



# DISCOVERY 3

## Gathering & Playing

**Grounded to the Earth ,  
Connected to the Sky**  
Barb Kobe

## The Transformative Art of Healing Dolls

**A Guided Process Making Art Dolls for Self Awareness, Discovery and Healing**

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**ONLINE COURSE**  
**April 1, 2016—March 31, 2017**

# Healing Doll Research: Gathering & Playing With

## Welcome to Part 3 of the Discovery Section

In the Artist's Way by Julia Cameron she suggests that every artist do a weekly artist's date.....assigned play. This is how she describes it.

*The Artist Date is a once-weekly, festive, solo expedition to explore something that interests you. The Artist Date need not be overtly "artistic" — think mischief more than mastery. Artist Dates fire up the imagination. They spark whimsy. They encourage play. Since art is about the play of ideas, they feed our creative work by replenishing our inner well of images and inspiration. When choosing an Artist Date, it is good to ask yourself, "what sounds fun?" — and then allow yourself to try it.*

This section is filled with invitations to make an artist date to get acquainted with your healing doll self. While the environment will not necessarily be an one that takes you outside. Think of these more as inner artist's dates. Record your results in your Healing Doll Journal.

Between now and the end of the Discovery period (May 31) research, experiment, play with, gather, collect, and make:

- Identify your learning style
- Answer the 10 questions as relates to you
- Write your intention statement
- Make mind maps of research and ideas; use doodles
- Write with your nondominant hand
- Take meditative walks
- Make collages
- Write Stories
- Write and Draw in Your Journal
- Make Healing Doll Maps
- Gather Your Symbols
- Research Metaphors for Dolls  
(use this when working with your answer to Question 10 in The Ten Questions
- Identify Archetypes and Anthropomorphic Images that You Like
- Play with All the Feeling Assignments
- Research Inner, Outer and Energy Bodies
- Make Paper Dolls
- Draw figurative images in your journal.
- Makes faces out of paper, clay, photographs, stone, fabric.

