
empty canvas : wondering mind

an artisan's workbook

compiled and written by miriam louisa simons

for all the extraordinary students
I have been privileged to work with and befriend

you asked for it: here it is

may it nurture your own creative questions
as they form the ground beneath your feet



Blind Men on a Log bridge
By Hakuin Ekaku
(The Gitter Collection)

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Imagination is the reaching out of the mind,
the capacity to see dreams and visions,
to consider diverse possibilities,
to endure the tension in holding these possibilities to attention.

Rollo May

OUTSIDE-IN & INSIDE-OUT

secret senses

First I think, and then I draw my think. (1)

Can I make a painting about human experience without having to depict appearances? Can I paint the human spirit rather than noses or feet? Can I reveal the splendors and agonies of life through space, color, light, shape, line, confrontation, rhythm and inflections in the paint?

Albert Irvin (2)

I was in Japan studying a method of dyeing textiles called *shibori* when the way of working Irvin wonders about opened up for me. It marked a significant turning point in my creative life. Artisans expert in the multitude of designs created using *shibori* techniques – mostly for the fabrics that would be made up into exquisite *kimono* – taught me that each design has its own name in Japanese. And that the given name was not a fanciful attribute, but was a kind of metaphor for the visual effect created by the pattern. For example, *arashi* means storm – and the pattern produced in *arashi shibori* reminds one of driving rain. In this way, *kimono* that are decorated with *shibori* designs are a canvas upon which the artisan communicates something relevant about the time of year or a special occasion.

I had no intentions of restricting my canvas to the *kimono* however, and instead began to use the *shibori* textiles in other ways – ways that combined with various media to express non-verbal narratives. It was like entering another universe when I realized that tone and color and texture – the elements of art I particularly adored – could be a language in their own right. It is the potential of this language that we will explore in **outside-in & inside-out**.

Playing with the ways of looking offered in **wildsight – the innocent eye** develops the seeing muscles we use for perceiving the 'outer' world. The fitter they become, the more subtle the information that can be perceived from whatever it is we are studying – whether it's a puzzle, a picture, a clump of moss, a color, a face, or light upon rippling water. What begins to occur is a strange diminution of the distance between the subject and our eyes. We begin to be curious about what is looking out and what is looking *back* at us looking out. With this kind of open wondering looking, the barrier between the observer and the observed seems to fade away.

Alan Watts' words quoted at the close of the last book, remind us of the miracle of the human brain as the co-creator of our wondrous world. Yet we have experienced for ourselves that what the brain creates is limited to what it knows, and that if it has been misinformed, we create illusions – which we then take to be reality. Clearly, the visual sense is a limited tool. It cannot see the micro or macroscopic, the complex, the vast and distant, or the interior of things – of our planet, or of our own brain. We cannot see phenomena we know to exist, like electrical currents and magnetic forces, and we perceive only a minute portion of the frequencies of light. By definition, the entire field of ESP is beyond our viewing apparatus, which is, for the majority of us, time- and space-bound. So, what is it that flies beyond the nets of the limited known and returns with the insights capable of changing the course of science, or philosophy, or a worldview?

The poet William Blake offers the key: *What is now proved was once only imagined*. The scientist Albert Einstein echoes the poet's sentiments: *Imagination is more important than knowledge*. Einstein's processes of discovery are well documented. By using his imagination, he *exposed fallacies in the Newtonian model of the universe that had distorted the perceptions of generations of physicists*. (3)

In the world of inner space our information seems to bubble up from a source deep within our own bodies. Whether we are at work in the science laboratory, the artist's studio, or within human relationships, creative insight and response occurs in relation to a form of inner vision that is unfettered by the limitations of memory or habitual thought. That inner vision is the product of what I call the *secret senses*.

The secret senses seem to have their own unique and universal ways of perceiving and operating – ways that are closer to poetry and the language of metaphor. In some people that language might be expressed figuratively, portraying images that resemble objects in the 'outer' world. But for others that language is best expressed by using the elements of visual language themselves – lines, shapes, forms, colors, tones, patterns and textures – without making any intentional reference to the world of familiar objects. American painter Georgia O'Keeffe said "*I found that I could say things with color and shapes that I couldn't say on any other way – things that I had no words for.*" Other artists find that they can express things through the actual processes of painting, or assembling, or printing, or stitching.

The secret senses include the imagination, but there is much, much more. In Amy Tan's novel, *The Hundred Secret Senses* (6) the mother character happily acknowledges at least a hundred secret senses, and they include the ability to move across time and space – even through and across dimensions. The important thing to remember is that in this domain we are utterly free from all the limitations of everyday 'reality'; this can open up wildly liberating possibilities. 'Insight' and 'intuition' are other words sometimes used to refer to material that seems to emerge from a level of the mind that is not ordinarily accessible. For our purposes here all these terms are included in the 'secret senses'.

When we dream, we see images and events happening on something like an internal video screen. We say we *see* them. But how? With our eyes? But they are closed! We don't see with our physical eyes – we see with eyes that have been created by our brain's inner image-making process. That process creates the imagery in the dream as well as an inner eye to watch the show. As Bob Thurman says, that makes our imagination rather like a '*virtual reality awareness*'. (4) We refer to the virtual eye as *I* – and for the most part forget that it is a figment of our incredible imagination! This hardly diminishes the wonder of the sense of *self* – it simply moves it from center-field to the edge of the ballpark. When this happens naturally during the process of creative play, the space vacated by the self is suddenly full of bubbling joy. Corita Kent describes this energy beautifully:

There is an energy in the creative process that belongs in the league
of those energies which can uplift, unify, and harmonize all of us.

This energy, which we call "making", is the relating of parts to make a new whole.
The result might be a painting, a symphony, a building.

If the job is done well, the work of art gives us an experience of wholeness called ecstasy
– a moment of rising above our feelings of separateness, competition, divisiveness
to a state of delight in which normal understanding is felt to be surpassed. (5) (Kent's emphasis.)

While we can't say much about the levels of consciousness that are unconscious, if we consider the upper levels we can observe that they have been conditioned, trained and disciplined – we have experienced that for ourselves in our previous experiments. Any levels of consciousness about which we have information are therefore archives of acquired knowledge.

The knowledge archive has two sources – material acquired by way of genetic inheritance and experience, and material that has surfaced from the unconscious. In this sense, the *unconscious* is the fertile ground for education (: *to draw out*) to occur, an opportunity that is largely overlooked by educational institutions. Can we simply take an excursion into the world within, and befriend whatever we encounter there?

In the deeper layers there may be the source and means for finding out new things,
because the superficial layers have become mechanical, they are conditioned, repetitive, imitative;
there is no freedom to move, to fly, to take to the wind!
And in the deeper layers ... there may be the source of something new. (7)

The secret senses are profoundly authentic. Yet they are, paradoxically, non-personal. We surely arrive at this conclusion if we consider global myths and dream symbolism. The font of the secret senses seems to be an archetypal archive into which we all have access – we let down our bucket, and up comes something curiously appropriate for the person we happen to be and the experiences we happen to be having. We let down our bucket every night and whether we like it or not, remember it or not, find it significant or not, it gets filled up during approximately ninety minutes of dreamtime immersion in the font.

