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# SPARK

A set of pedagogical tools leading a learner through different learning paths to the final result, which is the strategic plan for own initiative





In this publication you will find a set of pedagogical methods leading a learner (or a group of learners) through different learning paths to the final result, which is coming up with their own idea for an initiative.

Sometimes young people are in a stage of:

**“I don't know what I want”**

We focused on designing the methods stimulating and re-discovering a purpose of life. How to become “unstuck”. Starting from the moment in the life of total confusion to the stage of doubts or just lack of motivation.

### Chapter 1: **“AWAKENING THROUGH STORIES”**

For those who suffered difficult moments in their lives and needed to „rename” the future, there is a useful method designed by Eliza Zadłużna and Silvia Camagni, named „Awakening through stories”



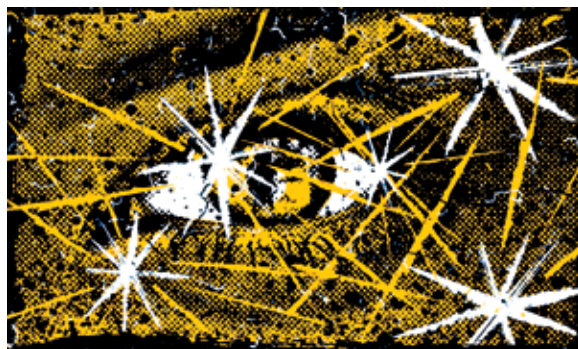
### Chapter 2: **“AWAKENING THROUGH THE BODY”**

For everybody whose body is stiff and needs an impulse through movement, „Awakening through the body”, designed by Marek Zadłużny, would be a suitable method.



### Chapter 3. **“AWAKENING THROUGH THE VISUAL PROCESS”**

For those young people who lost motivation, power or feel insecure or not visible enough, “Awakening through a visual process”, designed by Dagna Gmi-trowicz, would be the right method.



### Chapter 4. **“ONE WEEK SESSION”**

And additionally - ONLY FOR YOUTH WORKERS- One-week session- the method empowering those who temporarily lost the motivation in working with youth - designed by Daphna Saker Massey.



# Chapter 1

## “Awakening through stories”

by Eliza Zadłużna and Silvia Camagni

website: <http://sparkcatcher.eu/spark/awakening-through-stories/>

For those who suffered difficult moments in their lives and needed to „rename” the future.

“When you lose your path, you get an opportunity to discover a world you have never known! And better worlds are often found this way! Darkness and uncertainty hide presents in itself!”

**Mehmet Murat Ildan**

### The story of the heros - our stories

At the beginning there were stories.

Still, to be closer to the truth I should perhaps write that at the beginning there were THE STORIES as each of them is an exceptional example of heroism, going through darkness, looking for a sense in the moments of chaos and doubt, finding inner strength and embracing pain.

They are also the stories of choice - choosing to live rather than surrender and choosing to write the ending to one's own story or even re-writing it completely.

Finally they are the stories of questions, questions which were posed, those which got answered and those which remained as open question marks.

It is also a tale of human encounters, of true connection, empathy and light.



### Questions

Once we started Spark Catcher project very soon it became clear to us that how we perceive entrepreneurship of young people lies beyond the traditional and academic concept.

Quite often the discussion focuses on personal characteristic of entrepreneurs and their competences as well as the systemic approach towards it - i.e. identifying the factors supporting development of self-initiatives.

This approach works in quite many cases - still it misses the basic question:

**“What is the drive? What makes people move? Or going further - in terms of youth with fewer opportunities - what makes them overcome extreme difficulties and succeed?”**

How do they get “unstuck”, how do they ‘unfreeze’, how do they “become alive” again?

And finally **what lessons can we learn from their success stories in order to support those who are still searching their way out?**

## “Awakening through stories”

### Heroes

To have a story one needs a hero (or a heroine). We also needed ones. We were in need of hearing stories from people who managed not only to go through very difficult situations, but also who were able to embrace pain, despair and darkness as they were going through the way to transform themselves and their lives.

