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BUILDING AND SUSTAINING CONNECTEDNESS TO ONE'S MUSICAL CREATIVITY
AND SPIRIT

A Synthesis Project Presented

by

SUZANNE M. CLARK

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies, University of Massachusetts Boston,
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

August 2002

Critical and Creative Thinking Program

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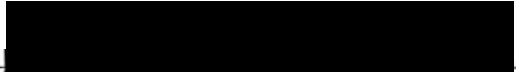
by

SUZANNE M. CLARK

Approved as to style and content by:



Peter J. Taylor, Associate Professor
Chairperson of Committee



Arthur Millman, Associate Professor
Member



Peter J. Taylor, Faculty Advisor
Critical and Creative Thinking Program

ABSTRACT

BUILDING AND SUSTAINING CONNECTEDNESS TO ONE'S MUSICAL CREATIVITY AND SPIRIT

August 2002

Suzanne M. Clark, B.M., Berklee College of Music
M.A., University of Massachusetts

Directed by Associate Professor Peter J. Taylor

While journeying through the Critical and Creative Thinking Program I became more deeply aware of the choices and circumstances that colored my engagement in the fields of musical performance and music education. Through the modeling of and participation in reflective practice, I began to see my experiences from new and varied perspectives. In using self-evaluation, I gained a clearer understanding of my own reflective processes and began to apply this knowledge to exploring my musical engagement and creativity. It was through a self-reflective exploration of my own creative process that I discovered a number of experiences that had steered my course in a particular direction. Each of these experiences, however, also contributed to my path in that they were missing important elements that would allow for a more integrated experience to take place. These discoveries inspired me to explore the creative process of other musicians and artists in order to see where all of our experiences crossed.

To start, this paper outlines my self-assessment of my involvement in music and the creative process. I have chosen to reveal this first as I feel it will give the reader an understanding of how I came to the conclusions I have about my own personal experiences and subsequently, how they led me to explore the experiences of other musicians. My own reflective

and creative engagement taught me that having an internal connection to the self is essential in carrying out these activities. As I found this inner focus to be both a necessary skill and one of the missing elements in my educational experiences, I felt it was necessary to find out if this was indeed an important part of the creative process and if so, how other artists handled this internal, reflective aspect of creativity. This examination led to the discovery of parallels between my own creative blocks and the blocks of other artists, as well as tools we all could use to help eliminate or prevent such blocks and become more attuned to our creative self.

My research led me to conclude that the various elements that were missing from my experiences were important factors in promoting healthy musical and creative engagement. Incorporating these facets on a personal level through self-study or a formal learning experience will help ensure creative longevity for any artist. An artist needs to recognize the internal aspects of their creative process, and also learn how to navigate through the phases of their process. In addition, artists need to recognize and remove creative blocks in order to sustain their work and promote creative growth. Reflective practice that supports these activities needs to be explored and should become part of the artist's path towards manifesting their creativity.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	
1. SELF-REFLECTION: A JOURNEY INTO THE CREATIVE SELF	1
Out of Tune, Out of Time, Out of Music	2
2. MUSE-ICAL CREATING	11
Musical Origins	12
Creativity and Journeying Inward	14
Creative Artistry in Motion	19
A Visit from the Muse	22
3. BLOCKS THAT INVITE DECONSTRUCTION.....	25
Difficult Phases in the Creative Process	25
Starting	26
Ending	27
Isolation	27
Some Root Issues of Blocks	30
Content and Meaning	30
Deeper Motivations	33
Internalized Messages	34
Alcohol and Drugs	35
Trauma	37
When Blocks Manifest Physically	41
4. M-USEFUL MODES.....	45
The Mind-Body Connection	46
Meditation	46
Chi Gung	48
The Written Word	51
Written Narrative	53
<u>Intensive Journal Method of Self-Development</u>	56
Reflective Practices	59
Reflecting on Self-Awareness	60
Reflecting on the Mind-Body Connection	63
Reflecting on Musical Imagination	66
Inside Advice	68
5. COMPOSING THE FUTURE	72
Creativity Seminars	72
Music Education	74
Performing Arts Medicine	75
Fine Tuning Your Inner World	76

APPENDICES

Perseus Appears
Song of You - lyrics
Song of You
Midnight Red
The Simulated Survivor
Evaluation Framework
CD

BIBLIOGRAPHY

CHAPTER I

SELF-REFLECTION: A JOURNEY INTO THE CREATIVE SELF

Instead of seeing the rug being pulled from under us, we can learn to dance on a shifting carpet. Thomas Crum (cited by Campbell 1991).

Developing a connection to your innermost self is a key ingredient in accessing and sustaining your creativity. Self-inquiry, self-assessment, and self-understanding are the basis for building a bridge inward. These reflective practices were first introduced to the field of education through the work of Donald Schön (1983, 1987). He suggested that teachers model their own thinking and reflection about their learning process while teaching in the classroom. In this way, students could learn about their own abilities in order to learn in a more integrated, reflective and hands on fashion.

While Schön's work has been applied to different areas of education, it has also been a model for engagement in any professional work. It is in this regard that I suggest using reflective practice as a means for developing an inner connection to enhance your creative growth. Artists seek to express their own truth through their art. Learning about how you feel and think, how you respond to life events, how your experiences color your views and how you make sense of your own world, will enable you to be more aligned with your own truths. As this integration takes place, you will be more able to find what it is you want to express and a creative way to express it. While external skill is needed for the vehicle of expression, such as painting, playing music or dancing, it is through self-reflection that you will be able to develop the internal skills needed for your self-truth to be transformed into compelling, creative communication.

My own journey of understanding myself in relation to my art is an ongoing process. Through my engagement in reflective practice, I have come to better understand my connection

to music and creativity, as well as my development in these areas. It is also through this process that, over time, I have come to recognize the missing elements in my own education and experiences that shaped this connection. Identifying these dynamics inspired me to explore the creative process of other musicians, as well as areas that cause creative blocks and tools that can help to eliminate or prevent such blocks. Just as it took time for me to develop my external skills in regards to creating music, it has taken time to discover and develop the internal skills that also support healthy engagement in music. In this paper I combine a reflective examination of my creative path, an exploration of the creative process of other musicians, creative blocks as understood by therapeutic professionals, and a presentation of tools and perspectives—including some of my own—that I believe others might find helpful. My hope is that readers will learn to develop their own reflective skills, better understand their creative journey and (re)discover the role inner connection plays in their creative expression.

Out of Tune, Out of Time, Out of Music

My music education created a solid foundation for me in understanding and hearing music, particularly jazz, allowing me to segue from amateur practice into skilled musical performance. Even before I graduated, I was gigging regularly and after a few years in the professional world, I found myself immersed in many steady engagements. I knew I had not gotten there on my own, that my education gave me enough tools to sustain my musical dexterity for which I was grateful. In retrospect, however, I see that it did not give me tools to sustain myself throughout the artistic creative process, to recognize and remove creative blocks or to

maintain healthy engagement in the field of music. Rather, it focused only on external functioning, leaving out the importance of internal connection and its function in creativity.

Three years after I graduated college, I began to have pain between my shoulder blades and across my upper back when playing on the gig. My undergraduate experiences taught me to “play through the pain,” so I kept gigging since the pain did not compromise my skill, and besides, I *needed* to play. My duo averaged three nights a week and as an acoustic bassist playing without a drummer, my musical role was more involved and more physically demanding. Within a three-year period of extensive playing, practice, carrying heavy equipment, sitting for long periods during travel, and keeping odd hours, the pain and weakness finally crept down my arm and into my right wrist and hand. After a few short months, I was unable to lift any equipment and had to have my musical partner not only carry my instrument, but assist in taking off its protective case as well. It was all I could do to plug in and play. In addition, the pain no longer limited itself to the gig. I found myself having difficulty turning doorknobs and keys, combing and drying my hair, getting dressed, chopping vegetables, and shifting the gears in my car, among other daily activities.

One day during a practice session, my tolerance for the pain broke. I took a short break, thinking that it just wasn't worth playing if I had to be in so much pain to do it. This was not how playing was supposed to be. It was suppose to be fun, joyful, and inspiring as it had originally been when I first became interested in playing music. I knew the instrument was partly to blame because of its high action. The strings were so far from the fingerboard that I was over-exerting my hands and fingers to press down the strings. Yet, I remembered from college that other people played with high action without any apparent problems, a model I didn't know was incorrect for me. I went back to practicing, only to find my hands still weak,

my upper back in flames. In frustration and tears, I shoved my bass back to the floor, but my defeated anger and disappointment proved too much for the poor thing: it cracked in numerous, irreparable places. I succeeded in removing the apparent obstacle of my pain and frustration: my bass. There would be no more pain, as there was no longer an instrument to play to cause it. The sudden loss of my musical conduit, however, left me with a new realization: it seemed the thought of not playing at all was much more painful than that of playing in pain.

With luck, I found another bass, better suited to my physique. I continued acupuncture treatments to manage the pain, and despite my compromised condition, I went back to my gig schedule. After a Saturday night concert in Marstons Mills, Massachusetts opening for Les Sampou and Vance Gilbert, I was tired, sore and cranky. My Sunday jazz brunch started at 11:00 am the next morning. Without enough rest, I knew my body would be very uncooperative, so I left in a hurry, hearing only the first tune of Vance's set. On the way home, I hit a deer, or rather, the deer ran out and hit my car. The incident left me quite shaken, as I had lost control of the car and nearly plunged into a row of trees, and somewhat stiff. Still, I played my jazz brunch the next day and it was business as usual for another five or six weeks. Then, one morning I woke up unable to move my head, with severe pain radiating from my neck up into my head and down into my shoulders and upper arms. A chiropractor connected the symptoms to the car accident. For months, I carried on in an even weaker state, my upper body riddled with severe pain, my head feeling as if I had a continual concussion. The accident exacerbated the overuse injury and created new problems. Eventually, I had to stop gigging, by which time I developed electric pains (signs of nerve impingement) in my right hand, wrist and shoulder and frighteningly, I found I was unable to lift my arm at all. Through the Brigham and Woman's Hospital, I found Dr. Michael Charness, a neurologist (and pianist) whose patients were all

performing artists. This was the first time I had heard of any medical practice or treatment geared specifically to performing artists or found any indication that overuse injuries were a common problem for musicians. Unfortunately, for me, this knowledge came too late.

In my years of trying to recuperate from the overuse injury, I realized I was re-educating myself in the areas that my music education had not addressed. The first part of my missing education revolved around the physical injury itself: the commonness of such injuries, how they can be prevented, who to go to for help, how to manage the pain, and what steps to take to recover the precious physical ability I had lost. In this respect, I gained a lot of experience and understanding of the body, how it functions and ways to support it. Most importantly, I learned how to do all of these things in relation to *my* body. Despite their continued understanding and support, however, my medical practitioners did not give any information about how to cope with the numerous losses brought on by the injury: the inability to self-express through playing, the loss of income, the loss of musical reputation, the inability to independently take care of myself, the loss of my health. These losses were also applying stress to my body and spirit, and needed to be addressed.

Months after I had started treatment for the injury, I began to have relentless nightmares and anxiety-filled, sleepless nights. My recovery was more difficult than I had anticipated and I was terrified of what was happening to my career and playing ability. While this seemed like a reasonable cause for the changes in my sleep pattern, something else from deep inside was screaming to get my attention. Some high school friends had recently disclosed to me that they had been emotionally, mentally and sexually harassed and sexually assaulted by our music teacher. While the same things had happened to me, I had stuffed the experiences for years, trying to forget them and instead focus on my dream of playing music. However, this new

information threw me into a tailspin, partly because it brought up a past I did not want to view and partly because the misty perception of what had happened became more crystallized. In response to my disclosure, my medical practitioners understood more clearly the layers that were contributing to my injury and my inability to heal, clarity that I did not gain for quite a while. At the time I also felt a responsibility to help prevent other young students from being preyed upon by this man. I sought legal assistance in the hope that it would deter him from carrying out any further harmful actions and also to balance out the injustices done to my fellow classmates and me. Unfortunately, the intense strain this suit produced succeeded in causing greater physical damage to my already over-stressed body.

While this was happening, I was quite unaware that I was filling in more gaps in my missing education. It was a few years after the case had ended that I had in essence learned part two of my re-education. The mind-body connection was powerful. Understanding how to negotiate this link was imperative especially in a field that relied so heavily upon emotive expression through physical movement. In addition, I learned that past trauma was a fairly common thread amongst musicians and other creative artists, and that these delicate issues needed specialized handling. And although I knew there were unresolved issues and fallout regarding my own high school experiences, I had not realized the total effect they had on me internally, or that they could negatively affect my body and health as well as block my creative expression.

During years of a long, painful recovery on various levels, I went back to school as a means to support a college teaching position in music, but also with the hope of regaining some lost ground. When I first started the Critical and Creative Thinking (CCT) Program at the University of Massachusetts at Boston, I expected to be playing by the time I finished the

program and planned on doing a synthesis of creative work through musical performance. However, as I progressed through the classes, I found myself still struggling with my health. In addition, my past school experiences unceremoniously seeped into my present as I struggled with being a student, engaging in classroom activities, and interacting with my peers and teachers. During my years of convalescence, exploring my inner self had become a regular practice during and in that time I uncovered many insights. However, the courses I took seemed to tug at these perceptions, forcing them out a little further in the limelight, and bringing to my attention the pieces that were not yet integrated. This unexpected turn of events was startling, terribly undesirable, and yet terribly necessary for me to continue along my path.

It was through the structure of the CCT Program that I made deeper connections to my inner self and discovered missing education parts three, the internal aspects of creativity, and four, the internal struggles of my students and co-workers. Unlike other programs that focus on critical and/or creative thinking, the program at UMass Boston strongly incorporated reflective practice. I was surrounded by a faculty who not only tried to instill thinking methods in their contingency, but who also asked their students to think deeply about how their inner self affected their thinking, perspectives and actions. A focus on self-assessment, self-awareness, negotiating relationships, uncovering assumptions, and evaluating resistance to change led me to richer self-discoveries. I began to consider the effect all of my internal work was having on my ability to be creative and to find self-satisfaction despite my diminished state. At the same time, I began to notice the internal struggles that stopped my students from accessing their own creativity and pursuing their interests. Many of them did not understand how the musical tools I taught would help them to be creative. Some didn't understand what it meant to be creative or what the creative process was all about. It was through their comments that I began to realize the set

curriculum was the same type of externally focused education that I had gotten, one that left out the importance of understanding internal connection and creativity. I also found that some of my colleagues held similar perceptions as my students, despite the fact that they had been in the field for many years.

All of these experiences led me to write this synthesis. What was first a loss of musical facility culminated into a loss of musical identity, personal identity and creative outlet. The path toward my synthesis is really the path of my life, and although my journey has been a personal one, I suspect that its essence will be familiar to many. My goal in presenting this material is to suggest food for thought rather than suggest that it is “right” or the “way.” I believe my topic and supportive information is compelling, whether or not the reader has had any experiences similar to mine. It stands on its own outside of my own personal path.

In the following chapters I will lead the reader to see the importance of internal awareness in relation to the creative process, as well as examine some areas and root causes of creative blocks. I will also address tools that have been successful in deepening one’s inner life in order to more readily access the creative energy as well as suggest areas where this knowledge can be incorporated. My synthesis relies heavily on the work of Jenny Boyd (1992), Musicians in Tune and Ann McCutchan (1999), The Muse That Sings. Both interviewed a number of musicians about their own creative process. The insights these musicians offer are intriguing and bring a personal dimension beyond my own. While they do explore creative blocks, Susan Kolodny’s (2000) work, The Captive Muse: On Creativity and Its Inhibition, gives a more clinical, yet sensitive view, based on her own experiences as well as her clients’. Brian Adolphe (1991), who was also interviewed for McCutchan’s book, offers his twist on developing a rich inner life and musical imagination through his book The Mind’s Ear: Exercises for Improving

the Musical Imagination for Performers, Listeners, and Composers. Some of the information regarding self-reflective tools for enhancing creativity are from the work of Barbara Larrivee (1996), Moving Into Balance: Creating Your Personal Pathway, while writing tools are extracted from Dr. Ira Progoff (1975), the Intensive Journal Program and White and Epston (1990), Narrative Means to a Therapeutic Ends. Mind-body information is supported by the work of Dr. Louis Montello (2001), co-director of Musicians' Wellness, Inc. a New York-based organization that works with musicians regarding performance related disorders. Writer Joan Weimer (1994) also gives insights into the mind-body connection through her experience with a debilitating back condition outlined in Back Talk: Teaching Lost Selves to Speak. In addition, I refer to a few journal articles that deal with both the psychological aspects of musical creativity and musical overuse injuries.