Conscious immersion – letting our bucket down with a purpose – is less common. We often have a love/hate relationship with the activity of the secret senses. On the one hand, we marvel at the way those who frequently visit the font, or who are able to allow its flow into the space mentioned earlier, seem able to make miracles happen. We like what they 'bring back.' We are touched by their arrestingly original creations. We envy that. We want to be able to *do that*.

On the other hand, we aren't prepared to ride our own bucket down into the dark. Especially not knowing what might come up with us, whether we'll be able to control it, whether we'll even like it, and importantly, whether or not significant others will approve of it. But all artists know that the source of their work lies down there in the dark waters: the *Rio Abajo Rio*, as Clarissa Pinkola Estes calls it – *the river beneath the river*. (8)

During the writing of these notes on inner space and the secret senses I went through a stage of feeling that the richness of all the material available on this subject, plus my own experience, was overwhelming. My brain was crying out to know how the material would resolve itself into some sort of coherent form. It was an experience identical to that facing the artist in the midst of an important work. Panic: *What have I gotten hold of here? Where is it all going? How can I possibly deal with it? I need a map!*

It was time to stand back, or better still to lie down. I stretched out on the floor, relaxed my body bit by bit, and began to sink into that familiar, delicious, semi-conscious floating cocoon. After some time, I became aware of an image appearing, unwilling, on the screen of my inner vision. I saw

... a handsome brass faucet, polished to a high shine.
As I watched it, a drop of exquisitely clear – crystal clear – water formed on the spout.
It hung there quivering for a few moments, then it dropped.
Another drop formed, swelled, and dropped. And another.
I watched the drops, marveling at the purity of the water,
and the way that the drops were reflecting such jewels of color and light.

I don't know how long I spent watching, but at some point the connection between the image and my writing was made, and I understood that here was a beautiful example of the way I needed to trust the secret senses in the creation of this work. To simply put it all down as clearly as I could – drop by drop – and allow it to form the order that was appropriate. Which it absolutely knew how to do!

This experience reminded me of the way artist and writer Marion Milner talks about her process of making, and the importance of the realm of the secret senses:

I saw now how it meant letting impulse and mood crystallize into outer form: not into purposive action determined by some outer goal, but expressive action determined by an inner vision – and this was the growing point, without which the subjective temperament remains stagnant and enwrapped in its own egoism.

And the inescapable condition of true expression was the plunge into the abyss, the willingness to recognize that the moment of blankness and extinction was the moment of incipient fruitfulness, the moment without which the invisible forces within could not do their work. (9)

Our reluctance to "plunge into the abyss" is fed from several sources. The most obvious is the way we are usually instructed as growing children to stop day-dreaming, stop imagining things, get back to productive work, get back to the 'real' world, by our parents and our teachers.

But there is another source of distrust, and it is a valid one. It is the observation that whole communities, congregations, and cultures can sometimes be dominated by wild imaginings. We see how those with vested interests – political groups, religious cults, and the commercial advertising media – play upon these imaginings to their great profit. And we know too, that "*creative imagination, especially of the most profound sort, is socially disruptive. Indeed, no force has yet been discovered that is more powerful than imagination.*" (3) How then, can we enter with ease and walk the razor's edge through the realms of the unseen senses with their potential for destruction as well as creation?

Awareness of their operations within our thinking is the key:

Only if we are aware if our imaginations can we know their illusory powers;
by contrast, those who are passively unaware of their imaginations
are easy targets for promulgators of illusion. (3)

We can *mindfully* explore the conditions conducive for the 'invisible forces within' to arise. We can play games within our imagination's realm in order to feel more at home there, less threatened by its awesome autonomy. We can experiment with guided tours and directed fantasies (just to see what might happen), and we can befriend the unknown just as we befriended the ways of looking in **wildsight – the innocent eye**. In doing so we will be befriending once again those inner senses with which we were so familiar as little children – the secret senses.

Expressing the wonders we have experienced in our wandering through this 'inner' world might mean playing with the language of the visual arts in the ways we've already explored to realistically portray our experiences. On the other hand we might, like Georgia O'Keeffe and Albert Irvin and many others, choose to use the grammar of that language in a different way. Perhaps we'll decide to link line and shape and color metaphorically with 'real' things and experiences we've brought back in our bucket ...



what is the **color** of blackbird's waking song?

what is the **shape** of a moment of pain?

what **lines** will express a trembling heart, a conflict, a smile in the sun?

what is the **texture** of delight, of envy, of the smell of fresh coffee?

what **form** would silence take?

what **pattern** would express exhaustion, or determination, or fear?



what is the shape within which these elements play?

does the space have depth, or is it flat?

what color, and tone, is the 'ground' against which things happen?

do some things happen behind others, in front, beside?

is the surface smooth or textured?



outside-in ...

clearing the space

Most of us cannot call the Muse on demand, or sink at will into her arena – the secret senses. But we can set up conditions that she seems to appreciate. Think of it as optimizing the chances she'll show up, edging your invitation with gold ...

relaxed attention resurfaces

Not surprisingly, it is as difficult for us to fully experience the world of the secret senses when tense, as it was to explore ways of looking at the outside world. Awareness is closely related to relaxation. The few minutes it takes for conscious letting go of stress and tension is not time wasted – it is quality of awareness and attention gained throughout the rest of the session. Please refer back to the exercises in **wildsight – the innocent eye** (particularly the body circuit), and enjoy them again before exploring the activities to follow.

a quiet environment

The images of the secret senses are often fragile and ephemeral. They are sensitive to noise, to interruption, and to agitation. Be sure you are comfortable, warm, and will not be disturbed. As we said before, music makes a difference, but it must be carefully chosen. The Adagio and Largo movements of classical Baroque music work well – their beat is in the same rhythm as the human heart-beat, and it takes only a short time for the heart to dance in time with the music. This creates a soothing, grounding effect in the body. Research has shown that use of this kind of music in language programs enhances creative learning. (10)

a playful attitude

Watch a child who is absorbed in fantasy. That child might exhibit an amazing range of emotions: anxiety, impatience, anger, frustration, as well as blissful serenity. Notice that there is always a sense of playfulness in the air around healthy children – they usually know they are "just pretending," and that gives them great liberties, especially in their relationships with one another. If we can adopt, for the moment, the "just pretending" attitude, we will have easy access to the world of inner space.

willingness of heart – courage

In *The Courage to Create* (11), Rollo May says that *courage* is not the absence of fear or despair, but the capacity to move ahead *in spite of despair*. Perhaps despair is too strong a word for the reservations some of us may have about the journey into the unknown, but very often it is those who despairingly claim to be unable to be creative who are reluctant to explore. Recall the Grail myth, and how the knights entered the forest, separately and alone, at the darkest place, no track in sight. Courage equals conviction plus doubt. Courage means having a willing heart, and for the heart to be willing it is necessary that the will of *habitude* be disengaged. Just for now, while we explore.

patience

Some people learn to play a musical instrument more easily than others do. Some learn to read faster. Some take ages to learn anything, but do so with great thoroughness. We are wonderfully different beings with different capacities. For some of us there has never been a separation from the world of the secret senses, for others the way back has been long obscured with the tangled overgrowth of "thou-shalt" and "thou-shalt-not" directives. So we can appreciate that our experiences may at first seem unproductive, that they may take time to mature. It's important to know that it may take time. How much time has passed in neglect of our creative life? Be patient and relax.

crossing the threshold

starting from where we are, and what we know

- **where are you now?** (3)

Stop whatever you are busy at. Where are you? Without looking around, or to the right or the left, put yourself into a spatial context. What is behind you? Notice how your imagination helps you describe the setting: furniture, colors, décor, the people. What is to your left? To your right? Now move through the wall in front of you and see what is there. Go on through the building next door, if there is one. What is there? Go as far as you can in that direction. Next, move down through the floor, experience what is underneath the house, on and on into the center of the earth. Next think about where you are in relation to the oceans, the mountains. And finally, locate yourself on the planet earth, moving forth to the solar system in space.