### Developing a Style

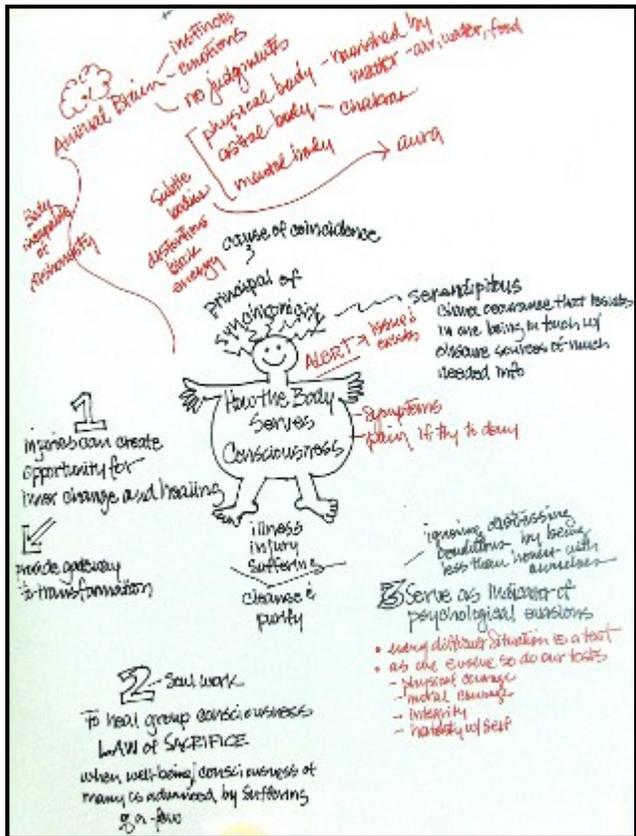
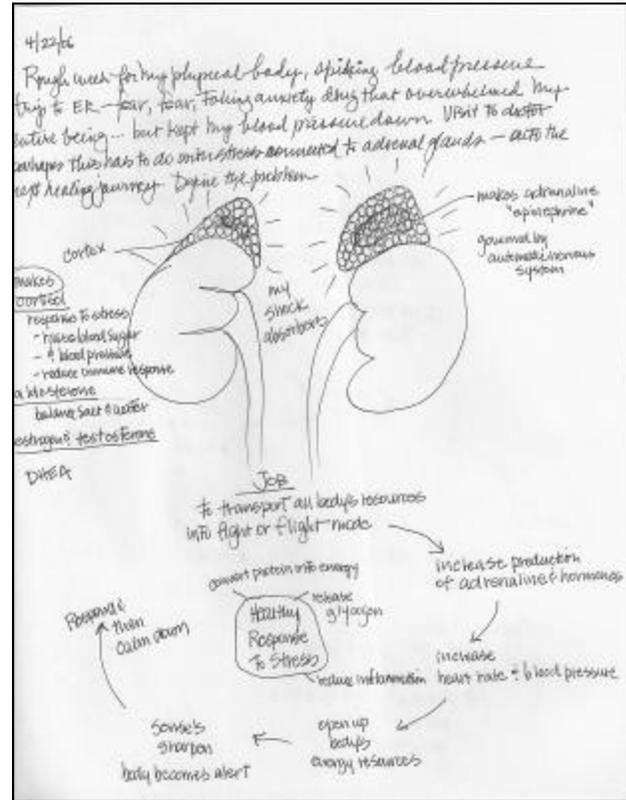
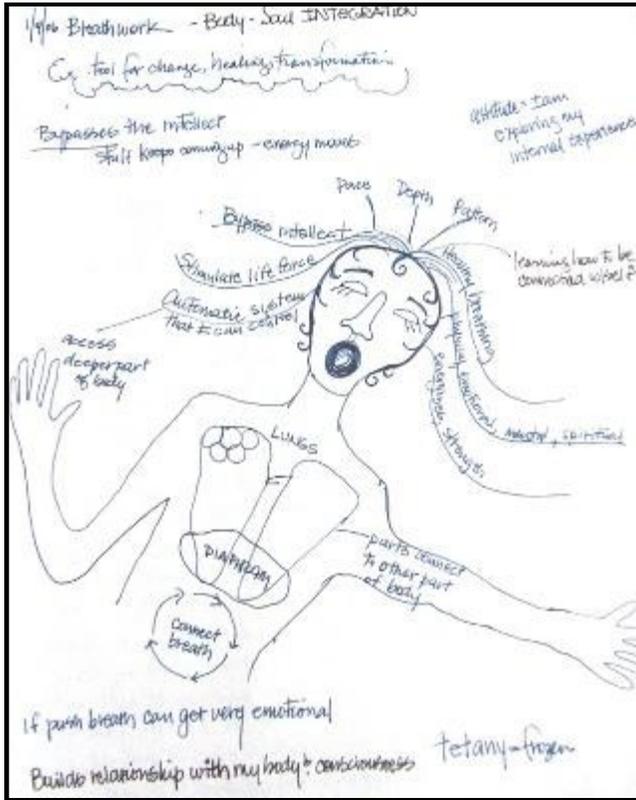
When I first began making dolls I looked at several dollmakers and copied their styles. Eventually my own style came through. If you are new to dollmaking I want you to start collecting pictures of other dollmaker's dolls. Pinterest is a fabulous place for this research and I have pinned many pictures of dolls under my Art & Healing Dolls section.

Print out the photos and gather them in groups on your journal pages. Make note of what is common about them: colors, shapes, materials, faces, bodies. Is there one or more artists whose work you were drawn to? Search for that dollmaker's website.

