

Reflection piece

Despite multiple attempts of trying to, one, comprehend and, two, articulate in words the answer to the question how has this year been for me, with regards to the first year of studying to be a psychodramatist, I haven't been able to come up with a response that I can say is completely honest. Hence, I am seeking the support of a medium that I often go to, to help me articulate the things that I am unable to in words. I am hoping that the following photographs make sense to you in some form. They do not necessarily have to make sense in the same way they do to me. Photographs often don't.

I had enrolled in the course in early May last year. We had our first class on a Zoom call in late June. We began the course in a state that presumably the entire world was in, a state laden with uncertainty owing to the COVID-19 pandemic. The idea of studying/teaching a modality like psychodrama which is very physical in nature, where the physical space plays an important role in binding the director, protagonist, auxiliaries, and the audience, virtually through a screen was something we hadn't imagined.

If I remember correctly, my primary intent of enrolling was to see how psychodrama could help me grow (the question of 'if psychodrama can help me grow' was resolved on day 2 of the 3-day workshop I had participated in, in January 2019. It was conducted by Sue Daniels). I was primarily here for self-care/growth with the plan of action 'one year at a time'. I had a slow and slightly rocky start. One, because I probably take relatively more time to warm up to something new and two owing to the ever-present anxiety which was a normal part of a day then. Eventually and gradually I got comfortable and the classes became a part of the routine. Something that I participated in once a month.

Earlier this year in March I displayed some of my work at a gallery in Delhi. The weeks leading up to were hectic and stress-inducing, both physically and mentally. Exhibiting my work in Delhi, being introduced to the art circuit of one of the most prominent cultural cities in India was a milestone in my career as an artist. On the day following the opening of the exhibition a thought suddenly dawned upon me. The realisation: through these classes of studying psychodrama, practicing spontaneity and the conscious building of intuition had become an inherent behavioral change in the way I responded to situations, people, challenges. In hindsight, the realization probably occurred to me then because in those few weeks the density, intensity, and frequency of such challenges were quite high.

Since March this thought has slowly expanded, elaborating itself by reminding me about multiple scenarios where the reason I responded to a situation in the way I did was the behavioral change that was subtly and subconsciously brought about by the 'once a month' psychodrama classes.

I had to decide whether I wanted to continue into the second year. The decision wasn't very difficult. I now have an answer that fulfills my primary intent of enrolling in the first year of the course. I enter this second year with a new question; how to extend the learnings of this modality to others?

The series of photographs attached is my interpretation of the transition of self that was brought about by the introduction of psychodrama into my life. The penultimate photo is my current state. The last photograph is a representation of the state I hope to achieve when I successfully find an answer to the new question. The last two photographs are inspired by O Henry's short story, 'The last leaf'.

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