When you have completed your galactic journey, return to where you are now, breathe quietly for a while, and then make a list in your X-file of anything you noticed about the way your imagination assisted you on your travels.

- **da Vinci's device** (3)

I cannot forbear to mention ... a new device for study which, although it may seem trivial and almost ludicrous, is nevertheless extremely useful in arousing the mind to various inventions. And this is, when you look at a wall spotted with stains ... you may discover a resemblance to various landscapes, beautified with mountains, rivers, rocks, trees.

Or again, you may see battles and figures in action, or strange faces and costumes, and an endless variety of objects which you could reduce to complete and well drawn forms.

Leonardo da Vinci.

Find a stained wall that interests you, or a cracked and mossy paving stone, or a hand built dry stone wall. Even a cracked piece of asphalt will do.

Look at it with your finder for ten minutes each day for a week, ideally at different times of the day.

For five minutes, draw the cracks, the shadows and shapes and textures as you see them using your new 'looking tools'.

Then gaze at the same view through the finder for five minutes (or longer), allowing yourself to discover the hidden images lurking within the surface markings.

Let yourself be free to imagine anything.

Write about your discoveries on the page facing your drawings. Then take more time to *draw out*, visually, the imaginary things you have listed.

Perhaps you will have noticed already that the images produced mentally can be experienced in every sensory mode – we can smell with the mind's nose, hear with the mind's ears, see with the mind's eye. We all do this every night in dreamtime, and while the ability to consciously experience dream images varies from person to person, it *is* able to be consciously developed.

The inner 'seeing' muscles are similar to the outer – like all muscles involved in physical fitness, the more they are exercised, the fitter they become. "Use it, or lose it," is the familiar refrain from physical education experts, and the same applies to our ability to experience inner imagery. One of the simplest ways to re-acquaint ourselves with the mind's eye is by experimenting with after-images. Even if you have experienced difficulty seeing inner images, it is unlikely that you will fail to discern after-images. And what is important is that by doing so you will get a *feeling* for the kind of inner attention necessary to enable the mind's eye to see its own, independently-generated mental images.

- **the pink pig** (adapted from 3)

Cut the shape of a pig out of bright green paper. Place a black dot in the center.
Hang the pig on a dark background in a well-lit place.

Stare at the black dot with unwavering attention while you count up to ten.

Now move your gaze to a plain wall – and see a pink pig!

Then close your eyes and see the same little pink pig with your inner eye

I wonder if you have noticed the patterns of color that appear on the insides of the eyelids when you close your eyes in a dark room. Sometimes students initially respond to this question with firm denial, saying that they see only uniform blackness. That is, until they really *look*. Then they report, as does Galton in Peter McKellar's study, that there is "a kaleidoscopic change of patterns and forms ... continually going on." (13)

Let's look for ourselves.

- **inner images**

Sit in a pitch-dark room. Tightly 'squinch' your eyelids without touching them.

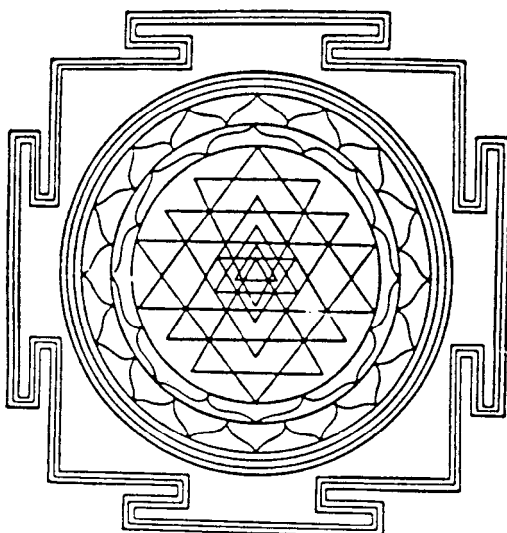
Pay close attention to the luminous patterns that appear. Even if they are very faint, watch them as they dance, melt away, reappear, form and re-form into patterns ...

When we experimented with da Vinci's Device we used our imagination to 'see' images contained within an external object.

Do the same kind of projecting as you did then, peering into the inner, dancing, luminous activity you see when you squinch your eyes in the dark.

Probably most readers are already familiar with this kind of visual after-image, particularly those who have studied the perception of color phenomena. But the next type of after-image might be less common. The Shri Yantra Mandala is a Yogic diagram from India. A *yantra* is said to be a power-diagram, in the same way that a *mantra* is a power-seed-sound. Let's experience for ourselves the curious effect of this diagram on our inner seeing muscles.

- **mandala magic**



Sit in a quiet place where you will not be disturbed. Gaze at the center of the Shri Yantra Mandala.

"Breathe easily, in through the nose – flaring the nostrils. Out, through the mouth – 6 times – slowly.

Close your eyes and focus them up into the middle of your forehead.

The emerging after-image resembles the Central Sun. Use your will to brighten the colors." (From R. Strauss, quoted in 3)

Note in your X-file your experiences with these experiments - especially any difficulties you had and how you could create interesting ways to restore fitness to your inner seeing muscles. Note particularly the emotions you experienced and whether or not you saw associated colors, forms, or patterns. If you didn't, don't be concerned. Fitness takes practice and the exercises will bear fruit in time. Remember what was said earlier about patience? Do keep trying.

Although the capacity to see inner imagery is something we all share, the ability to do so varies. Alan Richardson writes, "*Failure to become aware of imagery is chiefly due to inattention to, and consequent lack of familiarity with, internal channels of stimulation.*" (12) Keep experimenting until you *do* see the after-images before going on to the next activities.

adventures in inner space: 1

Jean Houston's book *The Possible Human* (14) is an excellent resource for guided visualizations designed to unfold creative potential. As an introduction to the inner journey I use an adaptation of one she calls *Cleaning the Rooms of Perception*. It introduces the idea of inner travel in an easy way and people find it really enjoyable. We move through the realms of the common senses first, and then into the territory of the secret senses. Make a recording of the text or have someone read it to you as you relax. The journey will take at least half an hour, so make sure you are lying comfortably on your back and that you are warm.

