



Imagination

"Row, row, row your boat gently down the stream. Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily, life is but a dream." ~ Children's folk song ~

What wonderful worlds imagination conjures up, maybe even this one. When I was little I remember using my imagination or 'make believe' as a time to play and have a lot of fun. One could have a world of fairies and elves or at Halloween hobgoblins and witches. Whatever you wanted, there it would be. It was a way to explain ordinary occurrences with magical explanations. One example is the tooth fairy bringing money in exchange for a tooth that had fallen out, or presents appearing under the Christmas Tree magically brought by Santa flying through the air with his reindeer.

There were no limits to who or what you could become if you used a little imagination. You could play Cowboys and Indians, or Cinderella finding Prince Charming. Little girls make up stories playing with their dolls, while little boys do it playing with toy soldiers or toy trucks. You could also be a King, Spiderman or Wonder Woman.

One of my favourites was to play 'dress up,' pretending to be a grown-up, which of course I would be one day. That is the interesting part of imagining; we make up a story and then act as if it is true. It is not that different than the life situations people are living out everyday. People do not all of a sudden become a judge or an architect. They usually envision or imagine themselves as those things, then plan or see images of how to get from here to there. Perhaps that is why we ask children what they want to be when they grow up. They can begin to imagine what they might like to be, try it on, and see if that is what they really would like to do.

Children pretend to be Mommies and Daddies, play Doctor, etc. In this way they are getting some practice at what may lie ahead for them. They actually are creating or planning their life by imagining it. Some

people believe we are the sum of all our experiences and that what has happened in the past shapes who we become. If this is true, then what we imagine shapes our everyday waking reality.

Imagination can also be a flight of fancy that has nothing to do with the 'real world' – or does it? Look at the popularity of books and movies of science fiction, fantasy, and heroes with superhuman qualities. Recently, *Harry Potter* and the *Lord of the Rings* were huge successes not because they were a factual depiction of reality, but because they were not. The writers took advantage of their imagination to create worlds where there were new and different ways of being. This, in turn, opens people to new possibilities in the way they view their own world. Seeing new ways to approach old familiar problems, we get an opportunity to achieve peace and balance instead of getting bogged down in the same old patterns and tendencies.

Imagination is a great tool for learning. Through viewing someone's fictional reality we see parallels to our own situation. Maybe our entire reality is first created in an imaginary way and then brought down to play on the earthly level. One friend of

mine often says, "I am making it up as I go along." When he first said this it made me stop to wonder whether this is what we all do. Maybe this is how everyone's life is. We first see (imagine) the possibilities and then create on the real worldly plane. What a concept! Often times our mind keeps us so busy we do not understand how simple it all really is. Imagination is a tool that helps us create our life. If we understand that we are the creators of our lives then we can also take responsibility for that life. This opens us to a new level of compassion, love, and understanding. We see we are very similar to everyone else and are creating our lives in the same way. Through the power of imagination the world is created.



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