Focusing on the internal component within the creative process has not been the norm. In fact it seems to be referred to more by creative artists themselves than by creativity theorists. While some theory skims the edge, most seem to refer to cognitive functioning and thinking strategies in relation to creativity, as well as in-depth studies on creative geniuses. Perhaps because of its link to one's personal experiences and emotions, and therefore personal subjectivity, this aspect of creativity has not been examined very deeply. Perhaps too, this is partly why some music programs do not incorporate it. Despite this, I believe it is an aspect that is a necessary component in any artistic creative process. Developing an inner connection is a key ingredient not only in accessing your creativity, but also in coping with the ups and downs of the creative process itself. I believe it is a necessary element to sustain such work. It is my hope that through my examination of this aspect, readers will see the value of using reflective practice

to build an internal connection, be inspired to develop their inner world and find their own creativity ignited.

CHAPTER II

MUSE-ICAL CREATING

And suddenly I was swept out of myself – knowing, knowing. Feeling the love of God burning through creation, and an ecstasy of bliss pouring through my spirit and down into every nerve. Loran Hurscott

The word music is intriguing. Its very origin gives insight into the essence of the musical creative process. From Greek culture, it is a derivative of the word *mousikē*, which means pertaining to the Muses. Originally, the Muses, daughters of Zeus, were three goddesses who resided over song. As the Greek culture developed, the three became nine who gave inspiration to various branches of the arts. The Muses also link to the verb to muse which means to reflect, ponder deeply, to meditate and to dream. In its origin, then, music is song with ties to divine inspiration and deep reflection. In today's culture, Muse is a generic term for the thing that enables one to create. It does not necessarily have ties to spirit or reflection.

Through the eyes and experiences of a number of musicians whose experiences and insights I review in this chapter, it will become clear that reflection is a necessary part of the creative process. It correlates to the inner connection an artist must develop in order to create. To express what is in the self, you have to know the self, a journey that can be overwhelming and taxing, despite its rewards. Oftentimes, the ebb and flow of inner discoveries also brings with it a stronger sense of spirituality, a connection not only to the inner self, but also to the sense of something greater than the self. Through an examination of the artistic creative process, you will see that musical creativity does contain the elements inferred by the name music. But the journey into music starts early in life, with the qualities of its inception acting as a guide along the path. Reflecting upon your early relationship to music and how it was shaped over

time can give valuable insight into understanding and fine tuning both your current relationship to music, as well as your creative process.

Musical Origins

Whether you are a musician or have an appreciation of music, there was some point in life where music had its first impact. The role music played in your early upbringing ties directly into its meaning throughout your life. For most of the musicians interviewed by Boyd (1992) and McCutchan (1999), music was an important part of their childhood. Not all came from musical families, where one or both parents were musicians. Rather, some grew up in an environment where music was a regular part of daily life, where family members held a deep respect and appreciation for song. “Most artists whose childhood homes were filled with music recalled gaining from that a sense of the joy and fun inherent in the art form” (Boyd 1992, 37). This is how it was in my own family, where there was a strong sense of fun surrounding music. I vividly recall my mom dancing around the house as she cleaned while listening to Rosie Clooney, the pleasure she got listening to Tony Orlando and the sadness she felt when Elvis died. My dad liked Frank Sinatra, Ray Charles and other popular artists he grew up listening to. I remember being amazed at the number of songs he knew and his ability to whistle any melody. Their influence spilled out amongst the family. During family outings, we didn’t listen to the radio, but instead, sang all sorts of songs, ranging from “Deep in the Heart of Texas” to the “Battle Hymn of the Republic.” I believe my parents’ enthusiasm for music helped to ignite in me my own curiosity and excitement about music. In a larger sense, this put me on a particular musical path as I ended up performing music mostly from their generation.

This shared experience within the family was often not limited to one style, but instead incorporated a variety of styles. Hearing different musical interpretations became an enriching building block to developing one's musical ability and creativity as outlined by the late New Music composer, Eric Stokes. "I think I was first called to a life in music by the Sunday radio broadcasts of concerts and opera that my mother and sister sang along with. The gramophone and radio also introduced me to ragtime, jazz, swing bands, country and western, and popular song" (cited by McCutchan 1999, 4). Appreciation of music was often reinforced in families where listening to records and singing were the family pastimes rather than sitting in front of the television. Singer Patti Smith recalls her early experience of her mother's record collection as transcendent. "I vividly remember ... singing Barbara Streisand and Frank Sinatra songs. It brought a lot of joy. That's my earliest memory of being taken out of myself" (cited by Boyd 1992, 32).

In addition to music being a part of daily life, most musicians found their interest in music encouraged by family members. Soon after having "discovered" the Beatles, I received my first guitar and harmonica, along with a few music books. Although I'm not sure that my parents actually liked the Beatles, they still supported my interests. Some families may also have had personal challenges within the family structure, yet despite such problems, it was important to nurture the young musician's music and creativity, along with their ability to develop as an individual and pursue their interests. Some also found support outside of the family structure through neighbors, friends, extended family and teachers. Composer and conductor John Adams retells a school experience that helped to ignite his passion for music.

I think the signal event of my youth was the bicentenary of Mozart's birth ... [T]he third grade teacher ... read a child's biography of Mozart to the class. All of the other kids were probably bored out of their minds, but I was completely enchanted by the idea of a young boy who could compose symphonies and

concerti. I think that was the beginning for me of a very strong fantasy life (cited by McCutchan 1999, 64).

Unlike the musicians in her book, Boyd grew up in a family where her creative efforts were not supported, resulting in a deep belief that she was simply not creative. This, along with other negative messages about her own interests, feelings and talents stopped her from pursuing her desire to understand and play the guitar. It wasn't until she met her future brother-in-law singer/songwriter George Harrison, a patient teacher who encouraged her musical interests, that she found she could indeed learn to play and express herself musically.

Creativity and Journeying Inward

For any artist, the creative process is extremely challenging. "It is the vocation of artists to seek their own truth and then express it in their art." (Boyd 1992, 47). Creating is not just a matter of getting an idea and then sitting down to play it, write it, compose it, draw it or paint it. The creative process is much more involved in that it is linked to your inner world. From her work with creative artists, San Francisco-based psychologist Dr. Jill Cooper notes, "[c]reativity is a journey into the unknown and unexpressed" (1995, 10). It is a journey into the self, with many ups, downs, turns, and twists, in an effort to express something in the self, finally culminating into a creative product to share with others. Because this process relies on self-inquiry, a certain amount of tension must exist. Yet this psychological strain is a necessary part of the process and also the substance of emotive creative work.

You must be able to dive into a deeper part of the self to find that thing that needs to be expressed and communicated. To do this, artists require a certain amount of solitude, as the journey inside is a solitary one. It is this element of the creative process that can become

overwhelming to artists as they can be sucked into a “depressive emptiness” (10) that can lead to isolation. Composer/conductor John Adams recognizes this phase in a composer’s process.

“Composers tend to get very moldy and introverted and difficult and paranoid, and I fall right into that type after two or three months of working alone. You know – I realize I’ve worn the same holey sweater for four days in a row; I haven’t cleaned up the mess of scores and books I’d thrown on the floor” (cited by McCutchan 1999, 71). It is in this withdrawal phase that many artists fall into self-destructive behavior as a coping mechanism for exploring their inner world. This is a precarious place to be.

All of us need to be psychologically rested in order to face the world and cope with our problems; however, the creative personality has double duty with their psyche. “Before artists can begin their work, a degree of introversion and internal tension are necessary in order for them to access their raw talent. They can deplete the internal energy normally used to maintain one’s psychological self ...” (Cooper 1995, 10). Not only do artists deal with the everyday challenges of life, but in addition, they must also deal with the internal challenges of their work. Artists continually meet their inner problems through their creative work as if constantly looking into a discerning mirror. The need for courage and risk-taking in creative work is aptly stated by singer/songwriter Joni Mitchell:

With writing, you have to plumb into the subconscious, and there’s a lot of scary things down there, like a bad dream sometimes. If you can extricate yourself from it and face up to it, you come back with a lot of self-knowledge, which then gives you greater human knowledge, and that helps. To know yourself is to know the world; everything, good, bad, and indifferent is in each one of us to varying degrees, so the more you know about that, the more you know about that which is external. So in a way, the writing process is fantastic psychotherapy – if you can survive. But it is tricky (cited by Boyd 1992, 86).

Whereas an executive goes out the door to work in an office within a business structure, the artist goes into his or her own psyche where there is no set structure. Instead, the artist finds a murky

blend of the conscious and unconscious, where ties to the external are temporarily broken. The element of the unknown, and the sense of disconnection to the world outside of the self can be disturbing, despite the creative product that may result from the creative venture.

Music is unique in that it uses only sound to express and communicate emotion. Most other arts rely on forms with more universal meanings to show this interchange. Words are the most explicit and in a sense, complicated, as there are so many ways to express a thought, feeling or idea through words. Language is more understood than sound, as are visual structures and even body movements. The meaning of such communications can be more easily interpreted than just sound alone. For example, how many words, images and movements can describe happy vs. sad? How about: glad, cheerful, delighted, content, sparkling vs. unhappy, melancholy, dispirited, gloomy, dull. Or perhaps: a kitten purring, a sunrise, bright yellow, a rainbow, a baby with a bottle vs. clouds, rain, dull gray, black obsidian. Or perhaps: a thumbs up, a high five, a smiling child hugging a parent, a toddler bouncing up and down vs. crying, walking with slumped shoulders, sitting alone and staring out the window, absentmindedly playing with the peas on your dinner plate. However, in music, there are basically two choices: major and minor.

What allows musicians to communicate such deep feelings when the choices for expression seem limited and interpretations are not as explicit? One of course, is technical, knowing how to work with the two basic tonalities, blending them to create hybrid sounds, and presenting them in different structures, with different timbres and with different rhythms. The other has to do with knowing yourself, your inner world and your feelings. "To be able to connect with the essence of a work, the performer needs to understand himself, to explore his own emotions, get in touch with his inner life and musical imagination" (Adolphe 1991, 6).

Without being able to access one's own feelings and thoughts, the transfer of the internal self through sound will not occur and leave music that may be technically correct, but unsatisfying. Jazz pianist Kenny Werner comes across both students and professional players who are good, yet "have little impact when they play ... They are swinging, and all that, but something is not landing in the hearts of their audience ..." (1996, 10). Jazz drummer Tony Williams explains it this way: "Some people are creative, but it's a self-conscious creativity. To me, [artist Salvador] Dali was very self-conscious. He lacked the spirit, thought he was a great technician. You could say, 'Wow, it's a nice image, but it's self-conscious.' He did things just for effect" (cited by Boyd 1992, 104). The emotional content expressed through a creative work correlates to the ability of artists to connect to their internal life. The level of comfort or discomfort an artist feels will be communicated on some level to recipients of the piece.

Although artists need to connect to their feelings in order to express them, they should not wallow in them as a safe haven. Many of the musicians interviewed by Boyd and McCutchan mentioned the importance of finding a balance between feel (of the emotions) and technique (of the mind). Composer James Mobberly refers to a number of events that affected his personal and emotional life. "All of these things give me musical strength to be myself on paper ... I'm not interested in hiding anything. I don't see how we can help being influenced by our environment, both internal and external" (cited by McCutchan 1999, 187). He also refers to the connection between emotion and music.

I'm really on a crusade for the emotional involvement of the composer in the writing process ... This has to do with wanting to create work that satisfies ourselves emotionally. And audiences respond more to music that has emotional shape or content (187).

Trying to create art without knowing the many facets of the self would be like trying to compose or perform knowing only the first five notes of a major scale in only one key. It could be done

on occasion and even sound pretty good, but it would also be terribly limiting, just a brief glimpse of what is possible. In my own case, I was very technically proficient, but not as connected to my feelings. I remember saxophonist Scott Robinson, then a college instructor and now Jazz Ambassador for New York City, telling me that I played too much from my head. I had no idea of what he meant by that or what I was to do to change it. I suspect now that my detachment was one of the things that led to my overuse injury.

In examining their own process, these musicians refer to skills they had discovered and developed in trying to cultivate their creativity. In response to the necessary introspection and withdrawal, many find they need to make time to daydream and seek an inner richness, while leaving the day-to-day details behind. Mental stillness allows the unconscious to manifest in the creative process. Juxtaposed against their busy external lives, it is important to find a balance between what one lets in and what one lets out. Introspection helps to cultivate observation and questioning, which leads to being in tune with the self and one's "purpose." Some observe that they are still connected to their childhood enthusiasm and spontaneity, seen here through the eyes of composer Bruce Adolphe:

I think a lot of it has to do with your childhood. If you're in a very fun, spontaneous household, you're probably open to inspiration. I did have a very fun household. There was a lot of dancing, there was a lot of humor, and if I have to write a piece, I can be inspired by just that (198).

Others find that broadening their scope of involvement in the world community helps to enrich themselves and thus their work.

The artistic temperament is often seen as emotionally unbalanced, oversensitive, and unreliable. However, artistic creativity relies on accessing one's emotions. Given the creative cycles of introspection and isolation intertwined with a reemergence into the "real" world, it is no wonder this stereotype exists. This internal focus is often referred to as narcissistic, the act of

being fascinated with the self or self-admiration. Because artists delve into the internal realms to create, the process is seen to be self-absorbed, vain or self-centered, all terms that have a negative connotation connected to egotistical behavior. In his view of a musician's creative process, jazz pianist Kenny Werner acknowledges the need to go beyond ego. "We as musicians must surrender to our own inner selves. We must go down deep under that ocean while the sludge of the ego floats on the surface" (1996, 13). Whether or not this internal focus connects to ego will depend upon internal processing and integration of the psyche.

The act of artistic creation demands artists to focus internally to create and to touch upon deeper aspects of the self. As often as artists are labeled delicate, they are also labeled as ego-driven. Perhaps a clearer understanding of the internal elements of creativity would help to dispel these sometimes-erroneous perceptions, allowing for deeper internal awareness and thus fuller creativity.

Creative Artistry in Motion

What conditions help artists to create? Over time, it becomes apparent that the condition of the environment has a huge impact on an artist's ability to create. Knowing what surroundings work and which ones do not work helps to access creativity more readily. For example, if you tend to get a creative rush in the evening, yet ignore that message and continue to try to be creative in the morning, the Muse will not be easy to access. Perhaps you need to have complete silence with no interruptions, yet you don't take the time to turn off the telephone or you try to do creative work after the kids have come home from school. Working against the self in this fashion can lead to frustration and blocks. By staying in touch with your inner self,

you are able to discover and nurture your own needs and support your own creative flow.

Unfortunately, many cultures frown upon self-nurturance, and instead focus on self-sacrifice for others. This makes it more difficult for most people to take care of themselves, and for the artist, may cause a wrinkle in their creative process.

The musicians interviewed by both Boyd (1992) and McCutchan (1999) are very particular about their environment, because they paid enough attention to their process to find out what conditions helped their process along. Like myself, most need strict silence in order to compose or practice. Composer Eric Stokes was a bit of an anomaly in this regard. “I can listen to the radio when I’m working, if it’s talk ... I don’t pay a lot of attention to it, but I’ll phase it in and out. When they play their musical leads it drives me nuts and I turn it off” (cited by McCutchan 1999, 8). He went on to further describe other conditions that worked for him by describing what didn’t work. “I don’t think I can work well traveling in a car. I can think about a piece sometimes, but there’s always stuff whizzing by and noises and the confinement” (8). Grammy Award winning composer John Corigliano needs to have his surroundings neat. “If the bed isn’t made and the house is messy, I can’t compose. It’s because I’m going into this chaos inside my brain, and I want to be able to look around and see order” (40). Singer/songwriter Edie Brickell of the band New Bohemians agrees. “Usually the house has to be clean, to have a nice environment [to create]. I can’t stand a crowded, clustered environment. I like sparse setting” (cited by Boyd 1992, 252). Some need to be near nature while others like the city atmosphere. Some need a piano nearby, while others feel inhibited using a piano, and still others use a computer with MIDI. If you can discover what works for you, you can use that knowledge to enhance your creativity.

Environment has to do with external conditions, yet relies on self-awareness of internal conditions. What other internal conditions can hone one's creativity? Composer Bruce Adolphe refers to an internal awareness that guides him in knowing when to compose. Like other musicians, Adolphe composes regularly, as it is necessary to be engaged in one's craft on a regular basis. However, he has fine-tuned his awareness of his own feelings in order to capture depth in his composing.

