

8

# Exploring the transpersonal realm

As teachers, we want our students to appreciate the full range of human experience. The transpersonal realm, although it goes far beyond what is usually considered traditional in education, is something for which most of us feel a deep yearning. We want to experience completion, wholeness, union, divinity, to feel what is sacred within us and around us. Here are several activities designed to take us beyond the limited realm of the ego into the boundless dimension of the transpersonal.

## **EXPANSIVE IMAGING**

**TO THE LEADER** Being more ourselves, moving beyond our conceptions of who we are, can occur in many ways. The

## Exploring the transpersonal realm

use of active imaging is a vital and immediate method for participants to find their relationship to the powerful forces in the world. These activities each have a central image that participants are invited to assimilate. Relaxation, journey, or emotionally evocative music is recommended (see *References*).

**INSTRUCTIONS TO THE GROUP** Wherever you are in the room right now, close your eyes and pretend that the sun is not out there in the sky but inside you and glowing very brightly right in the middle of your belly. Let its warmth and light fill you all up and then spill out in all directions, lighting up the room. Keep shining as you open your eyes and let the sun's rays dance through you. You are the sun! Let your warmth flow out into the room . . . send your light toward someone else now, beaming and dancing over that person . . . and now let your sun body shine on someone else, give that person all your light, and notice there's still more.

*(You might have students direct their light to someone who's not present, a friend, relative, or classmate.)*

Next, choose a partner and decide who will be the tree and who will be the wind. Wind, you have many possibilities within you. You can puff and hiss or you can flutter and billow, as you choose. Tree, your roots go deep into the earth. You can be tall and massive or slender and supple, as you choose. Wind and tree, move together, noticing how you affect each other.

*(Continue for 2-3 minutes.)*

## Exploring the transpersonal realm

Wind, let yourself become more solid inside until you become a tree. Tree, let the wind's breath dissolve your "treeness" until you have no solidness and you become the wind. And now, Tree and Wind, move together.

Next, let your body stretch out through your toes and fingertips, getting larger and thinner until you feel you could float away. And you *can*, imagining you're a kite, a beautiful bright kite in the air. And you can go wherever you want on the wind, no string holds you. Fly where you want to go!

Gurgling . . . bubbling . . . splashing . . . now be in a stream of water. Let it carry you flashing over rocks, around bends . . . let the water in and through you . . . until you *are* the stream rolling along. Where are you going? What do you see along your shores?

*(You can take the stream into the river and then the ocean if you wish.)*

## JOURNEY

**TO THE LEADER** This activity is designed both to open new internal resources for learning and to affirm the wholeness in each of us. The journey is an archetypal process with many possible levels of meaning: Our lives are a journey, school is certainly a journey, self-discovery is perhaps the most awesome journey. This journey leads to the inner teacher, what we perhaps have called conscience or the

## Exploring the transpersonal realm

small inner voice. The inner teacher can provide surprising new resources and perspectives and help build a sense of self-support, responsibility, and connection with transpersonal realms of experience. The music selection for the journey is especially important for the tone it sets. The music list in the *References* has several selections for journeys. You won't necessarily need an open space but you will need sufficient moving room and a soft floor; the opening section can be done in chairs if the floor is not carpeted.

**INSTRUCTIONS TO THE GROUP** Find a comfortable place in the room and lie down on the floor. Stretch out, yawn and sigh, find the muscles that need to roam, and wiggle and squirm them. Close your eyes . . . notice your body against the floor, where it feels hard and where you feel soft into the floor. Now release your muscles into the floor, let the floor hold you easily, gently. Take a large balloon breath in and let it out through your mouth . . . again, big breath in, out all at once. Good, now imagine a big pink scarf floating across your body up from your toes to your head. As it touches each part of you it relaxes and warms you . . . toes . . . ankles . . . legs . . . knees . . . thighs . . . hips . . . belly . . . chest . . . shoulders . . . neck . . . face . . . all warmed and comfortable. Let the scarf pass over you once more to release any other tense parts so your body is heavy and feeling good.

Inside your mind, imagine a natural place where you'd like to be. It could be a tall green meadow, the seashore, or up in the mountains. Notice where you want to be . . . see the colors and feel the warmth of the sun on

## Exploring the transpersonal realm

your face . . . any smells of flowers or water and the feel of the breeze on your skin.

You're going on a search in this place you've found in your mind . . . let the scene in your mind fill this room so that when you gently open your eyes you can bring your relaxation and your place here. Take some time.

