

The Pearl Catcher

Parallel processing in body-hypnotherapy through somatic storytelling

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If you look outside, you shall see people walking around. How many of them are carrying their body with respect, honouring who they are? How many look crouched, tensed or fearful? Some people may seem to be hooked up, locked in bodily patterns of holding in, of hiding - of not daring to be themselves. How can we free more life? How can we go deeper? For me, the process of going inside and finding shared spaces is one possible and exciting way to do so. In the process of body-hypnotherapy, when you come back into your body, you also find that you are not alone. Finding magic, hope and future. Coming into the flesh is awakening the soul, the mother of pearls.

So, there is a series of stories that are waiting to be told. These are stories that are woven into touch, and as you are touched by accepting hands, the story rubs into you, deeper. They tickle your body when you feel the words, when you imagine the pictures. They sit here, now, as you are reading - and wondering what will be YOUR story. Tissues can hear, you know. And as they listen, you also listen carefully with your body. This is somatic storytelling; and it makes sense.

There was a village, near the sea. The sea stripe was not long and not short, and when the villagers looked into the sea, they dreamt of oceans. And in the village lived a family, a father and a mother, and a little boy. It was many years ago, before food grew in supermarkets, before water came from the faucets, before clear air became a rare treasure. The father, like most of the men in this village, was a fisherman. The fishermen had their own path, their own shared love. Many of the women in the village had to face the difficulty of knowing that their husbands had a lover. The fact that all men had the same lover didn't make it easier for their wives, though. They envied the sea. They envied her for taking their husbands, going to meet her with glazed eyes and yearning impatience; they envied her for the power she had to enchant them, to call them. However, she mostly returned them back to the firm hands of the wives, who accepted them back, smelling from salt, sweat and fish; their cloths stiff and crunchy from the salt and the water. But they came home, and they were wanted.

When the boy's dad came back after a day or two in the sea, his son would hear his steps tapping in the path that led to their house. When the boy smelled the sea arriving, he would run outside, welcoming his father and hugging him. When his father returned home, the boy would hug his legs tightly, waiting for his father to pick him up and wave him in the air as if he was weightless. One day he would be a fine fisherman too, he thought. There was no doubt about it. They were together now, and they sat to the table, as the father gradually settled, reacquainting himself to his earthy life, to his wife and to his son. For some time he would forget about his other lover. They ate fish, like they frequently did, because fish were just there for them to eat. The village was the entire world the boy knew, and life in the village was serene and flowing. The boy needed nothing more.

Every Sunday, the little village became especially colourful and lively, when the villagers had the local market. The market could be smelt from afar; the fried fish and fresh breads were calling the people, come and take me, come and have me; and the people came. The children ran between the different stalls, and the villagers frequently gave them something, an egg or a bun, a sweet or a sausage. At other times, food found miraculous ways to get to the children's hands, but the shouts of the effected stallholder quickly dissolved in the general noise.

And then one Sunday arrived when things changed. It was a day that changed the lives of many, and specifically - the life of this little boy. When the children came to play in the market this Sunday, it was unusually silent. A stranger in a cylinder hat and a strange looking suit stood in the common area, circled by many keen villagers. Although the boy was short, he was very quick, and flexible, and pushy, so he found a dodgy passage and got closer and closer to the inner circle, where he could see the stranger. He looked like no one the boy had ever seen before. He was spectacularly dressed (Well, at least to the boy's eyes); his manner of speech was different, he used a somewhat softer dialect than the one that the villagers used, the only dialect the boy ever knew. But soon the boy stopped paying attention to these benign details of his looks or cloths. In his hands, the stranger had a shell. And in the shell was something glimmering, shimmering. In the shell shone a beautiful pearl.

Did you ever wonder where does the journey to find your vocation begin? Did you ever ask yourself what you felt in the amazing journey that you made down the fallopian tube? Well, it begins just at the beginning - when a small egg is searching for a warm home. How fascinating it must be for her, how amazing it must have been for you when you first had a glimpse into life!