I still write all the time, but I try to be aware when something really special is present. It's not just an emotional state, but an awareness. It's a state that brings together everything I know about music and about my real life, so that music seems like the perfect language for saying what I'm experiencing (cited by McCutchan 1999, 197)

It is relying on this type of internal knowledge that allows musicians to find their style in music. Developing a rich connection to your inner self will develop your musical expression, or voice, the thing that separates each musician from any other. After years of going through an "agonizing process" (57) to compose, Joan Tower found her own self-reflection diffused the intensity of her work. "You have to be infinitely patient, and you have to be a very good listener. You have to be alert to every little move you're making" (57).

Many corroborate the difficulty inherent in composing and know that their work often consists of long periods of thinking without being able to compose. Yet, this type of reflecting about their music is part of the process. Singer/songwriter Julian Lennon finds that previous reflecting now leads to a new openness about composing that was not present in earlier compositions. "It's knowing what you're going to play without even knowing, which is very weird and very exciting when it happens ... maybe it's a question of being more receptive" (cited by Boyd 1992, 90). In the same vein, composer Bruce Adolphe recognizes that it is the "person who receives the inspiration who makes it happen" and that "inspiration is an awareness and a

Centuries later, it is fascinating, and perhaps comforting, to find that these attributes are still present in the musical creative process.

While such qualities may be a natural part of the creative flow, there are times when man's nature may get in their way. The channels to accessing your inner self may become inaccessible, thus inhibiting your ability to self-express and be creative. These creative blocks relate to various aspects of the inner self. It is through the development of your inner connection that problems within the self may arise. It is during these times that a strong inner connection is vital in order to reclaim the "magic" inherent in the creative process.

CHAPTER III

BLOCKS THAT INVITE DECONSTRUCTION

Everything of which I know but of which I'm not at the moment thinking; everything of which I was once conscious but have now forgotten; everything perceived by my senses but noted in my conscious mind; everything of which I involuntarily and without paying much attention to it, I feel, think, remember, want and do; all future things are taking shape in me and will sometimes come into consciousness. All this is the content of the unconscious Carl Jung (1961, 389).

The artistic creative process is a solitary and challenging journey. Because art is born out of personal truths and perceptions, it demands connection to your inner life, conscious and unconscious, and therefore requires the ability to self-reflect. It is due to this element that creative artists may develop problems in their process. Without attention, these obstacles can gain a strong foothold in an artist's psyche resulting in an inability to connect to the inner self and therefore disconnect from their creative ability. The blocks I review in this chapter can crop up in various stages of the creative process. Their origins may be related to any area of or period in your life. They may manifest in a number ways, such as in behavior, attitude, and both emotional and physical health. Sometimes, the roots are so integrated into your psyche, they are difficult to uncover and release. While the journey of self-discovery can be painful and is still regarded by some as unnecessary or unimportant, the more you connect to and live by your true feelings, thoughts and beliefs, the more your unique creative gifts may emerge.

Difficult Phases of the Creative Process

All artists are on their own unique journey towards self-expression. While engaged in their craft, certain phases of the creative process prove to be more difficult for them than others.

For some, difficulty may coincide with the start of a piece, while for others it is ending a piece. Many have difficulty coping with the forced isolation that the creative process requires. Still, life is not stagnant. Each of us is continually evolving within our own self and in relation to the world around us. Where our problems arise in one project may not be the same place they occur in another project. In this sense, it is helpful to know where these potential roadblocks exist.

Starting

Being stuck before you even begin can be linked to various underlying concerns. Deep inside artists may question if indeed they have anything worthwhile to say. Not only might there be doubt as to the content of the work, but also its quality and acceptance. Will it be any good? Will anyone like it? Will it be as good as my last? Composer John Adams gives further insight to this:

Starting a new piece is very hard, because I have very high hopes that this is really going to be the piece. What usually comes is a terrible disappointment. At some point – a week, or two weeks, even a month later – I might still be sketching and throwing away, and sketching and throwing away, and finally I have to say, ‘Well, today, no matter what, this has gotta be it.’ Then this terrible sense of depression comes over me and, and I think, ‘Is this really all it’s going to be? Can’t I come up with a better idea?’ But I have to just go ahead, and this is why I always work with a deadline. If I didn’t have that date, not too far in the future, a crisis of confidence might overwhelm me, and I’d simply stop (cited by McCutchan 1999 67).

Through awareness of his own process, Adams has found a tool to help him get started – a deadline. While other musicians find deadlines a threat to their creative flow, Adams has found the thing to help him push through the initial phase of insecurity about his ability. Like Adams, some musicians set deadlines for themselves in order to get started and keep themselves moving. Others set up their schedule to allow for chunks of time that will be spent, not creating, but preparing to create, where one warms up to the idea of creating almost like a mating ritual.

Ending

Ending a piece also has its quandaries. The original intent in starting a project is to complete it; yet underlying issues about completion may cause a conflict, leaving the artist immobilized. Some may throw their work out altogether and start over, repeatedly, because it's "just not right." In fact, the product may be great, but an artist's fear of finishing colors their perceptions. Finishing may hold similar consequences as starting: Will it be any good? Will anyone like it? Will it be as good as my last? Completion of a project also brings with it the fear of what will come next, if anything. "To finish may feel like an entrapment. We may fear we'll be stuck within the confines of what we've made and so need to keep it going" (Kolodny 2000, 57). When the piece is done, the artist, too, may feel "done."

While the creative process is often a turbulent one, an artist feels alive while engaged in the process. The end of a piece may feel like a sort of death. This points to another dimension that can cause delay in completion: loss. Although an artist may feel joy at finally expressing a part of the self through their craft, the end of a project means the loss of engagement with the self in this regard and also with the product. Artists often refer to their creative work as parents refer to their child: it is of them. They gave birth to it. And while an artist can revisit their work, it is not the same as creating it. Perhaps this is one of the motivations that keeps artists producing regardless of the difficulties inherent within the process. The product may symbolize an end to engagement with the self, while the process symbolizes life stirring and growing within.

Isolation

That the creative process relies on a journey inward has already been established in the previous chapter. It is a trip that can only be taken alone. It is in this regard, however, that

isolation and loneliness can manifest. It is in this phase where being alone can become a troublesome issue even though introspection is a normal and necessary part of the process. It is not unusual for artists to spend hours of days, weeks and months alone, engaged in their process. It's easy to romanticize this aspect, viewing it as the all-important act of creating, where something "magical" is happening. As stated earlier, this part of the process is not simple or glorious. It is hard work. While in this stage, artists need to be sure that their basic needs are met. It is this part of my creative process that can initiate my own undoing. I have learned that I become too intensely focused for too long of a time, which in the end disconnects me from the outside world, strains my connection with myself and is very disorienting.

It is no secret that solitary confinement and lack of social contact has an adverse effect on a person. In fact, "creative people report a higher incidence of loneliness because of the time they must spend in solitude in order to develop the skills to express their talent" (Cooper 1995, 10). For example, the many hours spent practicing an instrument parallels this phase of the creative process. Performing musicians will spend hours each day, alone in a practice room honing their skills. This is a necessary part of the creative process as without technical proficiency, creative expression will be limited. Yet, such long hours away from others can cause strain and imbalance in the psyche due to the lack of interpersonal contact. A performer goes through cycles of intense isolation in their development, then intense public exposure during performance, and then is back to being alone when the performance is over. It is a roller-coaster ride that can be similar to the ride one takes during crisis, where balance and steadfastness is usurped for the driven need of the moment. The inability to cope with the ebb and flow of these cycles can contribute to an artist's downfall as seen through early demise of many performers.

As the creative life of a project may last for any amount of time, an artist goes through these phases of isolation and reemergence many times over. For many, this is a huge pitfall, where one may fall prey to a number of dangers. For some, the mere act of being alone is a charged issue. Complicating this aspect is the number of consequential discoveries that may arise while turning inward. The nature of what an artist discovers through their work may cause them to isolate more deeply and make reconnection extremely difficult. Some texts refer to this disconnection as akin to psychosis, where one is out of touch with reality. Such an analogy suggests the delicate nature of creative work. Those who have not gained a strong sense of self and tools for coping are at risk for losing the sense of self that does exist through self-destructive coping mechanisms, leading to further blocks to creativity. In addition, anyone who has a predisposition towards any mental illness, from depression to bi-polar disorder, could be more easily triggered into an episode.

Artists need to be exposed to the precarious nature of the creative process itself in order that they can arm themselves appropriately when they partake of their own process. “The lonely, confused states which all artists experience might be more tolerable, at least less likely to defeat so many, if the inevitable aspects of the process were more freely acknowledged and explained” (Kolodny 2000, 141). By exploring and understanding others’ experiences of their own creative process, one can be more self-discriminating as they experience their own. “If one does not know how to prepare for and have effective outlets for these emotional vacillations, there may be more difficulty in moving on to the next creative effort or performance” (Lund and Kranz 1994, 639). Using self-reflection and other tools, artists can stay more grounded in their journey and reach more deeply into their well for richer expression and creative longevity.

Some Root Issues of Blocks

While the previous three phases give a placement and nature for particular blocks, the reasons behind them are as varied as the unique characteristics and experiences of each artist. Underlying causes can range from external and internal messages to repercussions from traumatic experiences. Our response to certain situations in our lives and the meaning we apply will determine what we do with an experience, whether we integrate it into our deeper self, or keep it at bay, causing a fracture within the self. The more we can integrate our experiences, the truer we will be to our own self. It is when we split from an experience or alter a meaning that we move further away from our own self-truths.

If we typically can't allow ourselves to reveal what is true, or to tolerate ambiguity or ambivalence, what we create will reflect and share these limitations. So it will reflect what in us is rigid or flexible, needs to be absolutely in control or can be inventive and playful, needs to remain shallow, or is capable of richness and depth (Kolodny 2000, xv).

For an artist, the creative journey is one of discovering and uncovering one's truth. How much one is willing and able to connect to their inner truth will determine the degree of satisfaction they find in their work.

Content and Meaning

In her book The Captive Muse: On Creativity and Its Inhibitions, Susan Kolodny creates a framework for creative blocks, separating them into three categories, or "three orders of difficulty." The first deals with the fact that the creative process itself invites anxiety. The second acknowledges and explores the feelings of fear that may arise while creating. The last looks at the product, the act of creating and what it represents or means to the creator. "We need

some measure of emotional health and strength – and probably also support – if we are to proceed freely in the face of the three orders of difficulty ...” (140). Up to this point, I have addressed the first category. The following will examine the latter categories.

The content of a piece can be a troublesome area. Oftentimes, the artist has a larger concept of the creation, but it is not until they are engaged in the process that the finer details of the art become clear. Since the unconscious manifests regularly in the creative act, a new revelation can be troubling to the artist.

... [I]t is sometimes our feelings about the known or yet unknown *content* of the work. The content can feel dangerous because we fear what it will reveal. We may worry that the content will threaten our view of ourselves, or the view which others have of us, confront us with our own emptiness, repeat past traumas, or damage our relationships (xv).

Perhaps a musician is bursting to compose a piece for a loved one. The intent and love may be genuine, but as the artist digs deeper into their feelings, other feelings about the loved one may be revealed, causing a conflict. If the loved one has not yet been viewed as a multi-dimensional individual, it’s quite possible for the process to stop, whether through the guise of losing interest, finding a more interesting project to work on, suddenly realizing that there’s not enough time to compose the piece while trying to work on other projects, or some other “reasonable” excuse to interrupt the process. By addressing conflicted feelings, artists can continue their creative work, molding their contrived concept into a more three-dimensional product.

The unconscious is chock-full of blocks to creativity, yet at the same time it contains many of the deeper elements that enriches your work and enables it to become alive. “Creative work can have problematic unconscious meanings for us, and these too can bring about resistance” (xv). Therefore, you need to be deeply in tune with the self and your inner world in order to be aware enough of unresolved issues so they will not stop the creative flow. The fear

of exposure through creative endeavors can bring a halt to creative work. The unconscious may send warning signals that the artist is treading on dangerous ground, causing the artist to feel threatened or unsafe. Such messages may unknowingly cause the artist to leave things out of their work, or alter details in such a way so that the impact of the work is lost and the meaning marred. An artist may alter their truth in order to feel comfortable with sharing their truth, yet in the end, the work is misrepresentative of the intended truth. At times, I have been surprised at how unwittingly my own subconscious influences my writing.

In writing and editing my own short story “The Simulated Survivor” (See Appendices) over a long period of time, I found myself reframing and reconstructing the material according to my own comfort with certain personal issues, a process I became aware of in hindsight. Throughout its development, I was aware that my writing was not alive in particular areas, but did not know why. Unknowingly, I was censoring my writing, based on what I was capable of looking at in my own life. As I became more connected to myself and resolved some issues, my writing began to flow and became a more true representation of what I was trying to express.

While the first and second orders of difficulty deal with anxieties that occur within the process, the last deals with the outcome of the process. The creative product itself also holds the potential for conflict. Kolodny suggests that this last order of difficulty seems “to be associated with guilt,” whether in relation to “separateness, or about autonomous, exhibitionistic, aggressive, ambitious, competitive or erotic wishes” (138). Perhaps an artist sees herself as demur, polite and in control, yet the finished product gives the appearance of a bold, forthright personality. Or perhaps an individual feels he is not ego-driven, yet the finished piece brings a pride and pleasure that it is better than another’s work. “Resistance can be mobilized because the writer or artists fears the feelings creative work evokes in her or may reveal. Such fears can

occur in relation to positive as well as negative feelings” (51). How you respond to your completed work has an impact on what you do with a piece. Sometimes, completed projects fall by the wayside. Others may cheer on the creative person and support them through the process only to be baffled when the artist rejects the final piece. Yet the rejection represents an internal conflict that the artist needs to explore, define and release in order to bring their creative work out of the closet.

Deeper Motivations

For some artists, their creativity developed because of a need to escape their everyday reality. Whether due to home, school or social problems, their art became a welcome oasis. Composer and music theorist Fred Lerdahl comments. “I think certain conditions in my family made music important to me ... Coming from a somewhat troubled family might have driven me to music as a refuge” (cited by McCutchan 1999, 108). Likewise, composer Daniel Godfrey reflects the cause of his musical interests.

There is a mix of reasons why I compose, which I think – in a kind of fated, inexorable way – works together. Some of them have healthy roots, and some of them have unhealthy roots. Part of the unhealthy motivation, from what I can gather, comes from childhood, when my abilities - whatever they may be – were discovered. The discovery changed my role in the family; writing music became my niche, my way of mattering (98).

Not knowing the deeper reasons and motivations for becoming involved in your art can cause delays in the creative process. Kolodny refers to a writer who “was only slightly aware of what had motivated his choice of topics. What remained unconscious in his motivations contributed to his being stuck” (2000, 7). If born out of a want to fill unmet needs, a musician’s relationship to music has the potential to become unhealthy or dysfunctional, thus giving rise to blocks. For example, your identity could become too entrenched in music, leaving a narrow and incomplete

view of the self. This type of relationship can be observed and is usually questioned within a partnership. We often hear that people should not lose themselves in another person and should develop a life outside of their partnership. Without such development, the misaligned partnership becomes the controlling factor, rather than the two individuals who make it up. In a similar way, this can easily be played out between artists and their art. Dependence on art as a means to provide a framework for your identity may inhibit the view of your potential and constrain your creativity. Awareness of your reasons for choosing creative work eventually can give more freedom to do creative work with deeper satisfaction.

Internalized Messages

As the previous musicians noted, the roots to your interest in music can be tied up in the identity formed in youth. Sometimes, messages from others stick with us. Regardless of whom the culprit is, a thing said to us, things inferred or things overheard, can shape us if our sense of self is not strongly developed. Over time, these messages can become our own self-criticism or beliefs, manifested in the form of our own inner voice. "... [It] sometimes manifests itself as ... an inexplicable shift in mood, an attack of self-doubt or guilt, a wave of hope or despair, as if something had been whispered almost within earshot and were influencing us, although we aren't sure what, or by whom" (80-81). The role you play within your family can also have an impact. For example, a parent who never fully actualized their own potential may try to find self-satisfaction through their child's accomplishments. The behavior of the pushy parent, whether on the soccer field or at the annual violin recital, silently bargains with the child, leaving the child with a distorted sense of their relationship to not only their parent, but to their activities as well. Kolodny refers to a client who could not "allow himself the pleasure and excitement of

more deeply doing creative work and so [develop] his artistic potential” as it “represented further outdoing his parents and brothers” (xiii). Unconscious agreements, although not necessarily meant to do harm, can end up costing an artist in their ability to make sense of their own self, thus potentially inhibiting the creative process.