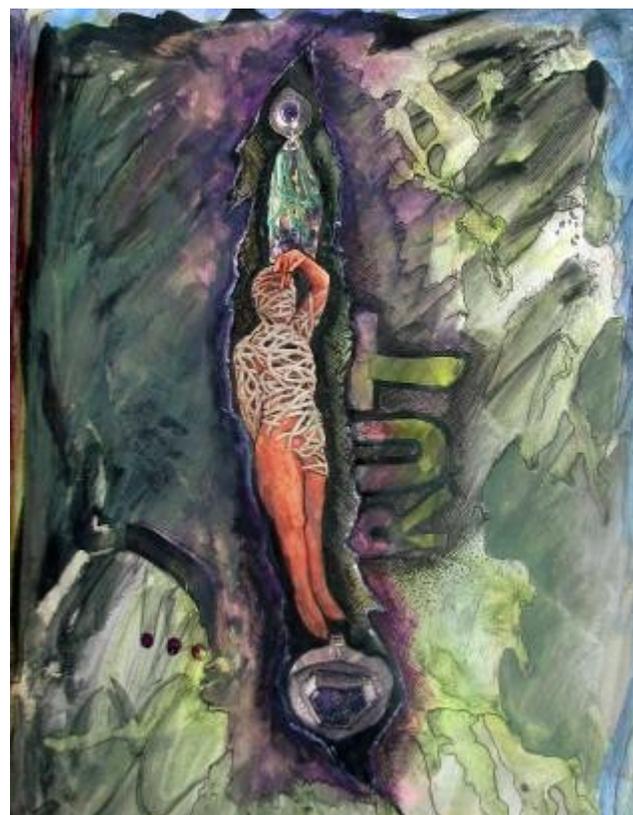
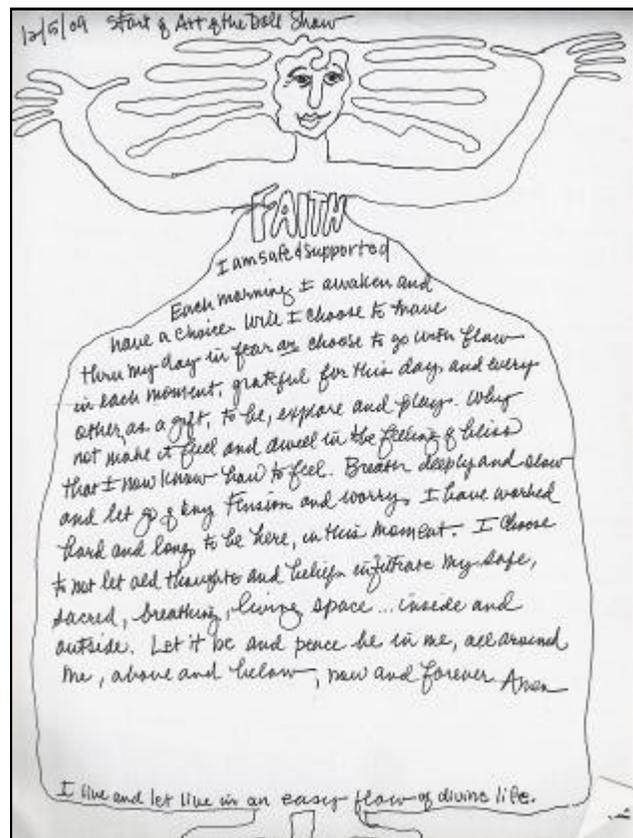
This may look overwhelming. These are all the things I do, use, consider, play with when making my dolls, my resources. Remember I've been making healing dolls for 25 years. I have lots of practice and experience. Key term is PLAY WITH. Ask for help if you want it. Your needs are important. Imagine are playing in healing fields.... Go to my Pinterest page and browse <https://www.pinterest.com/bkobe/>

