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SCRIPT WRITING AS A TOOL IN BIBLIOTHERAPY

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Motto: Thaumata - wonder, amazement, marvel, miracle, joy and beauty.

*Aim for the Moon. Even though you may miss it,
you will land among the stars.*

Abstract

In addition to individual or shared therapeutic reading, creative writing is a common part of bibliotherapy, which deals with the use of literary arts for preventive and therapeutic purposes. Often this involves the professional writing of stories, essays, poems and other literary works, therapeutic diaries and therapeutic letters with a therapeutic-educational purpose, with the aim of processing experiences and memories after the fact. The paper discusses life script writing as an important part of the therapeutic instrumentation used in therapeutic-educational oriented bibliotherapy. It is about the conscious creative shaping of one's own life story in the immediate future here and now. The paper is loosely connected to the paper Literary Art in Therapeutic Education, which was published in the last issue of Medicine & Art (3/2023); therefore, some terms that have been used before are not reexplained in this paper. It is intended for experts who are interested in bibliotherapy and imagination as tools for mobilizing a person's internal healing powers to support their health and well-being.

Key words: literary art, script writing, bibliotherapy, therapeutic education, self-development and therapeutic tools.

This article is published in English, which corresponds to the international status of the journal. Read the abstract of the article in Russian on the next page.

Данная статья опубликована на английском языке, что соответствует международному статусу журнала. Аннотацию статьи на русском языке, читайте на следующей странице.

НАПИСАНИЕ СЦЕНАРИЯ КАК ИНСТРУМЕНТ БИБЛИОТЕРАПИИ

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Эпиграф: Чудо – удивление, изумление, восхищение, волшебство, радость и красота. Целься в Луну. Даже если ты пропустишь ее, ты сможешь приземлиться среди звезд.

Аннотация

Помимо индивидуального или совместного чтения, творческое написание является распространенной частью библиотерапии, использующей литературное искусство с лечебно-профилактической целью. Часто это предполагает профессиональное написание терапевтических рассказов, эссе, стихов и других литературных произведений, дневников и писем, которые используются также с целью обработки переживаний и воспоминаний постфактум. В статье рассматривается написание жизненного сценария как важной части терапевтического инструментария. Речь идет о сознательном творческом формировании собственной жизненной истории в ближайшем будущем здесь и сейчас. Данная работа достаточно связана со статьей «Литературное искусство в терапевтическом образовании», которая была опубликована в предыдущем выпуске журнала «Медицина и Искусство» (3/2023); поэтому некоторые термины, которые использовались ранее, здесь не поясняются. Статья предназначена для специалистов, интересующихся библиотерапией и воображением, как инструментами мобилизации внутренних целебных сил человека для поддержания его здоровья и благополучия.

Ключевые слова: литературное искусство, сценарий, библиотерапия, терапевтическое образование, саморазвитие, терапевтические инструменты.

INTRODUCTION

Several authors are currently exploring the possibility of rewriting memories through exposure to ideas that are healing. They rely on findings documented by technical means of functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) as well as their own observations that the human brain and the whole body respond to imagery as

reality [1, 2], that visual imagination and visual perception are based on the same neural mechanisms, and that visual imagination has a brain activity very similar to visual perception [3]. Although the vividness of visual imagery has also been found to vary significantly in humans, from completely absent to factual [4], imagination still plays an important role in learning processes as well as prevention and treatment.

Memory rewriting techniques used in the so-called third wave of cognitive-behavioral therapy [5] as well as in schema therapy are based on this knowledge, which now includes mindfulness and imagery techniques in its therapeutic portfolio in order to modify the content of traumatic/avoidant memories into a kindly imagery. As documented by other authors [6], the use of the memory rewriting procedure achieves a high level of treatment effectiveness compared to other types of therapy, especially for post-traumatic stress disorder, social phobia, depression, bulimia nervosa, and borderline personality disorder. As reported by Wild and Clark [7], imagery rescripting is a very effective way of treating childhood traumatic memories.

