

STUART D. PERLMAN, Ph.D.

One Man's Journey in Art and Psychoanalysis

My autobiographical journey of healing as seen through art and psychoanalysis will be driven by a PowerPoint slide show of my artistic creations from over a 40-year period. This journey has involved many encounters and escapes, dangers and desires. My life has been a struggle to heal from childhood trauma, to find love, and express my inner passions. Art and psychoanalysis have been inseparable companions at every step, helping each other. My career choice has contained this tension between art and psychoanalysis, especially since art was the career that I did not choose in my 20's. My hope is that this paper will not be just a self-centered self-reflection, but a springboard to facilitate others to examine their own process of self-exploration.

The integration of my art and psychoanalysis is also in the artistic creations themselves. For example, in my 20's I began to draw some of my patients in terms of their dynamics in relationship to me, the transference and countertransference, as a way to work through these feelings. Then, during my first analysis in my early 30's I would draw my own dynamics and then write about it on the drawing.

A theme of my art in its newest incarnation has been to focus on the positive milestones and peak moments of my life, using joy and happiness to counterbalance the focus on pain and horror that is in my psychoanalytic practice and in my writing.

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