- **common senses and secret senses** (adapted from 14)

Close your eyes and focus on your breath, enjoying this gentle rhythm for a few minutes.

Now take your awareness down to your right foot and wander into your big toe.

There you find a little boat made out of a blood platelet. You hop into the boat, and set off through the foot flowing along the blood vessels.

Travel up your leg in a big artery until you reach your pelvis.

Continue to travel up your body, noticing what you see and feel as you pass through the stomach, the lungs, the heart, and into the neck.

Cont ...

Move up through the arteries in your neck into the muscles of your face, relaxing them.

Now you finally arrive at the folded hills and valleys of the cerebral cortex of your brain.

Move to the spot between your eyebrows, which is sometimes called the third eye – this is the location of the pineal gland.

It is also the location of a special house – **the house of the senses**. This is where your Muse lives. Your name is on the door, and there is a golden key in the lock. Unlock the door and keep the key with you as you enter the house. Walk into a spacious hallway. It is well lit, and you feel really welcome.

There's a doorway on your right and you walk through it into the visual center of your brain. This is the room of **sight**.

Walk around in it – what does it look like? Is it cluttered up with old images? Clean it up and make it sparkle.

As you do this, be aware that you are actually clearing up your perceptions at their neurological base.

Throw open the windows, letting the light and the fresh air flow in.

Dance in the sparkling light, feeling it cleanse your sight.

Look out the window and see the landscape bright and shining as though after a storm.

Notice that there is a door at the end of this room. It is locked but your golden key fits, and you open the door. This is the room of **hearing**.

What state do you find this room in? Is it clogged up with waxy stuff? If so, do whatever you have to do to scrape it clean.

Make it spotless, knowing that as you do so you are actually improving your hearing. Is this room too small? Push out the walls, push up the ceiling until it feels like the right size.

Now walk around and hear your footsteps on the floor.

Open the window and let the fresh air swoosh in – hearing it swoosh in and letting it blow out any stale air. Hear the wind in the trees, the singing of the birds, the laughter of children playing, the sneeze of a rabbit beneath the window.

Hear yourself singing softly as you dance to the music of the sunbeams.

Cont ...

As you dance, you notice another locked door. Open it with your golden key and step into the room of **smell**.

This is one of the oldest rooms in the house, and probably it is full of all kinds of clutter. If it is, get busy throwing all the rubbish into garbage bags.

When it is all cleaned out you might decide to give it a fresh coat of paint – what color will you use?

Open the windows and let the fresh perfumes of the summer countryside fill the room.

There are exquisite fragrances filling the room – what can you smell?

At the end of this room you see another locked door. Unlock it and find yourself in the room of **taste**.

How much mess is lying around in here? Get rid of all those old cigarette butts, the left-over cold coffee in cups, the stale chips, the candy wrappers.

Use whatever you need to make this room sparkle with cleanliness, and when you have finished lay the table with your favorite food.

Sit at the table with the window open beside you, and savor the tasty delights of your meal.

When you have finished go to another door at the far end of the room and unlock it with your key. Now you are in your tactile center, the room of **touch**.

I wonder what you will find in here? Old rubber gloves and mufflers? Other barriers to clear and sensitive tactile sensation?

If you need to, clean out this room until it is vibrant with life, glowing with texture, sensitive to heat and cold, a caress and a tap, the slippery and the silky, the rough and the lumpy.

Notice the feel of the window frame as you open the window, the feel of the air as it flows over your skin – walk barefoot over the floor and feel the sensation of whatever material the floor is made of on the soles of your feet.

Touch the walls and feel their texture. Enjoy all the feelings that are available to your body, which is now vibrant with sensation.

You have explored all the rooms of the so-called common senses, but your journey isn't over yet. You notice another locked door and you open it using your golden key – leaving the door open as you pass through. You notice that you are back in the hallway again, and that there are big trashcans where you can dump your rubbish bags.

Cont ...

As you do that, you see a beautiful circular stairway leading up to an upper level.

You climb the stairs and at the top you find yourself in a huge room.

This is the room of your **secret senses**.

What does it look like? Notice the architectural details, the materials of the walls and floor, the colors. Does it have a ceiling or not?

Walk around and as you do, pick up anything that is lying around cluttering the room. If this space needs cleaning, wave your wand and transform it! Open up the windows and let in more light and fresh air.

How does it feel to be in this space? Is it familiar to you? Can you see any of the things you really love here? Rest for a while, breathing in the beauty of this room.

As you rest quietly, you notice that this room has a kind of balcony. You go over to the balcony and see that it overlooks the five rooms of the common senses below – the rooms that you have just explored and cleaned out. All these rooms are interconnected by the doors that you left open as you passed through.

Breathing in the fragrant air and feeling all your senses alive, exhale your breath over the balcony and into the rooms below.

Do this at least ten times holding the thought that you are bringing the energy from your secret senses into the areas of your common senses.

Really see this energy flowing through all the rooms.

Take some time now to relax and to deeply feel the sensations of all these rooms in your body. Promise yourself that you will return here often, and that you will remember to keep all these rooms clean.

Now go back down the stairs to the hallway. Put any rubbish into the trashcans, and then make them vanish, completely, using any means you can imagine. Gone, forever!

Go out the front door. Whether you lock it behind you or not is completely up to you – but make sure that you have the key in your pocket and that you know how to get back inside easily.

Open your eyes and look around.

Have your senses changed? Does the room seem larger or smaller? Are there any fragrances in the air? How does your skin feel? Can you hear any sounds?

Bite into a crisp apple or some freshly baked bread and notice the texture, the taste, the aroma.

inside-out ...

outpourings from the secret senses

As a response to your journey, make notes in your X-file under six headings – one for each of the five common senses and one for the secret senses. List your feelings about each room, any colors that were evident – any details at all. Give yourself plenty of time to process the experience before you begin to express the journey, or a detail that was significant, in visual language.

inside-out 1

- **mapping the journey**

How will you make a memento of your journey?

You are free to work in whatever way seems right for you. Right and wrong are words that simply don't exist in the language of the secret senses.

To give further instructions would defeat our purpose ...

adventures in inner space 2

The next activity concentrates on the inner sense of color and allows us to not only visualize it, but also to feel it washing through our entire body. Again, it takes the form of a guided visualization, so you will need to have someone read the script or else record it. Make sure that ample spaces of silence are allowed in order for the images to arise. This activity is adapted from *The Right Brain Experience*, by Marilee Zedaneck. (15)

- **colors in mind**

Be sure that you are sitting in a comfortable position. Close your eyes. Check your breathing to be sure it is coming from deep within your chest. Exhale, and then inhale to the count of five – pulling the air in through your nose until your lungs are full; hold for the count of five; exhale for the count of five.

Again, breathe in – and hold – and breathe out. Now begin to breathe naturally, finding your own rhythm.

Cont ...



Close your eyes and visualize the color **red**. Let it become as vivid a color as you can imagine.

Imagine that color as a bright circle of red light above your head that covers your entire body with its glow.

Pretend that you can actually breathe in that color red.

Let it spread through your body, going into whatever parts of your body it wants to fill.

If any thoughts come in with the color, just let them come in and go right out again.