Imagery, by providing the person with a new image of reality or a new angle of viewing it, alters the activated memory/beliefs and emotions of the past, the unsatisfied needs associated with it, and helps the person to develop alternative corrective beliefs. Narrative therapy, which is related to bibliotherapy as a supportive treatment using the means of literary art, is also based on this knowledge. Narrative therapy is about faithfully reconstructing, *decomposing*, and *re-composing one's own life story* in favor of a new, healed life plan.

Narrative therapy helps people find a way to explain life events and make sense of them. Identifying this meaning (identifying and shifting meanings, changing focus, etc.) allows one to incorporate new elements into the telling or writing of a personal story, to analyze a situation from a different perspective and a different point of view, and to assign new meanings to events, persons, or other elements of a personal story. Especially meanings that are empowering. With this different perspective, the rewriting of the life story provides an opportunity to tell a new personal history (for example, by noticing different elements and contexts than before) and/or to find and form a new personal identity and a new life story.

According to Štubňa [8], psychotherapeutic directions that use narrative methods include logotherapy, psychoanalysis, shape therapy (Gestalt), process-oriented psychotherapy, hypnotherapy, catathyma-imagination therapy, relaxation therapy, cognitive-behavioral therapy, satir's therapy, and others. In doing so, it is

possible to work with the whole life story, or to decompose, to discover and assign new meanings, to reconstruct and in a new meaning-enhanced healed quality to compose also the story of illness, the story of (one's own) body, the story of a problem/life challenge, the story of a life event, the story of the message of one's own name, the story of a skill, the story of a relationship, the story of a success/failure, the story of a desire, the story of a dream, the story of a favorite song, etc. [9]. Vodičková, Mitašíková, Slavíčková [10] for example, collected 16 stories in which teachers wrote their very personal, more or less successful experiences, in dealing with inclusion of children with various disadvantages.

According to relatively older papers by reputable authors who, observing the flooding of feelings in patients or clients, whether in the process of speaking or writing, which are called cycles and from which there seems to be no way out at first sight, they recommend interrupting the negative experience with positive feelings by noticing and "reproducing the good and the beautiful", putting the negative experience in the imagination on the movie screen and "playing this movie in reverse" [11, 12, 13, 14], thus reducing the emotional charge of the original experience. As Pennebaker [15] notes, when the experienced situation is processed or described from a different perspective, it helps to better cope with sudden surges of emotion, but also to better focus on what may have been supportive, empowering, or uplifting and had previously gone unnoticed.

Thus, according to Šlepecký, Kotianová and Kotian [16], rescripting is not and is not meant to be a simple replacement of a "bad" ending with a "good" one; it is also a restoration of feelings of control, security and justice, an expression of what was left unexpressed, a change in the meaning of the memory - including the intra- and interpersonal context.

However, all of the above mentioned techniques turn more or less to the past. Admittedly in favor of a follow-up healing process in the immediate future, but in the sense of a kind of new composition, a completion or finalization of what has already happened in the past. It is not always necessary to rewrite memory. It is also possible to go directly. It is equally important to pay attention to the formation of a new life perspective before anything has ever happened. It is possible to start creating a new record straight away and shape the existing one through it, moulding the possible into the most exquisite form possible of a remembered wonder at the miracles of life and thus helping to materialize them in reality.

With the help of imagination we act preventively within the framework of developmental bibliotherapy, which partly also includes the area of personal and

professional development. As if anticipating the developmental tasks expected in the next developmental period, and by exposing reinforcing images, which are often in open or hidden metaphorical or symbolic form and also contain instructions on how to behave and act in a particular situation, we offer the possibility of a solution, allowing attention to be directed to what is encouraging, which reinforces the person's positive experience and the consciousness of the possibility of choosing from a number of perhaps equally good options according to the person's current needs and experiences.

In bibliotherapy, a typical example of such a technique oriented towards preparation for anticipated developmental tasks or events through the conscious creative manipulation of possible content is, for example, the story completion technique, which can be used not only for rewriting old memories, but also, with good professional guidance, *for the creation of a new empowering upcoming life perspective* that is as optimistic, happy, and *joyful* as possible for the person in the *here and now*. This is possible, for example, through life script writing as well as other creative ways of processing and materializing its processing.

