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## Playing With Our Own Strangers

What are your deepest, wildest, darkest and hottest fantasies? What if you could experience that and bring it back into your daily life? What new things might you learn about yourself? What aspects of your personality might you be able to enhance? What other experiences would you have to draw on?

Role play is frequently used to spice up a scene or add variety, but its potential can be so much greater. It can have a deeply spiritual purpose. Used with intent, it can be the key to a past life, the doorway to a darker side of ourselves, or the path to exploring our fears. Making use of our own witness, we can get in touch with aspects of ourselves that have been beyond our reach or construct a microcosm to explore our creative ability to shape our own life experience.

Come explore new ways to use an old tool. The class will include discussion, demo, and practice.

1. Poll the class for any particular questions they bring with them.
2. Background
  - a. While we stumbled across this tool on our own, it is a tool used in various psychotherapy modalities.
    - While it can be used as a psychotherapy tool, this is not a substitute for proper mental health care.
    - We do not recommend delving into areas of deep emotional hurt or pain without the assistance of a qualified therapist.
  - b. The mind records its own experience.
    - Not good at distinguishing reality from other experience.
    - For this reason many physical skills can be improved by visualization of one doing the activity in a skillful manner.
    - Makes it possible for us to have the value of experiences that would otherwise be outside of the realm of the possible.
    - Why hypnosis can be such a valuable tool.
    - Likewise, hypnosis can be used to enhance role play.

- c. Role play releases spontaneity and allows for experimentation and self exploration.
    - Psychodrama offers a means to express uncomfortable feelings, shadow aspects of the personality, and primitive impulses.
    - The players “get into the action” to the extent that it becomes the foreground reality and the sense of being a spectator recedes.
    - Revealing the true self in this way allows a person to continually re-create oneself, thereby promoting the conscious transformation of consciousness.
  - d. Role play seems to take on a life of its own and reveal information not previously in our consciousness.
    - From the unconscious
    - From a higher being or consciousness
    - From our higher self
    - From different aspects of our personality
    - From past lives
    - From universal knowing
3. What can we do with role play?
- a. Explore the historical perspective, i.e., the perception of rape in other cultures
  - b. Explore fairy tales and how they may relate to the real world
  - c. Explore dark fetishes and fantasies
  - d. Delve into areas of personal growth
  - e. Seek a different perspective
  - f. Explore (or accidentally discover) reality vs. fantasy
4. Our examples
- a. Miriam
  - b. Callie
5. Developing the scene
- a. Choose a fantasy, archetype, or scenario to play with
  - b. Play with people you trust to take you into the realm you are playing with
    - In order for spontaneity to occur, a safe and playful environment must exist.
    - It is important that each player knows they will not be judged for anything that happens during the role play.
    - As with any scene, have a safe word or other means of exiting if things are going in an unsafe direction.

- c. As long as everyone is willing to let the scene play out, you don't all have to be doing the same thing, i.e., one can simply be acting out a fantasy for the fun of it while the other is exploring deeper aspects.
  - d. Set the stage
    - Set up enough details that everyone has a direction to go.
    - Use clothes, props or other items to set the mood.
    - Make a conscious decision to use your witness or observer mode. The observer looks after your safety, gains intellectual awareness and engages in self-reflection.
    - Make a conscious decision to let yourself go where the scene takes you unless there is a significant reason not to go there.
  - e. Let the scene play out without undo intervention
    - Intervene if the scene is becoming physically unsafe
    - Intervene if the scene is becoming psychologically unsafe for you
    - Pay attention to whether the scene is pushing your partner too far, but don't be too quick to intervene
  - f. Follow the scene with appropriate aftercare
  - g. Debrief on the scene at intervals as everyone processes what has happened
    - Generally the same day, but after everyone is back in their own head space
    - At various points in the future as participants need to or have new insights to share
  - h. Consider whether to have "sequels" or whether there are aspects of the scene that you want to further explore
  - i. Consider how you want to use what has happened in the scene
    - Were there issues that came up that you need to investigate further?
    - Was there a personality trait that you want to be able to incorporate into your life? If so, how will you access this personality trait?
    - Did you learn something new about yourself or about a situation?
6. Demos
  7. Experimentation
    - a. Choose who to work with
    - b. Choose a scene that can be played with in the remaining time for this class or an aspect of yourself you'd like to explore
    - c. Set up your scene
    - d. Let one of us know if you need guidance
    - e. We'll come back together before the end of class to share our experience