We thought finding these people would be a challenge, but in fact it was not.

We simply started by identifying one person that we knew who was meeting characteristics and they led us to another one. And since we were introduced to another person by our acquaintance, trust was built quicker.

So the first lesson we learnt was – **it’s not difficult to find a hero**. In fact everybody knows one. We are surrounded by them, we are one of them ourselves.

The second thing we noticed was that **people love sharing**. They are not only eager to share their story but by doing it they invite us to their world.

They show their “inner scars and wounds” saying “this is who I am and I’m not ashamed of it”. In this way they give you the courage to show your own vulnerabilities.

We interviewed 6 people: 5 women and one man. In the majority of cases the stories were recorded and transcribed, however in some cases the person we talked to refused to be recorded – in such case we just noted down the main points.

Since the stories which people shared were very personal and connected to very sensitive issues (abuse, HIV, experiencing violence, facing mental crisis) all of our interlocutors were assured that their data will be kept confidential and that for our method we will use only small parts of their stories, quotations, inspiration and metaphors.

### Universal story or finding the patterns

From the very beginning it became clear for us that however inspirational and empowering the single stories can be, still they remain the stories of other people.

So the question was: how can the story of somebody else become also my story? How can I see the reflection of my fate in their own journey?

Looking for answers we referred to **the fairy tales and archetypes, myths and metaphors** as the ones which are universal, the ones which connect, the ones which **capture the richness of human existence in a deep and symbolic way**.

To be able to work on this level – we decided that from the very beginning, from the moment of collecting the stories we will not only ask people about what was happening and how they managed to find the solution, but we will also ask them to describe “their journey of coping” in a symbolic way – using metaphors, colours, music, etc.

This helped us to go **beyond individual perspectives, to find common patterns and to create a hero/heroine who is universal**, who can be any of us and, thus, describe his/her journey.

### The journey of a hero

In Joseph Campbell’s monomyth of “Hero’s journey” the tale starts with a call to adventure. However, in the case of our heroes it was not the adventure that was calling but the pain.

**Campbell’s stories start from movement – our stories start from realizing that actually you are not able to move.**

# Being stuck

“I felt trapped under water or buried under a landslide...”

“ I was in kind of sand holes from where I wasn't able to come out. It was a continuous sea wave that was grabbing me here and there without my will, taking me away from my heart and since I can't swim it was even more terrifying.”

“I felt like in a brownish-grey mud I was sinking into. On the one hand, I felt it was pulling me (as there were some things at my work, some people who wanted to keep me there) on the other, I felt it was overwhelming”.

“I felt like standing at the crossroads. There were two ways, but both of them seemed to be “wrong”. That's why I was just standing still, I was afraid to move. Change seemed so dark and scaring for me that I didn't have any energy to make a step in any direction. My life was just emptiness.”

“I felt like I was faking life: I was walking, talking, reading, sometimes even laughing with people, but on the inside I felt just a ghost”.

The story of our heroes starts in the moment of lack of power, the moment of darkness, the moment of pain and despair. Quite often it is being described as the moment of feeling trapped, encaged, dragged by external forces that one is not able to control.

# Catharsis or moment of choice

“I felt like standing at the edge of an abyss – I was afraid to fall, but I could not come back either, as if there was a huge rolling rock behind me which would push me into this abyss.”

“I felt like I was going mad, my head was about to explode. I heard this noise inside my head like a sound of the crowd, but amplified. It was this round, grey sound which could make my head explode. I could not fit it under my skull anymore. I felt I would go mad, or I would have heart attack”.

“I had slowly fallen into a psychotic episode. Four distressful weeks in the hospital; then, long months when I became a mere vegetable due to high medicine doses; lots of medicines with new and strange names; lots of side effects; painful arm injections; psychiatrist appointments and his strange questions; nurses; nausea, despair; crying; over-sleeping; agitation; fear; vivid dreams and nightmares, anxiety; and so many other things alike(...) No job, no money, no strength to hope for anything, no force to enjoy a sunrise, a simple moment in the nature, or a talk with my friends. Numbness. No feelings. No life in my life. Just gray and pain and carton.”

