

Music-Evoked Imagery

Description

Music-evoked imagery is a music-centred exploration of consciousness that enables you to tap your innate creativity and wisdom, as well as explore and overcome obstacles and challenges. Various imagery forms—visual, auditory, sensory, memory, movement—are experienced when listening to music in an altered state of consciousness while dialoguing with a trained facilitator. By listening to facilitated music, writers can progress plots, develop characters, and contextualize settings.

Music-evoked imagery for writers is a form of developmental editing. For artists and filmmakers, music-evoked imagery serves as a preliminary sketch or storyboard.

Individual and group sessions may be scheduled for one and two-hour time blocks.

Process

1. *Introduction*: You determine the topic for exploration in the session.
2. *Altered consciousness*: An altered state of consciousness is accessed by means of a facilitated deep relaxation induction.
3. *Music listening*: While listening to music in this altered state, you speak the images out loud as you are experiencing them in the moment while the facilitator writes them down, probing for clarification as necessary.
4. *Return to waking*: Following your return to waking consciousness, you process and concretize your imagery using art materials, writing, or both. The facilitator gives you the transcript of your images that were documented during the music.

Early History

Music-evoked imagery for writers is an adaptation of the dyadic Bonny Method of Guided Imagery and Music (GIM). Helen Bonny worked with Stanislav Grof in the 1960s at the Maryland Psychiatric Center where they researched the use of LSD and music with patients who were challenged by addictions or protracted grief. With the loss of LSD research funding in the 1970s, they recognized that music alone was sufficient to effect therapeutic change with patients. They embarked on separate professional paths, with Grof developing Holotropic Breathwork and Bonny developing Guided Imagery and Music.

Bonny's GIM method incorporates theories and techniques of psychoanalysis, waking dream (Mary Watkins), and Guided Affective Imagery (Hanscarl Leuner). Her work legacy continues through the Association for Music and Imagery, ami-bonnymethod.org.

Mary Rykov, PhD

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