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Could Pretending Be a Vehicle to Other Dimensions?

Marlana Lytehaause, MSW, DCH

Abstract

With a childhood seemingly tailor-made to highlight and strengthen the aspects of imagination that tend to fade with the process of becoming adults, Marlana explores how imagination can become an intentional tool in our daily lives. Discover the simplicity of connecting with pets, loved ones who have passed over and even Angels.

Key words: imagination, pretending, imagery, other dimensions, angels, blindness

My journey

When I was about four-years old I didn't know I was blind yet. I remember walking down to the river with my family to swim. We had to walk down a trail where I had never been before. They were talking among themselves, and I was walking in front of them. I stopped and felt terrified because I was standing at the edge of a cliff looking far down into the valley at the trees.

My mom came up behind me and became impatient and asked me what was wrong and why had I stopped so suddenly and she nudged me to go ahead. I was so scared and confused. Why would she want me to go over the cliff like that? She pushed me again and I stumbled forward, sure I was going to fall hundreds of feet, but I didn't. There was no cliff at all.

As an adult I grew to understand that what I had seen that day was a bunch of twigs growing up out of the rocky soil, not trees at all. The soil was light in color and the twigs were dark, like tiny trees poking up between the small rocks in the path. I continue to this day having many more experiences similar to this one. I have learned to trust my other senses over and above what my eyes are telling me.

I was born with cataracts. After about a dozen surgeries, my vision is 20/400. I compensate so much I actually don't know what I see and what I think I see. I see much better when the light is

coming from behind me than when it is in front of me. I also see better when there is a contrast of some kind. I have no depth perception at all.

My mother is also legally blind. She sees about half as much as I do. She was also born with cataracts. This rare genetic disorder has affected about forty of our extended family members. , I believe our experiences of our visual worlds may be a powerful factor in how we came to value our imaginations so highly.

I grew up listening to and telling wild stories we made up as a family. Imagination was valued and fun, and entertained us for hours at a time. My mother and I were, and are still, the most frequent storytellers. My brother would sometimes chime in with us and throw the story in an entirely different direction. My father would usually be in another room watching television or reading the paper. Though he didn't understand or participate in our imagination games, he seemed to enjoy hearing us laughing hysterically. We not only told stories, we changed traditional fairy tales to create new characters and new endings. Eventually we even learned to "talk backwards" by switching around the leading consonants of two words, creating hilarious new words, while continuing to make up a new fairy tale. For example, Peter Rabbit becomes Reter Pabbit.

We even played traditional games with our own rules that we would change whenever we felt like it, amid tidal waves of laughter. All of this imaginative play was my normal way of being. I now understand that with that natural style of educating my imagination, I learned to create and flow with an easy sense of awareness that since my imagination belongs to me, then I get to create my world the way I like it to be.

I continued to add to this natural education, with a formal education by way of a Masters in Social Work, which focused on various techniques in psychotherapy, and a Doctorate in Clinical Hypnotherapy, which is geared toward a deeper understanding and practice of working in the unconscious realms. Due to the richness of this educational combination, I gained a much greater understanding of the connections between imagination and the unconscious. I am still fascinated with symbolism and dreams and how our waking mind speaks to us in these same ways, when we learn how to listen to its creative and inventive messages.

Example:

Have you ever gotten seemingly "out of the blue" urges to open your kitchen cupboards and pull out all the dishes and just break them everywhere?

Maybe you even saw images of throwing open your closets and pulling out all of your clothes and ripping them to shreds.

Did you ever get a seemingly random impulse to just ram the driver in front of you because he is going too slow?

Yet, such impulses may be so out of character for you, that, you would never actually do something like that. However, these thoughts, visions and/or feelings, may be clues to what's going on below your awareness. If you were to actually carry out any of those ideas, what emotion might you guess would be being expressed? My guess would be that anger of some sort is floating around in your thoughts and feelings. Such daytime experiences might be very similar to dreams you might find yourself telling someone the next morning.

What a powerful opportunity such experiences offer us for understanding our emotional needs more clearly. The more we are able to grasp symbolism and tune in to our inner world, the more information we have and the more ability we will have to shape our worlds to be a more comfortable space in which we truly want to live.

As I worked with clients who had been deeply traumatized and needed to recover repressed memories as a way to heal, I soon recognized the strong similarities between their dreams and intentionally working in their unconscious world. I found that with some coaching, many clients could learn how to communicate with their unconscious mind using inner imagery similar to intentional dreaming.

Example:

Let's say a client has come in with a fear of dogs due to having been attacked by a large dog as a toddler. The first time this client recounts her story she begins to tremble and cries as she remembers her experience. I then guide her in using her imagination to shift her adult responses to her memories of that experience. Over several sessions she learns how to comfort her little inner toddler by using her inner senses to experience herself at the age when she was attacked by the dog. She uses her imagination to watch and keep her inner toddler safe, picturing that she is playing with toys, then small animals, small dogs, and then larger dogs – until she eventually becomes comfortable in her imagination with the larger dogs. This technique is what I call intentional imagination.