There is a moment in the story when it seems there's no way out, when the pain becomes unbearable, when the darkness becomes thick and heavy like black velvet.

However, **this is also the key moment, as this is the time of a trial and making choices, the moment of looking for hope and faith when it seems that there is no hope.**

Making a choice requires a lot of trust – trust in ourselves and in the others. It actually is, as of our hero said, like falling from the abyss not knowing what awaits for us there.

Still, it is also a moment of relief, a moment of letting go, a moment to surrender in a positive, empowering way. Thus, it reconnects us to the very basic and human will of life.

And this the moment of choosing to live rather than to surrender, which leads us to the next stage of our journey called redemption.

# Redemption/enlightenment

“I got the courage to jump and it turned out that it was a river down there and there was a treat (a boat) and people sitting on it took me from this river and saved me.

And once I jumped my dream was born. It was a first dream that was truly mine – before I was just meeting expectations of the other people. And this was a dream about “being myself”. This dream was like a candle light in the darkness, like a last spark of hope and it saved me.”

“It felt so calm. The noise in my head has stopped and the colour of the picture became orange as orange means energy—it is a combination of two colours: red which means power, courage and yellow which means sun and energy.”

“I felt like leaving the cage. Before I felt like an animal in the circus, put into the cage after the show and now I could leave it. I was free”.

**Redemption is the moment of letting light appearing into the darkness. It is the moment of reconnecting to the ourselves, to others, to the world.**

Quite often it feels like being “high”, becoming a new person, seeing the beauty of the world, the intensity of its colours with the new eyes.

“Before I was living at the grey land, overwhelmed with responsibility, harm and huge feeling of guilt. I felt like living in a cave, overwhelmed with a huge bag of rocks and thanks to the therapy and run out of that cave and I saw rainbow. I climbed that rainbow and I started to fly as I understood that I was not guilty of my husband drinking and the way I was looking – it was “co-addiction”. I left that cave and I started to fly so high that my therapist had to bring me back to the earth”.

However this is not the end of the journey – this is just connecting to the energy and joy of an inner child in order to use them to go one step further.

# Integrating pain or becoming a hero

“I was afraid to look into the mirror, I was just sneaking out not to look into it. For me the mirror was always telling the truth but I didn’t want to see it. I was putting different layers/filters between me and the mirror, so I didn’t have to see myself. And my work was to remove these foils, these layers, as if the mirror was hidden behind several other glasses which were painted. Working on myself, I managed to move these layers, stand in front of the mirror and touch it. Once I touched it, it became water and I could go through it and see the reality the way it was. I stopped to be afraid and to treat the mirror like my enemy – I understood that it tells the truth.

I was living at the other side of the mirror but then I went through it and I saw the real picture – real me.”

“As time passed by, I also learnt that the pages my life will keep forever some unanswered questions. Sometimes, we just have to accept this. And learn to live with a “background” pain”.

Hearing the stories which were shared we learnt that **what creates a hero is not to get rid of pain, but rather to embrace it as a part of a human existence.** It is to learn that some questions will simply remain unanswered, that light can’t exist without darkness and that tears are the reverse of happiness and joy.

It is to allow and express our vulnerability in searching for love and ability to give your own support and empathy when needed. It is to see and experience life in its richness and complexity and still at the same moment in its simplicity.

**It is choosing to write your own story, making it meaningful, giving it your own title.**

It is, what you make it be. Nothing more, nothing less...

# How to get there?

It would actually be great to finish our story here, as this would truly be a beautiful conclusion: people transformed, birth of the heroes, the happy ending.

Still, what remains is this one crucial question:

## **How did they do it?**

How did they find the inner strength to jump from the abyss, to leave the cage, to look for the spark of hope in the sea of despair?

