

## BODY-PSYCHOTHERAPY: PRINT-OUT

# DESCENDING INTO THE DARK

This is a form of a guided meditation: it is essentially for you to do for yourself, possibly even by yourself, but, as you do so, even in this workshop format, please allow yourself to experience and express any emotions that you might feel. The free expression of emotions (cries, groans, tears, laughter, whatever) is an important aspect of this exercise. It should take at least 20 minutes and it is probably best done lying on a mattress or squab, so that if you roll or thrash around, you won't get hurt.

Descend into the dark by whatever means comes to your mind. A cave, an entrance to the underworld, a river suddenly running underground, a fall into a bottomless pit, the sudden loss of sunlight or grace, whatever. This is a journey downwards, with no knowing that you will return. Many have gone: few, if any, have returned - unchanged that is. The general prognosis is not good: go with some fear and dread.

Acknowledging mistakes that you have made. Spend a few moments and remember a few of the "large" mistakes that you have made: the ones where you really 'fucked up'. Of course, things worked out one way and another, but these are "lulus" - if you could go back and re-do aspects your life, you would with these ones. Take yourself, step by step, through the experience to the point of mistake. Don't try to avoid, forgive, or excuse. At best, let this be a real leaning experience: at worst, "*Mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa.*" There is no "Sorry."

Acknowledge all pain and distress that you might have caused any other people. Spend a while and go back through your life and acknowledge that you may (frequently) have caused others pain and distress. Allow yourself now to feel their pain. Walk in their shoes, feeling about you as they might do. No time for hubris, here. Allow yourself to really feel their pain - about you.

### *Pause*

Now descend further into the dark. Lack of acknowledgement of any of this material actually prevents you progressing further on your path. You want to stick here - forever? Some do: it is just too hard.

Allow all your fears and demons to come, and to affect you, but not to deviate you too much from your purpose - to descend further. They will constantly be "at" you from now on. All sorts - every single one you have ever had - they are all here now; and they are all "at" you. You are big enough and strong enough, perhaps, to stare them in the face and carry on: to wrestle with them and defeat them, just. The cumulative toll is enormous. You have lots of fears and demons. They are all here now.

### *Pause*

Make one promise - "*If I get out of here, I will (at least) do ....x.....*" Make it an act of restitution, as, through proper action, we can be redeemed. This is the time for 'proper' action - a penance. Allow the thought to come from within: this is not a 'should' or an 'ought to' situation, or what others might determine: it is what you want to do, from within, to make a promise, a restitution, some sort of amends or a service - not necessarily connected to anyone or any previous situation - but for the benefit of your spirit: perhaps even a pilgrimage. See what comes to you as you make a Promise.

### *Pause*

You encounter a major obstacle - a deep dark river; a bottomless chasm; a fiery pit; a real "nasty" like a Balrog, or Cerebus. There seems no way past, and yet you cannot stay here - tormented as you are. You may fail, and that's it. There is a way through, round, over, to beyond - and you have to find it. It will take your every skill and ingenuity; every bit of courage; every resource - stuff you never thought that you had.

You now get wounded, hurt, damaged, whatever - in exactly the way which goes in the deepest. You get your just desserts: you suffer, uniquely for you. If you were proud of your athletic prowess; now you are lame. If you were admired for your beauty, you are now scarred. If you won prizes; now you've lost that potential, that edge. This is the real Wound - the one that is going to be with you perhaps forevermore, to some extent. No quick fix and plastic surgery for this one. In some ways, this is why you took this road; this was inevitable. This is the price that you must pay for anything else. And there is still no guarantee.

You get lost - hopelessly lost. No path; no light; a maze; you are all turned around; no way to go; no way to get back. No water, no food, no light, and wounded - this despair and the inaction arising from it seems interminable. There is no sense of time. Collapse and you die here. So you carry on - wherever. You are lost, hurt and you still carry on.

You sense something ahead of you. A light (or something) glows faintly. Whatever it is grows as you move towards it. Hope arises; fear also. You have no idea what this is and yet it is (at least) something. Go towards it slowly. It could be worse than what was before.

You are suddenly in the Presence of Something – it is huge, it is vast and it is awesome. You don't know what it is. It is something 'other dimensional' perhaps. You cannot fight it; run from it; hide from it; trick it; or escape it in any way. You can only submit to it - absolutely, finally, ultimately. This is It. The End.

#### *Long Pause*

You are Seen. You are Seen Totally. "It" can look right through your very soul. It sees everything there is about you to see, to know. Everything that has ever happened to you - ever, this life, past lives, the lot - is seen, known and it is now Judged. You have no idea of the place, the space, the ways, the vision from which this judgement comes. "It's parameters are nothing like yours, or anyone else's. "It" is almost Alien in its removedness from your life; except that "It" is so knowing, so familiar, so intimate with every detail of your life and you that it is not Alien. You are Judged. This is the End of Your Journey.

#### *Pause*

You start to return. Somehow, and by some path, you slowly begin to return upwards. You take with you whatever you were 'given' down there. Any rules or guidance that you were given, you must obey implicitly from now on. Any task to perform, you must perform it completely. The Judgement was absolute. The Result was inevitable. And you return, slowly, to the upper levels. Level after level passes before you. It is not an easy road, and there also is a growing certainty that this road leads you back, back to the world above, back here, back to this room, back to the present now. Now you are back, and you are also changed.

#### *Pause*

Work out what the changes are. You may still be shamed, or wounded. You did make a promise. You overcame almost insurmountable difficulties. You got lost. You survived. You were judged. And - you are now different. Even if you fell asleep, all these things happened to you. Spend a while exploring that difference. Shortly you will write or memorise an account of your journey - of your Descent into the Dark.

- *5 minutes pass*

Now the exercise is over. Please spend another ten minutes or so, doing things quietly and gently - in silence. Get a tea, have a pee, etc. Finish writing. Don't talk to anyone, other than what is absolutely necessary. Then come back into the room, find a neighbour, and speak about the whole experience for a few minutes to this person. Take about 10-15 minutes each. You do not have to share any details that are still very fragile or very personal to you. Then we'll gather together as a group and discuss the overall exercise.