



InnerPath...footnotes

at Cottonwood Tucson

Summer 2009

Our First Newsletter! ~ Jana's Corner

Welcome to our first InnerPath newsletter! We want to stay in touch and pass on some useful information to enhance your journey of healing and recovery. Rokelle will have a column in each issue and you'll also hear from our other staff as well. She has a new book out, [The Object of My Affection is in My Reflection: Coping With Narcissists](#) and she wrote a great article on this topic. We have an interesting piece by Charles on dreams. We'd love to hear from you. This is our first official newsletter. Any feedback or suggestions would be much appreciated! Be well.

Dream Tending as a Spiritual Practice

By Charles Gillispie

The famous Swiss psychiatrist, Carl Jung, believed that every dream we have at night fulfills two functions. First, our dream attempts to help us clarify a problem in life. Secondly, our dream attempts to provide solutions to the problem uncovered. In this regard, each dream is a call to action. It is primarily designed to help us move toward a corrective behavior, specific to our character and life circumstance.

Furthermore, Jung believed that dreams communicate in a universal language capable of serving groups of people as well as individuals. He believed that our most deeply meaningful dreams are capable of benefiting all people, regardless of individual differences. Just as we enter into fables or myths and experience common messages, Jung believed, though practice, we can enter into each other's dream stories and receive shared meanings.

At the InnerPath retreats, I teach a number of dream amplification techniques I learned at the Jung Institute in Zurich, Switzerland. Each dream tending session is designed to help people develop a regular and more natural relationship to their dream-life. Like prayer and meditation, dream tending is a spiritual practice that teaches us how to cooperate with our personalities and live toward a higher purpose.

Charles Gillispie is a counselor at Cottonwood Tucson. He is a licensed independent substance abuse counselor with a Master's Degree in Fine Arts. Charles presents the challenge course, dream tending, and therapeutic journal writing for InnerPath.

Narcissism

By Rokelle Lerner

Many people who come through InnerPath have parents who were narcissists. There are so many misconceptions about narcissism that I thought it best to define this term and how others are affected by this destructive disorder.

A pathological narcissist is characterized less by traits like grandiosity, arrogance, or hypersensitivity than by his or her severely disturbed relationships. The characteristics of entitlement, grandiosity, contempt, and even joyful cruelty make it literally impossible to have life-giving connections with others. Yet this state often goes unrecognized, even by therapists

Many people mistakenly believe that narcissism is really about individuals who feel superior. But the truth is that a genuine narcissist has no sense of self. They're desperate for praise because it's the closest they'll ever get to unconditional love. Think of a narcissist as the equivalent of an addict when it comes to the need for adoration or attention. Without the adoring, attentive reflection of others, narcissists feel as if they don't exist. Worse, they feel intense humiliation and disgust for themselves. You'd never guess this by their behavior. In fact, it's because of their grandiose behavior that others eventually revile them.

A true narcissist cannot allow others to affect him in anyway. When you can't allow others to have any impact on you, the result is a disconnection from others and the devastating lack of well-being that a relationship provides. Narcissists don't necessarily think they're better than other people; they just don't think of people at all. (Bernstein, 2002) They behave as if the world exists primarily for their gratification, and people exist only as pawns that allow them to direct their self-centered dramas.

When the children and spouses of narcissists become aware of the dynamics of this devastating disorder, they experience both pain and relief. At last, someone recognizes what living in hell has been like. Many have a sense that they've been in prison, and it can take them a lifetime to comprehend how their captivity could have been so dangerous and yet so compelling. For those whose lives have been impacted by a narcissist, it's important to remember that the behaviors I've discussed here are related directly to childhood trauma. They are survival mechanisms that were formed in sadistic environments among other narcissists who learned the same survival skills in their childhoods. These defense mechanisms are passed down through the generations and systematically choke the life out of children. Narcissistic parents beget narcissistic children.

*Rokelle Lerner is one of the most sought after speakers and trainers on relationships, women's issues and addicted family systems. She has inspired audiences throughout the world with her ability to address difficulties with insight, humor, and astounding clarity. Rokelle has published the best selling books, *Living in the Comfort Zone: The Gift of Boundaries in Relationships*, *Affirmations for Adult Children of Alcoholics* and *Affirmations for the Inner Child*. Her latest book is *The Object of My Affection is in My Reflection: Coping With Narcissists*. Ms. Lerner also facilitates the InnerPath Retreats for Cottonwood Tucson in Arizona.*

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