And finally **are some of their strategies to be repeated?**

## **Can I use them to find a hero in myself, to start writing another story of my life?**

Dr. Ofra Alylon who was working with survivors of disasters identified different strategies used by them in order to make a choice from being a victim to becoming a victor and to go through a “healing spiral” that pulls people up and transforms them.

Some of these strategies were also mentioned by the people whom we interviewed. They served us as the initial starting point for looking for inspirations for “sparks of hope” that were pictured in our on-line game with animated symbols.

Analysing all the coping strategies which people mentioned, they fall into three main categories:

**1) Connecting to yourself** - increasing self-awareness and ability to use one’s own potential

**2) Connecting to others** - finding the support of the others, trusting them, experiencing empathy and love

**3) Finding the meaning of it or writing a new story** - embracing pain and treating it as transformational experience shaping us and helping us to connect to our true selves.

Below you will find the description of metaphors (part of interviews) combined with coaching tasks that correspond to each of these three coping strategies.

These metaphors and coaching tasks are the ones that build the content of our on-line game



# Connecting to yourself

“There were these sand holes, that were swallowing me and I was not able to go out. I felt it was a catatonic, powerless moment. But then when I almost drowned, I took a breath of fresh air and I felt – that’s it. I still want to live, I’m not going to give up, I won’t allow these sand holes to overpower me...”

Even if at this moment it may seem overwhelming and difficult to believe, it is possible to stop your addiction. Still it requires your decision. And to make this decision you need to choose to live. You need to see and appreciate the beauty of life, be ready to experience it without this “glass wall” that addiction creates.

# Connecting to yourself

## Task

Take a sheet of paper and divide it in half (two columns).

Make the list of needs that your addiction helps you to meet (for example not thinking about problems, not feeling lonely, feeling joyful, etc.).

Try to be as honest as possible.

In the second column try to come with alternative ways of meeting these needs (without addiction). If it seems too difficult - try to make "research": observe people, talk to your friends or come back to the memories of time before your addiction started.

Once you are ready with your list - give it a try.

Choose one or two things that you want to start doing and see where it leads you.

Meanwhile - search the internet or your surrounding for the "stories of success": people who managed to overcome the same addiction.

Try to talk to them. Find out what were their first steps?

What helped them to succeed?

Are any of these strategies the ones you would like to try out yourself?

"I started to work obsessively. It felt like running a long marathon, a sweaty one - just not to stop and think about the old patterns.

I felt like a phoenix being reborn after having been killed, full of flames flying in direction of the sky..."

## Task

Think about one success in your life. Come back with your thoughts to that day.

What was happening? How did you feel on that particular day? How did you celebrate your success? Who was there to enjoy that moment with you?

And now think about the way that you took to arrive to that day: what did you do to succeed?

Which of your personal strengths, skills, abilities helped you to achieve it?

Make a list of them and mark these ones, which could help you to get out of your addiction.

At the next steps talk to your family and friends and ask them about what kind of skills, abilities and strengths they see in you.

Put them on your list, too.

"What has helped me, was looking at myself from the outside perspective - putting together confused emotions and making something valuable and creative out of them."

# Connecting to yourself

## Task

Draw a symbolic portrait of yourself.

At your feet put the things that are important for you in life: your values.

At your heart put the things you love, you're passionate about.

At your right hand put your knowledge.

At your left hand put your abilities and skills (things you're good at).

At your head put your dreams and aspirations.

Look at this picture as if you were looking at somebody who you don't know, who is a stranger to you.

What would you say about this person? What kind of potential do you see in him/her? What kind of positive change could she/he make?

What would you like to say to him or her?

"In the middle of despair I found out that there are people around me who love me so much that their life would be over if I ended mine. Or, even if I had nobody around, there are sunrises and breaths of fresh air waiting for me..."

You matter. Your life matters. You can make an impact on your own life and on the life of others.