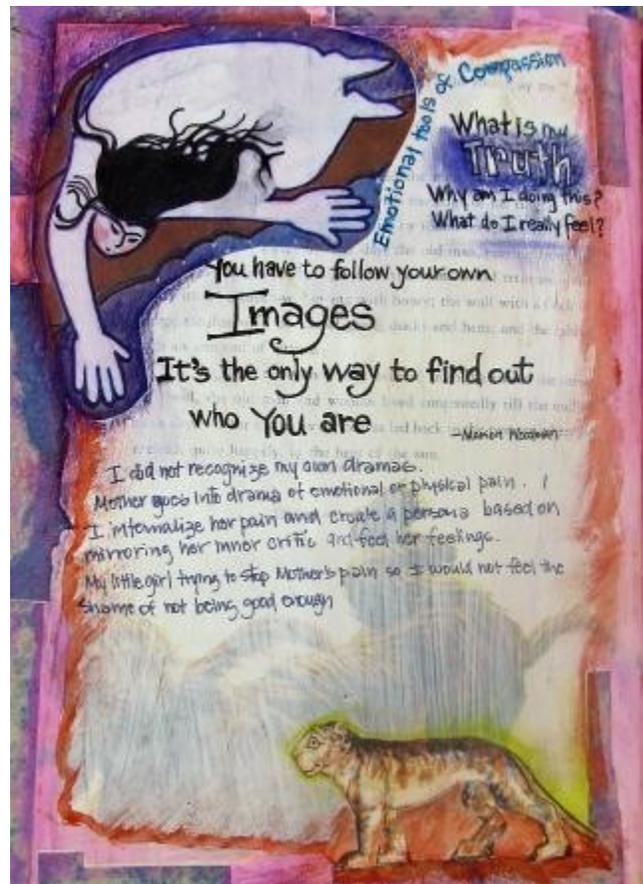
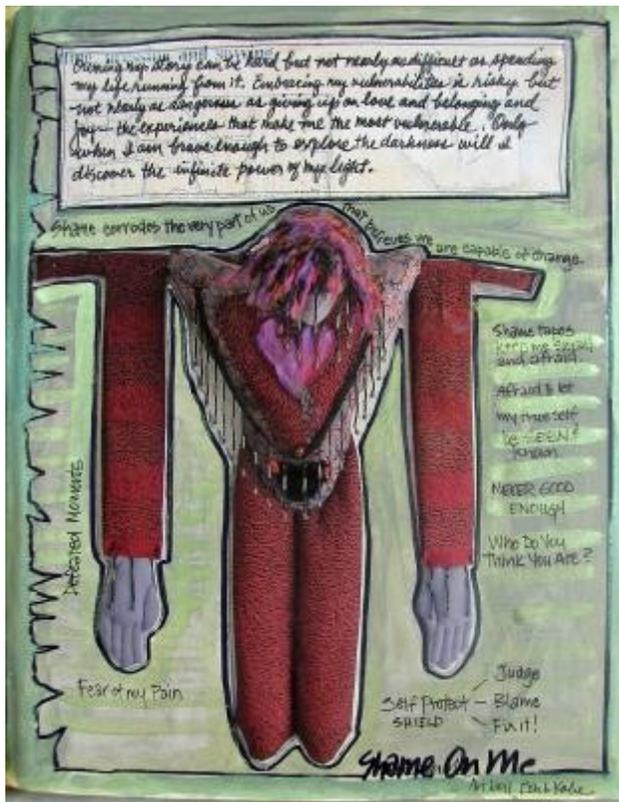