Strangely, touch is a reminder of it; trancework is a reminder of it. Here you are, sensing, feeling, being. And here is life, gazing at you, waiting for you to recognise it and say: you are mine.

It was the most beautiful thing the boy had ever seen. And although the boy never saw a pearl in his life, he instantly knew that there are many more like her in the sea, and he felt great reassurance and trust.

When the man left the village, the boy swallowed his tears. It was difficult enough to absorb such beauty and now he had to let go, and he grieved for the man's disappearance. However, this was only the beginning. The pearls were always there, in the sea. But it was only after the stranger drew the people's attention that the search for pearls began.

For some months after the stranger's visit, everybody went crazy. The children would wake up early in the morning and swam as deep into the sea as they could - to dive there, amongst fields of sand and fish, hungry serene corals, and breathing water, to catch pearls. And so did the fathers. It seemed as if the fishermen forgot about supplying to their family; so enthusiastic they were about looking for pearls. You could see many boats sailing into the sea by dawn, only to return by dusk as if the Argonauts are coming back from the search for the Golden Fleece. And the boy was among them, hunting for pearls. But the boy's relationship with the sea was very different. He didn't want to take from his loved one without returning, so every time he caught a pearl, he gave something back into the sea. Sometimes he cleaned her, other times - gave a loving word, or brought a stone from earth. You see, they had a reciprocal relationship and he had to give back, and she loved him for that, and gave him the most beautiful pearls she had. And the boy made jewellery from the pearls, bracelets that had grace and warmth in them, earrings that encapsulated love, necklaces which had the ocean's breathe. And if you were lucky enough to be given one of his jewellery, your life had changed forever.

So there you were, stretching in the space where awakening - or what seemed to be the awakening of the soul has begun. Where there is a shared, communal endeavour to find answers, to explore - to stay open. How beautiful it is to be living in such a nurturing environment, where you can risk your boundaries and find them expanding - together with you, to bring more life in.

The women, who got used to the ambivalent nature of their husbands, knew that soon the waves would calm down. Soon, the stomachs would say: we are hungry, the pockets would cry: we are

empty, and then they will get their husbands back. And indeed, the sea got insulted; no one was interested in her anymore, they were only after her treasures now. So one day she took vengeance, claiming her space back. One evening, when the fishing boats were slowly returning from pearl-catching, when the pier was full with noises of fishermen tying their colourful boats, of children running around with their daily loot, bragging - one boat was missing. The first to notice the missing boat was our boy. The second to notice it was the neighbour of the fisherman whose boat was missing. And the third was the wife, who loudly cried, for both her husband and youngest son were on that boat. But it was dark, and there was no use to go back into the foaming, abandoned lover at night. When dawn emerged, when the birds just began waking up, telling the stories of the day to come with their songs, a delegation was sent into the sea. They found the boat pretty close to the shore, actually, and in it was the fisherman's son, crying.

Well, people who make a living from the sea are well acquainted with death. They are not friends with him, because death has no friends, but there is certainly a bond between them, a bond of mutual respect and acceptance. In these times, when milk came from cows and eggs from hens, when people could feel the taste of nurturing soil in their salad, and when you breathed, fresh air came into your lung; In these days death was an important part of life, not a separate hidden one, and was hence treated as such. However, for one reason or another, being only human, the villagers blamed the pearls and the pearl-catching for the death of the fisherman. Over one day, the pearl catching mania that possessed so many people in the village completely ceased.

All but one got back to their old businesses, nets and baits came back to embrace the sea, and seduce her daughters and sons. It was as if the pearls were nothing but a delusional past-life in the shared memory of the community, albeit fresh and real in the memory of one boy. All but one ceased diving for pearls, making pearl jewellery or even talking about pearls. The boy was the only one still to be enchanted by them. Welcomed by the sea, he kept diving and catching pearls. For many months he made beautiful jewellery; he kept improving his skills and taking greater joy from his craft, from his love affair with the sea, from the long minutes in which he managed to stay under the water: seeing everything in a different light.