Thoughts will come to mind and move on – all your concentration is on the color that is moving slowly and easily through your body.

Visualize the color **orange**.

Picture it above your head, radiating a warm orange light.

Think of the color being drawn into your body moving easily, warm and soothing.

Let your body take whatever part of the color it needs, let the color go wherever it wants to go.

Allow whatever you don't need of this color to run out the bottom of your feet into the ground.

See a bright **yellow** light above your head.

Breathe in the light.

Let it go wherever it wants to go.

Let it warm you and soothe you.

Whatever you don't want can run out the bottom of your feet.

See the color **green** above your head.

The green light moves through your body.

What you don't need runs through your body and out your toes.

Visualize the color **blue** above your head.

Pull the blue light into your body.

Let it comfort and cool you.

Take what you need, release the rest ...

The **purple** light shines above you.

Breathe it in.

Feel the color moving gently through your body.

Cont ...



A bright **white** light shines above you.

Breathe deeply and pull it into your body until you are filled with brightness.

Feel it flowing through you, moving slowly, wonderfully soothing – and moving on ...

Picture yourself running or dancing – easily, smoothly, beautifully ...

Surround yourself with the light from any of the colors you experienced and be filled with the light .,,

Let the vision take you wherever it will ...

When you are ready, open your eyes and take time to enjoy whatever you are feeling.

inside-out 2

Write about your experience in your X-file. Were there some colors that you could visualize more easily than others? How did it feel inside your body to let the colors flow to wherever they were 'needed'? After you have taken all the time you need to process the experience, you might like to try this painting activity:

- **one-hue improvisation**

If one hue (a hue is a particular color) was significant during your visualization, choose that one for your painting. If not choose one hue that appeals to you.

Pour plenty of that hue into a palette, and pour out lots of white and a tiny bit of black.

With the addition of white you can mix many tints. With the addition of black you can mix many shades. If you mix black and white together to form grays, and then add the grays to your hue, you can mix dozens of tones.

Take a sheet of painting paper and several brushes in different sizes, and play with your infinity of variations on the theme of one hue.

inside-out 3

We'll call up colors again for the next activity, but this time music comes on stage as well. The pigments will be our instruments, and we'll play them in concert as we simultaneously listen to music. Our inner responses to the musical rhythms and patterns will flow out of our bodies and onto paper in a way that is similar to the finger-painting we tried earlier. The big difference is that instead of using our physical eyes, we will put on a blindfold and cue up the inner performer!

- **musical mind 1**

Arrange colored chinks, pastels, or crayons in two groups on your table: cool hues on one side, warm hues on the other. Have as many tones of each hue as you can find.

You will also need a large sheet of drawing paper, a blindfold, and some suitable music.

Cover your eyes so that the only external stimulus is from the music.

As the music plays, reach for the colors you have laid out on your paper. Your hands will select the hues you need to 'portray' the tempo, the depth, the mood, and the patterns of the music.

As you listen to the music, be aware of the way line, shade, color and texture, are suggested by the sounds. Let your body be directed towards the hues and tones evoked by each sound, and let it make the marks that dance to the rhythms of the sounds.

When you remove the blindfold you'll probably fall about laughing at your drawing. But the important thing to ponder is the degree to which you felt sensitive to the color/music synthesis, and whether you experienced any frustration brought on by not being able to control your work. Write all this down in your X-file.

Then take a finder with a large opening and scan the drawing with it, looking for areas that you find interesting.

Find about six separate vignettes (or more), outline them, and cut them out.

They can be mounted on a clean sheet of card, glued into your X-file, used to make little cards, or whatever takes your fancy.

inside-out 4

- **musical mind 2**

Choose some music that expresses a variety of kinds of sounds – smooth, staccato, jerky, sweeping, and so on.

Take a large sheet of tinted (any color will do) paper. If none is at hand, prepare a sheet of white paper by painting it all over with a soft color. Have plenty of white tempera or poster color ready.

Spend some time simply listening to the music, feeling into its rhythms, moving around the room, then quietly seeing yourself moving, dancing in your mind's eye.

Then when you are ready let your inner dance flow out through your arm, the brush, and onto the paper, leaving white lines. Just lines. Avoid trying to make any recognizable images. Use different brushes to express the variety of musical rhythms.

You will know when to stop.

Let your white painting dry completely. Then take a selection of colored oil pastels, listen some more to the music, and put down marks and colors on top of the white lines. Like the lines, the marks and colors will also be inspired by the textures and colors of the music. Use your fingers to blend the pastel colors and create delicate tones.

Music seems to bring vividness to the colors we see with the mind's eye, and one frequently reads about artists who work to music: Maurice Sendak, for example, paints to Mozart. But how easy is it to hear music that doesn't come from an external source – mentally orchestrated music? Perhaps it's easier than one might think.

adventures in inner space 3

In the next activity we experience the inner complement of all our outer senses, and more. We become really familiarized with the domain of the secret senses, and experience the brain's amazing capacity for 'ambidextrous thinking'. This is another guided visualization and it's great fun, certainly one of the most popular I have explored with students, even though it does require considerable energy and attention. Like our first inner journey, it is adapted from *The Possible Human* (14). You will need to record it or have someone read it, allowing plenty of time for the images to develop.

The full version takes at least an hour, however it can be modified if time is short. See for yourself how exploring in this way can, as Houston says, "integrate many functions of the brain, bringing together words and images, senses and emotions, the abstraction of numerical symbols, and the unity of the mind field."

- **the big brain workout** (adapted from 14)

Seat yourself comfortably with your spine straight and your body in a supported and relaxed position.

Consider now what you would say to your brain if you could speak to it directly ... what would you really say if you had the opportunity to begin a friendship and ongoing communication with your own brain? Remember what this is, because toward the end of this workout you will have the opportunity to say these things directly to your own brain.

Close your eyes and direct your attention to your breathing. Allow the rhythm of your breath to become regular. As you do this, allow your consciousness to rest in your solar plexus and gradually move up through your body, passing through your lungs and then your heart, moving up the left carotid artery to the left side of your brain. Move your awareness forward now to your left eye.

Keeping your eyes closed, look down with your left eye. Now up. Look to the left ... and to the right. Keeping your awareness in your left eye, allow that eye to circle clockwise ... and counter-clockwise. Which direction is easier? You may find it easier if you imagine you are looking at a clock as you move your eye.

Cont ...

Now shift your attention to your right eye. Keeping your eyes closed, look down and then up. Repeat this several times. Now move your eye from right to left. Allow your right eye to circle to the right and then to the left, clockwise and counter-clockwise. Is this easier with the right eye than the left?

Relax your eyes, feeling them get soft and releasing the muscles around the socket. Rest for a minute.

Keeping your eyes closed, direct your attention to the right side of the brain ... and now to the left. Shift back and forth easily a few times, noting any differences between the two sides of your brain. Does one seem more accessible than the other?

Keeping your eyes closed and relaxed, imagine the images that will be suggested as vividly as possible. Don't strain as you do this.

On the left side of your brain imagine the number 1 ...

And on the right side the letter A ...

On the left side the number 2 ...

And on the right side the letter B ...

On the left the number 3 ...

