

Advanced Seminar Letter #4

Dear Gang,

I want to write a bit about dream work, building on Catherine's teaching last month and preparing for work with guided imagery this coming Saturday. I suggest also that you review your notes from last year on these two topics, so we can build on that experience as well.

The key to dream and guided imagery work is to realize that the images, wherever they come from in the psyche, are qualified life-energy bearers--they are alive, essentially mysterious, and are differentiated channels for psychic energy and communication between the conscious, limited personality (mind/feelings/body) and the vast unconscious in which we are embedded--a psychic system which is ordered by the soul beyond our ken. You could say that our soul is the capacity to hold all the images in our psyche and its pure being, or force, is stepped down (transformed) through them, much as the atmosphere steps down the energy of the sun so it is nurturing of Life on the planet. Only our soul knows the full meaning of the images that arrive, and it is important, even when we interpret, and work with the images, and help them transform, to remember that our understanding will always be incomplete and that the most important thing to do is to respect and fully live the images that come, to let them work in you deeply, both in the moment and over time. Experience is more central than understanding. Understanding will come in time, but the experience is now, and that is the means of contact with the psyche and soul. Some images seem more important than others, and come from different levels, and this is in most cases a useful distinction, but in essence every image has force in it and is an aspect of your life. As such, even if seemingly insignificant, it deserves welcome and respect.

Dreams, of course, provide the purest flow of these images into our consciousness, for they are not interrupted by our conscious mind. However, rightly used, our conscious intentions, rooted in the "I" and in this respect for their mystery, can open the channels further and increase the flow of psychic force into consciousness in ways that support growth. Guided imagery, or what is sometimes called "Waking Dreaming", does this, and we will work with this form of imagery work this Saturday. The key here is to strike a constantly shifting balance between letting the flow be and intervening in ways that do not disturb it, but rather enhance it. To do this you need to be resting in the soul force field and be present, so that you can sense when to intervene and when to let well enough alone.

So, presence becomes essential in this work, as with the work with the personality. This includes working with the resistance to this flow and

bringing resistance and flow into relationship with each other and helping the person hold both. If we become too identified with the flow moving in certain directions, no matter how good, we may miss some steps in the process, expressed through resistance, which in the long run will mean the soul has to go back and pick them up in some other way.

Trust the process *and* also pay close attention to it. Appreciate the details and work with them and their complexities *while* staying close to the mystery of it. Gradually you will have the living experience, by doing this, of the deep order of the psyche and its language which is far beyond our comprehension, yet has a beauty we can come to recognize, appreciate, and cooperate with.

So here is a bit about an attitude toward this realm of experience which I think is important, and which often is overlooked in favor of a more operational view of images and the unconscious. The spiritual intention of the soul is expressed through this language of images and our intention needs largely to be to listen and be respectfully still. Then our interventions, when they come, will support and not interrupt the soul in its work.

See you on Saturday. I am looking forward to it. warmly Tom