This is the realm of conflict. Now the journey can turn either way: in or out, deeper or shallower. This is where you must decide: shall I craft my own story, my own dream? Or else, should I conform in the comfort of the dreams of others, in the truth of others? Will I let another tell my

story? I invite you to go in, to support your wave-like spine in its coiling movements, to make your own story. It has a price, however.

Whereas earlier on everybody was catching pearls and the boy was accepted and appreciated, now things have changed. When the boy kept diving, kept catching pearls, some villagers started talking behind his back. Gradually, without any overt expressions, the boy was on his own: unaccepted, lonely, and criticised. People still bought his jewellery on market days, because no one could match the boy's craft or his pearls' beauty, because they have forever changed the lives of those who received them. But the boy was secluded, without breathing space in his village. One evening, when he came home from a day at the sea, there was a sense of change in the air. As the boy sat to the dinner table with his parents, everybody knew it was time for goodbye. They didn't talk much, but within the silence of chewing, cutting and swallowing, the boy announced his leaving, and his parents heard it with love, great fear, and understanding that neither them nor their son can escape faith.

How long does it take before a boy sells his jewellery and buys a horse, before he packs his things and leaves his parents to seek deeper oceans, to follow a voice that calls him, come here boy, deep in? How long does it take for a boy to walk away, following nothing more than a feeling? Once a calling was heard, it was difficult for the boy to extend deafness. A boy takes a horse, and some food, and rides away. For many days and many nights a boy rides in silence. Sometimes, a horse is too tired, and then a boy stops, taking care of the needs of a horse. At other times sun and moon work in shifts, watching for the passionate pursue of a dream, of a boy. But to reach the ocean the boy had to get away from the sea, and as the months and years went by, he began to forget; no longer is he clear about what exactly is it that he is after. Regardless, he keeps riding.

And then, after many days, the boy didn't count the times, so time wasn't really moving on in countable units, the boy could smell the ocean and remembered what he was looking for. He stopped the horse and looked around him, but there was utterly nothing. If you gazed into his eyes now, you might have mistaken him for an old man. Watch his face! notice how mature he became! A young man is breathing deep, inhaling the distant fumes of the ocean. A young man cries. Two weeks from that day the young man arrived to the ocean. He was quite amazed that he could smell her from the distance of two weeks, but she wasn't at all surprised. She was just looking at him, with endless patience, and widened her big turquoise smile.

The young man sat by the ocean, noticing the huge spectrum of colours, the blues and blacks, the greens and yellows, the oranges and purples. For two days he did nothing but looking at her; he didn't eat or sleep, drink or talk. When he looked around after these two days, he could see some people walking around him. Few families were living by the shore, and they approached the young man with some food and smiles. It was their place but they could see that the young man belonged to her was welcomed by her, so they invited him to join their fire. Glazing eyes, what a beating heart, accelerating pulse! The impatience of a young lover was ridiculed by her as she embraced him for the first time. One young man swimming, deeper and deeper, not yet daring to dive.

And your tissues, did you know they open up when they listen? That pain loses its sharpness and expands? At this point exactly being begins and doing ends, at this stage you might fear going in deeper, you might want to turn over and return home. Can you? Of course, you can always go back and learn to master the art of forgetfulness. Your body would never forget, though. Infected with magic, it will enchant your soul forever to go in, to be you, to dive.

And then he dived. At first he was encapsulated in her frightening endless horizons. But he insisted, diving deeper, reminding his body of the knowledge it had, catching pearls. He then sat on the sand, making beautiful jewellery from the pearls he caught, only to get back in. The fear was always there, and he dared not go deeper than the edges of the coral reef. She frightened him, quite knowingly, and he learned to be a patient lover; he learned to let her love ripe. He learned to listen to her waves and her foams, to her currents and movement, to her voice. And as the young man learned the art of seduction and inclusion, of patience and laughter, he became a lover.