WRITING A LIFE SCRIPT

A screenplay is a textual template for the creation of a film, television, radio or other similar work. In the case of a theatre or film production, it is the very first step to be taken if there is a literary piece the script could be put on it, but also if there is no other literary model on which to base the script. It includes direct speech between the characters as well as stage notes (on sound, lighting, movements, scenery, costumes, props, etc.) on how the text should be realised when transformed into a physical audiovisual form.

The script represents the author's vision of how the contribution should be materialized on screen, radio or theatre. Putting together a good script that works, even if it is not directly read by the audience, is the foundation upon which the plan for the realization of the work rests and whether the audience will understand the author's vision and ultimately have an artistic experience from the work that will eventually have a longer-term effect. There are a few rules to follow, and it's not just about the formal structure for the physical execution of the documentary, but more importantly about the *artist drawing out and materialising the most beautiful emotions and feelings that he or she can*.

As Kulka [17] states, art as a specific mode of interpersonal communication conveys contents that would otherwise not be communicable. Art makes reality,

experiences, dreams, and desires visible and thus addresses the totality of man's psychic forces - reason, emotion, and will - and reorganizes them through its action. In film and theatre, it is a synthesis and complex of several arts (speech, music, dance, lighting, scenery, costumes, props, etc.) that can be perceived by several senses at the same time, but which can sometimes be overwhelming, which is why we begin gradually.

Verbal art and literary creation represent the simplest readily available form, and not only in material and technical terms. In musical-verbal relaxation, for example, it is human speech that is the medium that the person initially latches onto, thus contributing to the reduction of anxiety, the increase of frustration tolerance during musical production to the successful rehearsal of relaxation. Adequate vocal accompaniment with anchoring content allows for maintaining contact and attention in content that is beneficial and relevant to the person. One dominantly engaged sensory channel (sound/speech, even for inner speech) during reading or writing allows one to better notice and focus on one's own experience, emotions and feelings and through these to become more easily aware of what is happening in the environment.

Writing a therapeutic life script in bibliotherapy is thus not about getting through the most beautiful emotions and feelings to an audience, as in a mass artistic production, but rather about getting closer to oneself, one's own joyful and uplifting essence and its projection into one's own life reality and thus into the reality of the close persons with whom one comes into contact.

It is actually a way of consciously shaping one's own life that comes from a source that we might call admiration, fascination with life and its beauty, wonder at the miracles arising from the «contact of heaven and earth» — the mingling of the earthly and the otherworldly, wonder at its and thus one's own power in realizing and shaping oneself as part of the miracle of the river of life that we so often find in the literary texts of the great writers as well. Therapeutic life script writing is about creating one's own life as one's most beautiful work of art through one's most beautiful emotions and feelings, making them present and living them.

This activity is intended to help develop the patient's/client's competences (abilities) to live his/her life, to develop his/her potential and to solve his/her problems more or less related to the disease or even if he/she is completely free of the disease. It is an important part of the health care or health promotion process. It consists mainly of the formation and strengthening of self-competencies such as self-awareness, self-reflection, self-assessment, self-confidence, self-esteem, self-

love... which could be collectively called metacognitive skills, that are essential to fulfil certain developmental tasks or in the healing process.

Every person writes a life script for him/herself. Such writing could be likened to the "writing from excess" that author Rainwater [18] writes about in the context of therapeutic journaling, where a person shares and thereby re-materializes meaningful content for him or herself. Let us add that this is writing from an excess of experiences triggered by uplifting contents. An excess of experiences from, for example, imagined contact with the beautiful, the good, and the truth known through love and other similar uplifting values that nourish our souls and by experiencing them we enrich others as well.

Writing a script as a life plan is to create the conditions, a solid foundation for the formation of the future life reality here and now, and the imagination, which is an essential part of its creation, is *not to be a mental exercise, but rather to feel and grasp (in the form of capturing in images and words) the felt contents of the formed life reality. It is more to answer the question «How do I want to feel?» than to the question «What would I like to have?».*

The formed image is the *result of experiencing a formed reality, of which the mental structure receives the message that it already exists, i.e. it helps to recognize it and form it into a visual form, but the felt experience, even if not visually formed, is the primary and most important one. Formation into image, sound, movement, etc., is and should only be the result of feeling, i.e., it should come more from the heart center than from the rational center, and as such, depending on the changing parallel experiences, it may also change and re-form itself over time.*