In my own case, it wasn't until recent years I discovered that I had somehow equated my own success as an insult to my deceased mother. It was as if I was showing disrespect to her, as if my succeeding negated the tremendous loss I had experienced, symbolizing that I no longer needed her, that she didn't matter. Despite the past work I had done in regards to her death, this piece still lingered, unknowingly to me, causing me to make unconscious choices, choices that were not necessarily bad ones, but not necessarily well-suited to my needs. In writing this synthesis, I came across another agreement I had unconsciously made regarding my sister. Both of my older brothers received a Masters Degree and my sister was the next in line, not me. My stepping into her place was unconscionable. She was the one who had gone to college for writing. She wrote short stories, read voraciously and wanted to be a writer herself, but her life took a different turn and this dream remained unfulfilled. Although my drive to write developed at a young age, perhaps even influenced by her, I could not reconcile that I was doing what she had wanted to do: write. My attitude towards writing has always been “I'll do that when I get older,” but I hadn't realized it was really a way of dodging these issues with the two most important women in my life.

Alcohol and Drugs

Believed to enhance the creative process, alcohol and drugs have been used by many musicians throughout the years. Both are used to decrease inhibitions and increase relaxation in

an effort to go deeper inside the self to catch that elusive creative spark. While many musicians agreed their initial experiences opened a path to their creativity, they also agreed that the effect eventually wore off and the physical influence of the substances took over. “At best, substance use may help overcome anxiety and enhance a musicians’ creative process and never progress into an addiction. At worst, musicians may rationalize their continued substance use as “creative” long after the addiction itself has consumed any sign of creative work being done, leaving them anxious and depressed, and, in some cases, leading them to an early death” (Raeburn 2000). Guitarist Eric Clapton, who now funds and operates Crossroads Center, a drug and alcohol rehabilitation clinic in Antigua, struggled for years with substance abuse.

... Anything that distorts your awareness or any mood-altering chemical will actually just impair your thinking ... You’re not really in tune with anything at all other than your drug, and that works on your nervous system to a point where you are really at the mercy of it ... At the beginning there can be an opening up and then you move onto the next phase where it all becomes confused, and then the final phase where the drug or whatever it is has actually got control of you and you’ve lost that original thing” (cited by Boyd 1992, 199 – 200).

Stimulants have also been used as a means to escape from reality, the everyday hum of life, in order to free the mind of trivial matter. They’ve also been relied on to help artists get through their busy working schedules. The number of artists who have used drugs or alcohol throughout their lives, along with those who have died by them, is astronomical. And while some believe they can be used “safely,” others believe not. Singer/songwriter Peter Gabriel skeptically recognizes the role drugs have played.

Mind-altering substances of one kind or another have been traditionally part of many cultures and have a place in shaping creativity. But I don’t think it’s something I would recommend to anyone nor that it was necessary. I think it’s possible to get to wherever you want to go without it. Perhaps it does sometimes short-circuit longer routes that maybe allow you to look through a window perhaps at a state that might be arrived at through spiritual work. I’m not sure you actually get there. It’s a very dangerous road (206).

While some musicians find drugs to be inhibiting and have avoided them altogether, many who have experimented have found a richer life, both personal and creative, without them. Drummer Ringo Starr gives insight through his own experiences.

[When you stop using drugs and alcohol] you have to learn to live with your emotions, because you're not putting them to sleep anymore ... I got caught in a terrifying trap that to be creative I had to be on some substance. And what happened to me was in the end there was no creativity at all coming from me ... It's a sham you put on because you're lost; you're actually a lost soul for a while (224).

Like many others, Starr found that when he stopped using alcohol and drugs, his life opened more fully, he became more creative, in other areas besides music, and found more personal satisfaction.

Trauma

Like all experiences one has throughout life, trauma leaves an impression, adding to the parts of an individual that become the person. Yet the word trauma implies a deeper and lasting effect and therefore requires specialized attention. While all traumatic situations are bad, the effects can bring about both positive and negative changes to an individual. Due to this conflicting nature, it is easy to minimize trauma or become confused about its impact; however, not assessing it fully will influence choices in treatment and eventually, the degree to which the traumatic situation ties into one's life. For the artist, this will shape their creative work.

Cited in Handbook of Creativity (Sternberg, et. al. 1999, 175), Gruber states "there has been ample evidence to support the belief that early trauma is often present in the lives of great creators." Dr. Louise Montello, of Musician's Wellness, Inc., has found a similar pattern in her work with musicians struggling with various performance disorders. "... Almost all of the injured musicians that [she has] worked with over the years have experienced some emotional

trauma early in life (i.e. physical/sexual abuse, accidents/hospitalizations, neglect, abandonment)” (2001, 15). When a traumatic situation occurs, the autonomic nervous system responds. The sympathetic system relates to activity, while the parasympathetic system relates to inactivity. “In traumatized individuals, the sympathetic arm is often working overtime, leaving little energy for the body to achieve its needed rest and rejuvenation. Sympathetic over-activation leads to hyperactivity, anxiety, weakened immunity, and eventually burnout” (15). In this sense, trauma leaves a lasting impression on the mind and body – the experience becomes imprinted within both the individual’s biological and psychological make-up.

One area that has not been fully recognized is trauma that occurs within the classroom, a place where many artists discover their interests. I can attest from my own experiences and through observation of others with similar experiences, that the results are life altering and extremely difficult to reconcile. While information is limited, one study, “conducted by University of Toronto music professor Lee Bartel and assistant music professor Linda Cameron, suggests verbal, emotional and physical abuse can drive students of any age, from young learners to the university level, away from their love of music” (Carinci, 1997). In addition, sexual misconduct by teachers has been a longstanding yet under-publicized problem. In fact, “the number of teachers [across the United States] who have lost their licenses because of sex offenses has increased nearly 80 percent since 1994” (Zemel and Twedt, 1999). While statistics indicate a problem exists, the fact that “only about 7 percent of students being sexually harassed by a teacher complain to a school authority” (Shakeshaft, 1994), indicate that the problem is larger than it appears.

Not only does this type of victimization cause problems on a personal level, it also interferes with the student’s interest and ability to engage in education. If the student has a

vested interest in the subject area, then problems will also occur here as well. “A disproportionate number of accusations are against coaches, and drama, art, music, and physical education teachers” (Shakeshaft, 1994), showing a vulnerability that exists for students taking part in arts- and sports-related activities. In my own research during my legal case, I had read that approximately 50% of teacher perpetrators were music teachers. Because music deeply engages the emotions and because interactions are often one-on-one and unsupervised, music students were extremely at risk.

One issue at stake here is the building and eventual betrayal of trust that occurs in such situations. “Because of the greater power of the professional, the client is unable to give truly informed consent, and it is thus the responsibility of the person in the more powerful position to control the necessary boundary between the two parties” (Plaut, 1993). While it is clear that any sexual misconduct by an elementary teacher is wrong, the area becomes gray when it occurs at the university or even high school level, but in fact, such involvement between a teacher and student is damaging. Plaut (1993), affiliated with the University of Maryland School of Medicine, refers to a 1983 letter, where Henry Rosovsky, Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at Harvard University outlines this to his faculty.

Amorous relationships that might be appropriate in other circumstances are always wrong when they occur between any teacher or officer of the University and any student for whom he or she has a professional responsibility. Further, such relationships may have the effect of undermining the atmosphere of trust on which the educational process depends. Implicit in the idea of professionalism is the recognition by those in positions of authority that in their relationships with students there is always an element of power. It is incumbent upon those with authority not to abuse, nor seem to abuse, the power with which they are entrusted... (cited by Plaut, 1993).

While educator abuse is not the only kind of trauma a person can experience, my focus on it is due to the effects my own experiences have had on my engagement in both education and

music and the manner in which they have played out in my health. In addition, the problem itself is underemphasized and often times, unacknowledged. Other traumas such as physical abuse, emotional abuse, physical assault, surviving natural disasters, or kidnapping all cause severe damage to an individual and their sense of self. In Memory Slips: A Memoir of Music and Healing, pianist/educator Linda Cutting (1997) describes her immersion in music as a means to cope with her incestuous father. Like most traumatized individuals, there came a time when her musical creativity became paralyzed and she was unable to function musically, as well as personally, until she was able to start to integrate her experiences. The deep and lasting effects of trauma requires special attention. Each type of trauma that occurs brings with it a set of specific responses, indicating the intricacies involved. Boyd recognizes the importance of bridging the chasm that trauma creates in the self in order to realize creative potential.

... The most important question is not whether we are creative as in, 'How do I get creative?' or 'Am I creative?' The question should really be, 'How do I get more in touch with myself, my unconscious, my truth?' Once the blockages from trauma and self-doubt are released, we can start to get in touch with what our actual gift is, our way of self-expression (1992, 226).

Without awareness and integration, traumatized individuals may remain in a behavioral loop, repeating their trauma throughout their lives in various ways. The shock that occurs with trauma disconnects one from the self, thus setting the stage for an inability to connect to one's inner voice and creativity. Whether or not all artists have a trauma-related past, understanding the psychodynamics of trauma and creativity will essentially enable all artists to become more attuned to their own self and nurture their creative self.

When Blocks Manifest Physically

Like any other skilled athlete, a musician relies on precise, intricate movements to play an instrument. Years of practice and performances can put any musician at risk of overusing the only facility they have that makes them capable of creating music – their own body – putting them at risk of blocking, or even stopping, their creative process. Overuse music injuries are often not talked about, which makes it appear that they are not common. One factor that supports such secrecy is the fear that public knowledge of an injury will have a negative impact on a musician's career. The act of downplaying an overuse injury is unfortunately supported by a number of health care practitioners.

Dr. Charles Brantigan, assistant clinical professor at the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center, noted during the Denver Conference [The Biology of Making Music] that until recently physicians dismissed the physical complaints of musicians as being 'all in their heads', because the physicians thought the players simply could not take the extraordinary pressure of long hours of practice, rehearsal and performance. He also pointed out that 'doctors have a hard time taking their complaints seriously, because they find it difficult to accept music as a legitimate way of making a living' (cited by McDaniel 1985).

However, with more focus on musician's health, Performing Arts Medicine, which deals with injuries specific to many types of performing artists, is becoming more mainstream. Some in the industry “... see the need for teams ... made up of physical therapists (to change posture and movement) and psychologists (to examine self-image and attitude toward music)” (85), as represented by the services available through Montello's Musician's Wellness, Inc.

Each instrument requires a certain set of physical movements in order to be played, most involving some type of unnatural physical movement or positioning. A musician must learn how to adapt their body to the unique requirements of their instrument, without causing strain to their body, which in most cases, is quite a challenge. While the term overuse suggests playing too

much or for too long, oftentimes, problems evolve through inappropriate alignment of the body, leading to muscle imbalance. As a musician develops the flexibility and strength needed to play an instrument, certain soft tissue groups are developed, while lesser-used groups remain underdeveloped. At the same time, certain tendons and ligaments tend to get stretched, while some are not stretched at all. All of these may result in weakened muscles, or even nerve impingement. Weakened areas may not be strong enough to stay “in place”, causing them to collapse around, or choke certain nerves.

In addition to body injury, overuse injuries can also represent a physical manifestation of an emotional aspect of the self that has not yet been integrated. “With emotional stress being a critical factor associated with the onset of many performance-related injuries, it is so important to include a psychological component in treating musicians’ injuries” (Montello 2001). The imbalanced flow of the creative process contributes to this phenomenon. While previously thought of as being “all in the head,” somatic symptoms are initiated in the psyche, but present through the physical body. While the root cause may be psychological, the physical component is real and needs to be treated.

At a recent Musicians’ Wellness seminar I attended, Dr. Montello indicated that verbal, emotional and physical abuse often lead to performance anxiety, stress that takes physical form and can be crippling for a musician. She has also found a history of sexual abuse in those with physical injury, also incapacitating, but often requiring a different treatment. Internal discomfort may cause one musician to become anxious or jittery, imagining the worst possible scenarios with physical symptoms such as sweaty hands, a rapid pulse, heart palpitations or a quivering lip. Another musician, however, may stay calm, picture a great performance, but suddenly finds their neck or back in spasm or pain running through their arms and hands causing motor function to

become strained. As suggested earlier, one must look within to find the root cause of such distress. Yet because the second musician's discomfort manifested on a more physical level, injury can occur indicating that the body will also need to be treated. If such manifestations go on for a long period without recognition of the mind-body connection, treating the physical injury may not heal the injury.

While some may find relief from these injuries by submitting themselves to a variety of different treatments, their problems will inevitably return, because the root cause – the mind-body split – is typically not addressed. Additionally, all injured musicians could benefit from psychological support in dealing with the extreme emotions (fear, anger, grief, etc.) associated with loss (i.e. the ability to play, income, identity, work relationships) that can sabotage the healing process (Montello 2001).

The recognition of musical overuse injuries as a problem has been slow. The concept that the mind may also play a role might take even longer, but acknowledging this phenomenon is necessary to keep musicians healthy and engaged in their creative process. “With people who were traumatized, the ‘fight-or-flight’ response becomes their only mode of dealing with the stresses of every day life. This particular ‘coping’ style has a deleterious effect on the mind-body, however, causing chronic muscle tension, anxiety, and compulsive behavior in musicians which can eventually result in overuse – a primary cause of performance-related injuries” (Montello 2001). All of my life, I have been extremely hyper-vigilant, always aware of what was going on around me. My body and mind were in a constant state of hyper-arousal, leaving very little room for resting to occur. My problematic sleep was both an indicator of the imbalance in my autonomic system and a contributing factor to an inability to replenish energy expended throughout the day. As stated previously, my doctors understood these deeper layers of my injury, yet it took me quite a while to see this aspect. Because of the intricate link between the mind and body, physical injuries need to be assessed within a wider scope encompassing the

psyche as a possible component of the injury. Without such evaluation, treatment may well fall short of healing.

Whether rooted mostly in the physical, or combined between mind and body, the alterations one must make to accommodate an injury into daily life can become taxing.

Repetitive strain injury thrusts people onto a roller coaster of emotions that friends, family, and people treating them often don't understand. But patients who've had it for a while, and therapists who've treated them, say there are some phases many people experience – denial, panic and fear, guilt and/or shame, anger, grieving and/or depression, and acceptance (Peddie 1997 226).

Anyone familiar with Elisabeth Kubler Ross, author of On Death and Dying, will note that these responses are the same that one goes through when a loved one passes away.

Musicians use music as a mode of self-expression and it is deeply entwined in their self-identity. Playing, composing or conducting music is not just an act, separate from the self, but instead is the self. To be robbed of the ability to play and express one's self musically, is to be robbed, in part, of the self. Artists must find a way to maintain their health, both psychologically and physically. Blocks to creativity can take on many disguises and appear anywhere at anytime. By knowing their inner self, artists have a better chance at staying in tune with the changes that arise throughout their lives and thus not be undermined by them. As self-connection is key to staying balanced, it is important to find ways to facilitate such awareness. Exploring the tools others use for self-reflection will help you to find the methods that work best for you.

CHAPTER IV

M-USEFUL MODES

We shall never cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And to know the place for the first time. T.S. Eliot (1942).

Life itself is a constantly evolving system. If stagnation occurs, life, as it was known, stops. For nature, this process is automatic. While man is part of and evolves naturally within this system, the unique qualities of being human require special attention. Our biological self follows innate rhythms, but our inner self needs coaxing. It needs to learn how to rise comfortably to life's fluctuating challenges. This requires the ability to discover and rediscover the unique attributes of the self at any given moment within the variable currents. "Change cannot be avoided ... Change provides the opportunity for innovation. It gives you the chance to demonstrate your creativity" (Keshavan Nair cited by Campbell 1991. As shown in previous chapters, the ability of an artist to connect to their inner self has an impact on the flow of their creative process. It is also through the elements of the inner world where blocks may present. In this light, it is advantageous for the artist to find healthy ways to facilitate such connection. Within this chapter I present tools to access creative imagination and maintain healthy creative engagement suggested by creative artists and those in the therapeutic fields. Because we are different from one another, one tool may be helpful for some and not for others – finding the right tools is itself a process, relying on reflective skills that are part of the greater scope of the creative process.

The Mind-Body Connection

Many cultures focus on developing the mind-body connection. Strengthening this link is believed to more fully actualize a person's potential thus integrating the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual bodies. Someone engaged in these practices may only focus on one of these areas, yet it is believed that all four areas benefit.

Meditation

One mode that has been practiced for centuries is meditation. It has already been noted that some musicians find the act of creating music akin to a meditative state. Yet many also practice meditation as a means to connect to their inner selves and find an internal balance.

Songwriter/guitarist Keith Strickland has found meditation to be beneficial to his work.

