

# Working With The Forces of Destiny

The True Self, The Human Idiom & Following One's Bliss

## A New PSEN Workshop

Zagreb, Croatia

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### UNDERSTANDING THE WORKSHOP MATERIAL

Joseph Campbell would often say that *'the privilege of a lifetime is being who you really are'*.

We are all gifted with *futures* – potentials of our true selves – which we may or may not realize throughout the course of our lives.

We all suffer fateful events and happenings in our lives that may compel us to change course, but with luck, we may also continue to develop this intrinsic potential – through the use of objects.

The therapist's ability to be receptive to the idiomatic forms of their client may help to facilitate the release of that person's true self - to realize their 'future' – that has remained unknown to them, and unexperienced by them.

We can grow our capacity, as therapists, to liberate the true self potential of our clients.

We do this by making ourselves available to be used by them in the best possible way; to celebrate their unique expressiveness and their creativity in their usage of us; and to allow our client's particular idioms to shape the sessions in order to have this logic of their true self take form.

This is a form of play in which the client selects and uses us in order to materialize those elements of their personality that are latent, dormant or repressed.

There is always an urge to articulate the true self, and Bollas calls this the 'destiny drive', which is linked to the force of the true self to elaborate one's personality potential – to 'become one's self'.

### THE FACILITATION OF ONE'S POTENTIAL – BECOMING WHO WE ARE

- *How can we better learn, as therapists, to identify the presence of the client's true self?*
- *How can we better learn, as therapists, to bring a client to the edge of fundamentally new psychic experiences generated by the therapeutic dyad?*

## **WINNICOTT'S DEFINITION OF TRUE SELF**

The true self is the 'inherited potential which is experiencing a continuity of being, and acquiring in its own way, and at its own speed, a personal psychic reality and a personal body scheme'.

He stated that the 'spontaneous gesture' was evidence of true self, and that true self was aliveness itself.

The true self is the unique presence of being that each of us is; it is the idiom of our personality.

The true self exists before object relating. It is only a potential, however, because it depends upon maternal care for its evolution.

The psyche is that part of us which represents the exchanges of the true self's negotiation with the actual world. Conflict is essential to the usefulness of the psyche, which depends on a healthy balance of forces between the true self and the actual world.

## **UNDERSTANDING THE HUMAN IDIOM**

The idiom of a person is more a set of unique possibilities specific to the individual. Yet it only lives in us as a potential, waiting to be realized. The articulation of our true self depends solely on the nature of *its lived experience* in the actual world.

- *The life of the true self is to be found in the person's experiencing of the world.*

The idiom that lives within us, and the true self that we are, must find expression through the choices and uses of objects (people, places, things) that are available to it in the environment.

## **THERAPEUTIC FUNCTIONS & TASKS TO SUPPORT THE ELABORATION OF A CLIENT'S IDIOM, TRUE SELF, AND SENSE OF DESTINY**

### **POTENTIAL AREAS FOR EXPLORATION:**

- The therapist's specific capacity and availability to the client.
- The therapist's ability to make use of self as a subject on behalf of the client.
- The therapist's understanding and use of interpretations - in varied detail.
- The therapist's understanding and use of making associations.
- The therapist's ability to introduce and establish 'difference' between self and client.
- The therapist's ability to celebrate the client's capabilities.

- The therapist's ability to embrace 'not knowing' - in balance with knowing.
- The therapist's capacity for being 'bewildering' – a kind of essential disturbing force

## **PRACTICING AND DOING THE WORK**

We will pick a few key topics as a group, and also pick a few key therapist skills to emphasize and for Michael to demo with the group each day.

Then we work with the whole group for a period of time, to deepen everyone's understanding of the concepts.

Then we will practice these concepts by going either into processing sessions to explore how to allow the true self to emerge, or the idiom to express itself, in either dyad or triad sessions to practice.

We will come back to the group for questions and discussion about the work in these sessions, and to support the integration of the new learning that came forth.

## **Some Short Reflections on Fate & Destiny**

**FATE** – *fata*, in Latin – “sentence of the gods” and “to be spoken of by the divine”

**Fame** – *fama*, in Latin – “to speak and to tell” and “to tell rumors and to report on the reputation of others.

Fate refers to our deepest sense of subjectivity, where we are subject to mysterious limitations, and can open to surprising potentials.

Fate points to whatever limits, restricts or imprisons us.

Yet fate is where we must go if we are to awaken to our destiny. In seeking to live our destiny, we inevitably encounter the obstacles of our own fate.

Fate and destiny are an archetypal pairing within each soul; they form a dynamic tension that makes life meaningful and purposeful.

## **DESTINY**

The hidden thread that connects the old notions of fate and fame. Being seen standing together with one's genius or life spirit.

Living out our destiny reveals the true self set deep within the soul. Living what we are destined to live also causes others to recognize our true value and speak well of us.

In this way, being famous meant being “known well” rather than becoming “well known”. Infamy is about being known or famous for the wrong reasons.

In the modern media-based culture, flashes of fame seem to substitute for genuinely discovering the inner spirit and true destination of one’s life.

The greater life is found where destiny calls to each of us to become who we are in essence, to live far enough into life to reveal the inner story set within us.

Fate inscribes a territory we are bound to enter. Destiny involves finding a way through exactly those areas and aspects that constrain the vitality of our lives.

We have an appointment with destiny but often we must suffer the disappointments of fate in order to arrive there.