It is recommended to write a life scenario in the 1st person singular present tense at least once every 24 hours for at least 15 minutes. Optimally in the evening as the last activity just before falling asleep. *To deepen awareness and imagery, we can provide helpful questions such as, «What are your dreams?», «What is the most beautiful life dream you could have in your life?», «What and where is your joy in it, how beautiful and how much more beautiful could that life dream be?», «What and where is your joy in it, how beautiful and how much more beautiful could that life dream be?», «In what form can I create that joy?», «What life scenario could be used to bring that dream into being?», «What allies or aids could you have or call or attract into that life dream reality so that you could experience it?». To describe the future anticipated reality here and now, we recommend using the words «in my life I like when», «I love when», and the like.*

As with writing a therapeutic journal, it is necessary to separate the production phase from the evaluation phase, to feel completely free and honest in the creation, to allow oneself the freedom to wish, live, feel or have something, and to describe it in as little felt detail as possible, without worrying that it might be unrealistic or undesirable. Bearing in mind the scientific findings cited above about experiencing imagined images as if they were perceived in reality, this conscious manipulation in imagination makes the felt contents part of the person's lived reality with the potential to overlap into his or her everyday life.

It is recommended to repeatedly notice especially the feelings and, in connection with the images, to form and maintain those that are pleasant, emotionally reminiscent of joy and love, or other similar uplifting feelings. The only effort required in writing a life script is to begin writing. Even repeatedly. It is recommended to write even several times a day, whenever it pleases one, regularly - optimally always in the evening. It should be the last thing a person does before falling asleep. One should always write with the intention «*What else can I write that will make me happy?*». Writing anything with this focus is better than nothing. We should only write down things that make us happy in our life script. They may be seemingly small, but they make great ones.

For example, if it is a life dream to laugh more together, this should be felt and described in as much detail as possible. Similarly describe other smaller and larger similar dreams and intentions. Reminding ourselves of our dreams before bed causes us to be experientially in them. The more we are feelingly in them, the more we are in the experience of consciously creating out of joy and love, the more we are remembering and manifesting in our lives that we are creating joy. We create it as our clear and firm focus, which then manifests all the more quickly in reality because only the pleasurable outcome, only the pleasurable and nothing else makes more sense to us in that moment.

In other activities, such as reading or watching a movie, the mind easily drifts to another motive, idea or topic. The advantage of writing is that when we write, we focus on this one thing, which is writing. Therefore, writing/creating a life script as the last thing before bed should become a habit. It allows the subconscious mind to set itself up for the pleasurable and the associated joy of falling asleep. It allows it to feel like it's already happening. For our body, for our mind, what is happening is that what is part of a life dream is becoming a reality and although we may not 100 % believe it yet, we are closer to it. It feels like it's already here. The closer we are to that feeling, the closer we are to feeling good just for having done it/for having

allowed ourselves to do it.

What is written can be supplemented with pictures, photos, lyrics of songs we love, attach, sew or glue on, etc. things that are symbolic of the dream, such as pictures of money that are needed to experience the dream life scenario, etc. Alternatively, each night's writing can be alternated with creating a video of the most beautiful moments from a family vacation or by creating an audio recording of what you have written.

For better awareness and reinforcement of the uplifting, empowering and energizing aspects of consciously shaped and recorded content, it is advisable to continuously read the script aloud, reflect on what has been written or read, take notes on what has been written, correct individual inspirations and rewrite them *so that the written script is as joyful, happy and beautiful as possible in the end result.*

The life script can be recorded in your own voice as an audio recording. This allows us to better feel and emphasize the parts that we consider important. The recording can be listened to regularly, again preferably every day before going to bed, thereby habituating our mind to the importance of the intention of enjoying life as our nature. In doing so, we become accustomed to our power of becoming aware of ourselves in a new reality not only when falling asleep, but we can also do so when driving, cooking, and so on.

