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## Experiences of a Holy Fool Workshop

&ldquo;Holy Fool&rdquo; 22-24 August - Woodbrooke

After the initial panic induced by the pre-course request to bring a &ldquo;crazy outfit,&rdquo;----&ldquo;the more bizarre the better,&rdquo; this course led by Angela Knowles turned out to be an experience we felt very privileged to have had. At times uncomfortable, it was an immensely satisfying two days which challenged the safe but boring lives we often find ourselves living.

Using techniques gleaned over many years of passionate interest in this field, from studying drama, to circus school, Angela led us to recognise our inner critic who frowns on risk, playfulness and making mistakes, greatly limiting our joy. We took great delight in exercises to confuse and disempower this part of ourselves.

We worked at getting in touch with our feelings and our playful selves. Most activities were carried out without words and we began to disengage with &ldquo;head&rdquo; and communicate in other ways, with different parts of ourselves. Our task was not to be anything other than we are, not as easy as it sounds, but we all progressed together, and it was FUN!

Making mistakes, we learned, was fine &ndash; even making mistakes the whole time. We learn from our own and others&rsquo; mistakes: if we stay in our comfort zone we learn nothing.&rdquo;

Gradually, we seemed to find ourselves operating from what can only be described as somewhere in the centre of us. It was warm, open and accepting (of ourselves and others). We did exercises to affirm and cherish each other, and to provide a safe place in which to move freely: there were ways of practising awareness of ourselves and others in the constantly changing &ldquo;now&rdquo; in which we live. The &ldquo;crazy outfits&rdquo; were shared with the group as we worked at permitting our &ldquo;inner child&rdquo; to play, explore and create spontaneously. There were also relaxing and meditative times.

Angela Knowles&rsquo; craft was in creating a space where we felt safe to allow ourselves to be physically and emotionally freed up and to stay in that vulnerable place, in the company of others on their own journeys.

When we got to the edge of where we felt safe, we found we able , without trying, to be ourselves; we were, for those precious moments, holy fools.

Jane Seabury and Jane Wrench, Woodbrooke Holy Fool, August 06.