

## Reflection - A Year in Psychodrama - Impact on the self. - Version 2

Psychodrama - The word fascinated me, when I was undergoing my own healing (not that that journey is over). I remember coming across this modality, way back in mid 2021 when I had just realized that trauma isn't reserved for war veterans, and it's not a distinction only given to those who have been in the artillery line. I had supposed that trauma was reserved for only people like my father, who had been on the frontline for year after year. It was a small video by Van der Kolk that made me realize, my problems aren't a chemical imbalance in my brain, but something so deeply entrenched in my psyche during the formative years, which keep playing out even now. This was the context under which I had heard the term psychodrama, but my understanding of the term was far far away from the experience of the past year in this program. To be honest, when I first heard about it, I had just latched onto resolving the past by enacting it, psyche and drama. Maybe I could finally exact the vengeance for being brutally beaten by my father in this session. Honestly, that was all that was there to it, and funny as it may seem, this was where my journey started. I ended up joining PII much later, but this was the biggest motivation for me to do anything here.

The first workshop was just listening to others. The second month, on witnessing others' drama, it felt kind of anti-climactic. Where was the resolution? where was hitting back at those who had wronged you? Where was justice, if even not here? My peers brought out daily things that were affecting them, and upon seeing their visceral emotional reactions, all I wanted to do was go up to them, shake them out of their emotions and scream at them, why don't you take charge of your life? Why are you sitting here crying like a baby? Where is your agency to do what needs to be done? Just go and talk to the boss, just tell that guy to go somewhere unparliamentary, just fix what needs to be fixed. Your problems are not big enough to warrant such emotions!

But still something made me keep walking this line. That something was the slow realization, that my problems are not unique to me, even though the circumstances that created those problems were unique for me. The paradox of everything being different, yet the same. And that gave me my first thread of connection with the class. Through the months, I realized, I was also tearing up through some dramas I was witnessing. And these were fleeting emotions that would register for a fleeting moment, and would be shoved back in the internal bottle where my emotions for the past three decades were stuffed. Somewhere deep down, through a process that had become such a second nature to me, I wasn't even aware it was happening.

It did take better part of the year for that bottle's cap to be slowly unscrewed. What's been sealed for decades takes quite a long time to free up. But slowly that was happening. Concretization and breathing exercises at the start of each workshop during the first few months were especially helpful in bringing the complex web under a lens where suddenly a structure would appear. The structure that made sense. Breaking down complexity into simpler blocks. But what helped the most was just being there every session, with or against my wish, I just tried turning up.

It took me almost 10 odd months to even bring myself to talk about me and myself. It was a slow journey from wanting to shake them out of their emotional reactions to embracing it. And the biggest factor in this was realizing how much empathy and kindness goes around in these workshops. And kindness not just from others or for others. The kindness you feel for your own

"role" through a mirror position. It reminds me of this phenomena I heard a long time ago. The old British tradition of melancholy was incredible, and no "proper" gentleman or lady would be "expressive". They went through the years of war, and only sulked. It was when the war ended, and they went to movies or plays, that they would show any emotion. So often we are able to show that emotion yet for others, but seldom for ourselves. And in the end, my journey has all but been about shedding a silent tear for a dying Shah Rukh Khan on the big screen, to screaming out that repressed cry for myself!