And on the right the letter C ...

On the left the number 4 ...

And on the right the letter D ...

On the left the number 5 ...

And on the right the letter E...

Continue with the numbers on the left and the letters on the right, going toward the number 26 and the letter Z. You don't have to actually reach 26 and Z. Just continue for a minute or so. If you get confused or lost, go back to the place where the letters and numbers were clearly together and begin again.

Rest for a minute, relaxing your attention as you do so.

Now reverse the process you have just done, putting the letters on the left and the numbers on the right.

On the left image the letter A ...

And on the right the number 1 ...

On the left the letter B ...

And on the right the number 2 ...

Cont ...



Keep going toward the letter Z and the number 26.

Stop and rest for a minute. Note whether it was easier on one side than the other, whether numbers or letters were more clearly imagined.

Continuing with your eyes closed:

On the left side of your brain imagine a festive outdoor scene with a big picnic and fireworks.

On the right imagine a couple getting married.

Let that image go and, on the left, imagine a procession of nuns walking two by two through a lovely medieval cloister.

On the right there is a hurricane sweeping through a coastal town.

On the left is an atom.

On the right is a galaxy.

On the left are fruit trees bearing new blossoms.

On the right the trees are weighted down with frost and snow.

On the left is the sunrise.

On the right is the sunset.

On the left is a green jungle forest.

On the right is a snow-covered mountain in the Alps.

On the left is a three-ring circus.

On the right is a thick fog.

On the left is the sensation of climbing rocks. Try to capture the feeling and sensation of the rocks and breathe easily as you experience it.

On the right, imagine how your hand feels caressing a baby's skin.

On the left, the feeling of plunging your hands into warm soppy mud.

On the right, that of making snowballs with your bare hands.

On the left you are pulling taffy.

On the right you are punching a punching bag.

Now, on the left hear the sound of a fire engine.

On the right the sound of crickets chirping.

On the left the sound of a car starting up.

On the right somebody is singing in a very high voice.

On the left the sound of ocean waves on a beach.

On the right the sound of your stomach growling.

Cont ...





Now on the left the smell of a pine forest.

On the right imagine smelling freshly brewed coffee.

On the left the smell of gasoline.

On the right the smell of bread baking.

Now on the left brain, the taste of a crisp, juicy apple.

On the right the taste of hot buttered toast.

On the left the taste of a lemon.

On the right the taste of nuts.

Now, on the left side of the brain, experience as fully as you can the following scene: you are riding a horse through the snow and sleet carrying three little kittens under your coat, and you are sucking a peppermint.

On the right side you are standing under a waterfall singing "You are my Sunshine," and watching a nearby volcano erupt.

Now, eyes still closed, with your left eye look up toward your left brain. Move the eye so that it circles and explores this space. Roam around for a while.

Now do the same thing for a while with your closed right eye on the right side of your brain.

Now with the left eye trace some triangles on the left side of the brain. Now make some rectangles. Now draw some stars.

With the right eye trace some triangles on the right side of the brain. Now make some rectangles. Now draw some stars.

Now make many overlapping circles on the left side, leaving spirals of light streaming from these circles into the left side of the brain. Imagine the brain as charged with energy by this light.

Make many overlapping circles on the right side with the right eye, leaving energizing light streaming from these circles.

Now, with both eyes, circle vertically just in the middle of the head. You should circle along the corpus callosum, the ridge where the hemispheres of the brain come together. With both eyes together, circle as widely as you can inside your head.

Cont ...





With both eyes, create spiraling galaxies throughout your brain. Fill the whole of your brain space and the inside of your head with them.

Stop and let your eyes come completely to rest.

Try to make horizontal circles with both eyes just at the level of your eyes, and circling as widely as possible inside your head. Now try making smaller circles horizontally at the level of your eyes. Make them smaller ... and smaller ... and smaller ... until you get down to a space that is too small for circling and then you will want to fix on that point and try to hold it.

Continue to breathe freely with your muscles relaxed as you do this. If you lost the point, make some more large circles, letting them become smaller and smaller until you get back down to a point, staying fixed on that point for as long as you can easily.

Rest for a moment.

In the middle of your forehead, imagine a huge sunflower. Then erase the sunflower. Simultaneously, imagine a sunflower on the left and some green damp moss on the right. Let them go.

Imagine that there is a big tree growing right in the middle of your forehead.

Let go of that, and imagine that there is a golden harp on the left, and just a little to the right of the harp is a drum. Try to hear them as they play together.

Let them go and imagine on the left an eagle, and on the right a canary, both of them together there at once. Let them go now, and imagine the canary now on the left and the eagle on the right.

Let them go, and imagine two eagles on the left and two canaries on the right. Let them fade away.

Breathe easily, and if you need to adjust your position to be more comfortable, do so.

Now, in the middle of your forehead, imagine a small sun. Then imagine the sun just inside the top of your head. Try to roll it down the inside of your skull to the inside of the back of your head, so that if your eyes could turn completely around in your head, they would be looking at it.

Cont ...



Now, raise the sun along the back of your head to the top and then down to the forehead. Now raise it along the inside of the head from the forehead back to the top and then to the back of the head, and then to the top of the head and back to the forehead. The sun should be making vertical semicircles on the inside of your skull.

Now let that sun move out in front of you and see it setting over the sea. From somewhere in the direction of the sunset you see a sailboat approaching. Which direction is the sailboat coming from? From the left, from the right, or from some other direction?

Let that image fade away and imagine an elephant walking. Try to become more and more aware of him as he walks. He stops and eats something, pushing his long trunk into his mouth, then he walks some more, then he sees you and breaks into a run. He slows down and then he stops and eats some more.

Let the elephant go, and imagine seeing Santa Claus in a sleigh pulled by reindeer. Observe the sleigh and watch it accelerate, then slow down and stop, then start up again, going faster and faster as it circles around and down a spiral track that is inside of your head.

Starting from your chin, the sleigh spirals up and around and around and around until it reaches to the top of your head. Then it spirals down and around and around and around to your chin. Then it rushes up and around and around and around to the top of your head. Then it circles down and around and around to your chin. Circling now up and around and around and around to the top of your head. Let it stop there poised on the edge of the front of the top of your head.

Now yawn and let Santa and his sleigh and reindeer drive down over your nose and into your mouth, swallow the sleigh, and forget all about it!

Now focus attention on the left side of your brain for a while. Concentrate on it and try to see or imagine what your brain looks like on the left side. Be aware of the gray matter and the convolutions of the brain. Concentrate in the same way on the right side of the brain. Pay attention to the thick bands of fibers that connect the two hemispheres of the brain.

Cont ...

Now try to sense both sides at once, the whole brain. Sense its infinite complexity, its billions of cells intercommunicating at the speed of light. Meditate on it at a universe in itself, whose dimensions and capacities you have only begun to dream of.

Now, breathing very deeply, imagine that you can expand and contract your brain. And do this for a while, expanding your brain when you inhale slowly and deeply, and contracting your brain when you exhale slowly and completely.

Let your brain rest now and, holding its image, speak directly to your own brain, suggesting, if you wish, that its functioning will get better and better. Suggest that you will have more brain cells accessible to you and that the interaction of the cells and all the processes of the brain will continuously improve as time goes by.

