

‘And the thread held’ from *The Return* by Mary Oliver

Di Gammage

The labyrinth is an ancient symbol of passages through which we navigate our way to encounter what lies at its heart – the treasure, the shadow or the minotaur. We may be familiar with the Cretan myth of Theseus slaying the creature with the body of a man and the head of a bull and with how, with the help of Ariadne and her thread, Theseus is guided back into the light. It is a tale of brutality and betrayal. It is a tale, perhaps the tale, of humanity through the ages. One of destruction and power over another through violence. It is a way of living as true now as it was to the Ancient Greeks.

Is another way even imaginable, let alone possible? If we lose hope, what then?

In this workshop, I would like to invite us to consider an alternative perspective of the myth: one where Theseus, the minotaur, the labyrinth, Ariadne and the thread are all aspects of ourselves. Furthermore, they are aspects of each one of us. They are our collective condition regardless of the colour of our skin, our religion or beliefs.

Sharon Blackie advocates an intention and commitment to nurture rather than destroy. Empowerment that is power within, rather than power over. It calls from each of us a willingness to be open to venturing into our own personal labyrinths and to encounter our own personal minotaurs, but rather than slaying, to seek a different way. This is the nature of creativity.

We will explore the myth through story, poetry, drama and movement.

You are welcome with an open heart and open mind to enquire into your own labyrinths, to discover your own threads and to remind yourself what it is that keeps you holding onto your own.

Biography

Di Gammage is a play therapist, Buddhist psychotherapist, author, trainer, clinical supervisor, senior clinician with a national foster care agency and was a dramatherapist for over three decades. She trained as a Drama and English teacher at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama and holds an MA (Distinction) in Creative Writing from Teeside University.

Di is a passionate advocate for play as a way of being throughout life that nurtures curiosity, spontaneity, flexibility, tolerance and empathy. She believes play allows us to engage with the dark times as well as the lighter times, to bear witness to the experiences and render them less unbearable, and to communicate those experiences in ways that can be shared with others.

Di lives in South-West England, and enjoys dancing, reading, fiction writing and a renewed obsession with knitting. She loves the huge vistas of Dartmoor and the dark skies of Devon.

Recent publications and conference presentations

Gammage, D. & Merrick, B. (eds) (2023). **One tree, many branches: the practice of integrative child and adolescent psychotherapist**, Phoenix/Firing the Mind, London.

Gammage, D. (2021). **Beans of hope – building resilience through play psychotherapy for year 6 pupils transitioning into secondary school**. In: U. Herrmann, M. Hills de Zarate, S. Pitruzella (eds) Arts therapies and the mental health of children and young people: contemporary research, theory and practice, Vol 1, ECArTE.research publication.

Gammage, D. (2019). Presentation: **Playful awakening – the surprising and far-reaching power of play in our lives**. Integrative Health Convention, London (October, 2019).

Gammage, D. (2017). **Playful awakening – releasing the gift of play in your life**, Jessica Kingsley Publishing, London.



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Gammage, D. (2017). 5-day workshop: **Working creatively and therapeutically with children**, United Medical and Dental College, Karachi, Pakistan (November, 2017).