Comparing Group Dreamwork and One on One

GROUP DREAMWORK

Because the Haden Institute believes all dreams come in service to wholeness and healing, we trust that fruitful things can come from sharing a personal dream in a group context. Dream groups provide an opportunity for participants to explore the collective wisdom of a personal dream. Therefore, the dream group container must be set in the collective and create boundaries for the personal.

For this reason, dream groups are designed to minimize personal association and focus instead on the collective unconscious projections that arise for each group member.

Therefore, each dream group participant takes the dream on as their own, offering personal projections using "In my dream" statements. While clarifying questions may be asked of the dream itself, participants may NOT ask questions related to personal associations of the dreamer. The goal of group dream work is for each person to ponder the general themes and feelings evoked for them personally in the shared dream. And while group dream work can certainly offer significant a-ha's to the dreamer by suggesting possibilities that might have gone unexplored or unnoticed, the goal of group dream work is for each participant to receive wisdom from the shared dream. It is this collective healing wisdom that provides dream groups with their meaning and purpose.

When participating in a dream work, we are asking ourselves, "What does this dream have to say to me about my own journey of wholeness?" (And by default, we refrain from speculating or commenting on what it might have to say to the dreamer.)

ONE-ON-ONE DREAMWORK

While the Haden Institute retains primary focus on group dream work, in recent years we have seen an increase in interest regarding one-on-one dream work. And while some of the process overlaps with dream groups, it remains imperative to distinguish the two. The container created in one-on-one dream work parallels that of spiritual direction or a therapeutic dyad, where the conversation focuses on the inner work of the dreamer. For this reason, the dream worker creates healthy boundaries by NOT taking the dream on as their own or offering too many personal feelings or projections. When projections are made, these are to be named consciously by using statements such as, "If this were my dream" or "One thing I'd think about if this had been my dream…' Because the dreamer is the only one who can decide what the dream means, the dream worker simply serves to support and encourage this process of inner knowing. To do so, the dream worker asks the dreamer to make personal associations with dream content and then offers follow-up questions to further probe the possible connections. In this way, the dream worker creates a container that sets its total focus on the inner life of the dreamer and creates boundaries around anything outside of that focus.

When operating as a dream worker, we are asking the dreamer, "What does this dream have to say to YOU about your journey of wholeness?" The goal of one-on-one dream work is to companion someone in that process.

A SHARED COMMITMENT

In all aspects, dream work is to honor the sacredness of the dream and the dreamer. Allowing silence as we confront something heavy, offering space for all to process emotions, and providing a safe container where all members feel protected is essential.

Dream group facilitators are responsible for creating a safe container, maintaining that safety, and gently redirecting participants as needed. One-on-one dream workers honor this by listening well and letting the dreamer's insights serve as the guide. The dreamer alone can decide what a dream means. No facilitator should attempt to impose an interpretation or label a dreamer's interpretation as incorrect.

We also honor the container by acknowledging that dream work is not therapy, even as healing happens in these spaces. Dream workers are to maintain a list of references for those who need professional support to continue to unpack what might arise during dream work.

Group Dreamwork

- The focus is on the DREAM

- Group participants share their personal projections by using "In my dream" statements

- NO personal associations asked of the dreamer

- The benefit is hearing many projections from the collective unconscious

- The outcome is gaining wisdom for each participant from the collective dream images

The dream and dreamer are held with reverence.

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The dreamer alone can decide the meaning of the dream for themselves.

One on One Dreamwork

- The focus is on the DREAMER

- The dreamworker asks the dreamer for personal associations

- The dreamworker does NOT share personal projections without naming it as such

- The benefit is focusing on the inner work of the dreamer

- The outcome is personal insight for the dreamer

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