... I find through meditation I am able to be more spontaneous ... It can be very inspiring. The sound becomes so much richer because you have so much more space. Through more meditation, it's like getting more to the core. Meditation enhances creativity. Ideas and thoughts can arise from almost nowhere (cited by Boyd 1992, 254).

Singer/songwriter George Harrison discovered meditation in the 1960's while with the Beatles.

Throughout his life, he practiced meditation on a regular basis.

In order to infuse energy and power and get it flowing through our bodies, we have to meditate. You infuse that energy into your being, and so when you are in activity, it rubs off onto that creatively. To be really in touch with creative energy, you will find that it lies within the stillness (254).

Lund and Krantz (1994) interviewed ten performing musicians in order to better understand the role of emotion in relation to performance. Most stated that in addition to having to cope with their own feelings about performance, they also had to connect their feelings to the emotional content of the music.

Use of meditation, self-hypnosis, and 'self-talk' were mentioned as techniques that are helpful in controlling emotions and thoughts, especially when other musicians are involved and if there are distractions from the audience. Practicing how to remain 'internally quiet and positive' seemed to be an important skill, so that a musician does not get 'absorbed into the audience.' A number of the respondents noted that simultaneously balancing emotional detachment, exhilaration, and anxiety is something that takes years of conscious practice and may never be totally achieved (Lund and Krantz 1994 637).

With such an extensive emotive element present in their performance it was imperative to stay focused and not get swept away.

In January of 2002, I attended a workshop hosted by Musicians' Wellness, Inc. and co-
led by Dr. Montello. Although the material presented touched upon a number of topics, meditation was a particular tool used to strengthen the mind-body connection. It also helped to balance the autonomic nervous system by releasing tension and increasing relaxation. One meditation exercise focused specifically on increasing your awareness of your own autonomic system. Through guided imagery and suggestions you used your mind to warm your hands and feet, and steady your heart rate, all autonomic functions. Another guided meditation focused on your earliest memory of music. Again, with imagery and guidance, you came forward through time, sewing together events of your relationship with music. This is very similar to Progoff's (1973) "Steppingstones." Both exercises allow you to view a chronology of events related to one topic, which then invite insights, connections and reinterpretation to occur. Both contain a characteristic of story-telling, connecting also to White and Epston's (1990) work on the therapeutic use of narratives (to be discussed in the next section). A few weeks after I returned from the workshop, I felt a strong urge to write a tune. I sat down at the piano and played with themes and chords. A short way into my writing, I came up with "Midnight Red." Interestingly, this is a similar pattern that occurred when I wrote "Song of You" and "Perseus Appears," a tune I will refer to later. All three were written soon after I had experimented with certain tools.

While some meditations are used to quiet and empty the mind, some meditations contemplate particular aspects of the self and mind. In his book Effortless Mastery, jazz pianist Kenny Werner includes four meditation practices that focus on relaxing the body and mind while also using imagination and visualization. One end point is to “... [establish] a connection from your inner-most self to your instrument” in order to practice “direct linkage” (1996, 95), a principle I discovered through chi gung.

Chi Gung

Established in China, chi gung relies on a series of movements and exercises, which balance a person’s chi, or life energy. Chi gung is the basis for other Chinese healing body arts, such as tai chi and ba gua, which are just beginning to be incorporated into parts of Western culture. All of these practices fortify the mind-body connection, resulting in a healthy body, mind, emotions and spirit. Like other standard practices, chi gung aligns posture and tones the body. Its main and dramatic difference is that it deals with the body on an energetic level and therefore causes healing to occur in a unique, balanced manner, unlike any other conventional means of therapy. Chi gung is not the only practice that works in this fashion, as higher-level yoga practices develop the energetic body as well.

Another unique characteristic of using chi gung as prevention of and treatment for overuse injuries is that it conditions the connective soft tissues, tendons and ligaments, as well as regenerates and heals the physical attributes of the nerves. Since overuse injuries often are related to these areas, chi gung contrasts the Western approach, which focuses primarily on muscle strengthening, which may inhibit the flow of chi. In contrast to many forms of exercise, chi gung softens and tones muscles, causing them to lengthen and gain elasticity. For injured

musicians, healing of the connective tissues is imperative. Without strong, supple tendons and ligaments, strong, supple muscles are of no use to a performing artist. Muscles alone do not enable the intricate physical movements to take place. In this light, chi gung provides a benefit desperately needed for a musician to sustain or regain their playing and creative ability.

In practicing chi gung over the past three years, I have come to understand myself in ways that had been foreign to me before. The effects have been physical, but also emotional, mental and spiritual as well, elements I was not expecting. My intent had been to heal my body from its diminished physical condition, yet I found myself having insights and shifts of perception, which challenged and transformed my inner belief system. The restructuring of my inner self helped to restructure my physical body. Parts of myself that had been shut down or become stagnant started to loosen, causing my system to become more integrated and balanced. I have used this tool to relax, but more specifically as a means to connect myself with the healing energetic flow that comes from such practice. Outwardly, these practices have allowed me to be more fully engaged in living my life, strengthening both my mind and my body. Inwardly, they have allowed me to be more in tune with my emotions and spirit. The effects have been so positive that they inspired me to look at how to incorporate the chi gung system into my musical practice. Within a short time an element of creativity started to emerge in my practice sessions, an element that had not been present for some time.

On a daily basis, I practiced one or two forms of chi gung in the morning, sometimes adding an afternoon session. Following at least one of these sessions, I would immediately play my instrument, a practice I refer to as Musical Chi Gung. In this exercise, the environment created by the chi gung exercises transfers over to the act of playing the instrument. The challenge is to maintain the mind-body-heart-spirit connection that is strengthened in chi gung,

rather than focus on playing the instrument. Just as some forms of chi gung are a type of standing meditation, Musical Chi Gung is meditation with your instrument. You bring the instrument into the energetic field you have created, making it part of the exercise.

To do this, I recorded a series of easy musical exercises to play along with where I would not have to think about what I was doing musically or physically. This allowed me to sustain the awareness and energy that that came about in the chi gung exercises. While gently repeating a chi gung movement with my lower body and keeping my upper body aligned, I played along to a recording of long whole notes of various modes. My intent however, was not on the music or the instrument, but on maintaining a meditative state and internal awareness. I gave myself reminders to breathe, to feel my feet connected to the ground, to feel that I was a unit with the instrument and to stay relaxed, loose and grounded in my stance. I purposefully tried not to use strength to play and did not let my attention float to anything else outside of me, such as a car driving by, the sound of a bird or an out of tune note.

This exercise alone was important in that it allowed me to feel at peace with my body, my instrument and sound, something that recently was missing. For many years, playing had become a struggle between me and my instrument, which transferred to a struggle between me and music. Musical Chi Gung washed away that struggle because the focus was not on my body, my pain, the instrument, the music or my feelings of loss. It was more related to spirit and meditation and invited me to recreate that healing, energetic environment I had discovered through chi gung with elements that had become stress factors. The results were impressive. When time allowed, I would practice the musical aspect of playing through a tune by playing the melody, walking a bass line and improvising over the chord changes. There was a difference immediately. I felt more connected to the instrument, I had more energy, my movements were

more fluent and more importantly, I actually enjoyed it and played more musically. It was also during an increased cycle of internal changes brought on by my chi gung practices that I wrote “Song of You.” (see Appendices). The release and restructuring that took place actually caused me to be sick for a time as the energetic blocks were dissipating, but eventually that broke, leaving me feeling much more in tune with myself.

The moments when a performing musician feels like they are one with their instrument, when they’re on and their fingers glide gracefully and the music flows, that’s when the chi is truly moving. In this fashion, the act of playing is born out of effortless strength as opposed to determined strength, a concept that is applicable to any playing situation. As musicians/chi gung followers have told me, the similarities between playing, creating music and performing chi gung are strikingly similar. The “place a musician goes” when their performance seems to “flow” perhaps is the same place where chi flows.

Chi gung is a skilled art that can be taken with you wherever you go. You don’t need another person to administer it, nor is it something you will always need an expert to consult with on. It is easy to learn and can be practiced anywhere, whether you’re on the road, between sets, or between classes. Its benefits are long-term, enabling healthy musicians to stay healthy, injured musicians return to health and creative musicians to become more deeply engaged in their artistic expression.

The Written Word

Not enough can be said about the benefits of writing. Recording your thoughts, feelings and experiences on paper can be a transforming experience. It helps to make them palpable,

something concrete outside of your own head. Writing can take many forms, the most general one now called “journaling.” While journal originally referred to a diary or a publication, it now is used as a verb. It is a thing to do, not just the thing you write in. Keeping a daily journal has other benefits besides giving form to your inner self. It provides a record of you, throughout time, that you can refer to. This allows you to see where you came from and how you might have changed or perhaps not changed. It enables re-interpretation to take place and therefore contributes to the birth of a new system. While reading a passage you had previously written, you have the opportunity to find new meaning in your words and perceptions, inviting a deeper integration to take place. Such inner dialogues can help to ignite the creative process as Stevie Nicks of Fleetwood Mac describes.

I go from writing in my journal to typing out some ideas on my typewriter ... I tell people all the time that you should keep a journal, even if it's just, 'I had a terrible day today and I don't want to talk about it, love Stevie,' or 'I dreamt last night . . .' Even if it's just three sentences because at the end of five or six days, you would have created a habit and you will find that over a month that you have a whole story growing. Whether it's just for your own memories, so you can go back at any age, or if you are a writer or a singer, or some part of the creative business (cited by Boyd 1992, 250).

Keeping written records also helps to get ideas out of your head, so you don't “lose” them. After compiling pages of ideas, thoughts, images and feelings, you'll have plenty to choose from when you want to find something to develop.

Writing was the focus of a study conducted by a group of physicians at the State University of New York at Stony Brook School of Medicine. In order to find alternative treatments for chronic illnesses, these doctors explored how “... writing about emotionally traumatic experiences has a surprisingly beneficial effect on symptom reports, well-being and health care use in healthy individuals ...” (Smyth, Stone, Hurewitz, Kaell 1999, 1304). They surmised that since writing helped healthy people in these ways, then those with chronic illness

would also benefit. People with two types of chronic illness, asthma and rheumatoid arthritis, were asked to participate. Patients “... who wrote about stressful life experiences had clinically relevant changes in health status at four months compared with those in the control group” (1304). Instead of writing about traumatic experiences, the control group wrote about daily activities. While the study does not attempt to address *why* it works, the “results confirm[ed] the hypothesis that writing about emotionally traumatic experiences reduced symptoms in individuals with chronic illness” (1307). For these patients, writing became a new therapeutic tool.

Whether you are healthy or ailing, or in need of creative inspiration, writing can be a catalyst for healing and connection to the self. Like the formalized setting of the study, there exist a number of writing methods that are structured with a purpose in mind. They give guidelines and direction to your writing. Examples of two of these systems follow.

Written Narrative

In their book Narrative Means to a Therapeutic Ends (1990), White and Epston stress the importance of interpretation and how we apply meaning to our lives. Since we are participants in our own lives, objectivity is not possible. It is when experiences are placed upon a backdrop or within a timeframe that shape and changes can be perceived. Their use of the written narrative supplies this framework.

White, co-director of the Dulwich Centre in Adelaide, South Australia, and Epston, co-director of the Family Therapy Centre in Auckland, New Zealand, suggest that re-framing events that contribute to a problem can alter the problem itself. By telling a story of an event, the experience of the event becomes more apparent. A narrative shows how people organize their

lives and give meaning to it. Just in the telling of a story, through the items focused upon, the language used, and your emotional responses, you can get a clearer understanding of your relationship to the experience, how it fits into your life and how it had influenced who you are. This knowledge can lead to a different interpretation of the events, thus altering a person's relationship to them. Through this "re-storying" or "re-framing," the potential for a divergence from one's current view and behavior may emerge creating a deeper understanding and experience of the self.

In their private practice, White and Epston encourage clients to write their stories in a chronological format, thus giving the context of a temporal dimension and therefore the means to view comparison. Written in first person, the narratives support personalization instead of objectification. "In striving to make sense of life, persons are faced with the task of arranging their experiences of events in sequences across time in such a way as to arrive at a coherent account of themselves and the world around them" (White and Epston 1990, 10). Through a cycle of therapist feedback and rewriting of the story, the connections in the person's life become apparent. Overlaps in behavior, thinking, emotional responses, interactions, physical responses and outlook become clear. The narratives are not based on fact, but interpretation which gives rise to meaning. They "do not establish universal truth conditions, but a connectedness of events across time. The narrative mode leads, not to certainties, but to varying perspectives" (78). These perspectives can then lead to re-framing of one's experience and the possibility of release and change.

My own experimentation with the written narrative proved to be quite fruitful. I decided to explore a longstanding problem related to a traumatic experience I had as an adolescent. By writing about both the event and my ways of coping with it, I hoped to find a way to release it

more fully, as its influence was still present in my life. First I will briefly tell of the experience of writing the narrative of the actual event, and then refer to the outcome of the process.

In 1977, when I was a freshman in high school, I was nearly kidnapped by a man in front of my house. Through a narrative telling of this incident, I was able to make more sense out of my response to it and its effect on my behavior in the ensuing years. Although I had talked and written about the experience, the act of telling what happened in present tense was remarkably different. Writing in the first person present tense helped recreate the occurrence with its own "life." I felt more separated from it in that the writing brought it out of my head and into a "real" form, yet I felt more connected to my experience of it. There was a clarity present that had never been there before. As I reread my narrative, the words I used and the particulars that I focused on struck me. Connections that I hadn't previously seen jumped out. I began to get a different perspective and understanding of the event, what about it I had internalized and the assumptions I had formed. All along I had seen these things as "truth" rather than my view. I reflected on the new perceptions, my parallel to the feedback Epstein and White give their clients, and then engaged in a cycle of reading and reflecting. From this, I gained deeper insights, but also released more of my attachment to my earlier understanding of what had taken place.

For years, my response to and perception of the event remained the same although I wanted desperately for the situation to be different. My feelings, thoughts and beliefs had been colored by this event. Through the narrative, my views started to shift and I began to see my experience in a new light. It was miraculous to me that change could occur with such longstanding beliefs. The event was still the same one, yet somehow I began to see it differently. This opened me to the possibility of living my life unencumbered and taking steps I had previously been unable to take because I had previously been able to interpret the event in only

one way. Through my experimentation with this tool, I also found that my writing itself became more unconstrained, a benefit that helped in my graduate studies.

The framework that White and Epston suggest is a powerful tool for making deeper connections to the self. Although it is a potentially difficult and unsettling experience, the rewards of re-telling your life to discover new meaning are inspiring. It helps to free up the self, to see things you hadn't previously seen and crack limiting long-standing beliefs. A therapeutic tool, the written narrative helps you to uncover your own truth, leading to the possibility of freer self-expression and creativity.

Intensive Journal Method of Self-Development

Born out of his experiences in World War II, Dr. Ira Progoff created a system of writing techniques in order to gain understanding of one's unconscious mind, and thus open the door to creativity, direction and purpose in one's life. He believed that accessing internal energies, could lead one to new spiritual awakenings and internal awareness. Progoff formulated a methodology that could be "used by individuals whatever their faith or lack of faith, and whatever their level of intellectual development and personal interest" (1992, 5). He blended his own personal experiences with his research in sociology and psychology and by 1975, the Intensive Journal Program gained a foothold in the United States.

The various exercises presented at the Intensive Journal workshop have "the effect of evoking new ideas and opening contexts of understanding" (6). The methodology can be applied to a current crisis or stalemate that one needs to work through and to reframing past experiences. It can be used within or without of the structure of the workshop. Unlike many "self-help" tools, the Intensive Journal does not focus on analysis, but instead uses a meditative approach. By

working throughout the interwoven journal sections, “an inner dynamic is built” which “moves in two directions” (8).

One is outward toward the activities of the world. The other is inward. Both are integral to the process as a whole, but it is by ... the inward movement that that the new energy is built (8).

In order to uncover the meaning that one applies to life choices, the written work supports refocusing, which then allows for newly discovered information to be reintegrated.

Conceptually, it is similar to that of the written narrative by White and Epston (1990).

The workshop I attended was very informative, although I found the numerous segments of the journal to be somewhat confusing. The manner of jumping between sections was a bit overwhelming, yet the exercises did exactly what they intended. The different parts of the journal provided numerous topics and specific, short ideas, each of which could be utilized in another section of the book. There was a gathering of information, and then the information was separated into strands and explored separately. This process created endless possibilities for insights. Of course, just finding topics is not necessarily enough to create a breakthrough in self-awareness; however, the extended writing on a chosen topic provides further movement and thus the possibility of gaining new perspectives.

