

Loosening Inbuilt Programmes

I have been playing with ways of creating contexts for such experiences for others. The following has consistently proved to be potent: The intention is to create an atmosphere of trust, entering the unknown, rattling of programs, culminating in a brief exposure to Mystery.

The group divides in two, one half blindfold and helping each other into the depths of the fogou. One by one they then feel their way, alone and still blindfold, up the passage of the fogou and into the "creep" - a smaller passage off the main passage through which one has to stoop in order to gain entrance. Their journey is accompanied by rattles and drumming. Once in the creep they are led out on a Blind Walk. Meanwhile the fogou is dressed with crystals, flowers and about one hundred candles. The whole group is then led blindfold into the main passage, and one by one are led up to the dressed portion of the fogou - a part at the end of the main passage where there is usually a pool of water so that candlelight is reflected. As they approach they are given, via an intermediary, messages from the "little people" who usually oblige with enigmatic riddles that are invariably pertinent. Each person is invited to hold an issue or question in mind, and then their blindfold is removed to the accompaniment of soft chimes or bells.

I recount these experiences because they have served as looseners of inbuilt programs. And loosening programs allows other possibilities, other perceptions, a bit more clarity. Maybe even awakening for the right side of the brain.

TOUCHED BY CAER

by Jan Adamson

Jan Adamson delivers training in counselling and communication skills to a wide range of people throughout the South-West. She also masters Enlightenment Intensives and is an artist.

I had heard of Caer on the West Penwith grapevine, but somehow had never managed to actually visit, or do one of the many courses advertised there - a combination of inertia on my part, and a full time involvement with painting.

I enjoyed painting but felt increasingly restricted by the pressure to sell in order to eat. It rather hampered my artistic inspiration and since rich patrons were in short supply (and probably still are) I decided on something completely different - the world of training.

It was a time when Government schemes for training young people were growing fast - Youth Opportunities and the Youth Training Scheme, plus a host of others to follow. I had some experience in the area and as I went through a teacher training

course, I soon discovered that it was the area of counselling and psychology that intrigued me the most.

I did a two year counselling diploma at the local college where we were regarded as something of a freak show. We needed to pull down the blind on our glass door as the curious came to peek at what was going on in the "Grove Room".

In the training world, counselling was vested with a degree of mystique and some distrust - Do you really hug people? You're not going to make me touch anyone are you? Isn't all this navel gazing a bit self-indulgent? and so on. It was important to have support: I was glad to be working with David Rose, one of the founder members of Caer. We came from different backgrounds - his was more therapy and mine was more training, and yet each complemented the other. We were an extremely successful team and learned much from each other.

What was exciting and rewarding for me, was the process of taking many of the aspects of personal growth and development to people from very traditional backgrounds. It was extraordinary to be witness to the way they opened up to each other, and to us, and to feel the depth of communication and trust grow. Sometimes the environment we were working in was less than perfect - large hotels, or spartan training rooms. Caer was an enticing alternative, but how would people react to sitting on cushions on the floor? Generally speaking our anxiety was unfounded. The beauty of the place and its magic worked its wonders. It was amazing to see the way people began to relax, to enjoy and become aware of the environment, sometimes for the first time in years. For me, it was a thousand times better than impersonal hotel rooms. Here, we could work with the energy of the land, and the spirit of the place. For just as Caer touched the hearts of the participants, so it touched mine. I began to know its healing qualities more and more the longer I worked there.

I also began an IDHP course at Caer, facilitated by Jo May and Roz Grigg. It was fascinating to be running groups and also to be a participant on one myself. So many of the issues I, and we as a group faced, ran parallel with the issues in groups I was facilitating. It gave me powerful insights into group process, the roles we take on, authority issues and also gave enormous support to me personally. I began to face personal issues which I had been avoiding for years though there were times when I really doubted the wisdom of doing intensive personal work and running groups as well.

I remember feeling as if I'd been scraped off the carpet after one particularly gruelling weekend with Tom Feldberg, a visiting "Encounter" facilitator. I had my own group to run the next day and of course the first issues to emerge - child sexual abuse - were the very ones I had been faced with at the weekend. It taught me much about compassion, and about the myth of the invincible group leader. It taught me too about trust - trust in those I expect to trust me, trust in myself and my own strength, and trust in this process of working with feelings, allowing them and moving on to a different place.

To stay with the same group of people for 2 years was an experience in itself. We

had time to get over the pleasant, if somewhat superficial honey moon period, to fight and be angry, to experiment with letting go of old ways of being and trying out new ones, knowing sometimes others were horrified, amused or amazed, and yet here they still were.

We struggled with taking responsibility as peers, got caught in resentment and collusion, but emerged I believe, as individuals within the whole, with a sense of our own strength and an appreciation of others.

From the different visiting facilitators we experienced different styles, different approaches to therapy and group work.

One of these was an Enlightenment Intensive with Eva and Jake Chapman. I doubt if I would ever have undertaken an Intensive without it being part of the IDHP - it just sounded too bizarre! And yet it gave me some of the most profound experiences of my life. I have done others since then and have gone on to train as Enlightenment Master myself. Another weekend, this time on the Medicine Wheel teachings of the Native Americans prompted me to learn more. I was fortunate to work with Dream Weavers, learning about Shamanic healing. It opened up many new dimensions for me, and continues to do so. Their visits to Caer and ceremonies on the land there were particularly powerful and very special.

The IDHP opened up many doors for me. I first went to Caer with so many painful feelings, most well hidden, and with anger well repressed. My experiences there, and what they have led to, have at least made me aware of what I carried, and what I still carry. I used to think I would be "better" one day, and now I believe it's not quite like that.

It's easy to come out with trite phrases, like realising potential and so on, and that really just doesn't express it adequately. It's more a sense of being truly alive, more in the moment, less in the past or in the future. In a way I am coming full circle (spiral really) as I am now painting again, but this time it's different. Now instead of just eating, I'm learning to nourish my soul. I was pretty much asleep when I first went to Caer. Now, I'm waking up.

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