

Capturing the collective and connected spirit of writing for wellbeing - case study / example of practice.

Adapting spiritual or philosophical ideas for CWTP practice

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As a facilitator of CWTP, I am always on the look-out for new exercises which can serve a reach parts of myself, and those who attend my sessions, that other exercises cannot reach.

Having successfully appropriated Edward de Bono's Six Thinking Hats for my own and my participants' wellbeing, I recently, devised a writing exercise inspired by the practice called Feeding Your Demons. This beautiful approach is created by Lama Tsultrim Allione. It involves two people (facilitator and participant) and is broken down into five steps – identifying your demon; asking it what it wants, needs and what it would become if these wants and needs were met; satisfying it and watching its transformation; encountering the ally; integration. It is delivered as a workshop lasting several days, in California. As this opportunity is a little beyond my reach at present, I devised a method which could be done alone and in any location where a pen and paper were to hand. This, not surprisingly, has become my favoured and most practiced way of working.

As writers, we know that we can become, in imagination, as many different people as is necessary, through creative, adaptive, flexible, perspective-shifting writing. So I embarked on creating for myself an exercise loosely suggested by the principal component's of Allione's five step 'programme'. When I did it, first, on my own, I was delighted and transformed by the experience. I managed to have a transformational conversation with the imagined personification of the lingering virus I was experiencing at the time, with a very beneficial outcome.

Recently I led my version of it with two colleagues, and we were all surprised and powerfully impressed by our individual experience, added to hearing the shared process. We took it in turns to play the roles of facilitator and participant to each other, wrote in private initially, then shared our writing in turn at the progressive stages of the exercise. The whole exercise, of course, was experienced in a very trusting environment and all safe-guards were implicit within the existing group dynamic.

Our final reflections showed that it had been a powerful and very useful exercise for each of us. Having my first, solo, experience of the same exercise to compare this with, I noticed that the combined group experience had amplified the therapeutic aspects of the exercise for me.

I have long been fascinated by the dual role of the archetypal trickster figure in world myth and cultural thought – that it can both trip us up and give us a boost or a leg-up when least expected. I have therefore dubbed this written adaptation of Allione's *Feeding Your Demons* 'Trickster Transformation' as there was something so unexpected and magical in the process for each of the three of us, collectively and individually. Something that was initially presenting itself as a hindrance and a block, transformed into a gift, and a boon, through writing together.