

A Child's Drawing

This is Lincoln Stoller of Mind Strength Balance dot com speaking a piece called “A Child’s Drawing,” which is a way to enlist your subconscious in helping you address the issues of your day. “A Child’s Drawing” is a hypnotic induction that requires your full attention. Do not listen to this if you are driving a car, operating machinery, or doing anything that requires your attention.

Begin by finding a relaxed position. Lean back, settle down, uncross your arms and legs, extend your legs. Let your head rest back if you have a head rest, or let your head settle forward if you don’t. Let your eyes feel heavy and let your eyes feel slow and let your eyes shut closed as much as you can, letting your images fade and listen to the sounds in your ears. Sometime you can hear a ringing in your ears and let that ringing sound now, as evidence that you’re paying attention to the little things. Now let that ringing fade to a dull thinness, like the air through your nostrils, or the light filtering through a window at sunset. Escape into the present, letting yourself just settle down to being here and now.

Focus on your breath... take a breath... inhale... and exhale...

And in those pauses between your inhale and your exhale, and between your exhale and your inhale, carve out an extra quiet moment that gets a little deeper and a little quieter with each breath: inhale... deeper... exhale... quieter...

Focus on the tension in your breath, the tension of your chest muscles when you inhale. Recognize that you don’t need any tension. All that tension is unnecessary. Your diaphragm can do all the work. Let your chest just rise and fall with no muscles at all. Breathe from your belly, inhale... exhale...

Find your pulse. If you’re focusing on your breathing, then you can feel your heart beat just after you’ve fully inflated your lungs, and you can feel a softer beat after your full exhale.

If you’re focused on sound and hearing, and if you can hear the white noise in your ears, then you can hear your pulse as a faint diminishing of the volume of the white noise, or a momentary lapse in your attention.

If you focus on any sensitive skin of your body--like your face, your hands, or your feet--and you hold quite still and motionless, then you can feel the pulse under your skin. Sometimes you feel a throbbing. Other times you may feel a lapse in your connection with sensation, a momentary shift toward greater or lower sensation.

However you sense your pulse, sit with it so that you sense its regularity. Ask yourself, “Could this sensation be harder or softer; more sharp and sudden or dull and more gradual? As you think of these possibilities, amplify them in your imagination. Imagine a pulse that feels soft and a pulse that feels hard. Ask yourself, which of these feels more comfortable?

Move into a state that’s comfortable. Relax the efforts of your imagination and simply be at peace. Return to your breath. Inhale... and exhale...

Locate the natural tension in your chest as your breath, the stretching of the muscles of your chest, and then focus on letting those muscles relax. Make those muscles, skin, bones, ligaments, and organs more sensitive. Feel the movement of your breath as thoroughly and completely as you can.

When you're ready, sink more deeply into a state of calm, and rest, and comfort. As if you're stepping off a diving board into a weightless world, and I'll count down from five and when I reach one, but I'm not there yet, you'll step out of the sense of gravity and pressure and step into a sense of weightlessness. Five... four... three... two... and one. Step out and fall into weightlessness, becoming calmer, going deeper, drifting farther away.

In this calm and weightless space I'd like you to get in touch with a particular issue that weighs on you at the present time, under normal circumstances, and in which you're immersed. The kind of issue that has no cause of which you're responsible, and no solution of which you're capable. Just to bring forward in your heart one of the weights that has been getting you down.

Bring this issue forward and set it down somewhere in front of you. Imagine a small chest, like a treasure chest, a sealed box, or locked trunk. Leave this shut. It could be opened, but you'd rather that it was not. You think you know what's in it, but you're not sure. Like many unsettling issues you'd like to know more, but you'd be happier if you didn't need to think about it.

Consider some aspects of the issue that concerns you. There are some people and there are some memories that have dulled over time. We think using alternatives; consider how you'd like things to resolve. What would be the best?

Imagine an encouraging person, an advocate, someone who trusts you and supports you, and sees things the way you do. This might be a real person, a person you once knew, or someone you believe in. It might be someone you feel this way about but have not gotten to know. See this person or feel them to be present in your mind. Really sense their presence and recall a memory of them, or envision an encounter if you've not had one.

There are forces that oppose you, or oppose the outcome that you need or prefer. Imagine someone who represents the discouraging outcome, the contrary result, the situation you wish to avoid. You may have to invent this person as, in the real world, no one person is responsible for all our fears. Let this be someone you know or don't know, who strongly represents what you don't want. Call this the discouraging person, and associate with them a discouraging event, such as really happened, or that you heard of, or that you imagine.

