

Imaginal Education Lecture #1

Good Evening. We want to welcome you to the Imaginal Education course offered by the Institute of Cultural Affairs. The ICA began working with the different sectors of people who work within a community in education. As the ICA grew we discovered that there were people in many sections of society who were concerned with being a community, not just in a geographical area, but also in their workplace. The three courses we are offering you this week are all concerned with training you in methods of teamhood, of corporate activity and of motivational skill.

We are going to be training you first in something called Imaginal Education or image changing. Another word we use for this course is one we either made up or use in a particular way. The word is "selfhood." At the conversation tonight, someone made a comment on "not being in control of their lives in their workplace." Selfhood is being in control of your life and of the images that direct your life. Imaginal Education is our method for how you get in control of your lives so you see you are making your own decisions rather than letting someone else make your decisions for you.

Our second course this week is on CS-1 or Cultural Studies in the 20th Century. It talks about the changing times. You have a joke in your participant's packet of a cartoon character that says "I feel like I have spent my whole life preparing for a world that doesn't seem to exist." The CS-1 Course is a context on how to interpret this shifting world.

The third course this week is called LENS. Just like the lens in a camera, it is the perspective you use. This is a method that we teach for organisations that want to be unblocked in some arena-perhaps in effectivity or maybe in learning how to listen to their employees. This course will be a tutorial or you will learn the method by actually teaching it.

So we are giving you three things this week: a method for releasing people to live out of positive images; a context for living in our changing times; and the skill of working with a team.

In this course we are training you to be educators in the 20th Century. Now this is not the kind of educator who uses a chalkboard and sits at the head of a class. No, most of us work in particular work places where we are concerned with images that people have in their workplace. But we don't always and maybe never teach formally. We are working this week on the informal ways of shifting the images inside an office.

This is a 5 session course. Friday night we are going to start with how you shift images, or how you change images. Saturday, we have 2 sessions. In the morning we will talk about how you use a life method for reflection that enables you to seriously see the meaning and significance of what you are actually doing, and the interior dialogue you have with yourself. Then in the afternoon we are going to talk about how you create a comprehensive plan or training design that is in this mode of informal education. In the evening we have a great rest and relaxation, being able to talk through issues and trying to figure out how to sort out our brains with the swirl of all the things we learned that day. On Sunday morning we talk about the style of this educator. And if you know anything about the ICA you know that style has to do with the corporate style of teams. Then we will end up with the fifth session by talking about the practical implications.

Now if at anytime during this talk you don't understand me and you think I'm not going to clear it up in the talk and it is stopping you from hearing, please yell out or raise your hand or signal in some way and ask the question.

This talk is on image changes. A few years ago in Chicago I was celebrating a friend's 35th birthday. In the midst of the party she burst into tears and cried out that she was now over the hill. Her husband and I who are both older blurted out at the same time: "I'm older than you and I'm not over the hill." After we had stopped laughing, we began reflecting on this. She had this image, this picture in her mind that when you are 35, you are over the hill. She started talking about when she was in the university and even before that, people talked about 35 being the turning point when you could no longer go back. For myself, being 40, I had thought 40 was that year. Anyway, people had told her that when you are 35 you look back at where your life is going and you will realise that you are probably not going to marry someone else and your children are pretty much on the road to whatever it is they are going to be, and you are not going to choose another career and most likely all the alternatives that you could have had are no longer available. At 35 you are stuck in where you are now and are over the hill.

We began talking about our own images then; where we got them and how they were determining our behaviour. Where did we get the image that any age is over the hill? Everyone lives out of images and it is always an event or an occasion that reminds us or calls us to consciousness what this image is that we live out of. These images affect our behaviour. The way we act, the moods we have, is because of the images we

have of ourselves. Now everyone has a picture that either releases or stops them from quality living or what I like to call profound living.

First, I want to read you a story about somebody who has a crippling image about himself and about an educator who changes that image.....Journey to Ixlan

This concept of images I find interesting because images have to do with your freedom. This is a presupposition of Imaginal Education. You receive or reject images based on how they relate to the reality of your experiences.

Look at Don sitting there. Did you know he was a liar and a thief? He always lies. Sandy and Barry told me so and I have a lot of proof of it. Now, do you believe this? What is your experience of Don and what is your experience of those who make such sweeping statements? If my statement does not fit with your experience then it doesn't shift your image of Don(maybe of me, however) and thus, it does not shift your behavior toward Don.

