

## **TRANSFORMING THE LOWER SELF *A RITUAL OF RENEWAL***

*Jill Neitlich with Ellen Ronis drumming*

This ritual was originally created for and preformed on the May Core weekend as an experiential rendering of Lecture #138, “Desire for and Fear of Closeness.” The combination of ritual and Core Energetic group process creates a uniquely powerful experience. In ancient times among nature-based peoples, when there was no separation between human, nature and spirit, the rituals enacted had a transformative power, such that the symbolic acts performed in the ritual altered the psyches and bodies of the participants. Ritual draws on the transformative power of the imagination, as does this ritual.

After a brief discussion of the elements that block us from fully opening our hearts to love, we began a meditation on the Lower Self and the primal energies, asking participants to get in touch with their own unique negative intention and the places in their bodies where they withhold from life and love. At the close of this meditation I invoked the spirit of the ritual the group was about to perform. I asked them to imagine that they are members of a village where once a year for one day everyone in the village is given free reign to express all the negativities and resentments that have built up over the past year. It is emphasized that this ritual is essential to the renewal of the tribe, because only when the negativities of the Lower Self are transformed in this sacred ritual can the members of the tribe live together in cooperation and love.

Accompanied by Ellen drumming, the group members acted out their Lower Self, exaggerating the held, tight places in their bodies, and giving voice to their rage and hatred. After this group interaction, a circle was formed and the sacred vessel of transformation was placed in the center. Participants were invited to step into the center and reveal their Lower Self. Drumming accompanied each person, the group responded, and I challenged and encouraged participants to energize their Lower Self.

Once everyone had stepped into the circle and revealed their

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Lower Self, each participant was invited to cast his/her Lower Self into the sacred vessel, pulling and throwing it off from the will center and the reptilian part of the brain. The group encouraged each person in her/his struggle. With the Lower Self cast off, participants wilted down to the ground in a symbolic death of old patterns and structures that supported their bodies, and became like jello. From this place, they were asked to experience the life force re-informing their bodies. They began moving slowly, one limb at a time, feeling its new fluidity and grace. I invited them to move about the room feeling their defenselessness and the openness of their hearts, and then to begin making contact with others. They were told they were being bom into a new world where there was no need to fear love. The sacred vessel now holds (imaginary) flowers, symbolic of the transformation undergone, and each participant was invited to approach the vessel and inhale the essence of his/her inner beauty and truth.