We can record several versions - longer or shorter, in *our own voice, to retell in the 1st person singular present tense this is happening to me like this and like this, this is manifesting, this is happening...* One can make a video or powerpoint presentation out of the life scenario, which allows the use of multiple media and the imagined what has been described in the scenario to be perceived and felt with multiple senses at once, thus re-enforcing at least the good feeling of just having done something good for oneself. We are thus indulging ourselves in living something that is pleasurable to us, or in this way we are simultaneously noticing and materializing what of the dream has actually already been accomplished in reality.

The creation of a life script should also include other techniques and practices to maintain the formed feelings of joy, happiness, self-love, self-support, self-worth, etc. For example, perhaps content can be shared in discussion with a person or persons we trust, supportive friends or other similar supportive persons. Pleasant feelings can also be reproduced and shared with others using technical means of personal communication. Also in the form of sharing artifacts of the life scenario in the form of shared or unshared singing, painting, dancing, or other forms of

creative activity. The repeated materialization of enriching content in the form of sharing aloud in a safe environment and thereby anchoring oneself in its reality, helps to strengthen and renew its healing potential, personal transformation and the materialization of joy in ordinary daily life.

Even if something unpleasant comes up in the course of writing, which might happen, we don't dwell on it, but use it to make it or build on it something enjoyable. This makes us better at focusing on what is pleasurable, allowing ourselves to feel even more how much we want what is pleasurable, and manifesting what we really want and our intention of joy and love as quickly as possible. We use what doesn't feel good to see even more clearly what we want through what we don't want. We don't stay in it, we just show ourselves through it how to be more clearly focused on what we really want - to focus on the exact opposite.

We recommend repeatedly noticing especially feelings and forming and maintaining those that are pleasant, emotionally bringing joy and love into life, or otherwise personally uplifting. If we write during the day - we can spend at least 10 minutes reflecting on what we have written immediately after writing, or on what we have heard immediately after listening, before moving on to another activity. We can calmly continue such an inner attunement smoothly during another ongoing activity. We are advised to repeatedly remind and read the life script. To continuously refine it. In case of postponing it for a longer period, return to it. As often as possible.

It is also useful to notice and record what of the wishes, desires and dreams in the created life story scenario are already coming true, or to pay attention to the calibration of the change in the situation before the writing begins and after the writing is finished by asking questions such as "What difference did you notice?", «How is it different and how could it be even better and more beautiful than it is now or was before?» and expanding cognition by strengthening the person's awareness of what else the person would need (to see, feel, perceive) in relation to realizing their own continuous life transformation, forming new perspectives, insights, and anchoring the changes in their life perspective. *New habits are thus formed in which the miraculous becomes our everyday reality to the point of being natural and taken for granted.*

In addition to the basic functions of literature, such as aesthetic, cognitive, educational, and other functions, several experts [19-29] emphasize the importance of the therapeutic function, or rather the therapeutic potential of literature, both in

reading and writing. As in and through fairy tales, in therapy and in personal development through the creation of a life script as we have described it here above, it is recommended to *first acknowledge the idea of the miracle and allow it to be handled in the imagination as if it has already become a reality* [Steve de Shaser in 24], *in order to create the conditions for the individually conceived miracle to actually happen in reality afterwards as well.*

In writing a life script, one should foster a sense of wonder at the beauty and splendour of life, with an acknowledgement of perceived and realised miracles as normal parts of it, a sense of fascination with life, etc., within one's own competence and with an awareness of the support of all those around one. *Man thereby learns that he is consciously actively shaping his own reality, and at the same time he is healing himself, for he is thereby making himself competent to live his life as fully as possible adequate to his possibilities, desires, and capacities.*

When developing these abilities, in connection with the writing of the life scenario we can use singing, drawing, dancing, movement, various jobs, other individual, group and community creative activities like the next sources of inspirations of its creating. For the purpose of assistance of self-development, supportive individual, group, community self-help sessions, activities or therapeutic-pedagogical educational programs could be designed to meet the needs of the patient/client or the group since the whole point of learning is actually to help each other in our joy.

CONCLUSION

As a final conclusion of this article, thanks to this knowledge and our own experiences we would also like to highlight that art has its therapeutic educational potential and offers even more when it mediates contact with one's own spiritual sources of love and hope that transcend the individual, thus contributing not only to a better understanding of one's own life mission and meaning of one's life but to a consciousness creation of it.

ADDITIONAL

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