Now, let your body explore this nature scene in this room, really enjoying it. You're looking for something and you don't quite know what it is . . . searching in this place.

*(Take 1-2 minutes.)*

Let your search take you down, underground. What do you find there?

*(1-2 minutes.)*

Let your search take you uphill, climbing.

*(1-2 minutes.)*

You're looking for someone. Somewhere on the mountain you'll find the home of the person you're looking for. When you find it ask that person whatever you most want to know right now. The person may answer you in a surprising way. Be aware all around you. Take time to be with this person.

*(Continue for 1-2 minutes.)*

If you like, you can choose another time and place to meet with this person again, but for now, say goodbye and begin moving down the mountain to the place you started your journey. Notice anything new you didn't experience before.

## Exploring the transpersonal realm

*(1–2 minutes.)*

And let yourself sink back into the floor, enjoying in your mind and body your adventure . . . then stretch easily and wake up again, refreshed and recharged.

**COMMENT** Drawing or writing about this activity afterwards helps integrate the experience. Fantasy movement is a skill that becomes easier and richer with repetition. Feel free to vary the locations and questions of this journey as your class becomes skilled at moving while relaxed.

## **DREAM HOUSE**

**TO THE LEADER** The house is one traditional metaphor for the personality. All the rooms in the house are aspects of the personality, some familiar, like the living room, and some dusty and dark, like the attic and the basement. In this activity, participants create their houses and then explore them. Actual dreams of houses and buildings can also be used for exploration. Drawing the houses afterwards can be useful. A room with the available open space is most suitable.

**INSTRUCTIONS TO THE GROUP** Take a moment to stretch your body as you're seated, getting comfortable. Close your eyes and let your mind create a path leading over a hill. In the distance is a house. Come up to the house and move around it, exploring it from the outside. When you're ready, find a way inside the house. As you begin to explore

## Exploring the transpersonal realm

the house, let your body move through *this* room, changing it into your special house. Explore all the rooms and whatever is in them . . . upstairs and downstairs . . . hidden rooms . . . locked doors . . . whatever you find.

*(Explore for 2-3 minutes.)*

Then come back to your seat and draw something you discovered in your house or something you especially liked.

**VARIATIONS** You can lead students through the relaxation section of the previous exercise, "Journey," or all of "Fluffing" in Chapter 3 before starting this activity. You can also instruct students to "become" their houses, letting their bodies move the qualities they discover.

## MOVIE DIRECTOR

**TO THE LEADER** This activity is based on the students' dreams, and gives a group of students the opportunity to enter another person's inner life. The instructions for this experiment are rather general, as each dream is different. After some group sharing of dreams, ask one student to repeat her or his dream in the present tense. Then, as director, have the students assign parts to each other, *showing* them how to move and where to be in the room. Every aspect of the dream can be given as a role, even objects and trees, the sky, and the feeling of the dream. When everyone has a part, the director assigns her- or himself a part and the class reruns the dream.



## Exploring the transpersonal realm

**VARIATIONS** The director takes different parts. If you have an intuition about a part that would be valuable to explore, suggest that.

Another student takes the part of director after a run-through and gives another active interpretation.

## FAIRY TALES

**TO THE LEADER** Fairy tales are some of the richest sources of drama, life scripts, transcendence, and learning life's lessons that we have. There are many different ways to explore fairy tales. We'll suggest a few. For musical accompaniment, consult the *References* for ethnic or group interaction selections.

**INSTRUCTIONS TO THE GROUP** What are your favorite fairy tale characters? Let's make a sample list together:

Prince Charming  
the Princess  
the frog  
Ugly Duckling  
Snow White  
Rumpelstiltskin  
Hansel and Gretel

Wicked Stepmother  
Rapunzel  
Aladdin  
Little Red Riding Hood  
Sleeping Beauty  
Pied Piper

As a group, let's pretend to be some of these people. Let yourself stand and walk the way they would, greeting people you pass in character.

## Exploring the transpersonal realm

*(Call out various characters.)*

Let's pick one tale and act it out. First I'll read it through and you sit with your eyes closed and let yourself travel back to that time and place, seeing and hearing what it must have been like.

Now I'll put on some music and let you move through the tale yourself, encountering all the events and people as the tale unfolds. Let yourself become larger than life as you transform your world.

**VARIATIONS** Assign roles from a fairy tale to different students, and have other students become other aspects of the environment, such as the castle tower or the moat or the briar patch.

Use costumes when moving through the tale.

Have students make up their own fairy tales, moving, drawing, and writing them.