I had

at a shaman training some years ago, called Drumming the Sacred Dreamer. We made drums and danced around a huge bonfire. I heard the words, 'become the fire.' This has been a challenge and call for a long time.

Do I know how to 'melt toward the fierce heat of living' and 'fall toward the center of my longing'? Not consciously, though my body probably knows.

Do I know how to create space for doing this? Of course - and that's what I did with my project.

My project actually arose out a session I did with Kate Jobe, my mentor. She suggested I do some vector walking. We met on Skype, so I happened to be in my meditation room. She had me walk in a direction that attracted me, that called to me. I walked toward the corner I keep my altar and sacred objects. It felt like coming home to myself as I stood in my meditation space, soaking in deep silence and strength.

Then unexpectedly, she asked me to move in a direction that was uncomfortable, that felt like the opposite of what I had just experienced. I found myself walking toward the window opposite my altar. I felt lots of buzzing and shaking. It was extremely uncomfortable. She suggested that I move it, get to know the discomfort better. The movement was a wild, dizzy, uncontained dance, like a trance dance. It came to a stopping point and I stood still. I suddenly realized that if I am going to be a facilitator for others, I need to trust the experience of full spectrum movement so I can open the space for them - so I can help them trust their own experience.

After this session with Kate, I found the direction for my project. You know how I've continually listened within for my direction in life, to live with inner and outer congruence. I have also worked with others seeking that same congruence. With all of this percolating inside, I began wondering what I could design that would help us unite our outer life with the inner life of the soul? Thus I came up with the topic, "Finding Your Direction, Following Your Soul." You know the rest.

Well, thanks for listening, Jay. You really helped me put all of this together into a cohesive paper. I'll treat you to Chai next time.

Jay: My pleasure!

PART II: The Workshop/Retreat Design

FINDING YOUR DIRECTION, FOLLOWING YOUR SOUL: A Process Work Retreat

Paying attention to your inner depths through process work and the body, during times of transition and decision-making.

Gather in Silence

(Candle lit at the center of the circle of chairs, soft music playing)

Welcome & Introductions

Introduce myself: I've spent the past twenty years doing healing and spiritual work with people. I've done massage therapy, spiritual direction, and retreats at retreat centers and my offices in Houston and Denver. But you might say the essence of my life has been spent in listening to others and to myself. Process work has become sort of a spiritual practice. I am very much an introvert and enjoy contemplative space as we have here today. My desire is to bring to you what has been of great help to me in my journey. I encourage you to do what works best for you.

Invite everyone to introduce themselves - "What brought you here today?"
Go over the Agenda for the day, and housekeeping details.

Introduce the Day

A retreat is all about you – time for you to be with yourself, to reflect more deeply on your inner life and learnings. Over the years, I've discovered that no matter how long or short a retreat is - it is always enough. It's an odd phenomenon, but it's true.

Today you will spend time with your soul, the deep essence of who you are, the spark that makes you truly you. To take time to do this is an act of honoring yourself. Through tools of process work, which I'll explain in a little while, attention to your body, and dreams & insights that have been coming to you, you'll have space to re-acquaint yourself with your rich, inner creative potential.

Often during times of making important decisions or life changes, I find it difficult to stay in touch with my intuition and inner sense of direction. Yet this is when I need it most, and I suspect you do to. I have done these exercises many times and have found them to be extremely helpful. My body always seems to know, even when I don't have a conscious clue about the next step to take. So today, I offer this same path to you. Together we'll be in touch with our inner depths, supporting each other in the same space, finding meaning and direction for our next steps.

"Listening To Your Body" guided meditation

We're going to start with a body meditation.

I invite you to take a couple of deep breaths and settle into your place here, in your chair, in this room, in this circle.

Offer yourself permission to spend this time today.

Bringing your attention to your body, notice what part is desiring your attention right now. Take time to scan your body inwardly, and simply notice what calls to you. Or perhaps there's part of you that doesn't feel like its here. You might want to place your hand there if you can reach.

Now feel this place in your body from the inside out. Focus on what you're experiencing. Notice all the physical sensations and the thoughts connected to this part of you. Be with this for a moment.

Is there a movement to be made? Is there a sound to be sounded? Go ahead and move or make a sound.

Is there a message wanting to be communicated to your conscious self?

Take a few moments with this.

When you are ready, open your eyes.

You might want to jot a few notes in your journal.

Break Intro to Process Work

Process work and the body will form the foundation of our day. Process work is a theory and practice developed by Jungian analyst, Arnold Mindell, combining elements from Jungian psychology, Taoism, Shamanism, & Quantum physics. It's a way to facilitate change. His premise is that within our problems, are paths we haven't explored yet. Our symptoms and movements hold meaning for us to discover. By exploring and following the process as it unfolds, we develop a new perspective of ourselves that we didn't know was there.

Mindell proposes that everything is a dream - that "dreaming" is always happening, and not simply relegated to the night. He talks about 3 levels of reality happening at one time in everything we go through.

***Consensus Reality** – the physical reality as we know it and agree on it.

***Dreaming Level** – the daydreams or thoughts, feelings, night dreams, sensations, intuitions, synchronicities, and symbolic meanings occurring at the same time.