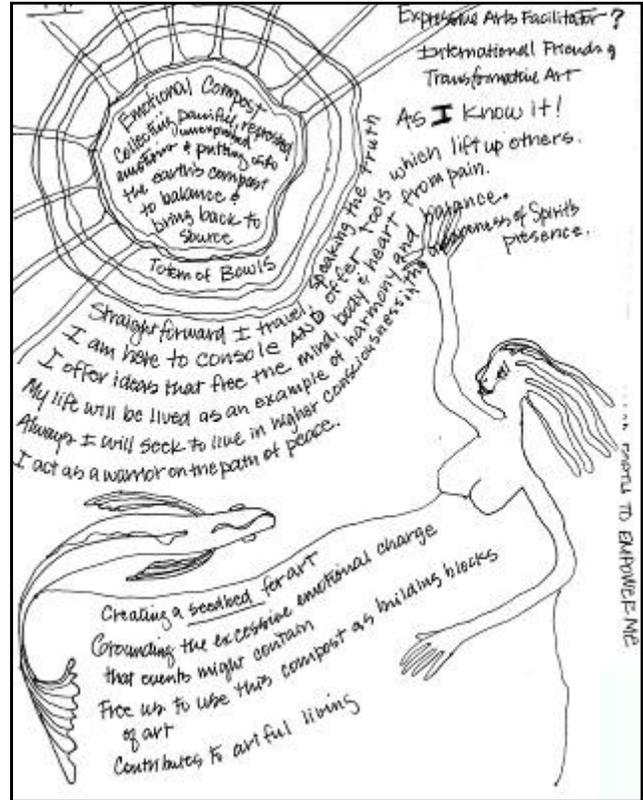
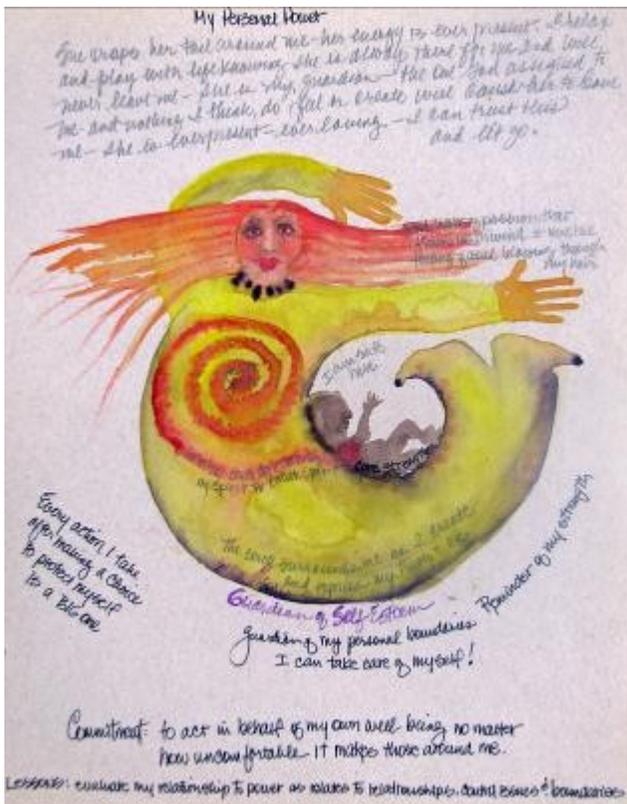


