

VALENTINA HARRELL

Psychoanalysis as an Art Form: Playing with Metaphoric Dream Language

A clinical vignette will be presented that demonstrates how a private metaphoric language emerged from a dream the analyst had about a patient. By playing with the dream – one that should have felt terrifying, but instead left the analyst amused and curious – served to unlock a treatment impasse. The case demonstrates an enactment communication that required an ability to listen analytically to unlock the mysteries of prematurely foreclosed experiences of closeness, affect, dependency, and vitality in a dissociatively-driven treatment impasse. Attending to the communication within the dream was the key to transforming the analytic process. The enactment initially recreated qualities of closeness that, although staving off the terror of hunger and neediness, also starved both the analyst and the patient. What opened up following the dream was affectively charged fuel that could be transformed into “a good-enough” feed.

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