***Essence or Sentient Level** – the realm of subtle tendencies that occur before they can be verbalized. The sentient level brings us to the deep, eternal, and cosmic aspect of ourselves. From this place, awareness arises into our consciousness, like bubbles from the bottom of a glass of soda.

The premise is that you listen for wisdom from all the levels.

Often in our work, we come up to the **edge* of our comfort zone, the place that stops us from moving forward. Finding an edge is particularly insightful during major transitions and changes, and times of feeling stuck. That's the place to work with, and we'll do that through some non-intrusive ways today.

Process work helps us to be more fluid and less rigid in our roles, and our inner stance toward things, more accepting of the many parts of ourselves, even those **marginalized*, unwanted, ignored parts. The more inner work we do, the more flexibility we have, and the more our essence/our soul lives through us.

This is very similar to many of the world religions that teach us about the connectedness of life to a greater source, as well as our individual spiritual depths. The more we learn, grow, study, reflect, and listen, the greater our ability to handle life with grace and acceptance.

***ProcessMind Exercise**

(Adapted from Process Mind Exercise at the Process Work Intensive 2009)

Let's begin by exploring who we are at our essence level.

Find a comfortable position in your chair. Close your eyes and bring your awareness to your body. Notice if you can, where does it feel like home in your body? Where in your body do you feel most at home? Take your time, and scan through your body. You might want to put your hand on that place to help you feel it better. If nothing shows itself, simply choose a place you'd like to be at home in your body.

Once you've located it, begin to feel the qualities of this place. Feel the energy of it. Let it start to move you. You can move it your chair or get up and move. The energy may even have sound that you'd like to make. Feel free to make that sound.

Now that you've experienced the qualities and energy of home in your body, what place on the earth does this remind you of?

Go there in your inner vision. Feel this place. What does it feel like? What are the qualities of this place? How is it like you? How are you like it? (Give them a few minutes.)

Slowly come back to the room. Open your eyes. You might want to journal for a few minutes.

Partner sharing.

Take some time to share with each other what your experience was like. Where did this exercise take you in your body? On the earth? What is the significance of this? In what way does this support you in your explorations, in your life right now?

Large Group Sharing

Break: Tea & Snacks

"Finding Our Direction" *Vector Walking Exercise

(Adapted and improvised from the Vector Walking exercise at Process Work Intensive 2009, exercises in Earthbased Psychology by Arnold Mindell, and an exercise I experienced, facilitated by Kate Jobe)

We're going to do a walking exercise and allow our bodies to give us some direction.

Stand up. Let's move the chairs out of the way.

Pick a spot in the room that feels like the place to start. (Let everyone find a place.)

Put a small piece of paper here to mark you spot.

Take a deep breath and become present in your body. We're going to walk a bit.

Sense which direction is the way your body wants to go, then start walking very, very slowly in the direction that feels right.

I sometimes turn around in one spot to "feel" which direction my feet want to walk.

You'll sense which direction your body wants to go, or your feet will simply go a certain way – just follow. If there's no inner sense, just choose a direction to walk.

Walk very slowly and mindfully – a slow deliberate steps.

Be aware of what's happening inside you as you walk – thoughts, feelings, sounds, images, colors. What is happening within you as you go in this direction?

After a number of steps, and come to a stopping place. Reflect in silence for a minute about what just happened for you? What was in those steps? [pause]

Now – We're going to walk in the direction that feels uncomfortable, a direction that you'd rather not go.

Find which direction this is and begin to walk again like the first time – slowly, and be aware of what's happening on the inside. [pause]

After a few slow steps, come to a stopping place. Put a piece of paper on this spot. Reflect for a minute, what was in this direction for you? What happened?

Now - return to where you started your initial walk and walk toward the place you ended, knowing that you are connecting your chosen path with the difficult path.

Walk slowly, aware of the any connections, thoughts, or feelings. (pause)

After a moment, return to your chair, and take a few moments to jot some notes.

Partner Sharing

What did you learn in this exercise? What part of this exercise *flirted with you, fascinated you?

Large Group Sharing

What insights/wisdom does this offer in relation to what brought you here today?

Closing Reflection

What is the pearl you take home with you today? Go around the circle. This can be expressed in words, sound, movement - whatever best expresses your gift from today.

Thank you so much for your willingness to participate in this retreat! It has been an honor to work with you.

End of Retreat

Part III – Interview with Jay, a participant in the workshop

Barbara: Can you tell me about your experience with finding home in your body and on the earth? (*ProcessMind exercise)

Jay: When you said find someplace that's home in your body, I had to fish around for a while. I actually had to find what felt safe inside me. It was somewhere around here in the middle (pointing to his solar plexus.) Then I was just following my breathing.

There was something you said that helped localize it. You said, put your hand on the place. At first I was thinking it was down here (stomach.) But then I realized it was here on my heart. It's my heart. Is that a metaphor, I asked myself?

As I was present with that, the instruction was to be aware of the qualities, the rhythm. I was aware that a rhythm was going on in my heart, not the metaphorical heart. I mean the real beating organ. There's a continuous flow. There's a rhythm to that flow. The heart just keeps going no matter what. It doesn't stop at all. It doesn't think about anything. It just goes as long as this thing, me, is alive. It's constant. That rhythm is partly what makes it seem like home.