## Task

Imagine you're getting onto the ship which sails into unknown direction. Finally you reached the land which is a very beautiful island. It is fine in every way but it's uninhabited. You have the power to create this island to be whatever you want.

When you arrive there, what is the impact you want to make, that's going to create the island the way you want it to be?

You come to the shore and get off the ship. You touch the ground and say: "It's going to be this way". What is "this way"?

"Even if I lost some things, it is compensated by the moment I'm in right now. I can say that I'm happy and grateful at the same moment - it's a good time.

It's like sky after the storm, sunrise after the storm. It's like sailing on sea and coming back to a calm and sunny shore and looking at the sea and seeing no more storms".

# Connecting to yourself

## Task

Turn the clock backward and look at the time in your life when you felt your full power, you felt truly connected to your skills and abilities, to your “true self,” time when you didn’t care what anyone thought of you. You were absolutely alive!

Where were you?

What were you doing?

Who was around you?

What was occurring in them at that time?

What was your impact on them?

And now reflect what this situation says about you and your potential?

What is the spark in you?

How can you keep it alive? Think about very real actions which you could take and note them down.

“During that time I turned from chrysalis into the butterfly, so once my therapist brought me back I was already different, joyful woman - I found colourful shirts, I started making my own jewellery which I was wearing. I started looking differently.”

You are like a precious pearl hidden in a shell. You deserve to be surrounded by people who will see and cherish the best in you, who will help you develop and flourish.

## Task

Write a “letter of appreciation and gratitude” to yourself. Think about all good, positive things that you give to others: your family, friends, your partner, school class, your local community. How do you enrich their life? How do you take care of them? How do you show them your appreciation and love? Include all of these in your letter.

And now think how can you show the appreciation and love to yourself? Make the list of at least 10 things that you could do to show tenderness and love to yourself and start doing them one by one.

“I personally think that what is needed, is to activate our own personal source, God in us, the immortal part of ourselves. We are our own solutions and the only possible solution that I see is to become active actors in our life”.

You have your place here and your unique mission. Once you find it, you can become a king or a queen of your life. You deserve success and self-fulfilment and you have all the resources needed to achieve it.

# Connecting to yourself

## Task

Take a piece of paper and divide it into three spaces. In the first one which represents your past come back with your memories to your childhood. Who did you want to become then? What kind of things did you want to do in life? What did you dream about? Write down/draw your reflection.

Now focus on the second part/space at your paper which represents your Present.

What are your current dreams? Are they the same that they used to be in the past, or have they evolved? If yes, in which way? Where are you right now when it comes to realisation of your plans and dreams? Note down/draw symbolically your main thoughts.

Now move to the third space at your paper which is devoted to your future. Think where would you like to be in 5-years' time? How would you like your life to look like? Where would you like to live? With whom? Where would you like to work? How would you like to spend your free time? What would give you the feeling of fulfilment and inner balance?

Draw a picture of your future life.

Now try to connect all 3 perspectives (Past, Present and Future). What connections do you see between them? How can you use resources from your Past and Present to create Future you desire?

“I was afraid to look into the mirror, I was just sneaking not to look into it. For me the mirror was always telling the truth but I didn't want to see it. I was putting different layers/-filters between me and the mirror, so I didn't have to see myself. And my work was to remove these foils, these layers, as if the mirror was hidden behind several other glasses which were painted. Working on myself, I managed to move these layers, stand in front of the mirror and touch it. Once I touched it, it became water and I could go through it and see the reality the way it was. I stopped to be afraid and to treat the mirror like my enemy - I understood that it tells the truth.

I was living at the other side of the mirror but then I went through it and I saw the real picture - real me. I saw also the possibilities of change...”

## Task

Stand or sit in the front of the mirror. Look at yourself with curiosity: at your face, your eyes, your nose, your mouth, your chin, your hairstyle. Look at the style of your clothes, may be the jewellery that you're wearing.