# Healing Doll Mapping



# Collage & Visual Journaling





# Nature Walk Ritual, Gathering Allies and Insights

The natural world is a great guide and teacher, providing a rich source of images and symbols to draw on. Native wisdom traditions teach that each part of nature holds a healing energy that we can easily access by taking quiet time and asking for guidance. The nature walk ritual is just that, an invitation to the natural world to offer guidance and wisdom. It is a request for powerful support and energy. It is an opportunity to experience an affirmation of your path.

Use the nature walk ritual to ask guidance on any question, or for asking questions on each of these eight key areas of life: 1) career, 2) finances, 3) health, and well-being, 4) friends and family, 5) spiritual and personal growth, 6) fun and recreation and 8) home and office. You may choose to do a nature walk for all of the categories or several. Plan on one focus area per day to hold the context of ritual. There is no rush.

Here are some guidelines:

1. Plan to have time before your walk to become quiet and still within. Do what is necessary to disengage from pressing mental activity. One way to do this is to do some deep breathing, sitting in a relaxed position with eyes closed. Another is to do a “brain dump” of all mundane “have-to’s” dancing through your head. Imagine all the mental busyness floating off in a hot air balloon. Take some time to choose an area of your life that you will focus on for this exercise.
2. Drive or walk to a place where you can have a pleasing contact with the natural world. Maybe it’s a favorite place you have been before, or somewhere new that you’d like to explore. Once you arrive at your nature walk’s starting point, become centered once again and remind yourself of the area you have chosen to focus on. Create an intention to receive guidance and/or spiritual allies in that area. Set off with a spirit of curiosity and faith that signs and symbols will be revealed to you. Guidance may come in many forms.
3. You may be called to pick up an object like a rock, a colorful feather, a shell, a thistle, a shard of glass...or you may have an inner image or insight triggered by a sunrise, a scent carried on the breeze, a random sighting of a fox or a bird, that insists on being noticed. Be open and alert to whatever shows up. Allow your path to guide you lovingly and surely.

## TIME TO REFLECT

When your walk is complete, take some quiet time to record anything that “came to you” during the walk. If you picked up an object, spend some time with it. What is the message it carries? What is the help it offers? Once you are clear about the guidance you have received, see if there is any action that needs to be taken. How will you keep the wisdom present in your daily life?

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This is a great place to get inspiration, stimulate your own creativity and encourage action, and they are Fun!

# Symbols



Dollmaking offers you an opportunity to actively prepare a space for visual symbols and metaphors to emerge. The symbols you will use and the metaphors and stories your dolls will represent will allow you to touch profound feelings without being threatened. These human-form images we call art or healing dolls will partner with you to take on the qualities you seek in order to feel healed or whole in spirit, body, and mind.

The word *symbol* comes from the Greek *symbolon*, meaning “token of identity.” Each of us chooses visual symbols—images and objects—to place in our living environments. We are all drawn to certain colors, shapes, forms, patterns, and textures, and we consciously or unconsciously use them in our home décor and the clothes we wear. So when you take a symbolic image from your life and put it on or in a doll, it can increase your understanding of yourself and your personal myth and stories.

Ultimately, you will apply your own symbols and meaning to your dolls. In the beginning, however, use resources at the bookstore, library, or online to teach you the language of symbols. These resources can help you understand your symbols or look for symbols that have meaning for you. For example, Louise Hay’s *Heal Your Body* details the symbolic meaning of body symptoms. You may also wish to research healing colors and herbs as well as aromatherapy. Remember to use any resources about symbols as guides rather than the “truth.”

Another helpful exercise is to study images of the human body. Think about what the body parts symbolize. Imagine if you made a doll’s hands larger than expected to symbolize taking power back or being powerful.

Imagine a doll with large feet to represent being grounded or large lips to give voice to something. Also look at a picture of the internal organs. Notice the shapes you could use on a doll dealing with breathing or digestion issues.

You will also be amazed by the beautiful design elements that lie within the body. For example, look in an anatomy book at an image of a T cell, one of the immune system’s principal means of defense. Now imagine using the cell image in a beaded design on a doll that represents dealing with disease. Dollmaker and teacher Cassandra Light has her students make charms to represent the chakras, or nodes of healing energy on the body. They then place the charms on their dolls in positions that seem right to them.



After exploring symbols in research, next make a list of the symbols you notice around you. Take special note of the ones repeated in the areas of your home or office. For example, are you drawn to spirals—do you draw them when doodling, wear them in jewelry or clothing, notice them in artwork? Consider where your symbols fall. Are they from your imagination or your intuition, or are they universal symbols? Consider their color, shape, design, and meaning in your life.

If you aren't sure about a symbol's meaning, give it some time. In many cases, the depth of meaning does not come immediately. For instance, you may use a symbol on a doll without fully understanding why. At some point while creating the doll, or maybe some time after the creation, your own meaning of the symbol will come forward. I often use dialoguing with my nondominant hand to discover the stories I am telling myself through my dolls. Sometimes the story of my dolls comes first, with my setting an intention; other times the story and meaning come after she is made. The meaning comes through insight when I least expect it.