The next thing you asked was where does that connect to on the earth. It took only a nanosecond to land in the mountains next to a stream, also flowing and having its own rhythm. If you took it on a larger time scale, it, the stream, pulses with the flow of the seasons. And it never stops as long as the stream or the wilderness is alive, which could be a long period of time. (Jay is a geologist by training.)

What did that do for me? Returning home to the stream was returning to a natural process that is not messed with by human thought and planning. The reason it's home is because it is returning to what's natural, completely natural. That's why sitting by a stream is like being aware of my heart beating. It's like the water of life. It's all about returning to a place that's natural.

Barbara: Can you tell me what happened for you in the direction walking exercise? (*Vector Walking)

Jay: You know how isolated I am in my work. Because of that, I noticed there was some attraction in not staying too far away from the other people. I didn't want to interfere and mess with them, but I didn't want to walk away from the people in here.

I wasn't quite sure what to do with that, so I veered next to you and then went up to the wall, which was really threatening to me (**his edge*). What do you do when you're facing a wall and it seems like there's nowhere to go?

If it was a door, you could open it, unless it was locked. And sometimes we forget that we could turn around, that everything behind us is open. Everything out here is

an option. Then you could ask again, what is behind me? Turning around means being against the wall. A sledgehammer is an option too.

Barbara: What did these exercises reveal to you?

Jay: If I thought about what these could reveal about me, it might be as simple as saying that deep inside, I know the best way for me to live is to follow the rhythms of my own body, of nature, of the seasons. The flow of that river will shift and change, but its always natural unless we get involved. Unless the tinkering, machine-like human mind and activities get involved, the river will just flow and follow its course. It will find it's own way.

When I move in a direction where I flow naturally, following my heart, everything feels better. Things don't go well when I start messing with my direction, trying to act like the army corps of engineers and redirect the stream, damn it up and fill in the basin for some other purpose. For me, I need to follow natural rhythms. That sometimes means nature itself, outside, beyond me, to reconnect with my sense of being a natural part of the world.

Can I sense when I'm not doing that? When I'm trying to build machines and create towers and dams? Yes, of course. The construction gets involved and I smash up against the wall, like I did in the exercise. That's what I do in my work.

If you asked me about my work, and ask how would that apply to different kinds of work that attract me, or the different things I've experimented with over the years – the teaching and the group leadership that I do, even public speaking on occasion, which I haven't done for a long time – it flows naturally.

The work that I do for my pay (**his primary process*), for my day job, hammering at the keyboard, and grinding all kinds of technical data through my brain, and creating these things, is like the artificial construction of the army corps of engineers messing with nature and the natural course of the stream. They force it in a direction they want it to go. What comes to mind is the Mississippi river and how they've now spent a generation or two, forcibly redirecting this massive river that has its own way. From what I've read, it will win eventually. We won't be able to direct its course forever. It will jump right over all the barriers. That's what happened in Katrina. It jumped all the levies. Nature said here's a new rhythm, and you can try to stop me all you want.

My career could do that. It could flood and destroy, or I can step back and see where's it going and follow it. I could get on a boat. Curiously, if I just followed the beginning of that exercise through, and say what does it say about me, it tells me a lot about me in lots of ways. Even relationships – what's natural and what's artificial. What's forced, what's constricting.

How do I find the natural flow? (**his secondary process*) Well, I put my hand on my heart and I remember that no one has to make this heart beat. It will do it as long as I'm alive.

So can I flow with it? The river is the most calming place for me to be. The most pleasant relaxing moments when I can let go of all this stuff are when I go and spend time by the river and close my eyes because it's doing what it does too.

There's something about the flow that attracts me. I came to Colorado because I wanted running water. I love trees. I love mountains. Oceans are fine. Prairies and grasslands, that's all fine. But I want running water.

So there's some connection between the heart and the stream. Of course, that's where I'm most at home. And I'm most at home when I'm following the natural flow of my own heart.

[Postscript] After the retreat, we went for a hike in the mountains to a stream we used to spend lots of time. We hadn't been there for quite some months, found that trees and branches had fallen across it, literally blocking up the stream and ruining its beauty.

Jay spent a few minutes being angry about the situation. But within minutes, he sized things up, and took out his pocketknife with a blade in it, preparing to do some work. For the next hour we sawed away at branches and hauled off tree limbs to open the flow of the stream. Exhausted yet satisfied, he physically opened up the natural flow of the mountain stream, and I suspect, the natural flow of his own heart and yearnings.

Part IV – Hypothetically Working with Jay, and Unfolding the Process

Process work elements and possible ways to unfold his process:

My assessment of his process:

It seems that his **primary process* is doing work that goes against the natural flow of his own rhythms and yearnings. His work is forced and artificial.

A major symbol of dislike and **marginalization* is the Army Corps of Engineers, and the way he imagines them “messing with” what’s natural.

Following a natural flow and using his perceived gifts appears to be his **secondary process*. He wants that so much, but doesn’t believe he can have it, which brings him up to the wall, his **edge*. The wall was a very threatening place to be.

I perceive he has the strength of the Army Corps of Engineers to move things, which he did in physically clearing the stream. His edge is to take that same energy and put it toward clearing the stream of his life’s flow.

Because he spends a lot of time “grinding data through his brain,” in the **auditory channel*, using the unoccupied **movement channel* would appear to be fruitful to **amplify* his process.

To work with him, I’d ask if he might want to physically push against the wall with his body, to push back against the army corps of engineers, and see if he gave **positive feedback*.