However some images seem to be based on partial truth or a reduced understanding of the situation and can become an operating picture for you. How do you ensure that you live out of helpful images, those that enable you to live a profound life, a life of your choice and creation?

Imaginal Education is a method in selfhood. I don't know if you are familiar with the philosopher from the 19th Century, Soren Kierkegaard but he made a statement of selfhood that I had to memorize in school. It went like this: the self is a self that relates itself to itself and by willing to be itself grounds itself transparently in the being that posits it. Or the key to being in control of your life is that when you are in the midst of a situation in which a response is required of you, you respond out of an image of yourself. Perhaps you are defensive, or you laugh it off, or you ignore it or go sulk. Now SK says everybody has those defensive situations and those responses. What it means to be a self

is to be able to step back from that situation and say, "Am I willing to be the self tht I am, that I find myself being in this situation?"

I was ill last year in Africa and they could not tell what it was. Finally I was told I had a severe form of inflammatory arthritis and could end up in a wheelchair. This later proved to be wrong. Now anyone who knows me knows that I pride myself on being in control. I have a reputation for my confidence. But when the doctor told me that, it only took about half a second for me to fall apart. All the stories I had told myself about how I would respond to bad news were gone. If they had told me that I had cancer, I had a story prepared for that or if I was going to be in bed for 3 months, I had a story for that. But the button they pushed was wheelchair and I said: "Get out of here, I don't want to talk to anybody, close the door and stay out." Later, with the enforced help of my colleagues who did not stay away, I was forced to say to myself that I don't want this situation. So am I going to be willing to admit that I am the person that does not live up to my own expectations of being confident and the one who fell apart so quickly?

Now once I was able to say yes, which was not at all easy; once I was willing to say yes then I was able to decide what image I was going to live out of. Now there were many images I had to contend with--a wheelchair means for me something like a half life, no more work in the field, being only able to work partially at my work. But other friends came in and began giving me new images that would release me to live a new life. But I could not have chosen those images if I had not first been willing to be the self that I am.

That is what we call selfhood. Selfhood is being able to stand outside of yourself and will to be yourself. If you will to be yourself you then are able to make a decision about who you are. This is not only images you have of yourself but also images you give other people. I would suggest that most of the images today are formed from the popular media rather than the family or close cultural groups.

Society is always beaming messages at me that form the basis of my images of what it means to be a human being. In this particular time of conflicting and changing values and priorities, responsibility has to do with who decides my images: society or myself. And then , in the same way I find myself reflecting images of society and beaming them at other people. How do I become self conscious and intentional about the images I do beam at others?

There are 3 basic types of images we beam at others:
contextual images; relational images; and attitudinal images.

What is a contextual image. There was a newspaper article in Chicago recently about the pre-teenage girls who are having babies. It is getting so severe among the 11 and 12 years old who are having these illegitimate children that they have hired elementary teachers so they can get the equivalent of a standard 6. As I read that story my mind blocked it out. It was such a terrible bit of news that I just stopped thinking about it and tried to close down my consciousness. Part of this is because the burden is just too much but part of it was that I did not have a context to receive this data. Why are these children having children. Give me a context for this or my only response is something like, let's bomb this city and start over again. I don't want to live in a world where this is going on. So we started talking and somebody was trying to give me a new image, a new context for what was happening. They started talking about the breakup of the family, particularly in the city and the consciousness of children. Children were saying they weren't going to stay in their situation, they were going to get out of it and this was the way they were going to get out. Like the recent teen suicides, this was the cry of help. And all of a sudden I had a brand new context out of which I could receive this. Well, what it means for us to live out of images and beam those images is how you create a context that enables people to see the very struggle of the issue that is going on rather than the absolute impossibility and the hopelessness of the situation.

Here is another example of contextual images. I have a good friend who just turned 50. I called her to wish her a happy birthday and I said "What does it feel like to be 50?" And she said "There is something wrong because I have all these images of being 50 and I don't fit in any of them." So we began recreating our context for what it meant to be 50 so our images fit the reality rather than trying to force her into images that did not fit.

Images do come at you in peculiar ways. My sister who is 6 years older than I sent me a picture of herself with brown hair and I sent her a picture of myself in my grey hair and asked her why she didn't have any. Well, she had all these images of why it was wrong to have grey hair and how no one would respect her and so forth. I wrote back that living in Kenya with grey hair was a great advantage--I got seats on the bus and was served first in stores and generally treated with great respect. When you live in a 3rd world nation you get a different context beamed at you which gives you the

chance to question your previous context. Images change because something challenges them like this ,but more on this later.

