Jung On Active Imagination
Synopsis

All the creative art psychotherapies (art, dance, music, drama, poetry) can trace their roots to C. G. Jung's early work on active imagination. Joan Chodorow here offers a collection of Jung's writings on active imagination, gathered together for the first time. Jung developed this concept between the years 1913 and 1916, following his break with Freud. During this time, he was disoriented and experienced intense inner turmoil—he suffered from lethargy and fears, and his moods threatened to overwhelm him. Jung searched for a method to heal himself from within, and finally decided to engage with the impulses and images of his unconscious. It was through the rediscovery of the symbolic play of his childhood that Jung was able to reconnect with his creative spirit. In a 1925 seminar and again in his memoirs, he tells the remarkable story of his experiments during this time that led to his self-healing. Jung learned to develop an ongoing relationship with his lively creative spirit through the power of imagination and fantasies. He termed this therapeutic method "active imagination." This method is based on the natural healing function of the imagination, and its many expressions. Chodorow clearly presents the texts, and sets them in the proper context. She also interweaves her discussion of Jung's writings and ideas with contributions from Jungian authors and artists.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Jung on Active Imagination is a compilation of C. G. Jung's writings on the particular discipline called "active imagination." This book is the definitive individual work on the subject. Jung
developed the technique during the years immediately following his split with Freud. It is not, as some suggest, a meditative technique but a method of actively engaging the imagination in pursuit of contents generally hidden within the unconscious. The book's editor, Jungian analyst Joan Chodorow PhD, has done a marvelous job of assembling all the relevant material from Jung's collected works. Chodorow also provides a marvelous, twenty-page introduction for those not familiar with active imagination. This then is a book that will be of value to both the Jungian professional and the interested layman, such as myself. Active Imagination in and of itself is a discipline wherein the practitioner, after securing a secluded place of relative isolation, clears away a space within the psyche and then actively watches for images and listens for voices that originate spontaneously. The practitioner then focuses on the images and/or voices and attempts to engage these psychic entities in dialogue. The intention is to encounter psychic entities that come from within the practitioner's subconscious. Jung recognized two different aspects of the unconscious. The first, he termed the shadow, which has its origin in the repressed, culturally unacceptable, portion of the ego. The second, Jung termed the collective unconscious, which contains the inherited archetypes of human existence that ultimately create civilization. When the practitioner encounters entities from either aspect of the unconscious, he/she allows the entity to retain its autonomy as much as possible.


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