

# The Art of Witnessing



in the  
Dark Eros Salon

## *The Art of Witnessing in the Dark Eros Salon*

### *The Dark Eros Salon*

Within the *Dark Eros Salon*, our private membership forum, there is a ceremonial etiquette which serves our growing communion. Like a Japanese tea ceremony, there is a Tao, a *Way*, which when respected and honored guides and contains the energies of the unconscious which are pouring themselves into this vessel of our creationary haven.

These are sacred energies. These are powerful forces. These are volatile energies which burn and destroy, transform and create. These are the authentic raw energies from our depths which we are unleashing so as to fashion ourselves anew. Our Tao cares for these energies so we and others are not harmed by them.

We have a unique challenge as creators and witnesses of this energy in cyberspace. We are not sharing the same physical room. During our live sessions we will have the opportunity to witness each other via the webcam. Yet in the *Dark Eros Salon*, we will be sharing our psyche's movement through our writing and our artwork which we will be posting.



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When we are physically sitting together in a circle, our bodies and facial expressions communicate a lot without having to say anything. Because we do not see each other in cyberspace, we need to respond to by clearly mirroring each other's writing and artwork through our written response.

Therefore I am going to ask each of us to become aware of the sacred laws of engagement with Psyche in cyberspace and practice the Way, the Tao.

### *The Art of Witnessing*

#### *Welcoming the New*

Much like entering a dojo or authentic movement space, we acknowledge when someone new has entered the space, welcoming them as if they are entering our home so they know we have seen, heard and received them. Particularly in the beginning this is vital for we don't know who is reading our words or looking at our art and who is not. We can feel self conscious and nervous entering into a seemingly empty space and exposing our depth process.

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### **Rhythms of contact**

All of us have different rhythms for engaging with the *Dark Eros Salon* and therefore time may lapse before people respond to our work. While our writing and artwork sit in silence, we are contained in this sacred space we have created.

Our work in the *Dark Eros Salon* does require engagement and tending, like a garden, and yet does not have to be voluminous. I suggest if you do not have time to engage, just write a short comment...

"Kathleen, I hear you. Your words are with me. I am your silent witness." Anything along those lines that acknowledges to the author they have been received.

### **Our Words**

Our markings... our writing and artwork... are expressions from our dark hidden psyche, the Self, the deep unconscious, our Daimon, and are not the same as personal communications with each other, though that engagement certainly may happen here.

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***The Art of Witnessing*** is about seeing and being seen. It is about **deep listening**, bringing a specific quality of attention and presence to the experience and work of the creator.

### *The Art of Witnessing...*

*... is to listen, to hear the words of yourself or another through your body rather than your mind. To 'not think', but drop down and in. Feel the sensations that move through you when the other person moves, or when you read their words or view their art. Is there heat? Does your belly constrict? Your toes tingle? What emotions arise to their words? Their images? Their movements? Stay with yourself... and then speak from the I... "I see the woman in the flames. I feel my chest expand and my heart crack open. I weep in joy." We never analyze what is happening with the other person. We let them tell us. We mirror that back to them. And...we stay with our own experience, and tell the story of our own encounter.*



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Witnessing is about acknowledging another's thoughts and feelings without projecting your own thoughts and feelings on them. Unless a person has told you they are angry, we never say....

**"You are angry," assuming this from their words or artwork.**

A key component to witnessing is to speak from the point of "I". We own our experience. We do not own another's.

If someone writes, "I HATE the forces of nature which make me feel so helpless!" Our response can simply mirror their words...

**"I hear your hatred and feel the presence of your helplessness. I breathe."**

Just one phrase echoed back is a powerful act for both witness and mover (writer, artist).

It is also important to communicate what is evoked in ourselves in response to what has been written...

**"I feel heat in my body, energy in my belly, fear of this force of nature."**

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What is evoked in us as witnesses can cause a felt sense of conflict with the image or writing the author is expressing. This is where witnessing becomes the art. Rather than not speak to our truth because it feels in conflict to another, we offer it up, yet own it as our own. We are wrestling with the complex, the archetype, not the individual...

**"I hear your hatred and I feel myself cringing in fear at its intensity. Hatred is not an emotion I am comfortable with."**

or it might be...

**"I hear these words and feel fire in my belly. The image of Kali springs forth from its flames. I dance in my ferocity and feel my own power! I claim my rage!"**

Witnessing in this way creates the scintillating space between the writer/artist/mover and the witness. This is the field from which new consciousness is birthed.

***Out beyond the ideas of wrongdoing and rightdoing there is a field. I'll meet you there.***

*~ Rumi*

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**This is the secret to deep seeing... and being seen.**

We need to discover our Tao of relating that is both authentic to ourselves and supportive of the Other. Through this creation and witnessing of our authentic writing, movement and art, we explore the mysteries of *I-Thou* and *Creator & Witness as One*.

Over time *the Way* will continue to organically evolve and develop as we self realize through this form. What is appropriate now may not be necessary in the future. Let us build upon a foundation of great care and tending to ourselves and each other.



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