The second kind of images are relational images or how you fit things together in a screen that allows you to futuristically interpret things. This triangle is helpful to me as my screen for discerning the context people live out of. On the left hand side is the objective data--what is going on, what are you seeing and hearing. On the right hand side are the trends. What has been going on in society for the last 5 years; it is a cycle of hope/hopelessness; crime/law and order, or what? If the objective data is this and the trend is that, what are my alternatives. This screen gives me a way to receive and store data when a decision is required.

Or this triangle that we will be using in LENS: Economic, Political, Cultural. The analysis of society--is your community healthy. Let us look at it. Are you self-sufficient in terms of economics? Are people satisfied with the acting policy and decision making forms in your workplace? And culturally, what is their story of themselves, how do groups interact with each other in a helpful way; how does education go on?

Or this screen of an X we used with the Aboriginal community here in Australia. How are they related to the 20th Century world(at the top); what is their self story that gives them self esteem(at the bottom); how do they creatively use their past(on the left)and how to they plan for the future(on the right)? I don't know what I would have done with all the half understood conversations I had when I spent a year with the Aboriginals in Arnhem Land, Northern Territory without this or some other relational screen.

I was terrified listening to some newscasters' relational images: the cause and effect screen. "They were violent so the only thing left to do is to close that section down, use violence back... Or the images that the wrong people live in the city and the good people live in the rural. Everyone has some kind of relational screen of how they categorize or put things together.

Now the last type of images are the attitudes that you teach. We have four basic attitudes that we see can either block people or enable them to use their human freedom. The first one is related to the world. The world seems too complex for us to cope with or maybe I don't have control over this world because it is too complicated. Well the images we are beaming in this course is that this world is complex but it is a challenge, it is the stuff out of which you create your future.

Here we use the image of the self. There seems to always be this one underlying problem, wherever we go--that people see themselves as victims. There is something wrong, I can't do it, there is some reason why I am not the one to change it. The circumstances are wrong, the country is wrong, the times are wrong, I'm not educated enough, I've made too many mistakes in the past, I don't know how to do it, I'm just a victim to what ever is going on. For a while I did think there were other issues but I think it all comes back to people do not have the belief in themselves with any kind of conviction.

Then the past. People do not know how to affirm the past that they have and take the past as this treasure house of uniqueness in history and resources out of which you create and live in the now. Some say that we want to only live in the now and not in the past or the future. But they don't know how to live in the now because they are afraid of the past and afraid of the risk of the future and therefore can not creatively stand and put their passion in the present now.

This last one is the future. People do not know how to stand open to the future. They cannot see that standing open to alternatives is the only way to maintain their human freedom.

Now, my first assignment as a teacher outside the U.S. was in Australia, up in Arnhem Land and we taught with the aboriginals. One of the gimmicks was to write a song, using this screen of world, past, future and the self. They were tribal aboriginals. They were not town. They were still related to their past and the song they wrote was-(well, then I didn't really believe we could teach through images, I didn't think they could do it.) We left the room in order to force ourselves not to help them. They had to come up with a tune, and the words. The song they wrote was the one we sang "Journey on, journey on, all of Mankind, future is waiting for you. Struggling, stumbling all of life through, future is waiting for you. Opportunities, opportunities, all in your

hands, our life is limited to foretell. All of your own and nature of unseen, future is waiting for you."

Then they did one from their past to the present. "Ancestors of our land, I bring you back to present time. Walkabout, living on the land we knew. New world you never dreamed of is in our hands." I realised, I didn't really believe the assignment I gave them. I didn't think they could do it. I think it cured me forever. People want a way to articulate that they are willing to live, not die in this world. And willing to say yes to the world, to themselves, to the past and to the future.

Now why doesn't everyone teach in images? There has been a crisis in education in our time. We are learning that education is more than a matter of information. Maybe the computer revolution that was mentioned in the meal conversation pushed us into this. But people want to know how to do things, not just what to do. They want to be able to use what they have, not simply to learn. We have an educational triangle here that talks about learning through facts, through values, and through interpretation. Now I have been in both the British and the American school systems. The British school system teaches facts, how to get data. And the American system is big on interpretation. Americans want their children to go to the British system so they can get a "basic" education. And British like the American system for challenging the children to be creative. The difficulty is that neither system is too good for including all three poles so those who are good at memorization do well in the British system and those who don't like to get the basic data but love to spin off into theories do well in the American system. But those who want a comprehensive system: one that emphasizes data, a relevant value system, and a method for interpreting are not in luck.