See this person or feel them to be present in your mind. Really sense their presence and recall a memory of them, or envision an encounter if you have not had one. They are not as close as the encouraging person, but they are still present, nonetheless.

Imagine these two characters are on a stage that's in front of you, and they are in some scene, and there is something happening, and these two characters are talking to you, first one and then the other. You may hear what they're saying or only bits of sentences and ideas, but you know what they mean because you know who they are and what they stand for.

And in this scene things play out as you expect, with the encouraging events supporting you and the discouraging events creating anxiety. Let your thoughts flow forward into the future or backward into the past. See things in the distance as they might turn out to be, or in the past as perhaps they were when all this started out. Let yourself be transported into that future you would like to see, and how it feels when things work out as you'd like them to.

These characters are symbols for you, symbols of what's important for you: of being right, or being safe, respected, or successful. And the contrary image or idea carries the negative: the feeling of being wrong, or vulnerable. They are more symbols of yourself than of forces vying for control of the future, and you hear them as reflections of yourself, and you feel them more or less as you are vulnerable or accepting of their attitudes.

As the scene finishes, the explanations end, and the light fade. You don't really need to hear them or see the details because you know them by feeling, by memory, by intuition. The lights dim and the stage goes dark.

People are symbols. They symbolize things that are meaningful to you. You position these symbols in your mind and they play roles in your attitudes.

Symbols are the language of your subconscious. They are more fertile, nuanced, and dynamic than words. They represent bigger things than words. They can be ambiguous. You would like to know them better and you would like to be better at reading their meaning. Ask your subconscious mind to help you understand them better, to see them in a different light, to connect deeper motivations and more distant outcomes.

Feel yourself in this darkened theatre for a moment, with the stage empty. There are others with you, in the audience, others whom you know but cannot see. They have other knowledge and other points of view. They are other people, or other parts of your mind, or other possibilities involved in other ways.

They can put things together differently, and they can help you put things together differently. The collection of these others, this larger audience around you, are representatives of your subconscious. Citizens of a larger collective, one that does not have one ego or one personality even though it has a unity of insight and feeling. Your subconscious works for the greater good of your greater person, a larger person than yourself.

See or feel your encouraging advocate and your discouraging adversary return to the stage, but now you see them in roles that are reversed. The encouraging advocate might be critical or unsupportive. They might be seeing the wrong side of things, or they might be thinking wishfully, acting in their own interests, or telling you what you want to hear. Their intentions may be the same, you are not wrong about them, but their insight might be shallow.

The person who you see as negative may not be focused on you, but on forces you also would like to change. Or they may aim to change things in ways that will benefit you. Perhaps they see a threat

you did not notice because they moved in other circles or worked for different ends. Maybe they have worked to help people you support.

If these characters have become archetypes to you, people who represent what is good or bad for you, then switching their roles feels entirely wrong, and it may be wrong, but their actions might still be different than you expect. Maybe they are temporary figures, or play a temporary role, or act in a way that brings you into contact with someone you need to meet, or reveal an ally who will support you.

These characters, who symbolize things to you, may symbolize other things, also. Larger ways of putting things together, other outcomes or ways things come together.

They speak to you and they also speak to each other, and they describe why things are the way they are and you hear them describe things differently from what you may believe or have expected. They justify and explain why things should go in other directions, for other benefits and other programs.

This is not what you expect; these arguments are unfamiliar to you, and you may not hear the arguments so much as notice the rearrangement of feelings of alliance or blurred roles of allies and adversaries.

People to whom you feel indifferent may feel intimate, and those with whom you shared a bond may seem strangely distant from you. Things that were obvious and which you took for granted may now need to be stated more clearly.

The symbol of authority may now be clutching a child's stuffed animal. The mail carrier may be partnered with the hero. Gender, power, ethics, and morality may be unclear, along with sanity and righteous action.

Consider these confusions, to broaden your possibilities or to clarify your point of view. Broaden if you can; become more inclusive and less attached to your core symbols. See regret and injury as sources of stasis and sorrow, and things that can be gently detached from you. Beyond forgiving or forgetting, it's a matter of separating and allowing things to develop separately from you.

Put the question of what is real before your subconscious, to the vote of the members of your theatre audience, whose voices appear separate but are actually the different frequencies of your subconscious. And just as the words "yes" and "no" can be spoken at a different pitch, so these words are sounds that can be put together to mean yes and no at different levels to become more expansive. They create a multi-tone expression that is no longer an answer but an understanding. No longer a judgment but an experience, the experience of things in action rather than things recalled, and expectations of your feelings now rather than the actions of others later.