Another option is to find out if there is a figure or something that he’s pushing against? We could explore what feelings come up as he’s pushing. Perhaps he would want to become the wall and embody that which holds him back.

A different approach could be to start with his hand on his heart and get in touch with the rhythm of the his heartbeat, the flow of blood. He seemed adept at using the metaphors and the **visual channel*. Perhaps the **proprioceptive channel* would offer some positive feedback in **unfolding* his process.

Process Work Journal

2/19/09

Session with Elva Redwood:

It seems appropriate to begin with my last process work session at the end of my Intensive. We did a process mind exercise:

The deepest part of me was located in my head around my mouth and back of my head. It felt like the rings of Saturn around my head. The place reminded me of the Himalayas, snow-capped and reaching toward the sky. I became them, growing taller and deeper simultaneously. My body responded by sitting straighter, lengthening my neck.

When the mountain spoke to me, we were in a crystal cave inside of it. Its essence was "white brilliance." Its message to me, "Become the Mountain." As I did, I could feel a deep energy and brilliance pulsating from me and filling the room. Elva said she could feel it too. We just sat in that for a while. I thanked her for doing her own work, which allowed me to come to this incredibly powerful place within.

I realized this profound silence held for me the fullness of my intensive experience – the sharing, the love (we named our group 'Seven-kisses'), the difficult times, the fun times, the incredible learning, and so much more. It was a phenomenal way to integrate the friendships, and it was all within me. It was me. There was no separation.

5/3/09

PW Exercise:

"What is the most prominent thing to work on this morning?"

I see a huge boulder sitting on the bottom of the ocean. It's heavy and stuck, the same way I usually feel, unable to move forward.

I stayed with the image and molded my body into the shape of the rock and just sat there on the ocean floor. I suddenly go through the ocean floor, dropping through 3 layers of rock and sediment, and came to the core. Boiling molten magma. Another rock bumps into me and breaks me apart. My body opens up and I fall back onto the floor.

It is so freeing! And so exciting! The molten rock is carrying me downstream. I melt and become part of the liquid rock. I enjoy being in the core. There is movement, fluidity, bubbling, new rocks coming into the molten stew. It feels like home! I feel so alive!

5/10/09

I look at an old business card that I used when I was doing spiritual direction. I have gone through so much transformation, but I haven't translated it into current language.

What is an image that reflects my spiritual life now? The image that comes immediately is a 'dulled mirror,' an antique in which you can't see a clear reflection. It can't even be cleaned up or shined. An entirely new mirror is needed.

Two days later, ironically I'm at a Catholic retreat center for a poetry retreat. My room has an old mirror similar to the one in my imagery. It's time to allow the old to give way to a new way of looking/seeing/reflecting.

6/23/09

PW Exercise:

I want to expand my horizons but don't know how to do this at the moment. I feel the energy in my belly, my center. I see a galaxy. It's beautiful! But I'm saddened because I don't know how to move into it. I remember I'm a rocket with ability to move.

I begin to feel movement to a solar system on the left. I move to the left and feel pulled down to earth, so I stoop down. Now I'm a peony bush with many flowers on it. Each bloom is an aspect of my giftedness. I can do many things well. The choice is mine which bloom to focus on.

7/22/09

PW exercise:

I get in touch with the most noticeable feelings/things going on right now. I feel a brick in my abdomen. I also notice a very subtle rocking motion that feels anxious. The rocking called me, so I focus on it. I slow it down. I feel a noose around my neck connected to the wooden chair I'm sitting in. I'm being pulled backwards, like I'm flying backwards in the chair. This is reminiscent of an exercise I did with Zoe just before going to the Intensive. The process is cycling back, not yet complete.

I see Mighty Mouse, a cartoon character from my childhood, flying through the air pulling me on a rope. It seems more like a rescue. We land on an island, palm trees blowing in the wind, and surrounded by gorgeous blue water. I just sit there looking around at the beauty, amazed stunned that I'm here. I let out a sigh of relief thinking this is what I've been wanting for a long time – to spend time on an island beach gazing at the waves.

The big message I get is 'stop trying so hard'!

7/24/09

PW Exercise:

I do a ritual this morning with incense, moving the incense stick in the four directions, up to the sky, down toward the earth, then all around in a circular motion with the intention to clear the energy around me. Then I begin to move. I move in

Gabrielle Roth's (author of *Sweat Your Prayers*) "Stillness" movement, so slow that it is stillness and movement simultaneously.

I become the white bird given to me by my grandfather in my dream. Though moving slowly, I soar through the air. It feels so good! So freeing to be without confines of gravity. Yet I realize that the boundlessness of bird's flight and the bounded confines of gravity of both present and necessary in my life.

7/28/09

PW Exercise:

My head is swimming with a barrage of thoughts. It feels like I'm trapped beneath water under a tight canvas, like something covering a pool, yet I sense I'm in the ocean. I'm struggling for breath, for air, swallowing little pockets I can find at the interface of the water and the covered surface. But I'm also angry! I'm so tired of feeling trapped below the surface, being kept down!

Who is the one that traps me under the water? I push up with my hands. The cover doesn't go away or move much, but I can breathe. Now I am a dandelion puff. I move my arms around in circular motions, feeling my fullness. I wind comes and blows my seeds into its current. I am flying free in the air – wow this feels so good!