What kind of person do you see in the mirror? What is his/her story?

Would you like to change anything in the picture that you see? If yes, what? How could you make this change? What will be your next step?



# Connecting to the others

“In these days I really felt that I needed somebody. The warm presence of another person ready to hug me was very important at that moment. It was like a warm blanket which was put around a wet puppy that had stayed for hours in rain...”

You're not alone with your problem. There are people around you who are willing to help you. Perhaps they already tried to do it before. And perhaps you have rejected their help. Still they are there waiting for your move. They are there for you.

# Connecting to the others

## Task

Draw the “universe of your supporting relationships”. Put yourself in the middle and then around mark with different symbols people that surround you who could help you for example with the symbol of the phone- people you talk to, with a symbol of ear- people who are always willing to listen to you, with the symbol of a ball - people you can play/enjoy your time with, etc.

Then - make the first step and make an appointment with some of them. Call them/meet with them and tell them that you need help in overcoming your addiction.

Discuss with them what kind of actions of them could support you.

In addition search for a professional help or self-support groups. Remember that you're not the only one with this problem and that there are already many ways which were discovered and taken by the others which you can try out yourself.

“I felt like standing at the edge of an abyss - I was afraid to fall, but I could not come back either. I felt there was a huge rolling rock behind me which would push me into that abyss. But then, I got the courage to jump and it turned out that there was a river down there and there was a boat and people sitting on it took me from that river and saved me”.

## Task

Gaining support from others requires trust. It is about asking for help and being ready to accept it. It is about expressing your vulnerability and accepting the fact that perhaps you may be hurt since people are just humans, beautiful but imperfect.

So it is time to practice asking for support.

Choose 5 people you would like to ask for help in different aspects. It can be different things (the small ones like helping you with your school project or the more difficult ones: like helping you with taking important decision). Think about what kind of request would you like to make towards them and then try to formulate it. Be precise in formulating your request.

Once you make your request, observe what happens. Do people answer to your request? In which way?

How does it make you feel?

Would you like to express/share these feelings with them? If yes - in what way?

“The question which helped me to get “unstuck” was the one asked by my therapist: “why not now? And I was about to start looking for so many reasons of “why not” and then I realized that they were just excuses...”

The only way to stop your borders being violated is not to wait for the situation to change itself but to take an action and change it now.

If it's needed - look for help.



# Connecting to the others

## Task

Find an adult in your surrounding whom you can trust and ask him/her to support you in finding the way out of your situation.

You don't need to share your personal story with him or her, if you don't want to. Still, they could help to take actions needed to end this situation and feel physically or emotionally safe again.

"I understood that it is about me, that I'm a human being. It was all covered with tears, rebel, pain, but this candle light being inside me was growing a bit bigger. I was sitting in the darkness but this candle light was flashing there and didn't leave me alone. I was trying to ignore this light, turn my back to it, but it was still there.

People gave the oxygen to this light and it turned into a fire and from the yellow light it turned into day light and colours started appearing in my world again.

Before I was living in the grey land, overwhelmed with responsibility, harm and huge feeling of guilt. I felt like living in a cave, overwhelmed with a huge bag of rocks and thanks to the therapy I run out of that cave and I saw a rainbow. I climbed over that rainbow and I started to fly..."

Like a tree you belong to the world and to the others. You are surrounded by people. Some of them share the same interests, the same way of living, the same values. They are your "tribe", you just need to find them.

## Task

Look around and identify possible circles of people sharing the same interests like you or the same values. It can be members of a school club, youth from the youth/cultural centre in your town, your acquaintances meeting to do some sports or going to the cinema together. Think which of these groups would you like to become part of?

If you made your choice, think how could you approach them? Which of these groups would you like to belong to? What will be your next move?

"When I think about love I associate it with hope and faith. They are all interconnected.

When I was thinking that I lost my love it was not true - there was still in me that desire to love and be loved, it was there together with that spark of hope".