Tell it that the right and left hemispheres will be better integrated, as will older and newer parts of the brain. Tell your brain that many of its latent potentials can now become manifest and that you will try to work together with the brain in partnership to allow these potentials to develop in your life.

Listen now and see if your brain has any messages for you. These messages may come as words or images or feelings. Give the brain time to respond, withholding judgment. Does your brain want something from you? What does your brain want to give you?

Again, being aware of the whole of your brain, begin to feel a real sense of both communication and communion with your brain. Think of it as a new friend and of this friendship as a profound and beautiful new fact in your life.

In the weeks to come, spend time nurturing and deepening this friendship so that the two of you (your brain and your consciousness) can work together in useful ways. But now, spend some minutes communing with your brain. Images may come to you, or feelings, or words, as together you move into a more complete partnership and friendship.

If you wish, while you do this place your hands about half an inch above your head and have the sense that you are caressing the "field" around your brain, in the same way that you might pat or stroke the hand of a dear friend. (Allow about three or four minutes for this to happen.)

Cont ...

If you have some special intention for your brain, offer it now.

Continuing to feel a communion with your brain, open your eyes and look around. Observe whether there are any changes in your sensory perceptions. How do you feel in your body? What is your mood and your sense of reality? Do you feel that your possibilities have changed? Observe these things.

As you do this, stretch and move around the room. When you wish to, suggest to yourself that you are becoming more and more wide awake.

(For interesting comments on, and extensions to, this exercise please refer to Houston's book. The possibilities are limitless.)

inside-out 5

How would you express that experience without words? Most people are somewhat overawed by the richness and intensity of this interaction with their brain. It might take time to let the full impact of the imagery be integrated – writing notes sometimes helps. Consider what part of the experience had significance for you, and when you are ready -

- **the big brain picture**

... waits for you to bring it into creation.

Since you are the only person who knows what you experienced, no one can tell you how to do this.

One small suggestion: try using as many of the elements of visual language as you can.

To get started, try assigning a quality or image to each of the elements in turn.

Then play with them in the space of your paper until you find a composition that feels right.

inside-out 6

If you enjoy and practice the kind of inner mental activity we have been exploring, you will be astonished at the rewards offered up by the secret senses. The next activity calls upon the action of something akin to extra-sensory perception. Spoken instructions for drawing lines and shapes are followed while wearing a blindfold. This is great fun. It is also very challenging. How can we possibly draw accurately without our optics in action? We find that there are indeed other senses we can bring to the task and that with practice, they become more and more efficient.

- **esp drawings**

One person is the 'instructor.' He or she will ask the blindfolded participants to create very specific arrangements of lines and shapes at certain places on their drawing sheet.

Here's an example:

Find the left-hand top corner.

At a point 1cm diagonally in from the corner, draw a dot.

Now draw a smooth line from that dot to a point half way up the right-hand side of your paper.

Go to the center of the paper, and draw a 4cm square there, which is made up of vertical lines only.

From the lower left-hand corner of your central square, draw a corkscrew line down to the bottom of your sheet.

Turn your paper around once, clockwise.

Locate the end of your corkscrew line, and draw a question mark there.

And so on ...

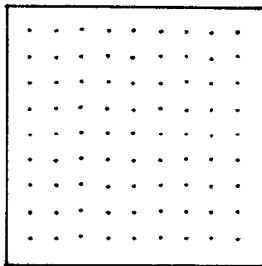
Once any initial anxiety passes, participants invent all sorts of ingenious ways to find their way around the paper. As their confidence grows, the instructions become more demanding. Directions to incorporate certain imagined images, or interpretations of sensory experiences, at specific places – so that ambidextrous thinking is fostered – can augment the instructions.

inside-out 7

Andre Breton was a French artist who experimented with 'automatic writing' to explore the world of the secret senses. He was deeply curious about "the forms and images buried beneath conventional appearances and habits." (18) We can experiment with letting our automatic functions (secret senses) have a free play, letting them take us wherever they choose, in this next activity.

- **homage to Andre Breton** (adapted from 18)

Make three dot-grids like the one below.



Enlarge two to twice the size.

Enlarge one of them to four times the size.

Using the dot-grid as your 'ground,' let your pencil wander as it pleases over the terrain of each of the two small grids.

Try not to analyze or plan what you are doing.

Let your arm be moved by your secret senses rather than your neo-cortex.

On the larger dot-grid combine your analytical 'problem-solving' mode and your secret senses mode to make a design.

For more games to play within the field of the secret senses, I recommend the book *Put your Mother on the Ceiling*, by Richard de Mille (16). It's a great resource of games intended for all ages, designed to challenge levels of *imaginative fitness*.

the dreamtime

The vision of the dripping faucet I mentioned above was an example of unprompted or autonomous imagery. It came floating up as though in a dream. This is something familiar to us all; it is commonly experienced when dropping into sleep, or when awakening. As well, consider the abundant play of imagery, of which we are only marginally aware, during our estimated nightly ninety minutes of 'real' dreamtime.

Obviously the most important condition conducive to accessing this kind of imagery is a deep state of relaxation, and the suggestions offered earlier will again serve you well. Aside from consciously relaxing, befriending and inviting our new ally there is little we can do to encourage images to arise. We can only create the quiet space, and *allow*.

To begin with, emerging reveries may be brief, but with practice they can be prolonged. It would seem that any concentrating or attempt to mentally 'take notes' melts the images away. Also, they are notoriously easily forgotten, so one needs to have pen and paper handy in order to capture their essence in words or a quick drawing as soon after the event as possible.

inside-out 8

- **daytime dreamtime**

Every day for one week, settle down somewhere quiet where you will not be disturbed, at a time that is convenient – perhaps after lunch. Make sure you have at least 15 minutes on hand. Do the Body Circuit to relax your body from toe to top.

At first you may find that you simply fall asleep. Eventually you'll be aware of this beginning to happen, and with a simple instruction to your brain, be able to prevent it.

Each day, write down everything that happens – even if you went to sleep – in your X-file. Make drawings too, if you wish. But don't try to analyze, or attach meanings to anything you see or experience. You aren't 'on the couch!'

In David F. Peat's book *Infinite Potential* about the life and work of physicist David Bohm, we read that Bohm possessed an extraordinary capability for single-mindedness that enabled him to entertain an idea *within his mind* for many hours at length.

In the world of his imagination Bohm travelled freely, erecting great abstract structures of thought. ...

Like a painting, Bohm's theoretical inventions were free creations yet were constrained by internal laws of consistency. Their overall form was guided by his deep intuition, and by a constant correspondence between theory and the world of observation and experiment. (17)

It is well known that many notable contributors to the fields of science, literature, music and art have drawn on dream material in their work. A brief list is impressive: Goethe, William Blake, Edgar Allan Poe, Voltaire, Dante, Shelley, Tolstoy, Coleridge, Mozart, Schumann, Saint-Saens, Descartes ...