In particular, I liked the “Steppingstones” writing exercise as it can be used repeatedly to move below the surface of different events and experiences. The first time it’s used in the workshop, the topic is your life, yet later, any topic can be applied to the exercise. Basically, it is a list of 10 – 12 items, written in two to three sentences, that are highlights or main events related to the topic, thus giving a clear view of your perception of the topic. Each item then becomes another avenue for exploration through other exercises.

It's interesting to note not only what one writes as their Steppingstones, but also what one does not write. My first set of Steppingstones revolved around a number of pivotal events in my life. Although I have looked at a chronology of my life, I was re-struck by how I unconsciously "defined" myself by these events. There was a clear thread running through each of them, showing them not only to be interconnected but also interdependent. This led me to consider some of the "reasons" why events happened in the order/way they did and my responses to them. More importantly, it raised the question of what I had to "gain" by keeping these events "in tact." In a later exercise, I also wrote Steppingstones of my music teacher's life, but from "his" perspective, meaning in relation to his life events. Although I was somewhat resistant to viewing his life from his eyes, it was rather revealing and thought provoking, leading me to look at the places where things might have been altered, even before I met him.

Both applications of the exercise gave me material for other explorations, as each entry was useable in other sections of the journal. The Steppingstones exercise was very useful in that it put events into a digestible framework and allowed for a deeper look at the meaning you applied to the events. This scope paves the way for uncovering misunderstandings, assumptions, and unseen connections, adding a clarity that might not have been present. With these misconceptions out of the way, the path toward being yourself and knowing your inner world becomes more accessible.

Approximately two weeks after the workshop, I was hit with a strong urge to create something and decided to sit at the piano to see what might come out. I started to play with a theme that had been floating around my head for a few years, one that I had previously tried to develop, quite unsuccessfully. Within a short time, the motif grew, phrases formed and supportive chord structures became clear. Out of this, "Perseus Appears" (see Appendices) was

born. This piece made it evident to me that the work I had done throughout the workshop had altered something inside, allowing me to reach into that elusive place and create something. The turnaround time was startling to me as was the ease with which I wrote the tune.

Ira Progoff, like White and Epstein, developed a compelling tool that supports self-exploration, leading to a richer inner and outer life. Like journaling, these methods provide the means to carry on a self-dialogue where personal discoveries supply the impetus for abundant creative expression.

Reflective Practices

The term reflective practice came about in the 1980's based on work by Donald Schön (1983, 1987). He focused on educators and their ability to teach in a way where they expose their own thinking and methods while teaching in order for students to learn by active observation and participation. It refers to a teacher modeling how they came to the perspective they hold, while encouraging their students to do the same in order to bring about a deeper, more integrated learning experience. In this manner, the classroom becomes a living experiment where both teacher and students evaluate their own engagement with each other, their own self, and the subject matter. It is this same type of assessment and hands-on learning that occurs throughout the creative process, yet the players are narrowed down to mainly just the artist. In this sense, it is important to nurture your own self-reflective thinking in regards to yourself, your process, blocks to your process and your subject matter in order to more fully access your creative channel from within.

Reflecting on Self-Awareness

As stated at the beginning of this chapter, life is in a continual state of flux. As we move through our lives, change occurs, whether we are ready for it or not. Instead of being surprised by change, perhaps it is possible to welcome it by nurturing stability from within. In this manner, we might be able to keep our creativity flowing more steadily. In her book, Moving Into Balance: Creating Your Personal Pathway, Barbara Larrivee (1996) presents a cyclical process for inviting change into your life. “Knowing the difference between what we can change and what we have to learn accept arms us with a new understanding of who we are and where we’re going” (1996, 45). It is a blend of two different viewpoints of change: making things happen and allowing things to happen on their own. She suggests a process that combines taking charge and letting go. The basis for finding and sustaining this balance is through self-inquiry.

Like White and Epston’s (1990) concept of re-storying, Larrivee suggests that “meaningful understanding comes about by fusing insights gathered with multiple representations of reality” (33). Larrivee ascribes self-examination as a means of re-framing to gain new perspectives. Engaging with others in active listening is one tool she suggests for self-reflection. By using empathy, and listening beyond the spoken word, we not only reflect back to the speaker some aspect of him or her self, but we reflect back to us some aspect of our self. Active participation in self-reflection leads to changes in perceptions. As perceptions start to shift and change, new obstacles may arise, thus giving momentum for further self-inquiry, shifting and active change.

Larrivee describes self-reflection as “the ability to simultaneously look at what’s happening without judgment while recognizing that the meaning that we attribute to it is only our interpretation filtered through our cumulative experience” (50). It means looking within for

answers rather than without and connecting to your feelings rather than splitting from them. It means knowing yourself inside out. Through examination, assessment and re-framing of our core beliefs, we insure that our thoughts will connect to our actions. “When we return to ourselves, we begin to penetrate the meaning of our own existence” (49). Larrivee describes the many factors that contribute to our response to a situation or as White and Epston (1990) suggested, the meaning we apply. She sees these factors as layers or filters that one moves through when responding to a situation. Included are: past experience, beliefs, assumptions and expectations, feelings and mood, personal agendas and aspirations. (*See figure 1*) (61). These screens “result in different perceptions of circumstances and events, leading to different interpretations, and subsequently to different responses” (62). Self-reflection of these stages can bring about more integrated and aware responses, as well as shifts in our perceptions.

Larrivee provides a number of self-reflective exercises related to each chapter and a number of exercises for other topics such as listening, tapping your inner wisdom, and on-going self-assessment. She even provides a set of questions that correspond to the mind-body connection, where pain in the body is a signal that something is not right inside. The following are some of the questions she suggests for self-inquiry.

- What am I feeling?
- Is there something I am afraid of?
- Am I acting out of fear?
- Is there something I need to say to someone?
- What message is *my* behavior communicating?
- What assumptions am I making about another person’s actions?
- Did I ask for what I wanted?
- What can *I* do?
- Are there other choices I haven’t acknowledged?
- What am I doing? Is it getting me what I want? If not, what is it getting me?
- What am I doing that’s not working? (1996, 161-162)

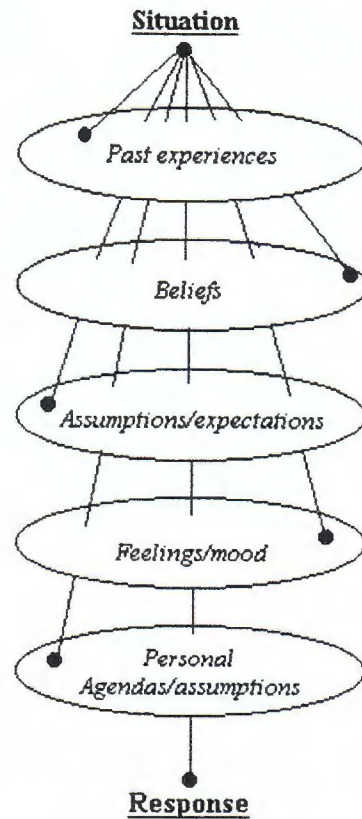


Figure 1

When faced with a complicated life circumstance or a block in your own work, questions such as these may help you to see alternatives for getting life moving in the direction you want. The more aligned an artist can be with the self, the more their self-expression will flow.

Larrivee believes that the “key to self-fulfillment is for our actions to reflect our core beliefs” (52). For the artist, this means the difference between satisfying engagement in their work or not. As stated in chapter 3, Kolodny (1999) corroborated this explaining if an artist is not true to the self, their creativity will also be limited. The deeper an artist is willing to travel inside, the richer their experience. This will be reflected in their creative work.

Reflecting on the Mind-Body Connection

Back Talk: Teaching Lost Selves to Speak is Joan Weimer's (1994) account of her life before, during and after she developed a debilitating back problem. Both a writer and English professor, Weimer examines how her harried engagement in her own life led to the injury and how the injury stopped her creative expression through writing, teaching and lecturing as well as strained her personal life. Amongst describing the onset of the disability, the surgery and therapies used to correct the problem, she gives insight into her own mind-body connection and how the injury itself represented areas in her life that were not working well.

Through her therapeutic relationship with Dr. Hillevi Ruumet, Weimer learned to use various self-reflective tools to connect her mind to her body in order to heal on both levels. Ruumet, whose work was based in Jungian principles, taught Weimer to see her injury in active terms, asking her to describe the injury in terms of something *she* had done rather than something that had happened *to* her. This point of view was very revealing as it connected her thoughts, feelings, and perceptions to her body, something Weimer was not used to doing. The technique is seen through the following passages. Here, Weimer states the specific injury, then her interpretation of what it symbolized in her life.

- "I've snapped off the 5th lumbar vertebra in my spine." *You've disconnected parts of yourself.*
- "My detached vertebra didn't settle in one spot . . . it kept moving back and forth." *Just like you . . . teaching classes, forming committees, organizing demonstrations, giving talks, raising money, writing articles, leading delegations.*
- "So far, my spine is not accepting the bone graft." *You hate to accept help, even from yourself.*
- "Shreds of scar tissue . . . yank and tug and set off spasms in my legs." *You're still attached to that hyper-active life. That attachment is crippling you.* (1994, 223).

This technique is similar to one found in Progoff's Intensive Journal Program where participants are asked to dialogue with their own body. Progoff points out "while the

meaningful contents of our lives are expressed in our emotions, our aspirations, and our deep inner expressions, they are all carried in our body.” (1975, 154). Similar to the Steppingstones exercise referred to earlier, yet broader, the life of the body, meaning physical life experiences, is recorded in chronological segments. This base is used to develop a “conversation” with your body. The angle is slightly different from Ruumet’s technique, yet the goal of linking your body to your inner awareness is the same. As the mind-body connection is strengthened, deeper integration occurs within the individual.

Another tool Ruumet used to help Weimer heal was through dream work, where the gaps between the conscious and unconscious were lessened. Like in the tool for connecting mind to body, Ruumet suggested a different perspective in reviewing dreams. She had Weimer see every character in her dreams as herself instead of seeing them as apart from herself. She also encouraged Weimer to develop self-awareness in her dreams, a tool commonly referred to as lucid dreaming. This deepened Weimer’s insights into her inner self and allowed her to see connections in her life she had previously not been able to see.

At one time I kept a dream journal and developed my skill at lucid dreaming, which allowed me to connect more deeply with my subconscious. I found it excitingly fun and an extremely helpful tool in trying to figure out underlying meanings and insights into my own self and life. My dreams became very vivid and on average, I easily recalled four dreams per night. However, as my sleep problems increased throughout my injury and legal case, I had to stifle the skill I had gained. My dreams were replaced with nightmares of unbelievable proportions, their magnitude due to the awareness I had developed while dreaming. I believe my inability to consciously change these dreams while still asleep had to do with the intense unresolved issues that were manifesting through my subconscious.

Dream analysis is not new, however Dr. Helmut Moller has put a new spin on it by using it as a treatment for musicians. His research examines the dreams of music performers and composers to find underlying cause of physical-emotional ailments. While musicians come to Dr. Moller for a medical consultation regarding physical symptoms, he finds that “the classification for of symptoms in terms of traditional medical diagnosis often has little to do with the true cause” (2001, 4), and that “in their etiology, such symptoms are almost always ambiguous and under no circumstances should be understood as only as physical malfunctions” (6). Because of the difficulty in uncovering the underlying cause of a musician’s ailment, Dr. Moller finds that “the interpretation of dreams and their psychological-psychoanalytic interpretation can be an invaluable diagnostic help for better understanding the treatment of musicians” (6).

Like Moller with his clients, Ruumet assisted Joan Weimer in untangling the gummed-up strands of her life in order to heal and reclaim her creative passions. Through the use of self-reflective tools, Weimer was able to reconnect the parts of herself she had lost along the journey of her life. Through her injury and recovery she discovered that “[t]o become whole, we have to integrate the rejected parts of ourselves into consciousness” (1994). The body is the channel through which artists express their art, regardless of whether their craft is music, painting, sculpting, dancing, writing or some other expressive form. Your internal world is intrinsically aligned with your physical body. Whether through body dialoging or tapping into your dreams, the insights that can be gained through connecting with your own body are invaluable in freeing you to express your art.

Reflecting on Musical Imagination

Self-reflection does not just have to be about knowing your personal self; it can also be about knowing your musical self. Bruce Adolphe, on faculty at both Julliard and New York University, has found a way to take self-inquiry and apply it to enhancing your musical creativity and aural skills. In The Mind's Ear: Exercises for Improving the Musical Imagination for Performers, Listeners, and Composers Adolphe (1991) bases his musical exercises on those for fine tuning an actor's skill by connecting them to their emotions, memory and imagination. The main concept in his work regards using your imagination to hear sound inside of your own head. In order to develop this inner hearing, you must be self-reflective and connected to your inner self and feelings. "Hearing in silence is a great and useful skill for musicians, and it is also a stimulating and worthwhile exercise for anyone wishing to explore his inner life" (Adolphe 1991, 8).

Adolphe relies on his own memories as inspiration for his composing. His interest in memory and cognitive functioning led to the development of these exercises as a means for his students to create and sustain their own inspiration and enhance their lives as well as their creativity. Internal listening is the ability to know what a sound sounds like without actually hearing it. Applied to music, this means knowing what music sounds like without playing it. This encompasses such skills as knowing what a group of notes sound like, or a set of chords and a melody, or the specific tone and timbre of any instrument. These are the skills that allow a composer to compose without using an instrument. In arranging, one would want to develop their internal listening to include hearing single lines, duets, and sectionals, which would lead to hearing chord voicings and orchestration.

Adolphe's approach covers both the internal component (self-reflection) and the external (musical product) component of creativity. You would not be able to do these exercises if you were not able to engage in self-inquiry and self-assessment. At the same time, you also need to internalize sound, specifically music. "Practicing for six or more hours a day, as many musicians do, will not produce a mature performer if the musical inner life is not attended to. Strengthening the memory, imagination and inner ear can lead to more meaningful interpretations, more communicative performances, and even shave off a few hours of learning-by-rote" (3). Although you don't need to be a musician to carry out the earlier exercises, Adolphe presents more advanced challenges for those with a musical background.

Some of the exercises ask you to imagine particular sounds or to imagine a piece played by different people or with different feelings. Other exercises ask you to play your instrument from different perspectives, such as reciting a poem through an instrument or playing a piece as a particular musician would play it. Adolphe recognizes that his students "must engage their minds seriously and continually question whether they have done what they set out to do with each exercise" (11). The following are two of his exercises.

Hearing Voices

- Choose a short passage from a book, play, poem, or magazine.
- Hear it being read in the voice of someone you know.
- Hear clearly the qualities of the voice: the tone, the inflection, the vowels and consonants, the volume.
- Hear the same voice read the same passage with different emotions.
- Hear the person yell and whisper parts of the passage.
- Choose another person and try the exercise.
- Try to hear yourself reading it as someone else would hear you – do not speak out loud (12).

Prelude to Hearing Orchestration

- Hear a major scale in your mind.
- Hear it played very slowly on a trumpet.
- Hear it played on a muted trumpet.
- Hear the first four notes on a muted trumpet, and the last four on oboe.
- Hear each note of the scale played on a different instrument.
- Try this: trumpet, flute, clarinet, French horn, violin, oboe, cello, vibraphone.
- There is a big difference between reading this exercise and actually doing it. If you can really hear those instrumental colors sounding loudly in your head, playing the notes of a scale, you are ready for ‘hearing orchestration’ exercise (18).

Through his creative teaching, Adolphe models his own imagination. One exercise, “A Senseless Activity” (22), asks you to focus on your visual, olfactory and auditory skills. By paying such close attention you learn more about yourself and open yourself to a greater perceptual awareness.

The unique quality of these activities is that they engage you with yourself within a musical realm. Like some of the previous tools, they allow for new perceptions to occur and encourage connection to the self. In addition, they encourage musical creativity and imagination. All of these things help to spark your inspiration. “The love of music which originally motivated the student to choose an artistic life should never be forgotten during training and study. The love of one’s art is an aspect of technique” (5). This is what it means to be an artist. External technique is only part of the equation. Staying in tune with your inspiration is another.

Inside Advice

While the benefit of the previous tools were echoed by the musicians interviewed by both Boyd and McCutchan, they give other valuable insights and dispositions that help them move through their work. Trial and error was emphasized as a way of gaining new ideas. Hope to make mistakes as they can lead you in a new direction. In addition, working within a criterion

can bring about different results. Jazz drummer Peter Erskine refers to this concept. “Some of the best creativity comes from imposing a set of limits; for example, jazz music improvisation is the most cherished part of what we do” (cited by Boyd 1992, 251). However, sometimes musicians end up playing lick or recycling the same ideas and nothing new is born. In order to break this pattern, Erskine describes a teaching tool of guitarist John Abercrombie. “He’ll take a tune and only play half notes so that you can’t play what your hands know. You have to be very creative then because every note has to be a good choice” (251). This paradox can be difficult to accept, and quite a challenge, yet it is a technique used by many great musicians.