Sometimes it is difficult to open yourself to love and be loved as we all have the fear of being hurt and rejected. Once it happens to us, it becomes even harder to trust somebody again. Still, there is no other way to be seen but to go behind the walls you created around yourself and show your vulnerability as this is what makes you unique, this is what makes you human.

## Task

Identify people in your surrounding who may need support (for example your elderly neighbours, children from the surrounding, your school mates). Think how could you offer them "a gift of empathy" (by helping them in everyday tasks, playing with them, listening to them, etc.). Try to make such "gifts of empathy" to at least 3 people from your list.

What did you do? How did people react to your "gift of empathy"? How did it make you feel? Did you receive "any gift" from them in return? If yes, what was it?

What did this experience teach you about interaction with other people?

Taking into consideration what you have learnt, what will be your next steps?



## Finding the meaning of it or writing a new story

“Even if I couldn’t do much, I realised that I was still doing some things and it gave me the sense that I was doing some actions in order not to feel useless and powerless. So as for start – just do small things, don’t build the whole house, may be just may be just put two bricks one along the other. And you need to have the sense of realism. Sometimes you have to accept things as they come and you can’t do much. But still try to do something, even if it were the small things – try to do it. I managed to give sense to my life through these small things that I was trying to do”.

Maybe you feel there’s no way out. You feel stuck, not able to move.

Or maybe on the contrary – there are too many options, which make you paralysed with fear of making the right decision.

In both situation you may feel that you have lost your direction, your power, ability to choose the life you want to live.

Still, there are some aspects in your life which you can control and aspects that you can make choices about: starting from the simple ones (for instance: what clothes do you want to wear today or what are you going to have for your breakfast), and moving to more complex ones: (for example to how are you going to react to what was said to you by your parent/teacher/friend).

# Finding the meaning of it or writing a new story

## Task

Create a “diary of everyday choices”.

Take a notebook and every day try to write down the choices you have made: starting from the simplest ones (about the meals you were eating or way you took to school or work), going to the more complex ones.

Try to analyse what factors affect these choices. What makes you to choose that particular option rather than another one?

How free do you feel in your decisions?

At the last stage allow somebody to ask you this question:

“What would you do if you were not afraid?” Make this person ask you the same question for 3-5 min. while trying to answer it.

Ask your partner to write down your answers.

Then, ask him/her to read loudly what you have just said.

“On that day my dream was born. It was first dream that was truly mine – before I was just meeting expectations of other people. And this was a dream about “being myself”. This dream was like a candle light in the darkness, like a last spark of hope and it saved me”.

## Task

Sit down or lie down and play relaxing music in the background.

Ask somebody to read slowly the text below:

“Try to imagine that you’re going through the dark forest. You see no path, you feel lost.

You see the shadows dancing around you, you hear the sounds of trees and animals. It really scares you.

However, at one moment you remember that there is something in the pocket of your jacket. You take it out and it turns out that it is a torch. You switch it on and suddenly everything looks differently. Forests changes its shapes, it looks more friendly, there are no more dark shadows and you can finally see the path.

Follow this path, take it with your open heart and with the courage. Where does it lead you to? What is at the end of it?”

Now take the crayons or paints and draw what you have just seen at the end of the path. May be it was just abstract colours or may be it was more precise image.

What does this picture represent to you?

What does it say to you about you and your future choices?

What will be your first step to go into direction of the vision which you saw the end of the path?

# How does our method work?

When we started working on our method, the challenge that we encountered was: **how to encourage youth who were struggling with very difficult situations to make use of it at all?**

How to attract their attention, how to make them “click” on it?

The answer came with observation, talking to young people and friends was very simple: an on-line game.

We decided to create it in a form that is attractive for young people: so it is simple, colourful, playful and still touching “heavy subjects” at the same time.

It is as far as possible from academic approach, at the same moment it incorporates a dozen years of experience of our work as artists, trainers and coaches.

So here it is. It starts with a pretty dark, rather depressing landscape with some volcano craters showing bubbles with initial questions once you draw your cursor over them.