8/23/09

PW Group, Waynelle's office:

My work today is around letting go of the old relationship with Mom that I had when she was alive. Death was in the 'field' of our group. I worked on Mom's death from brain cancer.

I am with her standing by the coffin, as I did during the wake and funeral. I couldn't leave her. I feel like I am her protector. Now she is the pillow next to me. I want her to be taken care of. I pick her (the pillow) up and hold her close to my face. "I miss you Mom. I don't want to let you go."

I realize I am doing to her what she did to me throughout my life – never letting me go. I desperately wanted freedom, but she always pulled me back. Now I understand. Can I give her freedom to move on? I love her and can choose to let her go. I hug and kiss her, cry a lot, and I give her to Jane. "I love you Mom and let you go." I am grateful for her love that I always misread, and for our relationship.

I feel a happy sadness and an open heart. "You will be with me forever, Mom."

8/26/09

PW Exercise:

I feel a pull/tug between my hands and my intellect. My hands still want to heal. But I don't want to do hands-on healing work anymore. I want to do something more! What if I pull off all the stops? Break apart the rope? Whew...my heart is let out of its bindings. Tears flow as balm all over me.

8/29/09

PW Exercise:

I feel like I want to jump and run, or move fast. I don't want to sit still as I do most mornings.

I start moving my hands, pushing aside the heavy veil that is in front of me. It feels good to be 'opened up' rather than 'closed in'. I stand to move my arms more. It's a very staccato movement, sharp and hard, elbows bent and arms together, thrashing outward over and over again. I'm pushing stuff away from me. It feels good to be rough and sharp.

I shake my head and hair as if I'm trying to shake pine needles out of my hair. Next I am grabbing at my abdomen trying to get out all of the shit, with motions of throwing it aside and out of me.

Back to thrashing my arms outward. What am I pushing away? I now see the inside of a membrane. I'm inside an eggshell. I'm a chick ready to peck my way out. With my sharp beak, I peck my way through the shell. BREAK THROUGH! I'm coming out!

9/5/09

PW Exercise:

The volcano energy I experienced in Portland is back. This time the lava is much closer to spewing. I'm afraid of spewing. That's the peaceful gatekeeper speaking. Can't let anything be messy, and god forbid, we can't let anything explode! I flash back to the lava. Wow, I have liquid fire in me. I am the fire. I am the mountain that houses the fire. That's pretty powerful stuff!!

10/14/09

Therapy with Waynelle:

We focused on my inner turmoil. I see dark purple goo. There is a feeling of tumult below the purple. There is a scared little girl, about age 7, hiding in a closet from the chaos. I go down to be with her, and wrap my arm around her. As we stand there, a path of light pierces through the dark purple. It is me - vulnerable and strong.

What is the purple? Part of the rainbow. Also a color of church garments. Tim's wedding is next month. I'll be seeing my ex-husband who is now a Catholic priest. There's the purple turmoil. Time to take care of unfinished business.

10/18/09

PW Exercise:

I have a flash of my inner divided self. There is me, going about daily life. And there's another me in hibernation crouched down on the floor, all tucked together, head down and inward. This me is dressed in the lavender bodysuit of a dancer, yet hibernating.

The daily life self keeps dragging the hibernating me everywhere. Someone keeps the her in a drug-induced state. I sense that its fear of the daily reality self that keeps her asleep. I also sense that it takes a lot of energy to drag around a drug-induced hibernating self everywhere.

I move into movement to continue the process. I am now the hibernating self. I get up and move up and around in dancing flowing movements. This part of me is quite powerful, moving the energy currents as I move my body. This powerful part of me is waking up and moving.

12/17/09

Therapy with Waynelle:

I bring a major dream: Dream Teacher

I am with a group of kindred friends. We are walking the grounds of the monastery where we live. We have all been out praying for parts of the world. I have been at the high point in Boulder, praying for the people there. As we walk, a monk walks toward me. I recognize his presence. He tells me that he was with me during my prayer time, and will continue to be with me while I do this more and more.

Waynelle suggests that dream teachers are very significant. Any dream work I do with this is a beginning, an opening, rather than an ending place.

We work with the teacher: I enter the dream again. Michael is standing in front of me, yet he doesn't speak in words. He communicates with his mind and I sense his communication in my mind. Yet I can't make out the meaning, other than feeling his presence. I simply bask in his presence. Words will come.

1/14/10

Therapy w/Waynelle:

I came in to work on my edge with doing pw with people. A friend had affirmed that I had such a good way with people. So what's my edge?

There are voices that say you'll never be good enough. I focus on the voices. (Imagery) It is a big booming voice coming from over the hill. I go over the hill to see who and where it's coming from, only to find a puffy cartoon character like a stuffed rabbit. When I confront it, it flattens out on the ground and becomes 2-dimensional. It's my inner critic using the "Wizard of Oz" effect. In essence, it's hiding behind the hill, the curtain, but portraying a big booming voice to scare me. The fact that it's a cartoon character – not real – how can you take it seriously?

My recent dream: I have forgotten my identity. Jay needs to drive me to my healing session, which I know will help. It's a busy healing center with lots of therapists and clients around. Everyone is friendly. They let me borrow a blanket because I forgot my coat.

She assures me that my dream is hopeful, showing that I'm ready for change. She affirms my natural therapist abilities that she recognized from the beginning.