The crisis in education is how to learn to take the facts, find out what the values are and interpret it. The option is to continue with lumpsided, or piecemeal education, where you learn this piece and that piece and that piece and it is all supposed to fit together and you are supposed to be able to apply it. I did waste my university education. I read things, I memorised things and I put things down on a test, and I don't remember a thing out of it and I don't use it. Therefore it always horrifies me that I still live out of the image that everyone must go to school. And yet it horrifies me more when I find young people who don't go to school. How do you get an education today? Now, all of this education has to do with the new images out of the times in which we live (which is the course in CS-1 we are teaching in the next 3 days.) Let

me tell you briefly about that course although I will save the detail until later in the week.

There has been a shift in our images because of 3 revolutions that have happened in the 20th Century: the scientific revolution, the urban revolution, and the secular revolution.

In the scientific revolution there has been a shift from the agricultural and mechanical metaphors of society to metaphors of modern society. Like the holograph. Do you know what that means? Once we talked about life as being a matter of planting the seed and nurturing it until it grew to its "real" nature. Or that life was like the principle of the lever. You push up on a rock with a lever and it goes up-a simple one-to-one action, cause and effect. And your images of what it meant to function is that whatever you did should have a direct effect. Someone in the meal said that individuals don't feel that what they do have an effect any more. Well the reason is not because individuals have become less creative but because the times in which we live is an extremely complex universe where a one-to-one relationship is not the reality we experience.

Now what is a holograph? If you could take a picture of this room of people and tear it into pieces and look at any one of the pieces(holographically) you would not see one of the pieces, you would see the whole room in each piece. Like every cell in your body contains the entire gene not one leg or a part of an arm. If we use this image, out of the scientific revolution, I see that my life is not like bits of a puzzle where if I can get it together and pull it into shape and add this bit here I will be a whole person(maybe when I am 50 and have all the parts I am missing). No my life doesn't work that way. It is whole now and it is whole in every second. That is the scientific image I live out of rather than an agricultural image(of the old science)that one day if I am nurtured with the right kind of.....I will grow to be a fulfilled person.

The second revolution in the 20th Century concerns the Urban. There is a radical shift in relationships due to this revolution. There has been a shift from the mode of hierarchy which used the chair of command. I'm the boss and all of you listen and obey or I'm the expert teacher and all of you will do what I say. The only problem with this mode is that it does not work. I was made the supervisor of programs back in Chicago this year and I really thought I would be able to step in and change some of those things I thought needed to be changed. But it doesn't work that way at all. I don't know if they made me boss too late or maybe the universe did change. Today, no one operates out of a hierarchy. Instead, we now operate from a network of relationships. Those who are in power are so in relationship to the others and relative to the situation in that time period. This means the end to abstract power where things were done out a sense of maintaining order. People operate more out a sense of the task and what needs to be accomplished rather than who gives the order.

The third revolution is the secular revolution, a change in common symbols and life meanings. There has been a shift from the one answer, the one truth, the one way to the multi-perspectives. In terms of the political structures, there was a King, a president or a prime minister or whatever. Once we lived as a one focus people; that is, we had one thrust and we had one concern. When you were building Australia there was only one thing and that was being Australia. But we live in a time now where you have 25 demands or major covenants or major responsibilities on your life and what is being demanded is a new understanding of what you are asking to be loyal to and what practically gives your life meaning. We are now a people of one world with many different cultural views, perspectives and everything else. Therefore we have got a brand new world on our hands of what it means to be not the people with one thrust and one story but to be people that have 25 things coming at us. And all of those have to be juggled in relationship to each other.

Now very quickly, if you were going to be this kind of person who self-consciously decides to live out of an image, how does the image change? I'm going to put this chart up on the board. How does an image change? Here is the old image that you are living out of that has to die (Let's say the old image of being over the hill at 35). This image has to die before a new image can come. And the old image dies because it is challenged by a new image. There is never the death of an old image with a new image coming later on. The new image challenges the old image. In the midst of the old image dying a new image is emerging and it is a long process. And sometimes, it is a fragile process.

