



WORLD JOURNAL FOR SAND THERAPY PRACTICE

PROMOTING THE ETHICAL PRACTICE OF SAND THERAPY

Book Review:

Foundation and Form in Jungian Sandplay: An Art Therapy Approach

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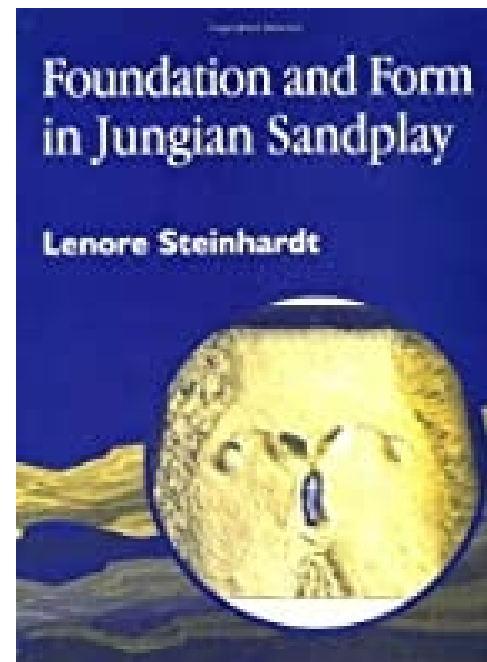
Recently I had the opportunity to travel to Jerusalem and take part in the International Society of Sandplay Therapists' 26th Congress, hosted by the Israeli Sandplay Therapy Association. ISTA featured groundbreaking sandwork with many of the Arab-Israeli, Hebrew-Israeli, and Bedouin communities. One of the members present was Lenore Steinhardt, Sandplay Teacher, Art Therapist, and Jungian Psychotherapist, Director of the Art Therapy and Sandplay Therapy Training Program at Kibbutzim College in Israel.

Let's revisit one of her early books, *Foundation and Form in Jungian Sandplay: An Art Therapy Approach* (Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2000), specifically for her perspective on working with sand forms and water in sand therapy. Ms. Steinhardt's perspective is more in line with sandtray methods, although she terms her work "Jungian Sandplay" (Johnson, 2000, p. 102). I agree with Johnson's view that the limitations of this perspective can be found in her generalizations about art therapists being superior as sandplay therapists by their background and training in visual arts, as well as primarily focusing on training sandplay therapists in group settings rather than through an individual process (Johnson, 2000, p. 103).

Steinhardt's (2000) sections on the use of water are beautifully articulated in terms of controlled drips, flooded trays, and the use of different states of water in trays (e.g., cleansing rituals). She states: "Sand in its dry form flows in response to wind, water or human action. Thus, the notion of flow is present in the sandtray as a natural aspect of both sand and water" (p. 154) and,

The need for seeing and feeling real water in the sandtray may be connected to water's qualities of depth, cleansing, reflection, and flow. Flowing emotion and flowing body movement is a state of release. It may also be a state of integration of inner emotional movement and perceptible outer movement. (p. 157)

She organizes two categories of universally recurrent sand forms children create, using her observations of beach play: manipulations (i.e., filling a mold, drawing lines, impressing, gathering sand, and making mounds) and penetration of the sand surface (digging holes and tunnels, burying and uncovering,



entombing, searching underground). She also distinguishes the use of manipulation of the sand in what she terms the client's possible "instinctual struggle to form a concrete manifestation of one's own psychic *base-foundation* in the sandtray. This creative struggle may resolve when the form that evokes in the sand is sensed as sufficient in itself for that moment, as is, or used as a foundation upon which objects are placed" (Steinhardt, 2000, p. 19). Steinhardt delineates the positive aspects of peaceful resting that manipulating the sand can bring, as well as the challenge for many in the reluctance to engage directly with touching the sand. Additionally, her section on the classification of the natural world materials necessary for symbolic representation of the earth's authentic grounding is exceptional: including metals, stone, glass, crystals, semi-precious gemstones, wood, shells, bones, feathers, and the like.

I encourage sand therapists to enliven their practice of sandtray by drawing on the rich understanding Steinhardt brings to the metaphors inherent in sand forms and manipulation alone. "A hand imprint in the sand may symbolize one's existence and also a request for protection and justice from a divine power (Cooper, 1978). Releasing a 'pie' into the sand world from a filled mold may be like the birth of a new world with some external support still needed (Neumann, 1988, p. 10). The mound or mountain may be experienced as a breast, belly or womb, a container of feminine nurturance. It could also be a Tel - an ancient tomb, or a world center, an on-halos connecting earth and heaven (Cooper, 1978). A cave scooped out of the sand's depths may be sensed as womb or tomb, a place of hidden treasure, a spirit guide or an oracle's residence. A tunnel may provide a passage for transformation similar to a birth (Steinhardt, 1998). Controlled sand drips create lacy spires reaching toward spiritual realms. Flooding dissolves all forms, a mini-deluge that enables later reconstruction of the world with new forms (Steinhardt, 2000, p. 25).

BOOK REVIEWED:

Steinhardt, L. (2000). *Foundation and form in Jungian sandplay: An art therapy approach*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

ISBN-10: 185302841X; 252 pages; Size 6x0.57x9.25 inches

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