1/28/10

Work on major dream:

My mother (who passed away in 1998 from brain cancer) appears in my dream as an old woman. She is talking to me and getting me to calm down before an explosion happens outside. While doing this she touches my naked breast as a mother touches her newborn baby with love and care.

In my imagery, she is touching under my armor that I hold up to the world. It reminds me to be vulnerable.

2/11/10

Movement meditation:

I light incense and move slowly, dipping my body as I touch into my deeper self to listen to my soul. I move around the periphery of the room in which I also sit in the center. I am both. My center self wants 'crystal clear' vision. My periphery self is sweeping away with hand movements, all of the unseen debris in the way.

I am used to clearing away the clutter. It is the center self that I want to become. I try to move into the center, but my role to be on the periphery is strong. So I sit on the outside and speak to the center self. "I am here to get to know you. Teach me." There is peacefulness. I have connected for now.

2/17/11

I am working with edges around my stepson, John. It is reminiscent of my childhood when my sisters used to take things that were mine and ruin them. Except that he uses up ketchup and other things in the refrigerator without my knowledge, until I go look for them.

I do some huffing and stomping. I am angry. But this time I also speak up, rather than stay silent.

I come back to do more movement – stomping, slamming. My feet want to keep walking. Speaking up is my edge. It's easy to walk away or stomp.

2/23/10

PW exercise:

I ask what my soul wants today? I experience a body feeling imagery, feeling like I want to run – run like a horse – then the image of half human, half horse appears in the forest. I think it is Pegasus.

I am a female Pegasus with a bow and arrow running free through the forest in the early morning mist. It's a wonderful feeling of "bursting forth" into a run!

Exhilarating! I will go for a run today to honor this in myself.

Dream fragment: I am helping Japanese immigrants escape through the use of virtual technology. We enter a game. I am both in the game and also watching from the outside.

3/8/10

Skype session with Kate Jobe:

Feeling jumpy and restless with no direction. I begin jumping and making thumping motions with my hands, like a bushman dancing around a fire. There are two figures here. One that limits me, tells me I can't jump, pushes me down. The other says just be free. What part of my life is calling me to be free? I don't know. But I feel a push behind me. "Go do, do, do." She's pushing me out into the world, saying once you get out there, your spontaneity and creativity and limitless possibility will take you where you are to go. This pusher is the part of me that wants the best for me. She knows me intimately and knows that I need a nudge into a creative space where I'll flourish. Sometimes that creative space will need contemplative time in nature, a balance to the doing.

3/25/10

Therapy with Waynelle:

I bring the experience of receiving healing prayer at the contemplative service this past Sunday. I felt like the brazier with the fire inside being lit. This corresponds to a dream I had long ago where I am leading a prayer service for a huge auditorium of people. I hold a brazier in front of the group, smoking with incense. She said this was the dream dreaming me.

The woman at the service invited me to join her in praying for others next time. I had two polarities happen simultaneously: an intake of breath in excitement, and a physical puling away and catching breath in fear. I haven't done this in years. I don't believe in God anymore as these people do. I couldn't possibly do this. And yet I consider myself a healer and that doesn't go away.

I need to process the rejection of the Catholic Church, in the form of the spiritual direction community, that happened during my divorce.

Waynelle suggested that these 'movements' are archetypal and bigger than things happening in me. I can call on the support of my dream figures.

3/27/10

PW exercise:

I want to explore my colon and the constant constipation I experience.

Immediately a dialogue begins:

Me: Why don't you move? Why do you keep things in?

Colon: I'm just a reflection of you – uptight.

I become the image with my face scrunched up and fists pulled up to my shoulders, shoulders hiked up to my ears – a defensive position. Tears come to my eyes as I realize I've had a defensive stance for most of my life. First, defensive from my mother intruding into my quiet world. Then defensive from John, my partner at the time. I don't know how not to be defensive.

The dialogue continues:

Me: How can I help you?

Colon: Breathe – (and I begin to take full deep breaths.) The posture softens a bit with my shoulders lowering the more I breathe. I experiment with arm movements – away from, open and toward, defensive, becoming fluid in my movements, noticing that its easier to change from one to another the more I do it.

3/28/10

PW exercise:

The hand motions want to continue. Spontaneously, I begin with open-hands coming from my center, announcing themselves with the ‘ta-da’ of a performer. They say “I’m here” with a smile on my face, excitement in my body and a feeling of pleasure in my heart. “Let me lead on” are the words I speak.

Dream: I am a doctor/priest in training. We’re in a cloister setting with people coming for healing. Medical needles are available, and we put them mostly in the mouths/gums, sometimes in the arm.

All the doctors leave. A woman comes for healing. I hesitate because I haven’t done this alone yet. I put the needle in her mouth, and suddenly a great wind comes and blows through. We take cover. When we open our eyes, there are blueberries that have blown all over. Although they aren’t very sweet, I think we should gather them for food.

4/3/10

A phrase from a Spiritual Direction newsletter flirts with me: “What wild possibilities are in me?”

Pegasus shows up in the movie “Clash of the Titans” – able to fly through the air and run free on the earth. ‘Wild’, ‘run free’ are edges for me. Or are they secondary processes? Or both?