My journey took me further inward, to the realms of energy work and explorations of subtle energies. These are important aspects of our inner being and also link us with other beings. These inner worlds are difficult to explain with our current language.

As I connected more solidly with these new awarenesses of the power of imagination, I began to remember that even as a teen, my mom and I would train our dogs and show them in obedience trials, speaking to them telepathically. At that time, I wondered how this communication was actually happening. I realized that I was physically staring at my dog as I was commanding her to sit or lie down for the specified time, so I may have unconsciously been giving her a subtle, body-language signal.

I started exploring this telepathy more carefully with my dogs. I would stare at them, and think "sit" until they did it, and then I would think "down" until they did that, with no verbal cues or any outward motion. The dogs took longer than when I used verbal commands, hand gestures or body-language signals and they seemed to be less sure of themselves. However, the results were enough for me to know something was happening at a level beyond the physical senses.

As I was remembering these little experiments after opening to energy aspects of imagination, I began to analyze my internal work with the benefit of my higher education. I quickly realized that I was hearing my own voice giving the command in my head, and I was imagining seeing my dog follow through with that command over and over until she did it.

I knew I was onto something. However, as a mainstream psychotherapist, I was hesitant to delve into a realm that had so little science behind it. Even so, I began to tell myself things like, "It's ok to be different than others." Because I discovered that as I had grown up I had set aside my imagination to some degree, though not completely, because I still cherished and loved it within myself. Yet I also knew that many people didn't appreciate imagination nearly as much as I did, so I tried to hide it for many years.

As I continued to give myself permission to open up and think “crazy” or “think outside the box,” I realized I was beginning to get information that was beyond my five senses.

Example:

I will tell you a story to illustrate how I began to realize that my imagination was sometimes filling in the blanks for me where my physical eyes couldn't see what was going on. I didn't know this phenomenon was happening until I was around 45 years old. I was with my business partner, visiting a man who happened to be an energy healer that neither of us had ever met. As we were introduced, we shook his hand, talked with him a few minutes and then had to leave for lunch, agreeing to meet again later that evening.

As we were driving to get our lunch, my partner asked me what I thought of the healer we had just met. I was reluctant to answer, since I had just met him and really had nothing to go on except a handshake and a brief “hello.” My partner was persistent and asked again what my impressions were of this healer. With an exasperated sigh I said, “I don't know. He was ok, short, dark complexion, wore a turban like he was from India, I'm guessing since he spoke with an accent, and seemed quiet and peaceful. I'm hungry, can't we just eat?”

My partner stared at me a moment and said, “He was not wearing a turban, he didn't have an accent and he had very pale skin.” I was stunned; I frankly didn't believe my partner. I just mumbled something about being glad we were going to see him again and how hungry I was.

We did see him again that evening. He was an American man, with no accent, with black hair, no turban and very pale skin. He said that when he does his healing work he channels an Indian healer, and had just finished a session right before we met him that morning. I concluded that I must have been seeing the being that he channeled rather than his physical person.

Needless to say, I pondered long and hard about events like this that continued to occur in my life. I decided that if I was seeing things that were real, and they must be real since they were validated in various ways, then I must be tapping into something real. I was using my inner vision, hearing, smell sometimes, taste sometimes and even emotions. So far, this was happening without my planning it or intentionally participating in it except in those times when I would become consciously aware of the discrepancy between internal and external experiences.

My next leg of this journey was learning how to make the leap from accidental to intentional use of imagination to obtain information beyond the physical senses. There are some mental health therapies, such as “Parts Work,” as defined by Internal Family Systems (created by Dr. Richard Schwartz) that use imagination in an intentional way to help clients connect with themselves. A detailed, nonprofit website explains this technique (<http://sfhelp.org/gwc/IF/innerfam.htm>.) I had done a great deal of this work and it is a natural fit for me with clients.

However, I wanted to enter more fully into other dimensions.

Example:

One of the first ways I remember exploring this possibility was with my business partner again. At that time we were setting appointments with alternative health practitioners we had yet to meet. My partner suggested that I try tuning into the person we were scheduled to meet with and write down my impressions of that person. Then, after meeting them, I would

read my notes and compare what I had written, prior to meeting them, with how I experienced them after meeting face-to-face.

The first person with whom I tried this technique was a man who looked nothing like the one I saw in my head. Therefore I concluded that I was just making it all up. My partner was more persistent and suggested that I look deeper into my notes. Then I realized I had described that man's personality to a 'T.' As I compared my image of how he looked in the physical world with the picture I had created of him in my mind before I met him, I became aware that I was using symbols to give me more information.

For example, I will see someone wearing glasses to indicate they are intellectual; they may have gray hair to let me know I might describe them as wise; and they may look right at me, in my mind's eye, which tells me they tend to face their issues straight on. I have had to learn and even intentionally create a sort of visual dictionary to help me understand how my imagination is communicating with me.