Sometimes the image is simply shattered and then maybe you rebuild it and say "That never happened." Sometimes it collapses totally and it is broken up enough that you can't piece it back together again. My favorite image collapse happened about 15 years ago when I was cooking for the ICA some kind of lunch-stew, I think. I hate to cook and I have never considered myself a cook but I was assigned to cook lunch. So I was putting in spices and following the recipe and so forth and I was complaining to everybody that came into the kitchen about the fact that I can't cook and they shouldn't put me here. One of my friends came in as I was complaining about the fact that I can't cook. And she said something like "Kaye, quit complaining, you are cooking." Well, that really stopped my world and finally I had to say to myself, "She's right so shut up and keep cooking." Do you talk to yourself like that?

Well, when the old image shatters and you say yes to it (that is where your freedom comes in again) a new image replaces it. Now, what does it mean to be an image changer? As educators, you can see when an image is keeping a person from being a human being and to give new images. How do you give new images? The way you give new images is by giving messages-messages that tell people that the old image is not adequate or it is not quite connected to reality.

Once, when I was teaching in a black neighborhood in an urban ghetto, I was teaching like this in front of a board. And one of the black urban ghetto men was sitting about where Don is now. We had a square table and it was quite crowded between me and the front table and this guy gets up and walks in front of me and goes out of the room. He could have gone around the back, but he walks in front of me and I was really angry at him. Furthermore, when he comes back in he walks in front of me again and sits down. I kept my anger to myself but asked the Dean later just what was going on. He said something like: "He wasn't being rude. He just didn't think you had noticed him. You know he is a ghetto black man and he is used to not having people notice him." Well I started to think about that. When people behave a certain way, they behave that way because of the image they have. The image influences that behaviour and we are beaming messages at them that reinforce that particular image.

Let's see, now. The behavior he had was rudely walking in front of me while I was teaching the seminar. The image was that he was a "nothing" and therefore noone, including myself, would notice him walking in front of me. Now, what were the messages that I was giving him that reinforced that image. Oh yes, I was such a liberal in those days that I

didn't ask him any questions because I thought it would embarrass him. And when I went around the room and waited for everyone's else answer, I skipped over him or went quickly to the next person. I had beamed messages at him during the whole session: "You don't exist, you are not important, you are not capable of being here like the other human beings." And he got the message I and others were and had been beaming at him; and his behavior reflected that image.

I suppose the clearest insight we have in this imaginal education method is the presupposition that you can't change behavior by changing behavior; you change behavior by changing the image; and you change the image by challenging the old one and beaming new messages that relate to the new image.

We have some kids who are pretty noisy in our apartment building and they run up and down the hall and I am invariably going out and saying "Stop it." Now they will obey me as long as I make like a policeman and stand outside my door. But I know that as soon as I go back inside they will start running again because I am not trying to change their image, only their behavior. And if I want to stand there 24 hours and enforce the law I can modify their behavior for a while but that is not using their freedom, it is just being more powerful than they are.

Changing images is not easy. I have another colleague in Africa who was the most chaotic human being I have ever worked with. She is supposed to organize the files, sort the post, and manage the finances in one little village in Kenya. You meet her in the morning and her table has got everything that exists on it in one big mess. Everyone is ready to kill her because the chaos puts us on edge. So we tried to change her behavior by advice. "Why don't you get organized, or do this or anything but what you are doing?" And that doesn't do any good because we aren't changing her image and her behavior falls into the same old mode as soon as we all relax.

Well in image education, the way you change this image so that it challenges the old image is to find out what the old image is and begin reinforcing it with new messages. And those messages have to be beamed from the entire environment-in time, in space and in relations.

so helpful. Our screen is simple: are the images comprehensive, are they futuristic, are they intentional?

Comprehensive images give people the big picture; it enables them to stand before the complex world and the simultaneous demands of the task rather than the particular step. Futuristic images enable people to see alternatives and challenges in everything instead of staying in one place. These images give people a way to see the implications rather than just the task itself. Intentional images give them a way to make decisions self consciously rather than acting out of the immediate. One way we test ourselves is to check with a colleague and to ask: "Is this relevant only to this particular time and situation or can it be adapted to other situations. How can this grow into something more? And did I slide into this or did I make a conscious decision about it."

Well, we are now going to move into our workshop on just how to relate the behavior with the image with the messages and how we can be an agent of change in these images.