What is it like to entertain wild possibilities? ‘Wild’ causes me to shut down, feel overwhelmed, yet I have always desired to embody that sort of abandon. I never could. This is a major edge. I can’t even continue with this right now.

5/3/10

Therapy with Waynelle:

Today is a family/relationship theme. I’ve just returned from my visit to Houston to visit my grown children and grandchildren. I took a stand this time and didn’t call my dad or sisters to let them know I was in town. I just wanted time with my kids.

The archetype of the devouring mother came up as I talked about my sisters who have fulfilled that role since she’s been gone. It was hard to take a stand against my mother when she was alive – a major edge for most of life. It’s still here, even though I’ve moved out of state, away from family. Yet, during my divorce, Mom and I experienced a real reconciliation when I moved back in and we spent lots of time talking things through. Tears filled my eyes as I remembered.

The question that lingers from our session: What/how would I deal with holding my own ground if I had stayed in Houston?

5/20/10

PW exercise:

I watched a WorldWork video called the Asian Way. I relate to the statement about not taking up much space. It brings tears to my eyes.

In my inner vision, I see a small me – a little girl filled with fear in a dark room. I instantly knew that the fear was about using my voice to express my true feelings. There is a memory of mom yelling at me when I was young because I got angry at my sisters and told them I wished they had never been born. She punished me for saying that and warned me never, ever to say that again. Being a good girl, I listened. There went my voice, my ability to express anger or speak up in conflicting situations. Wow – big edge. I want my voice!

Dream from last week comes back to mind: I am in ancient times. Columns are falling down. I am helping the small, cowering, frightened people to cover. I want to live and want to help them to live! I go around and comfort the children, making sure they are doing okay.

Apparently, I can be fluid – I can be the small, frightened child, and the strong adult providing aid. Although I didn't use my voice in the dream, I can feel my strength. The voice will come.

5/30/10

PW Exercise:

This came out of dreaming about a midlife retreat I'd do on the Midlife Landscape.

My current landscape: A very cluttered room

My desired landscape: Spacious green outdoors on a high mountain, trees around & a mountain view.

I've been feeling the need to go inward, stop attending to people and listening to them. I prefer to roll up into a ball all curled up and throw a big cover over my to close out the light and the world. So I rolled up on my chair and put the covers over my head, and covered my eyes with my hands.

The light inside my eyes was a pink orange glow. It brought my focus into my own energy. I went into the creative glow and stayed there, simply resting there for a while. No images came for a long time.

Then an image of a Zen rock garden appeared, something I've always been fascinated with and attracted to. I spent a long time gazing at my inner Zen garden.

6/3/10

Session with Waynelle:

A question from a previous session came up, "Can I take space for myself in the midst of my family?"

I'm currently feeling the need for a retreat alone. I want time to listen to me. When I listen to Jay or others, I lose myself and focus on their story.

Talked about how our relationship began with me listening to him. I have a relationship edge in telling him that I can't always listen to him. She suggested I always have a choice to be fluid in my roles.

6/17/10

Session with Waynelle:

Feeling like a Himalayan mountain, very tall, strong, deep. Then a big hand comes up behind me to squelch me and keep me down. What has so much energy that it can keep down the Himalayas?! I can't see it – a big edge.

7/1/10

Difficult time working with what is squelching my Himalayas. A dream about my ex-husband sheds light. My overbearing mother comes back to mind, along with the role of the church that John as ordained minister (my ex) represents. I was always being crushed by these big institutions – parents, church, marriage.

I remember fluidity, I have a choice to stay in these roles or try something new.

7/22/10

The goddess Kali showed up today! Heat. Fiery energy. It sparked me up! A contrast to the cool Himalayan Mountains of a few weeks ago. Had a fiery exchange with Jay about doing the lawn – I'm tired of doing it alone all the time. I need some help. He readily agreed to my surprise. Not what I expected, but happy to have some role change around this.

It was a major event for me to express my discontent and do it with such energy! My assumption is that roles don't change very easily. Yet he accepted the change with no problem. It seems my assumptions get in the way of fluidity. A significant learning!

7/31/10

PW Exercise:

I feel an underlying jitteriness beneath the layer of calm. I move my hands in rhythm of the jittering. An image of a floor with white protrusions similar to an egg crate shows up. I see they are spores wanting to erupt and give off their seeds.

I continue with the hand motions allowing me to release and open. Ahh... it feels good. It's my creativity wanting out.

After a while, my open hands are holding my huge alien-like head, so very heavy – it's my past. If I let it go down, a headache forms. When I hold it up, it relieves the tension.

This is similar to the weight holding down my Himalayan mountain. I have to clean out my file cabinet. I face the heaviness of my past. It's time to unload and let go.

I puncture the big head, let it ooze on the ground and fertilize the seeds planted there. Wow, the past fertilizes the creativity of the present and future!

9/17/10

A flirting image:

I'm walking on the second level of the outdoor walking mall. I glance up at the mountains, and for an instant as I look down at the street level, I see myself in a business suit and heels, carrying a briefcase, heading toward a meeting. It catches my attention and my breath. Ah, I would love to be that woman!

11/24/10

A dreaming image:

I look out the window and notice the treetops are golden yellow. What is this? I haven't noticed this before. It's the sunrise through the snow clouds touching and illuminating the landscape of treetops.