These initial questions are indicators of 5 different dilemmas that the user of the game may be facing which are:

- ▶ Addiction
- ▶ Finding no sense in life
- ▶ Having no satisfactory relationships (or even being a victim of physical or emotional abuse)
- ▶ Having low self-esteem
- ▶ Feeling that you have no control over your life

These dilemmas were the ones that were identified during our interviews as well as they were the ones appearing very often in our work with young people over years.

After clicking on one of the initial questions, an user is coming to the picture of a monster – symbolising the inner struggle, the moment of pain and despair connected with that particular dilemma.

This is also a visual representation of “getting stuck” situation, which is also underlined with description of feelings or attitudes connected to it.

At that point, we decided to combine the image with words as it makes the message stronger and addresses different communication styles (both people who respond more to visual symbolic language as well as those who are more into words).

What comes afterwards is a variety of animated symbols that indicate different possible paths to try on or behaviours which can help one to get unstuck.

These symbols were chosen based on images and metaphors appearing in the stories of people who we interviewed.

User may choose the symbol being connected to it, or she/he can do it randomly. It doesn't matter as the idea behind it, is simply to play with it and try it out.

Once the symbol is clicked, user gets to the first screen with text, which shows the consequence of his/her choice and is actually the metaphoric part of one of the interviews, being at the same time the example of “coping strategy” in that particular dilemma situation.

The next screen user goes to, is already a coaching task related to that particular coping strategy. The aim of this task is to help the user make the first step towards “getting unstuck”.

All texts and tasks used in our online game have been already described above in this publication. What is to be added here, is to underline that many of these coaching tasks are based on years of our coaching practice with several clients while some of them were uniquely designed for the purpose of our on-line game.

At the end of the game, after going through coaching tasks, user comes to the place where the inner dilemma is solved, which is represented by change in the landscape as well as transformation of the monsters.

Monsters get transformed, still they don't disappear completely. This was for us the way of passing the message that what is important is not forgetting or denying painful experience, but rather integrating it and transforming into self-growth and integrity.

So I guess – now it's time to try it out.

## How can you use it?

Our on-line game can be used in different ways.

On the one hand, it is designed as a **tool of intervention to be used by an individual** on their own which means that a young person (or anyone else) who is facing a particular dilemma in his/her life can play with it, get inspired and make use of some coaching tasks with the intention that they will help them to get unstuck.

On the other hand, it is also a **tool for dialogue** that you as a youth worker or a coach may use as an inspiration for a conversation with a young person about his/her situation.

You can use the coaching tasks which are included in our game to work with him or her, or you can come up with your own, getting inspired by the tasks in the game.

Finally - you can also use our game as **an inspiration for working with a group**.

You can take the structure of the game and use it creatively to prepare a short workshop.

You could start by asking people to share their stories of "being stuck" situations and ask them to come up with metaphors describing them.

Another suggestion would be to ask them to draw a monster representing this situation.

Then in small groups people can brainstorm possible ways they see to go out of this situation, or they can try in pairs some of the coaching tasks included in our game.

Or... There are plenty of possibilities and we are sure that knowing your group, you will know best what their needs are concerning the topic and the ways of working.

What we would like to encourage you to do is to give it a try and have the courage **to talk about "heavy topics" with lightness and creativity**.

Finally, we would be happy if you **share your story with us**: story of the difficult moments you managed to get through, story of the coping strategies you used, story of people who supported you on this way, story of change you experience or the ones you would like to experience in your life.

We would also be grateful if you share **your feedback** on our on-line game itself.

You can share with us what worked well, or what should be improved as well as upload your own coaching tasks.

We want to **make this tool alive**, responding to your needs and also expanding following your ideas and creativity.

"For every item that carries the darkness of humanity there's one that holds the light. And that light is worth believing in. Not just in others, but in yourself as well."

**C.M. Rayne, The Forbidden Land of Andara**