Besides setting criteria, some musicians suggest setting a structure. Creating a daily routine helps you to stay engaged in your craft on a regular basis. Composing even when you don’t feel like it helps to keep continuity. Some like setting up a specific time to engage in their creative work. Composer John Adam refers to his own routine.

... I am the sort for whom daily contact with my art is essential. For me, the creative act is not unlike being an athlete. If you’re in shape, things tend to flow, and if you’re out of shape, it takes some patience and effort to get back in. If I’ve been away traveling for two or three weeks, I can often have a difficult, stubborn time getting going again (cited by McCutchan 1999, 66).

In this same vein, you need to include time to set limits throughout your work. A list of rules or reminders could include things such as taking time for yourself, setting aside time to eat, stopping to rest regularly, or stopping when you know your body is over-strained. It also helps to set up a network of supportive people who are empathetic and supportive of the difficult work that you do. Teaching your partner about your creative process and your needs throughout can help relieve strain that can easily occur in close relationships.

Visual tools, such as drawing or diagramming your work also help as outlined by composer Dan Welcher.

To plot the symphony I made a graph, a time-line picture chart of all four of the movements showing major divisions, textures, keys, or key centers, where there's counterpoint and where there isn't, where there's rhythmic pulse and where there isn't. The graph also showed clock time. In the case of the big bang in the first movement, I allowed one minute from initial rumble to cataclysm. Coming down from the crescendo, I planned on taking two minutes to 'set up the world' (91).

This intricate planning is like seeing a piece in physical, three-dimensional terms. Although Welcher sets this structure, he also knows he may alter it as he composes. Some musicians rely on text, such as poetry, to structure their sound. Composer Eric Stokes used this tool.

Words can be a wonderful partner to the musical imagination. I'll fall in love with the words of a particular text and the idea those words can carry with them. The sounds of words can be wonderful stimuli to my melodic and rhythmic interests ... (6).

Another form of inspiration comes simply from listening to music, especially music outside of your regular listening, performing or composing style. Fresh ideas can spring from new stimulus, even when it non-music related. Doing anything outside of your norm can help infuse new energy to support further creative action.

One of the most important tools that many kept coming back to is the ability to question and self-reflect. Thinking about your process, your practice session or your composition all keep you engaged in your creative process even though you are not taking direct action. Indirect action leads to changes in your application. Nurturing your own self-inquiry helps you to reflect yourself more accurately in your actions as noted by composer William Bolcom. "You have to be true to your own space, and your history, and your own way of operating, and try to find out what that is, and try to work in some kind of harmony with it. You are who you are, not somebody else you might admire" (27). Composer Richard Danielpour also sees the importance of living out who you are.

The experience of writing music is akin to a waking dream, and we constantly seem to be involved in creating this dream as a means of coming into a deeper

reality, as a way of approaching the deepest parts of ourselves. This experience of the waking dream is for me one of the greatest mysteries, both in music and in life. If you write enough music, you begin to experience your life as being a waking dream. At that point, art is not just an imitation of life; it is a mirror (227).

These self-reflective internal elements are a necessary part of the creative process. They need to be supported and explored in order that our unique human qualities evolve. Just as the physical practice of your instrument leads to creative musicality, practice to get in touch with your internal self also leads to creative musicality. The point of being a musician is to express your self through sound and to share that part of yourself. Musical works and musical training that rely only on the external elements of music are missing the thing that gives music its meaning. It is vitally important to not only acknowledge and include this dimension of creativity within our educational and social structures, but also to embrace it and live it. In this way, the Muses can help us keep our creative flame ignited.

CHAPTER V: COMPOSING THE FUTURE

Certain aspects of the creative process are still cloaked in mystery despite decades of research to understand how it occurs. Theoretical inquiry still asks where talent comes from and questions its relation to creativity. Many concepts of what constitutes a creative act or product still coexist. Studies have compiled information to better understand numerous aspects of creativity, such as motivation, culture, personality traits, and intelligence. In the midst of this, lies my own belief that a deeper connection to the self enhances one's creative potential, a concept born out of my own experiences. Although it has not seemed to be a primary interest of many of the creative theorists, the references put forth demonstrate its relevance. When I started my synthesis, I did not yet see the relevance of this work to any other part of my life. Through the process of writing my synthesis, developing it, and reflecting upon it, interconnected changes have already come about showing that this synthesis is tied to more than my work in the CCT Program. In this chapter I describe three possible avenues for incorporating information about the internal aspects of creativity. As a step towards building a foundation for such incorporation, I present in the appendices the framework that underlies the evaluation of my own experience described in the first chapter, an evaluation that helped me identify the missing elements of my own engagement in music and inspired me to explore creativity in music further.

Creativity Seminars

As I began my synthesis, the thought had crossed my mind that I could construct a seminar of my work. The audience I had first thought of was student musicians. Surely there had to be some way to connect with colleges in the area and offer a workshop to music students. Yet because my synthesis was still in its inception, and ideas were hardly developed, I let go of the notion of putting my synthesis into another format. As ideas for my synthesis became more structured, I began to mention it occasionally to a handful of people at the college where I teach. It piqued enough interest that I was asked to participate in a Faculty Development project where the focus would be on creativity. As I became more solid in my work, my discussion with my co-workers did also, and finally I was asked to moderate and present at three Creativity Seminars in the spring semester of 2003.

Looking back at my own research, process and product, I see that there are a number of paths I could take for these seminars. This realization gives me some confidence that I will have enough information and experience “under my belt” so that I will feel comfortable with this challenge. For me, this truly is a challenge as it will be vastly different from anything I’ve done before. It is not my nature to take such a direct role; I like working behind the scenes, nudging things from underneath to help them take shape. After all, I am a bass player, not a saxophone player. And although I have performed numerous times, I have never performed to such an extent without my bass. While a small part of me is cringing at the thought of doing these seminars, a larger part is excited. I am sure that the latter is due to the work I’ve done in the CCT Program and for this synthesis.

I'm hoping these seminars will give me experience to draw upon for future seminars outside of the college where I work. They will be a good sounding board that will help me to develop a clear format for other presentations. In addition, I will be furthering my studies with Musicians' Wellness, Inc. in their Training Certification program. My original idea for taking their course was to support my synthesis, but I also realized that such certification was unique and might lead me to another avenue for application. The combination of this program along with the CCT Program, and my management, music and education backgrounds seems to put me in a singular position. The potential for change in both my inner and outer life has become greater because of all of these. Who knows where they may lead?

Music Education

Although I have been incorporating my CCT work in the course that I teach, I feel that the fruits are only just starting to show. My efforts to synthesize the CCT material in this final compilation seem to have coincided with a change in my teaching, a change that I am sure is not haphazard, but a direct result of the work that I have been engaged in. As I have come to realize through my own reflective efforts the pieces that were lacking in my own education, my approach to teaching has altered. My perspective of how to teach music is changing. Perhaps I am starting to develop my own voice in teaching. While I have always strived to be myself and present myself in my teaching, the aspects of myself that have become more integrated through my graduate work can now add a deeper layer to my engagement in my teaching.

Perhaps a Creativity Seminar can be geared not only toward students who want to access their own creativity, but also to teachers who want to discover new approaches for teaching

creativity to their students. This is a concept that has only come in recent months due to the difference I'm feeling in the classroom. It is something I feel less confident about developing because I still feel inexperienced in regards to teaching, yet the changes that have taken place have planted the seed. The acknowledgement and incorporation of the creative process within an educational structure could only help young artists in their quest to access and sustain their creative pursuits.

Performing Arts Medicine

Like my music education, my early health education also lacked information about how to connect with the inner self. The focus was on external, or physical, reconstruction. Yet the internal changes that occur throughout an injury must be addressed as well as the possibility that an injury may have internal roots. Without these acknowledgements, a full recovery, where one does not keep backsliding or have limited functioning, may be impossible. For those whose injuries have moved beyond the point of physical restoration, help needs to be available to deal with the loss, but also to rebuild the belief that one is still creative and whole despite the loss. Much has been accomplished in understanding and treating performance-related injuries, but more investigation is needed to include these aspects. Approaches that include the connection to the inner world need to be developed in order to insure an artist's re-entry into health and their creative field. Preventative measures also need to reflect the intricate link between the mind and the body.

Perhaps another contingency that could learn from the material in my synthesis are practitioners in this field. Perhaps they too need to be educated about the creative process. After

all, they often treat ailments that are a direct result from this process. What better way to more deeply understand an artist's unique disorder than through learning about the engagement that helps to produce such disorders? In this way, a more accurate diagnosis and treatment plan could be arrived at. If they were to reflect more clearly the issues that have brought the artist to ill health, then perhaps recovery would be more complete.

Fine Tuning Your Inner World

The creative process is a journey through your inner world, where sights along the way are channeled into a product and eventually shared with the outer world. Because it is a process that relies on self-perceptions, self-truths, beliefs and values, there must be a system in place in order to acquire, express and ultimately share this self-knowledge. Whether you are conscious of it or not, you engage in this system when you do creative work, yet this inner component is often overlooked when artistic pursuits are taught or creativity is examined.

By understanding the creative system in relation to the inner self, artists could develop strategies to maintain healthy engagement in their work. If artists are better prepared to cope with this aspect of creativity or to anticipate their own needs throughout their personal process, they will be better able to sustain a deeper creativity that more directly reflects their own voice. This does not mean to rid the self of problems and deep psychological issues that often manifest throughout the creative process, but to learn to coexist with them so they do not stop or inhibit your creativity. After all, they are your experiences and have led you to be the person you are today – the person you will end up sharing through your creative work. Understanding and supporting the link to your inner world will enhance your ability to nurture your own creative

spark. Developing a more complete view of your engagement in your own work will strengthen your ability to sustain your work.

If the word music truly does represent song with ties to divine inspiration and deep reflection, then enhancing those natural elements could only support its essence. Perhaps by establishing a deeper awareness of the self and incorporating this into our creative endeavors, we might greet the Muses more often and find a sustenance that keeps our creative spark ignited.

APPENDICES

Perseus Appears

Song of You - lyrics

Song of You

Midnight Red

The Simulated Survivor

Evaluation Framework

CD

Perseus Appears

Suzanne M. Clark

loose swing

$\text{♩} = 76$

Staff 1: $E\flat \text{maj} 7(\#11)$ $F \text{maj} 7(9)$ $E\flat \text{maj} 7(\#11)$ $D\flat \text{maj} 7(\#11)$ $C \text{maj} 7(\#11)$ $B\flat \text{maj} 7(\#11)$

Staff 2: $A \text{min} 7(9)$ $B\flat \text{maj} 7(\#11)$ $A \text{min} 7(9)$ $E\flat \text{maj} 7(\#11)$

Staff 3: $D 7(9)$ $G \text{min} 7$ $C 7$ $F \text{maj} 7(9)$ $E\flat \text{maj} 7(\#11)$ $F \text{maj} 7(9)$

Staff 4: $E -7(\flat 5)$ $A 7(\flat 9)$ $D \text{min} 7(9)$ $D\flat 7(\#11)$

Staff 5: $C \text{min} 7$ $F 7$ $B\flat \text{maj} 7(9)$ $B -7(\flat 5)$ $E 7(\flat 9)$

Staff 6: $A \text{min} 7(9)$ $B\flat \text{maj} 7(\#11)$ $A \text{min} 7(9)$ $E\flat \text{maj} 7(\#11)$

Staff 7: $D 7(9)$ $G \text{min} 7$ $C 7$ $F \text{maj} 7(9)$ Coda last time $E\flat \text{maj} 7(\#11)$ $F \text{maj} 7(9)$

Staff 8: $E\flat \text{maj} 7(\#11)$ $D\flat \text{maj} 7(\#11)$ $C \text{maj} 7(\#11)$ $B\flat \text{maj} 7(\#11)$ $A \text{min} 7(9)$ $A\flat \text{maj} 7(\#11)$

Coda

Song of You – lyrics © 2002
By: Suzanne M. Clark

Long ago on a night in June,
We gently swirled to a lovely tune.
Nestled high in the bright, starry sky
Glimmered the moon.

Roses swayed as we danced 'till two.
Our timid words whispered "I love you."
Then we kissed in the sweet, perfumed mist
And my heart sang a Song of You.

Swept in a stream of unending dreams,
We glided on through the summer days.
But then fall arrived and our stream had run dry,
And the dreams fell beneath rippling waves.

Autumn speaks with an air so cool.
I still dance on, but my steps you rule.
You have gone, but my heart still sings on.
I can't seem to forget, our sad vignette,
My wistful Song of You.

Song of You

Song of You - 1

SMClark

Ballad

$\text{♩} = 72$

$D_{\text{min}}^{7\flat 5}$ $G7(\flat 9)$ C_{min}^7 $B7(\flat 9)$ B_{min}^7 E_{\flat}^7 $A_{\flat}^{\text{maj}7}$ B_{\flat}^{-7} C^{-7} $D_{\flat}^{\text{maj}7}$

Long a-go, on a night in June, we gent-ly swirled to a love - ly tune.

$D_{\text{min}}^{7\flat 5}$ $G7(\flat 9)$ $C_{\text{min}}^{7\flat 5}$ $F7(\flat 9)$ $B_{\flat}^{+\text{ma}7}$ $E_{\text{min}}^{7\flat 5}$ $A7(\flat 9)$

Nest - led high in a bright star-ry sky, glim-mered the moon.

$D_{\text{min}}^{7\flat 5}$ $G7(\flat 9)$ C_{min}^7 $B7(\flat 9)$ B_{min}^7 E_{\flat}^7 $A_{\flat}^{\text{maj}7}$ B_{\flat}^{-7} C^{-7} $D_{\flat}^{\text{maj}7}$

Ros-es swayed as we danced 'till two. Our tim-id words whis-pered "I love you".

$D_{\text{min}}^{7\flat 5}$ $G7(\flat 9)$ $C_{\text{min}}^{7\flat 5}$ $F7(\flat 9)$ B_{min}^7 E_{\flat}^7 A_{\flat}^6 $D_{\text{min}}^7 G^7$

Then we kissed in the sweet, per-fumed mist, and my heart sang a song of you.

C^6 D_{min}^7 E_{min}^7 F^7 E_{min}^7 $A7(\flat 9)$ $D^{-7}(\flat 5)$ $G7(\flat 9)$

Swept in a stream of un- end-ing dreams, we glid-ed on through the sum - mer days. But

F_{min}^7 B_{\flat}^7 $E_{\flat}^{\text{maj}7}$ $C7(\flat 9)$ F_{min}^7 B_{\flat}^7 $E_{\text{min}}^{7\flat 5}$ $A7(\flat 9)$

when fall or-tired our stream had run dry, and the dreams fell be-neath rip-pling waves.

$D_{\min} 7^{\flat 5}$ $G 7(\flat 9)$ $C_{\min} 7$ $B 7(\overset{\#11}{9})$ $B^{\flat} \min 7$ $E^{\flat} 7$ $A^{\flat} \text{maj} 7$ $B^{\flat -7}$ C^{-7} $D^{\flat} \text{maj} 7$

Au-tumn speaks with an air so cool, I still dance on, but my steps you rule.

$D_{\min} 7^{\flat 5}$ $G 7(\flat 9)$ $C_{\min} 7^{\flat 5}$ $F 7(\overset{\flat 13}{\flat 9})$ $B^{\flat} \min 7$ $E^{\flat} 7$ $E_{\min} 7$ $A 7$

You have gone, yet my heart will sing on. I can't seem to for-get our sad vi-gnette,

$B^{\flat} \min 7$ $A \text{maj} 7(\overset{\#11}{9})$ $A^{\flat} 6_9$

my wist-ful song of you.

Midnight Red

Suzanne M. Clark

bossa

♩=152

Dmin7(9) Ebmaj7(^{#11}9) Dmin7(9) Ebmaj7(^{#11}9) 2nd time

Dmin7(9) Cmin7(9) Dmin7(9) Cmin7(9)

Gmin7(9) E7(^{b13}9) Amin7(9) Ab7(^{#11}9)

Gmin7(9) Fmin7(9) Gmin7(9) Ab7(^{#11}9)

A-7(b5) D7(^{b13}9) Dbmaj7(^{#11}9)

Cmin7(9) Gmin7(9) Amin7(9) D7(^{b13}9) Ebmaj7(^{#11}9)

♩ Coda Dmin7(9) Ebmaj7(^{#11}9) Dmin7(9) Ebmaj7(^{#11}9) 2nd time

Cmin7(9) Gmin7(9) Amin7(9) D7(^{b13}9) Ebmaj7(^{#11}9) Dmin7(9)

The Simulated Survivor

© 2002

By: Suzanne M. Clark

Shafts of bright sunlight penetrated my heavy eyelids. Distant voices drew closer, tickling my ears. Sleep was falling away from my mind. I lifted my head, squinting to see. Instead of my bay window with mauve drapes, I saw bars. Vertical bars, very close together. I shook my head, blinked and stretched my legs and arms, pushing myself up off the floor.