What is this here to teach me? It's like the tip of the iceberg – there's so much below. The trees have roots that go deep below the surface, giving life to the very high pine bows that rise above the rooftops. So it is with me, my deep roots nourish my life.

3/13/11

Conversation with my eyes... "Why do you have all the bloodshot lines in you?"
"We are extremely tired from doing work that's too busy and not natural to you. Maybe you should think about doing what comes naturally to you. What stops you?"
I am in my own way. I remember fluid roles. I move a little bit into the edgy feeling. I move a little bit more. I sway back and forth, playing with the energy at the edge. Play! Yes play. Life doesn't have to be so hard. I can play with it. Sway with it. This feels so much better.

Wrap Up

I loved doing my workshop and learned so much. The responses from people were quite profound. Jay's story, in particular, was very touching. That's why I've included it in the paper. I also remember Devera, who had such an easy-going nature. She realized that going in the opposite direction wasn't as hard as she first thought. That was wonderful wisdom for all of us. Joanne also shared a poignant experience. Her movement brought her to stillness with concrete feet, not something she was very comfortable with. But as she connected it to her *processmind exercise, her earth spot, which was at the lake of her childhood vacations, she recognized the reminder to be still in the midst of her fast paced life.

The participants that gave me feedback found the workshop to be very enlightening. Some found it difficult to find their spot on the earth in the *processmind exercise. But most discovered a significant message in their *vector walking and connecting the two exercises.

I began with these questions:

What is "the soul" that I've been listening to all these years?

How do I/we experience the soul in our bodies?

How does this relate to the Process Work Sentient level of reality?

I discovered that my concept of soul is not really any different from Arny's sentience. It is that deep aspect of my being that holds within it the tendency toward, the emerging of life and connectedness. I've also learned that process work is an excellent way to discover direction and seek deep wisdom.

The other fascinating part of this project has been keeping a process work journal through the duration of my certificate work. The contents include the learnings I've gleaned through my daily life, the celebrations and the cycling back of processes, the high dreams and low dreams, the flirts.

It is my hope to stay aware and participative my own unfolding process, and open to new ways of facilitating others in this same venture, because it is definitely an adventure!

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Dreambody – The concept that what is happening to our body is happening in our dreams and vice versa. There is meaning to be discovered, rather than pathology to be fixed.

Process – Refers to changes in perception and the variation of signals experienced by the observer. The idea of process can be compared to a train whose destination cannot be predicted, but is simply stopping at another place each time.

Signal – Bits of information that present themselves in different channels.

Primary process – The identity of the person at any given point in time. It may be conscious or unconscious, depending on where the person is in their process.

Secondary Process – Experiences that are foreign, unconscious, or distant from the client; something happening to a person, unpredictable, out of their control.

Edge – The point at which a client comes to and says, “I can’t or will not do that.” It is the place that intersects the primary process, which the client associates with, and secondary process, which the client doesn’t feel directly identified with.

Channels – The mode of experiencing, understanding, communicating information. These channels are: visual, auditory, proprioceptive, kinesthetic, relationship, and the world. Channels switch naturally when a process deepens, and can switch unpredictably when one comes up to the energy of an edge.

Visual channel – Perceiving through and using vision, imagery, or language pertaining to eyes, seeing, insight.

Auditory channel – Hearing sounds, voices, speaking, making sounds, or using language such as listen, hear, sounds good.

Proprioceptive channel – Experiencing body feelings, sensations, and symptoms not obvious through observation.

Kinesthetic or Movement channel – Movement, body postures, dance, or lack of movement.

Relationship channel – Dealing with another person, a dream figure, an imagined relationship.

World channel – When the focus is on the outer world, foreign events, unfamiliar people, global and universal issues.

Amplification – To exaggerate the process by making it bigger in some way or slowing it down. The idea is to put a magnifying glass on a significant part of the process for the client to sense the meaning that’s coming through.

Unfolding the process – Following the signals of the client, utilizing occupied and unoccupied channels, metaskills, and amplification techniques until the client becomes aware of their message.

Marginalize – Aspects of ourselves that we disavow, trivialize, cut off, or shut out.

Metaskills - The subtle atmosphere created by therapist’s deep feelings and attitudes that can facilitate the client’s relationship with their process. For example, befriending, humor, courage.

Feedback – The person’s macro and micro responses communicated verbally and nonverbally, that indicates whether or not the therapist’s interventions are on the right track.

Flirts – The experience of our attention being caught for a split second. Quick, flickering nonverbal sensations, sometimes visual, moods, hunches.

Levels of Reality:

Consensus Reality – The everyday, physical reality as we know it

Dreaming Level – The daydreams or thoughts, feelings, night dreams, synchronicities, and symbolic meanings occurring at the same time

Sentience or Essence Level – The realm of subtle tendencies that occur before they can be verbalized. The sentient level brings us to the deep, eternal, cosmic aspect of ourselves. From this place, awareness arises into our consciousness, like bubbles from the bottom of a glass of soda.

ProcessMind – The organizing factor behind all life that is present in our personal lives and the universe connecting everything.

Vector – A concept in physics and mathematics that has to do with the direction and magnitude of the position of one point in space relative to another. Vector Walking as a process work exercise starts with a question or issue, standing at a given point in the room. By walking in the direction that attracts or pulls you, connecting the vectors, and being receptive to an inner answer, light can be shed on the initial issue.

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