We also have insights into the way dreams have influenced some of our most important contemporary thinkers' discoveries. Physicist Neils Bohr, in a vivid dream

... saw himself on a sun composed of burning gas. Planets whistled as they passed him in their revolutions around the sun, to which they were attached by thin filaments. Suddenly, the burning gas cooled and solidified; the sun and the planets crumbled away. (3)

This dream led Bohr to conceive a model of the atom that had enormous influence on atomic physics.

The best way to begin to have closer contact with dream imagery is to keep a dream diary. Something about the simple intention to get 'serious' about dream activity seems to increase our ability to recall our dreams and the actual noting down of content and imagery heightens this further.

inside-out 9

- **night-time dreamtime**

Keep a dream notebook and pencil beside your bed. When you become aware of having had a dream, jot down the barest keywords – you needn't describe it in detail, for the keywords will trigger memory of the dream in the morning. Without the keywords, our dreams are likely to be lost for all time.

Cont ...

Next morning, write and draw details of all the images you can remember from your 90-minute dreamtime in your X-file.

Also make notes of the ways in which time and space were or were not represented, and about the colors you saw – if any.

Do this during the same week that you are experimenting with daytime dreamtime.

Some people believe that if one 'asks' for a dream to clarify an issue before going to sleep, the secret senses will oblige. Experiment for yourself.

The above examples of how two eminent physicists played with the *dreamtime* – Bohm's *daytime dreamtime*, and Bohr's *night-time dreamtime* – contribute positively towards the healing of the rift between thinking and intuiting. My scientific colleagues tell me that Chaos Theory itself ends the estrangement of thinking and feeling – the former no longer threatened by the latter's turbulence, nor the latter trapped by the labyrinths of explanation.

It appears that intuition can at last announce its glimpse of a simple truth without being dismissed by the logic of our 'common' senses. And we may discover that our common sense isn't that good at making sense after all. This next activity will probably horrify your common senses. I'm including it as an experiment in *dreamtime* processing of a task that would normally be simply too tiresome or too difficult for the common senses.

inside-out 10

- **the 101 problem** (adapted from 18)

Select a single subject from this list: *paper bag, frog, sneaker, ant, dandelion, banana*. Interpret your chosen subject 100 different ways.

As you work, apply all the tricks of the graphic designer's trade – cropping, touching, overlapping and intersecting of forms, negative and positive relationships, composition, texture, tone and color, and so on. Make your compositions quite small. Allow yourself to explore all possible solutions to this problem – including taking it into the dreamtime for inspiration. Keep a record of the outcome.

Finally, choose the one you like best and make it into a larger work.

beyond space and time

The last activity in the realm of the secret senses takes us on a guided inner journey into the theoretical microcosm of the universe – a journey that will allow us to penetrate the mask of matter. It is a journey into a universe that may be both real and familiar to the quantum physicist, but which the rest of us can only experience in our imaginations.

Which is, of course, exactly where those physicists first experienced it.

This guided visualization comes from *Ageless Body, Timeless Mind*, by Deepak Chopra. (19)
You will need someone to read it to you unless you can record it in some way.

adventures in inner space 4

- **the dance of the universe** (adapted from 19)

Make yourself comfortable in a position where your spine is straight – sitting up, or lying flat on the floor.

Look at your hand and examine it closely. Trace its familiar lines and furrows, feel the texture of the skin, the supple flesh cushioning the submerged hardness of bone. This is the hand your senses report to you, a material object composed of flesh and blood.

We will attempt to "thaw out" your hand and give you a different experience of it beyond the reach of your senses.

Close your eyes.

Holding the image of your hand in your mind's eye, imagine that you are examining it through a high powered microscope with a lens that can penetrate the finest fabrics of matter and energy.

At the lowest power, you no longer see smooth flesh but a collection of individual cells loosely bound by connective tissue. Each cell is a watery bag of proteins that appear as long chains of smaller molecules held together by invisible bonds.

Cont ...

Moving closer, you can see separate atoms of hydrogen, carbon, oxygen, and so on, which have no solidity at all – they are vibrating, ghostly shadows revealed through the microscope as patches of light and dark.

You have arrived at the boundary between matter and energy, for the subatomic particles making up each atom – whirling electrons dancing around a nuclear core of protons and electrons – are not spots and dots of matter. They are more like traces of light left by a Fourth of July sparkler waved in the dark.

At this level you see that all things you once took to be solid are just energy trails; the instant you see one trail, the energy has moved elsewhere, leaving nothing substantial to be touched or seen. Each trail is a quantum event, fleeting, dying out as soon as it is noticed.

Now you start sinking even deeper into quantum space. All light disappears, replaced by yawning chasms of black emptiness. Far away on the horizon of your vision, you see a last flash, like the farthest, faintest star visible in the night sky. Hold that flash in your mind, for it is the last remnant of matter or energy detectable by any scientific instrument. The blackness closes in, and you are in a place where not just matter and energy are gone, but space and time as well.

You have left behind your hand as a space-time event. Like all space-time events, your body has to have an origin beyond the fourth dimension. There is no such thing as "before" or "after" in this region, no concept of "big" or "small." Here your hand exists before the Big Bang and after the universe's end in the "heat death" of absolute zero.

In reality these terms are meaningless, for you have arrived at the womb of the universe, the pre-quantum region that has no dimension and all dimensions. You are everywhere and nowhere.

Has your hand ceased to exist? No, for in crossing the boundary of the fourth dimension, you didn't go anywhere; the whole notion of place and time simply doesn't apply any more.

All the grosser levels of perception are still available to you; your hand still exists at all these levels you have traversed – quantum, subatomic, atomic, molecular, cellular – connected by invisible intelligence to the place where you now find yourself.

Cont ...

Each level is a layer of transformation, completely different from the one above or below it, but only here, where there is nothing but pure information, idea, creative potential, are all levels reduced to their common origin.

Now examine your hand with a new understanding – it is the stepping-off point for a dizzying descent into the dance of life, where the dancers disappear if you approach too near and the music fades away into the silence of eternity.

The dance is forever, and the dance is you.

Sit quietly for a few minutes breathing deeply in and out of that timeless space, before you gather yourself again and begin to reflect upon what you have just experienced. Reactions to this activity will vary enormously, depending on one's world-view and one's attachment to that view.

inside-out 1 1

Write down your thoughts in your X-file. Find out as much information as you can about the quantum universe. (This information will also be useful later.)

If you have worked your way through all the inner journeys and the subsequent painting or drawing activities above, you will probably need no invitation to the worktable at this point. Since the emergence of the quantum worldview at the beginning of this century many artists have been inspired to portray their understanding of this very odd sub-atomic universe. How would you do it?

- **through the eyes of an electron ...**

In your own, unique way.

It's appropriate that we concluded this part of the journey by taking a close look at our hand, for the next e-book in this series, **making fun of play**, invites us to explore the wonders that our hands can do when head and heart are putting into practice the ways of working and wondering we have become familiar with so far. We take all the insights and the perceptions and the amazing imaginings, and we experience for ourselves the phenomenon of *externalized thinking*, otherwise known as play.

In the form and function of play,
man's consciousness that he is embedded in a sacred order of things
finds its first, highest and holiest expression.

Johan Huizinga

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