Scrambling forward in a daze, my hands reached out haphazardly grabbing at the steel rods. I was in a cell, a cage, a prison. What the hell was going on?

Nearby stood a small group of people: a man, a woman, two girls and a boy. My pounding heart threw itself against the wall of my chest, drowning out their voices. I tried to speak, moving my mouth slowly and determinedly, but not a word escaped. I waved my arms furiously, trying to get their attention. I did.

They moved closer, pointing and whispering to each other. Finally, my lungs heaved out a few syllables. "What is this place?" My voice was raspy, deep. They backed away, motioning to a sign next to my cage. "No," I croaked. "Don't leave." They left.

Bending my head sideways, I tried to read the sign next to me. Letters faded in and out of the morning glare. Squinting, my eyes adjusted, combining the thick, black characters to read, "The Simulated Survivor-A New Addition". It made no sense.

A voice interrupted my racing mind. "Penny for your thoughts."

To my right, outside the cage, stood a person entirely cloaked in a hooded sable robe. No hands or feet showed and the facial opening was so dark, I could see nothing. A shiver ran up my spine.

"Who are you? Where am I? What am I doing here?"

The creature held up an arm to halt my barrage of questions. Its voice was soft, feminine. "You are in your cage in a zoo and I am your own private zoo keeper."

I knew it was insane. "You're nuts. I'm supposed to be at work. How did I get here?"

In a balanced, almost floating motion, my keeper edged across the front of my cage.

"No, you're supposed to be here now. It was time." She stopped. "And as for how you got here . . . that's for you to discover."

The dark shape continued on its path, disappearing in the shadows of the trees next to my cage. "Wait! Come back!" My mouth tightened.

Falling to my knees, I leaned my head against the cold, metal bars that separated me from the outside world. None of it made any sense. Just the other night, I was sitting at home, with Gary, immersed in a deep, heated discussion about where our relationship was going, or rather, not going.

"Hey there, Kate. How goes it?" It sounded like Gary's voice "Hey knucklehead, over here." There it was again.

I looked up through the bars and there stood Gary, holding a red and white paper bag. Reaching his hand in, he pulled out a clump of white and proceeded to fill his mouth with popcorn.

"What's up?" he asked in a muffled tone. His fingers dug steadily, transporting the puffy pieces of corn to his stretched cheeks. His figure was poised, about five feet away, on the other side of the bars.

Scrambling to stand, I felt my heart jump. "Gary! Boy, am I glad to see you. You've gotta get me out of here." Every nerve end in my body tingled with anticipation. "Quick, look around for a key or something."

He munched and crunched, looking away. "Um, I don't know what you're talking about." He motioned behind him. "I was just taking a walk and I saw you over here." He looked into my eyes. "You looked a little lonely." A few more cooked kernels popped into his mouth.

Moving closer to him, I stuck my face through the bars of my cage and grimaced. "Don't you think it's weird that I'm in a cage in a zoo and that maybe you should help me get out?" I gently klunked myself on the side of my head with my knuckles and widened my eyes. "Hello? Is anyone in there? What part of this," I motioned to my enclosed surroundings, "don't you understand?"

He cast his eyes toward my sign, his mouth straight. "Uh, look Kate, I know things didn't work out like we expected . . . you know, I can't help it if my feelings changed." He looked up defiantly. ". . . But I'm not the one who put you in there."

My face drained and I felt dizzy. "You mean you're not going to help me get out of here? You're just going to leave?" I was speechless.

He crumpled the paper bag and tossed it into a barrel. "Look, I'm sorry it ended up like this, but what could I have done to make it different?" His voice trailed off.

My hands gripped the bars, my teeth clenched. "Well, you could have tried to grow up sooner and figured out who you were and what you wanted before we met and then . . . "

" . . . And then you probably wouldn't have been interested in me," he finished. "Think about that Kate. You were part of it too, you know."

His foot played with a piece of fallen popcorn. "It wasn't on purpose you know. We did the best we could." He picked up the tidbit and flicked it over to a squirrel cautiously eyeing the morsel from a safe distance. "Look, I gotta go. See you sometime, huh?" He was gone.

A gentle breeze sent a few candy wrappers in my direction. They skipped and scurried haphazardly along the pebbled path outside my cage.

A sudden movement interrupted my gaze, catching my eye. It was my zookeeper. She spoke before I had a chance to. "It's sad, isn't it? Painful." Her voice was soft, sympathetic. "Confusing," she added.

Her dark figure stood amongst the shadows of the trees that loomed above my cage. I moved closer to her, peering at her faceless appearance. "Look, I don't know who you are, but . . ."

She interrupted. "I'm your zoo keeper."

My eyes narrowed. "Didn't anyone ever teach you to not interrupt? I never interrupted, you know . . ."

"Maybe you should have."

Her impertinence stopped me for a moment before I finished. " . . . and I listen when people speak to me."

The leaves above us shook gently in a light breath of air. "Maybe sometimes you shouldn't," she threw in.

Her sincerity struck me. "Look, I need to get out of here, I'm supposed to be at work. I'm sure it's all a mistake . . ."

"No," she stated. "No, it's no mistake. You're here until further notice."

My temperature started to rise. I looked away. "You know, you remind me of my family. It took me years to get them to listen to me, and still, I sometimes think they don't hear me."

My eyes crept up to my keeper. Instead, my family stood before me, their voices joining in to greet me. "Hi Kate," they chimed.

I blinked. People sure came and went quickly in this zoo. "Boy am I glad to see you guys. I . . ."

My sister intervened. "Is that where you sleep?" she asked, pointing to the pile of hay, wrinkling her nose some.

A male voice added, "At least the trees help block out the sun."

"Yes, the shade probably helps a lot on hot days. You know how Kate doesn't like being out in the sun too long!"

Like a fine tuned quartet performing an intricately timed etude, they laughed, chuckled and teased playfully, teetering on the edge. My edge. Amidst their chatter, I tried to get their attention. "Hey you guys, I wonder if you could help find a key and . . ."

Before the words could complete their journey, my brother taunted, "Now, how would we know where to find the key? It's your cage isn't it?"

My other brother took out his camera, a gleeful grin covering his face. "Get over to your left a bit, sis. I want a picture to remember you by."

"Oh come on you guys, this really isn't funny . . ."

A thunderous boom stopped me in my tracks. "Kate! You do what your brother says. Now!" It was dad. I quietly inched over to my left. This was crazy.

A click and a bright flash told me it was over. My father smiled. "That's good. We've got to get going now, so take care of yourself. We'll try to come back soon." They glided away.

My stomach felt queasy and my head hurt. Family negotiations. The threads that ran throughout our lives connected us in ways in which we were not even aware . . .

"What a jolly bunch. Jokesters, they are!" It was my keeper. "Hardly let you get a word in though. Why didn't you just speak up?"

I felt beaten, weak. "I don't know. I guess I still I don't know how to get them to listen." A bird glided close to the top of my cage. "It's no wonder I was always so quiet. They never let me say anything."

"Perhaps you shouldn't have waited for their permission."

She was starting to annoy me. "Look, I got through all of those years whether or not I spoke or was heard." A speck of defiance flashed from my eyes. "And I survived it, didn't I? I'm here, aren't I?"

My keeper glanced at my sign and motioned to my cage. "Yes, you are, but you know, a voice from where you are may never be heard."

A bell chimed. A bright gold bicycle with a sparkly banana-seat and long handlebars with streamers rolled up to me. On it was Karen Grayson. I hadn't seen her in twenty years. She wore purple bell-bottoms with metal clasps around the ankles to keep them from catching in

the colorful plastic-coated spokes. A matching Beatles' tee shirt from "A Hard Day's Night" rounded off her outfit.

"Hey," I called out. "That's my bike. And those are my favorite pants and my favorite tee shirt."

Karen smiled sweetly. "No, Kate, they *used* to be yours." She rode in a circle, ringing the bell. "They're mine now. I don't think you'll be needing them in there."

It was preposterous. I glared at her. "You always copied me, no matter what I did. For the seventh grade dance, you went out and bought the exact same dress I had shown you earlier at my house, and then you wore it to the dance and told everybody that I copied you." I tightened my fists.

She laughed lightly. "Oh yes, I almost forgot about that! It was such a lovely dress."

"You even copied my homework and got me in trouble for it." My eyes widened. "And then, you cut your hair, started wearing make-up, and dumped me for the popular girls! You know Karen, that was really cheap. I thought you were my friend."

She drew towards me. "I *was* your friend and then I decided *not* to be your friend. It's not a crime, you know." She brushed a loose strand of hair from her face. "You should've said something back then. Can't do anything about it now."

I was seething. "You tricked me, caught me in your little trap, pretending to be my friend!"

She glanced at my new prison. "I didn't trick you or trap you." She swung around on her seat. My seat. "Besides, you seem to forget - I was just a kid too." She rode off on my bike, jingling my bell, wearing my favorite outfit.

Behind her diminishing figure, I saw a man in the distance. Clothed in a gray trench coat, he was rather heavy set, with thinning hair. He zig-zagged through the sparse crowd, grinning and holding up a jar for all to see. My zookeeper spoke. "That one looks a little strange."

For some reason, I found his movements mesmerizing. "Yes," I agreed. A hazy cloud settled in my brain. "He looks familiar, I think."

The man got closer and closer. The cloud disappeared. "My God," I murmured. "That's my music teacher! He's the guy who fucked me when I was in high school!" I was dumbfounded.

"Ah, Kate," he said as he neared my cell, "You've grown up into such a lovely young woman." He winked, smiling a full, fat grin.

"You disgusting pig. You thought you could get away with it . . ."

Smirking, he cut me off. "I did get away with it Kate. You were such a good student. Straight A's usually, although your work always left one wanting." Gingerly, he hid the jar behind his back, keeping it from my view.

"What do you have back there?" Suspicion hovered about my words.

His face was straight, his eyes daring me onward. "A souvenir," he said slowly, carefully watching my response.

I stretched to each side, trying to see what he held, unconsciously following his lead. "A souvenir from what?"

He smiled victoriously. "A souvenir from our time together." His aged hand slowly crept out from behind his back. The jar was filled with water and something I didn't recognize. "It's your vagina," he announced.

My body froze and my heart pounded. I leaned closer and . . . he was telling the truth. I pressed my knees together, my thighs instinctively contracting, and hunched over a bit. My mind crumbled. My heart sank. "How is that possible . . .?"

"You never took it back, Kate, after you gave it to me." He laughed. "And I've had it ever since." He rubbed the jar greedily.

A small piece of dignity surged up in me. My voice was a hollow whisper. "I never gave it to you. You just decided you wanted it and then stole it."

He shrugged his shoulders. "Think of it how you like. It's still mine." He held the jar up in the sunlight and smiled.

Gripping the bars to steady my wavering mind, my insides crumbled as I attempted to ask what I had always wanted to know. "How could you carry on like you were a friend, someone I could trust and count on when everything was such a mess and then gone on and . . .?" The burning question extinguished itself before all the words could escape.

His cool gray eyes tried to stare me down. "I was always exactly who I am. Don't you remember what I told you? 'A man simply cannot conceal himself.' Where were you looking, Kate?" He raised the jar as if it were a party drink. "See you 'round."

As he wandered away, I sank down to the floor of my cage. Tears ran from my eyes. I was trapped and I didn't know how to get out.

"Kate," a soft voice called. "Kate, turn around. Look at me."

Fully expecting to see my keeper, my mouth dropped open when I saw my mother. She was bathed in a radiant, gold light that flickered and shimmered. Her image floated above the walkway outside of my cage. Slowly, I climbed to my feet, unable to take my eyes from her brilliant appearance. A wave of want engulfed me.

"How can you . . . you're supposed to be dead," I gasped. I reached my arm through the bars, her luminance bouncing off my skin.

In amongst the golden light, threads of pinks, magentas and violets swirled in a musical dance. Her calm face looked puzzled. "I thought if I came to you like this," she motioned to her buoyant, vibrant image, ". . .that you would know I was an angel." Although my face was filled with wonder, I knew a trace of disbelief passed across it. She put a wispy hand on her hip. "You know, Kate, where I come from, angels don't have wings. We just flit around as it suits us."

My lips were chilled. "What are you doing here? Are you going to throw the past in my face and then take off like everybody else has?" My jaw stiffened. "Of course you've already done that once. The second time should be a breeze."

She moved closer, her voice soft. "It was time for me to go, just as one day it will be time for you to go." I forced the lumpy truth back down into my throat.

The pink and purple hues melted into oranges and yellows. They reached out to me, calling to me, warming my heart and melting my rough edges. "Kate, the reason I'm here is this." She held out her shimmering hand. A ball of spinning, blazing white light darted up from her palm and hung suspended in the air. It almost hurt to look at it. "It's yours, Kate. It's your soul."

My mouth fell open, filling my lungs with cool, dense air. I could barely breathe.

"When I left, you gave this to me." Her cheeks blushed faintly. "I've kept it for you long enough. It's time to take it back. Before it's too late."

My mouth gaping, my fingers clenched around the steel bars, I stood and just stared. She hesitated. "You do want it back, don't you?" My dangling head somehow managed to nod in an affirmative.

She laughed lightly, causing a whirlpool of sparkling colors of all hues and shades to blink rapidly in and out. "I thought you would." She winked and started to fade.

Her lingering departure lured my mind out of its reverie. "Wait! You can't leave with it. How do I get it back?"

She was barely a film of glittering light and washed-out color, her misty palm drawn out before me. "It's yours to take, Kate. It always was."

As she blinked into oblivion, I lunged at the twinkling glow above her hand, stretching and forcing my arm between the rigid, steel bars. My fingertips brushed the edge of my soul, filling me with a tingling warmth and drawing me into a rushing vortex of silent infinity. A dark figure appeared before me, burning light engulfing both of us. It was my keeper. She raised her hands to throw off her dark cape, revealing her identity. It was me.

Together, we reached forward, each of us stepping into the other. A bright flash erupted around us. The vortex fell apart and the silence broke.

The sun shone through my empty cage, casting long shadows on the walkway at my feet. I held out my hands and arms, peering at them, and then felt my legs and my middle. They were mine, alright! I took a step toward the sign in front of my cage. Pieces fell to the ground as I stomped on it, pulling and ripping it apart and a sense of sheer joy filled my newly discovered soul!

In the distance, I heard a chiming bell. Squinting, I saw a shiny gold bike riding by the monkeys. Nearby, my family stood, feeding peanuts to the elephants. Gary was off talking to the doves. And a gray blob darted in and out of the sparse crowd.

My hand flew up to my forehead. "Well, first things first," I mumbled, trotting in his direction. As I broke into a run, I called, "Hey, don't let that man with the jar get away!"

Evaluation of Four Areas: Experience One

EXPERIENCE: Physical Difficulties in Performance

DISCOVERED: Injuries are common

Performing Arts Medicine

Prevent/manage injuries

One form of treatment is not enough

MISSING ELEMENTS: Internal vs. external (physical) loss:

Loss of health

Loss of career

Loss of finances

Loss of creative outlet

Loss of independence

Evaluation of Four Areas: Experience Two

EXPERIENCE: Unresolved Negative Experiences

DISCOVERED: Trauma commonly found in artists

Deeper understanding of the mind-body connection

Stress from unresolved issues can affect health

Physical ailments may not heal if the “mind”
counterpart is not addressed

MISSING ELEMENTS: Unresolved issues can inhibit the creative process

The creative process can stir up unresolved
experiences

Evaluation of Four Areas: Experience Three

EXPERIENCE: Critical and Creative Thinking Program

DISCOVERED: Thinking about thinking

Reflective Practice as a known and applied concept

Insight into my blocks to engagement in the
field of education and music

MISSING ELEMENTS: Application CCT skills to music and emotive expression

Evaluation of Four Areas: Experience Four

EXPERIENCE: Engagement with Students and Co-workers

DISCOVERED: Misconception of creativity and creative process

That music skills alone are not enough for
creative musical engagement was reinforced

Modeling reflective elements of the creative
process increases students' abilities to be creative

MISSING ELEMENTS: Room to explore creativity and the creative process

Internal, reflective aspects of the creative process

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