

On Creativity

Making music, sculpture, pictures, or creating change in another's or one's own life is taking the risk of releasing one's self, one's heart and soul, into the world.

Joseph Zinker: *Creative Process in Gestalt Therapy*

Creativity is a yearning for immortality. We human beings know that we must die. We have, strangely enough, a word for death. We know that each of us must develop the courage to confront death. Creativity comes from this struggle - out of rebellion the creative act is born. Creativity is not merely the innocent spontaneity of our youth and childhood; it must also be married to the passion of the adult human being, which is a passion to live beyond one's death. (p.25)

The creative process must be explored not as the product of sickness, but as representing the highest degree of emotional health, as the expression of the normal people in the act of actualising themselves.....Creativity.....is basically the process of *making*, of *bringing into being*. (p.40)

The receptivity of the artist* must never be confused with passivity. Receptivity is the artist's holding him or herself alive and open to hear what being may speak. Such receptivity requires a nimbleness, a fine-honed sensitivity in order to let one's self be the vehicle of whatever vision may emerge. (p.81)

(*Try interchanging the word artist with therapist. V.F.)

.....creativity itself requires limits, for the creative act arises out of the struggle of human beings with and against that which limits them. (p.113)

Order comes out of disorder, form out of chaos, as it did in the creation of the universe. The sense of joy comes from our participation, no matter how slight, in being as such. The paradox is at that moment we also experience more vividly our own limitations. We discover the *amor fati* that Nietzsche writes about - the love of one's fate. No wonder it gives a sense of ecstasy! (p.123)

Our passion for form expresses our yearning to make the world adequate to our needs and desires, and more important, to experience ourselves as having significance. (p.131)

As a psychoanalyst, I can only add that my experience in helping people achieve insights from unconscious dimensions within themselves reveals the same phenomenon - insights emerge not chiefly because they are "intellectually true" or even because they are help-ful, but because they have a certain *form*, the form that is beautiful because it completes what is incomplete in us. (p.132)

This passion for form is a way of trying to find and constitute meaning in life. And this is what genuine creativity is. (p.134)

The above are from Rollo May's *The Courage to Create*

To be shaken out of the ruts of ordinary perception, to be shown for a few timeless hours the outer and the inner world... this is an experience of inestimable value to everyone.

Aldous Huxley

The act of creation is as basic a need as breathing or making love. We are driven to create. We must take the risk of projecting the most idiosyncratic, personal imagery upon objects, words and other symbols - the same sort of risk we take in loving another person.

Joseph Zinker: *Creative Process in Gestalt Therapy*

The desire to make things, to 'do' art, is an inherent part of our humanity. I believe that we want and need to, if we are seeking our fullest humanity...From prehistoric times until today, we have made things together, presenting a synthesis; we have created symbols and communicated meanings.

Janie Rhyne: *The Gestalt Art Experience*

Creativity is not merely the conception, but the act itself, the fruition of that which is urgent, which demands to be stated. It is not only the expression of the full range of each person's experience and sense of uniqueness, but also a social act - a sharing with one's fellow human beings this celebration, this assertion in living a full life.

Creativity is each person's statement of godliness, of transcending the daily struggle for survival and the burden of mortality - an outcry of anguish and of celebration.

Creativity is the breaking of boundaries, the affirmation of life beyond life - life moving beyond itself. Out of its own sense of integrity, life asks us to affirm our own intrinsic nature, our essences as human beings.

Creativity is an act of bravery. It states: I am willing to risk ridicule and failure so that I may experience this day with newness and freshness. The person who dares to create, to break boundaries, not only partakes of a miracle but also comes to realise that in his process of being he is a miracle.

Joseph Zinker: *Creative Process in Gestalt Therapy*

There is a rich vein of creativity and knowledge available to each according to their abilities, just beneath the surface of usual consciousness. I believe that it is part of our human heritage, accessible to some extent to any person who explores the inner dimensions of the mind.

Seth: *The Nature of Personal Reality*

If I make a drawing of my fantasies, I can see them, I can read my messages, I can learn; I can integrate my past childhood with my present and with visions of the future. I think of my expressive drawings as sources of learning serving me somewhat as my dreams do.

Janie Rhyne: *The Gestalt Art Experience*

Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once he grows up. Pablo Picasso

There are no fairy tales in my paintings, no fairy tales or popular legends. I am against the terms "fantasy" and "symbolism". Our whole inner world is reality, more real still than the apparent world. To apply the words fantasy or fairy tale to everything that seems illogical is to admit that one doesn't understand nature.

...The style has no importance. The thing is to express oneself...

The psyche should get into the paint. You must work the painting with the thought that something of your soul penetrates it and gives it substance.