One day he was walking along the sand stripe, heading for a little village not far from his camp, as he heard her calling him. The young man held jewellery for sale in his bag, he had some pearl necklaces and bracelets, earrings and pins, and he was quite reluctant to leave it all by the ocean, so he ignored her call and continued to walk. And then she called him again. He looked into her eyes and held his breath; something is about to happen, he knew. The young man took off his cloths and wrapped them around his pack. He stepped into the ocean and swam, breathing out, with long slow strokes, deeper than he ever thought he could. When he could see nothing around him but water, the young man suddenly felt terrified. He was a tiny insignificant breath in this

huge movement, in this life. I am going to die, he thought and as soon as this thought crossed his mind, everything seemed easier.

The young man stopped swimming. Together with him was someone or something else; he knew it. He looked around but couldn't see anything so he dived in, and there it was - a silver dolphin. The dolphin had a very smooth touch and a wide smile, and it moved deeper into the water followed by the man. The young man stopped thinking. He wasn't trying to dive deep, to catch pearls or to play, he was just there, together with the dolphin, diving. When the young man first realised how deep he had dived, it was much too late to panic. It seemed as if many minutes passed, and indeed many have. The dolphin was gone when the young man was astonished to find that he could breathe in her. And so he did, that is - he breathed. It was actually the natural thing to do, and even if later on no one would believe him, it was a fact that the young man was breathing, daring to dive deeper and deeper still when he saw the most heavenly shell he had ever seen, waiting for him.

A young woman sat there, on the shore, besides his cloths. She couldn't resist the temptation to open his pack and look at his jewellery. She looked into the ocean and was concerned. When she saw the young man stepping out of the water and approaching, she noticed that something in him changed, and somehow - it affected her deeply. She walked away in silence, without him seeing her. In his arms rested the most remarkable pearl yet to be seen by human eyes. For a moment in the ocean, the young man was this little boy again, raving in front of the world about his finding. In this very instant, she became angry and he couldn't breathe anymore. But young lovers are quick to learn and old lovers are quick to forgive, so he apologised in his heart and she gave him his breath again. And when the young man allowed the sun to dry his shivering body, he looked at the pearl and knew that it will change somebody's life, just as it has changed his.

It is now your choice what to do with this life, but life is contaminating, and you are likely to infect others, to radiate. What will be affected? Just about everything: relationships with yourself and others; the way you perceive life and the way life and death will perceive you from now on. The ways you will do it are your choice, and your organism is wise enough, it wouldn't have let you reach these pearls unless you could wisely make a living choice.

The young man made a necklace from this one pearl, without piercing it. This precious gift ought to stay intact, he thought as he walked back to the camp and handed it to the girl that waited for

him on the shoreline and walked away when he came. When she wore the necklace on her neck she felt, without realising, the depth of the ocean, and a very powerful change took place in the young woman's soul and body.

Funny, but still every now and again the young man would fear that he can no longer breathe in the ocean, and sure enough - whenever he tried to breathe in her he failed. But when he accepted an invitation to come in, when he allowed the water to envelope him and followed a dolphin or a fish, she let him remembrance of her generosity, her love. When he followed she yielded into his body and let him breathe. And the young man caught many precious pearls, made some beautiful jewellery, and changed the life of many. And still, every time he stepped out of her waters, he wasn't sure whether he would be allowed again. But he was.

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Integrative Massage Therapy (IMT) is a body-hypnotherapy approach. It combines conscious cognitive work with unconscious work and bodywork. IMT aims at supplying a safe space to expand and shift, and within the therapeutic framework we do our best to invite magic. IMT draws knowledge and experience from various sources, including massage and bodywork approaches, Reichian bodywork, hypnotherapy, NLP, shamanic work, various psychotherapeutic schools, stress management, Buddhism and healing. This particular process of somatic storytelling is one magical way to encourage inner resources for spontaneous change.

I offer IMT, hypnotherapy, stress-management and NLP in London and St.Albans.

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