

House of Changes and Possibilities

Changing and healing our inner images

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Already 20 years ago, I began developing this idea of viewing the inner soul as a house with various rooms. Essentially, the idea of symbolically describing our soul as a house is not new as can be seen in Theresa of Avila's "The Interior Castle" or in Dr. Peter Reiter's soul-house method. All describe the same idea that our soul uses the language of images and feelings. It is an excellent technique to get in touch with the soul and it helps finding and resolving causes of conflicts, blockages and diseases.

When I started my practice, I asked my patients to paint their inner house and I let define their inner space themselves. At the time, I was already applying the concept that we have various roles and for each role we have our own room in our house.

For example:

- me in my role as a daughter or son,
- me in my role as a partner,
- me as an employee,
- me as boss,
- me as mother,
- me as a wife or husband (girlfriend / friend) etc.

The respective personal House of Changes and Possibilities reflects our subconscious structures and concepts. Through our own decision we can rebuild this inner house. Internal healing is the prerequisite for external healing.

Already early on, I created the phrase that once the umbilical chord is severed, we are no longer automatically provided for and that we can only survive through the affiliation with the mother. As infants we are already capable of doing everything to have

a place in our mother's system and have a place we belong. We are able to push the right buttons so that provides for all our needs. And the hormonal changes in the mother are an additional factor in helping us to live and survive. Nevertheless, it is only through our affiliation with our mother that we are able to survive. Already at this stage in life, we interpret and evaluate situations and we make decisions even if this happens subconsciously. And these decisions influence our entire life. We all know how babies are able to order families around, and that is their right. However, in these kind of situations it is rather the parents that are the problem.

In the close relationship to our mother and our surroundings, we develop a variety of skills and roles to meet our needs. We learn early on to meet the expectations placed on us so that our needs are met. It is a reciprocal relationship between dependence and independence.

Already as infants, we are able to choose unconsciously between the many concepts and belief systems. At the end of the 1980's, Wayne Topping said that by the age of 3 we have activated nearly 300,000 different belief patterns. Especially in emotional situations when we are hurt, offended, desperate or angry, we decide how we perceive the world and our life. In simplified form, there are only two fundamental decisions: the glass is half full or the glass is half empty. This has a massive impact on how we experience things. Our perception of the world is our choice.

How do we evaluate situations? How do we deal with new life situations? How do we face challenges,

defeats etc.? Whether we are more curious and interested in life or not. In our further life, we have many experiences and continue to construct our roles by means of our learned and acquired skills. Do we get an unconditional yes from our parents? Do our parents perceive us as individuals and provide a space in their lives to let us develop ourselves? Do they care for their children? How do we deal with expectations of our parents, relatives, teachers and so on? Do we have to change who we are to have our needs fulfilled? How do we socialize with other in our formative years and later on in our professional life? How far do we lose ourselves in who we really are on our life path? Are we losing our clarity and our dreams? Are we predestined for burnout with increasing age? Are we making ourselves sick, because we are trying to be somebody who we are not? The list of questions could go on forever.

Many decisions have been made from all our mutual interactions - most of them unconscious. Our basic and fundamental decisions play an important role here. There is great pressure, the basic need to have a secure system and one of our deepest needs - the sense of belonging - has to be fulfilled. We will do everything to have the feeling that we belong, whether it be the affiliation to the family, friends, sports clubs, or colleagues. We try to conform so that we can be part of the group. Humans are social beings, which does not mean that we always have to be right in the middle of it all, but we do seek a secure place in the system. For this reason, we learn all these different roles in order to move on in life.

All of this has an impact on our inner self; not only on what our inner self experiences, but also on our entire body. Have we developed a stress metabolism? Is our body under tension? Are we able to switch

between relaxation and tension mode? Have we lost sight of our own needs? How mindful are we? Have we oriented ourselves more towards the external? Do we rather meet the needs of others and forget ourselves? Or do we only see ourselves and are fixated on the fulfillment of our own needs? There are many possibilities, of which I only can mention a few here.

Years ago, I coined the term of the „functional unit“ and the „expectation fulfillment asylum.“ No matter which survival strategy we have chosen, we are moving along a destructive path with our strategies where the „glass is half full.“ For this purpose, I'd like to use the allegory of the car with only one gear: I can drive the car at a normal rev and have the feeling that everything is still alright. I can also rev-up the engine in this one gear and exhaust myself or I can drive with a very low rev and drown out the engine. However, it only has one gear, and that gear is the survival gear. In this survival gear, we have achieved our only goal and that is to survive. Even though we have developed many skills we still feel that something is lacking.

Our lust for life is not satisfied by this. For this reason, I tell my patients that our cars have 5 to 6 gears and we can add gears to this life. Our life gears are part of our fundamental decision of the „glass is half full.“ It is the everlasting decision to meet the challenges of life constructively.

The above-mentioned issues already show that we have many different aspects and roles in us. Most of them seem so natural to us that we are not even aware of them. Only when we are in a life crises do we begin to take notice and start dealing with our issues.

I ask my patients to paint the inside of their house and give the different rooms names. Already by entering into this task brings about many insights. By going on a guided visual tour, we can discover these rooms and begin to redesign them. Basically, our soul functions through images and feelings. Though the power of deciding and the appropriate implementation and action, we begin to fulfill our own needs and shape our own lives. I like to describe it as starting to learn how to walk again. And just as it was when we were children learning to walk, it isn't easy in the beginning - we don't succeed right away. With each unsuccessful attempt, we can decide again to get up and constructively implement the experience and go forward.

During these visualized journeys, I like to add rooms like hospital, diagnostic and healing rooms. The cause analysis takes place in the cellar where our „skel-etons“ and „shadows“ are hiding. Once they have told their story, they often provide us, with their greatest insights and gifts. This then greatly increases the patient's motivation to redesign the house. I am always amazed by my patient's creativity when we work on the House of Changes and Possibilities.

Once a patient told me that she had bought herself a black and a white book. In the black book she wrote her dark stories of emotional wounds, unresolved conflicts and so on. In the white book, she rewrote the story into a comedy. The facts remained, but they were viewed from a completely different perspective and were reinterpreted and evaluated accordingly. Other patients painted their rooms and redesign them as they liked. Through the act of painting, the patients began to process and decide. Some began to build and rebuild their inner house in small format using modelling clay. There are no

limits to the variety of possibilities; as they are very individual processes.

Sometimes our inner house needs a spring cleaning. This can help to free us of emotional baggage and other useless stuff. Also, having a sense of humor can be a valuable quality. Our House of Changes and Possibilities is subject to constant change just like life itself. The place-time-human constellation is in constant flow. Life itself is not the main issue, the main problem is our resistance.

The House of Changes and Possibilities is a way to do an inventory of what is real and a way to constructively change.