See your understanding of things as simple, much simpler than what could be. See your actions in the realm of symbols as a child's drawing of the world. Stick figures in a world of shadow, texture, and volume.

The ideas you form are simple drawings, in which one element is you, a second is a house, a third is the sun. There might be a tree for nature and a flower for life. You show these drawings to your subconscious and you ask for their opinion and what can they say to you?

Should they say, “Oh, that’s very nice. That’s very good!” Is that what you want? Should they point out the depth that could or should be there? Would you take that as encouragement or criticism? What if what you’re more nuanced subconscious knew used different symbols from what you use, or used them differently, or ascribed larger meanings to them?

Think of your own epiphanies. Thoughts that opened you up and introduced you to other ways of seeing. What if insights like these could be brought to bear in your current circumstances, and applied to your own long-standing issues?

If you present to your subconscious just one picture, one opinion, one expression of what you see, then your subconscious can do little more than encourage you, just as you would encourage a child who brought you one picture that expressed their hopes or fears.

But if you present to your subconscious two pictures, showing how different things could be, focusing on the meaning of things and not just your expression of them, then your subconscious can engage you on a deeper level. They can speak of your ideas and perspectives, picking up on differences and directions, and going beyond the stick-figure archetypes and simple, happy sunflowers.

Even if you have only one set of symbols, you can still paint two pictures. Create one scene of what you feel and what you want, and another of what you feel and don’t want. This does not reverse the actor’s roles, but it makes clear you are not asking for approval but for insight.

Bring to your subconscious your request for insight, allow for explanation that goes beyond your own statements and expression. Let yourself be taken to another world or a different understanding.

So there is an issue that weighs on you, and it’s a present issue, and there are actors, events, and outcomes. There are several ways to see it, and you’re thinking about the outcomes you prefer, and this is the picture that you present.

Be clear but less certain. Children don’t like to have two pictures; they don’t like to edit and erase, they want there just to be one picture that has no mistakes.

Organize things in your mind to see alternatives not conclusions. The way things work out depends on how other people feel and act, and what those things that you remember really mean, and you are not sure, and you may not know.

Allow your archetypes to hold greater detail. See beyond the presentations that present themselves. Exercise your own subtle discernment as if you were trying to learn to draw, and you knew you could but you don’t yet know how.

Picture or sense in your mind the positive person and the negative person, and then take the other point of view in which the negative better serves you. The positive offers obvious benefits, but the

negative offers benefits, too, but they're not obvious. What a child sees as a mistake an artist sees as a possibility.

Imagine that things turn around, or they turn out differently. Your worries may be justified but that doesn't mean they're right, only that they might be. Circumstances might change, outcomes might be different. Your needs might change, or the needs of other people might change.

The actors on your stage are not archetypes or symbols, but just actors who can play different roles. The pictures that represent your feelings are not evidence of fixed perspective, but snapshots of situations, portrayals of one time of day.

These scripts are your child's drawing of how you feel, and need, and want. Present these stories to your subconscious as your attempts to understand what you see. Let your subconscious speak to you in its deeper language, to propose other arrangements and suggest other dialogs or costumes.

Let rearrangements happen in your dreams, with your characters or others you don't recognize or haven't seen. Peopled with characters you don't know and motivations foreign to you, acting in unfamiliar scenes. These are the suggestions of your subconscious spoken not with declaration but possibility, not with answers but with bigger questions.

Your subconscious is the realm of possibility, ambiguity, change, and potential. Your subconscious moves toward complexity, swallows things whole, and digests to incompleteness. It takes things apart and keeps all the pieces.

That's why you find your dreams so confusing, they expand to confusion, and catalog all possibilities because, in the future, who knows what images and associations might turn out to be useful or true.

Now we'll return, back to the theatre where the curtain falls and the house lights rise. And you're in the theater alone, though there were others there when the lights were dim, the ghosts of your own mind and parts of your personality. Like clouds that evaporate to vapor your subconscious disperses with the heat of consciousness, to coalesce again in the valley in the cool of your nighttime mind.

Coming back to your present and your issues and your bodily self, another self of many voices that we rarely hear, back to your dictatorship of one, your ego-self whom you take yourself to be.

Counting back, to bring us out from the theater. On one you stand up from your seat. Two you make your way down the aisle. Three, leaning forward to walk up the floor's incline. Four brings you out into the lobby where sounds and light prevail. And five, you take a breath, clear your head, and you're out of the theatre. Back to daylight and the bustle of daily life.