Marc Chagall: *Chagall by Chagall*

Creativity in Psychotherapy

... if we understand art as a creative expression of what a person has experienced and stored in the unconscious, and not as the "sublimation of instinctual drives", every kind of therapy that has the goal of paving the way to self-expression will promote not impede creativity. The fear that the infinite riches of the unconscious might be exhausted by bringing a small but tormenting portion of it to consciousness, will not be shared by anyone who has been moved by the painting of Picasso, Miro, Paul Klee or Chagall. Their brushes were guided by the unconscious, not by neurosis.

Alice Miller: *Thou Shalt Not Be Aware*

... living vicariously, through one's patients, is as much a danger for some psychotherapists as it is for some parents; and it is essential for the therapist to find some area in which he lives for himself alone, in which self-expression, rather than self-abnegation, is demanded.

Anthony Storr: *The Art of Psychotherapy*

Psychotherapy takes place in the overlap of two areas of playing, that of the patient and that of the therapist. Psychotherapy has to do with two people playing together. The corollary of this is when playing is not possible then the work by the therapist is directed towards bringing the patient from a state of not being able to play into a state of being able to play.

Winnicott, *Playing and Reality*

Therapy, then, can be an artistic expression of the two parties involved, and can be an invitation to a shared communication in which two minds intertwine on the deepest level of psychic existence. However, in order to arrive at this profound level of communication, the therapist must employ an enlarged capacity to respond to nonverbal cues.....A sensitivity to the creative process usually requires some direct experiences in creative work.

Arthur Robbins: *Introduction to Expressive Therapy*

Only those therapists who, if not at peace, are at least fairly comfortable with their own unconscious material (which sometimes is of a primitive kind) can be at home with similar processes in the patient, without imposing a rigid structure on what goes on.

Roberto Assagioli: *The Psychosynthesis Manual*

In one self lies the whole world and if you know how to look and learn, then the door is there and the key is in your hand. Nobody on earth can give you either the key or the door to open, except your self.

Krishnamurti

A monk asked his teacher "What is my self?"

The teacher answered: "There is something deeply hidden within your self, and you must become acquainted with its hidden activity."

The monk then asked to be told what this hidden activity was.

The teacher just opened and closed his eyes.

Frederick Franck: *The Zen of Seeing*

Move from within you, don't move the way fear wants you to

Rumi

I beg you . . . to have patience with everything unresolved in your heart.
And try and love the questions themselves as if they were locked rooms or books written in a very foreign language.
Don't search for the answers, which could not be given you now, because you would not be able to live them.
And the point is, to live everything. Live the questions now.
Perhaps then someday far in the future, you will gradually, without even noticing it, live your way into the answer.

Rainer Maria Rilke (1875 - 1926)

I want to know if you can see the beauty within
even when it is not pretty everyday,
and if you can source your life from IT'S presence.

I want to know if you can live with failure, yours and mine,
and still stand on the edge of the lake
and shout to the silver of the full moon, "Yes!"

It doesn't interest me to know where you live
or how much money you have.
I want to know if you can get up after a night of grief and despair,
weary and bruised to the bone,
and do what needs to be done for the children.

It doesn't interest me who you are or how you came to be here.
I want to know if you will stand
in the centre of the fire with me and not shrink back.

It doesn't interest me where or what or with whom you have studied.
I want to know what sustains you from the inside when all else falls away.
I want to know if you can be alone with yourself,
and if you truly like the company you keep in the empty moments.

Oriah Mountain Dreamer

Life

After a while you learn the subtle difference between holding a hand and chaining a soul.

And you learn that love doesn't mean leaning and company doesn't mean security. **A**nd you begin to learn that kisses aren't contracts and presents aren't promises.

And you begin to accept your defeat with your head up and your eyes open and with the grace of an adult, not the grief of a child.

And you learn to build all your roads on today because tomorrow's ground is too uncertain for your plans.

And after a while you learn that even sunshine burns if you get too much.

So plant your own garden and decorate your own soul instead of waiting for someone to bring you flowers. **A**nd you will learn that you really can endure - that you really are strong.

And you really do have worth.

Anon. (scripted by Richard Thompson)



Awake awhile.

It does not have to be forever,
right now
one step upon the Sky's soft skirt
would be enough.

Hafiz, awake awhile.
Just one True moment of Love
will last for days.

Rest all your elaborate plans and tactics
for knowing Him,
for they are all just frozen spring buds
far, so far from summer's divine gold.

Awake, my dear.
Be kind to your sleeping heart.
Take it out into the vast fields of Light
And let it breathe.

Say,
"Love,
give me back my wings.
Lift me,
Lift me nearer."

Say to the sun and moon,
say to our dear Friend,
"I will take You up now, Beloved,
On that wonderful Dance You promised."

~ Hafiz ~

(I Heard God Laughing - Renderings of Hafiz -- Daniel Ladinsky)

On Creativity, Art and the Expressive Arts in Psychotherapy: a book list

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