Since then, I have broadened my horizons. I mean, since we are talking about using imagination, then we can broaden our horizons simply by imagining new places to go. Get it? For instance, if your imagination is wondering what you would feel if you were really able to fly, then imagine flying! Feel yourself rising up, hear the wind blowing in your ears, see the buildings becoming smaller and, watch out for those telephone lines!

My next conscious step came when I was reading a book about how to connect with our Angels. I was so excited to find a book to tell me how to do this! I got this book and took it home and immediately dove into it. About half way through, I still hadn't gotten to anything about connecting to my Angels and I was getting impatient. I was lying on my bed and sighed really big and said to myself, "Surely it doesn't have to be this complicated!"

I closed my eyes, imagined an angel, and pretended I could talk to her. I asked her if I really needed to do all of that stuff in the book. She smiled and said, "What do you think?" I thought, "I don't know, but whatever this is feels pretty cool." I never finished reading that book because I knew I had just connected with my Angel simply by pretending to have a conversation with her. I knew this by how I felt: calm and happy, like I would imagine I would feel after speaking with my Angel and getting an answer. I was stunned at how simple the process actually was for me

Your journey

Now, it's your turn. Where do you start in your own journey of pretending your way into other dimensions? Begin by becoming familiar with your strongest internal modality. That means, how do you first chose to represent the world in your own mind? Do you see pictures? Hear words describing your own thinking? Do you have sensations in your body that have certain meanings for you?

Many people aren't immediately aware of how they process their inner world, so no worries if you don't have an instant answer to the questions I just suggested. Usually people will have a preferred inner sense and the others are secondary to that one. Once you find that preferred one, you can use it to start making sense out of your intentional daydreaming.

One of the simplest ways to discover your primary inner modality is to remember a trip, maybe to the beach or a hike along a river. When you remember that scene, do you see pictures of this

trip? Can you feel the breeze on your face? Maybe you can hear the water or feel the water rushing by your fingers when you imagine holding your hand in it?

Practice recognizing your inner senses for a week or so. Then, as you feel more confident, begin stretching to try to experience more of your inner senses. If you can't, then don't worry. You may need some time to wake them up. You can even practice during your everyday life by asking yourself, in any given moment, what am I thinking about right now? Then notice how you are thinking, whether you are thinking in pictures, hearing thoughts, feeling sensations and so on.

Once you have gained a clearer understanding of your main modality, it is time to use this information in combination with your imagination. Start with something simple. If you have a pet, a child or someone special to you, then imagine them sitting beside you. This technique is actually a combination of remembering and imagining. You are remembering someone who you can see, but you are imagining them in a place where they are not, right in that moment.

Can you imagine seeing them sitting by you? Feel their presence beside you? Maybe hear them breathing, or maybe they even speak to you? If you want to elaborate, go for it! If you are imagining your cat and she rubs up against your hand, that's awesome! Imagine petting her. Then imagine that she can talk to you with words. What would she tell you? If you can't quite hear her, pretend you have a volume knob, right there, and simply turn up the volume.

You can go anywhere, become anyone. It's your imagination. Once you grasp the potential, you can dream up all sorts of interesting ways to use your imagination. Here's an example: Let's say you would like to feel more confident. By pretending you are someone you admire for their confidence, you can literally experience a sense of confidence. If you want to understand more about spiritual enlightenment, why not pretend to be an ascended master?

Only our fears and skepticism block us from at least touching on these experiences. The more you dare to play, the more you will dare to allow new information to come into your awareness. Could our inner senses truly be this easily accessed? How would you imagine your world differently?

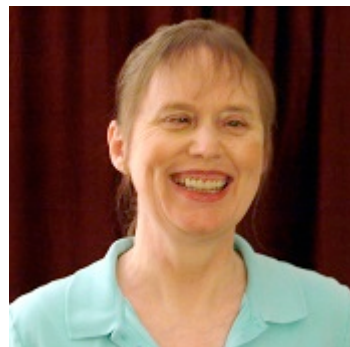
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Nonprofit Break the Cycle! Project, Peter Gerlach, MSW - founder
6530 SW 30th Ave., #72; Portland, OR 97239 1-503-293-8385

Marlana Lytehaause, MSW, DCH had a private practice as a mental health therapist for about ten years. In 2000 she began adding other-dimensional energy work to her educational foundation, which includes finding and clearing unconscious beliefs at the cellular level, past life integrations, creating Energy Beacons of Attraction, Filtering Shields and much more. She calls herself a Spiritual Healing Facilitator with a strong mental health background. She is now as comfortable working in the Angelic realms as she is in the physical dimension. She works almost exclusively over the phone and through the internet.



Contact:

www.Marlana.org

Marlana.Lyte@gmail.com

503-747-5076

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P.O. Box 76, Bellmawr, NJ 08099

Phone (609) 714-1885 Fax (519) 265-0746

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