In the Spring 2013 issue of *The Polymer Arts*, dollmaker and art therapist, Christine K. Harris wrote an very useful article called *Working With Personal Symbolism*. She shares techniques for developing personal symbols that I summarize here.

### 1. Find Patterns.

Look for repeating patterns of behavior, life events, situations, and relationships that keeps showing up. What meaning can you make of this? What symbols might you use to “display” them? What people, places or things are you attracted to, curious about and want to know more. Are there animals, themes, colors, characters or places that draw your attention and enlighten your imagination. Include what you like and dislike.

### 2. Borrow with awareness.

Many artist use symbols from other cultures without knowing what they mean to that culture. Christine invites artists to be fascinated by other cultures symbols but determine if it would be appropriate to use that symbol if you are not a part of that culture. Consider the universality of the symbol, like a spiral. If the symbol exists in many different cultures then using that symbol would be appropriate.

She says, *If you do use a cultural symbol, consider how it will be function in the context of your work. Will you be using the symbol in a unique and personal way that adds meaning or specialness to the work? Ask yourself how others might interpret this symbol in your work. If you are aware and conscious of this reaction use it.*



#### Coming Home to Myself

*Kobe*

Symbol of my inner self wrapped with cloak of affirmations. House represents a container for inner self.

### 3. Collect meaningful things.

Gather images that you find visually striking and draws you to them. Gather words and phrases that speak to you and your story. Gather meaningful memorabilia, things usually from your past. For instance, jewelry, fabric, toys, beads and buttons.

### 4. Sketch and write in a journal.

Capture dreams (great resources for personal symbols), record important events, express your feelings (my favorite), analyze emerging patterns, and discover connections. I will add take pictures of your dolls when done, print out and paste into your journal.

### 5. Share.

This is a great way to use the person who you selected as your Believing Mirror. Share your discoveries and ideas with her or him or someone you feel emotionally safe with. Christine suggests taking a class. She says, *“My sculpture and use of symbolic imagery grew considerably after taking a healing doll online class lead by Barb Kobe. As part of the class there is an online group used for sharing and feedback. This class is a great way to discuss personal symbolism and it helped me escape a creative rut.”*



She says,

*The best way to develop your symbolism into something personally meaningful and rich is to use symbolic objects and images in your art, even before you are completely sure what they mean. Go with what feels right and think about it later. As you reflect on your creations and the imagery you have used, you'll come to deeper realizations that you can explore in your next piece. It's a journey that can lead to art that communicates in a real and human way.*

Visit [www.whats-your-sign.com](http://www.whats-your-sign.com). It is a great Internet resource for symbols.



### CREATIVE ACTION

Draw a symbol you love, then dialog with it with your non-dominant hand. (Writing with your dominant hand represents your voice; your non-dominant hand responds as the symbol.)

Create your own symbols. Write a list of your favorite words and feelings. Scribble, doodle, and make inkblots, then look for symbolic shapes within them. Play with making up your own symbols and applying a meaning to them.

Walking meditation: choose a question present in your mind. Write it down in a small notebook you take with you on a nature walk. Spend about thirty minutes on the walk, keeping the question in the back of your mind, while imagining you are walking through a dream world. Come back to home base and journal the experience. Write down or draw everything you saw, heard, and experienced that could be a symbol in response to the question. Dialog with these symbols using your dominant and non dominant hand.

# Healing the Heart of My Womb Doll–My Process



*I studied the circulatory system and how the heart works in the body.*

*Then used watercolor to form the body and added images of the circulatory system.*

*Then started filling in with shapes of organs. I stopped and noticed that I had painted in a pink image in the center that looked like a child climbing up the chest. I wondered, "Is that my inner child? Why would she be showing up now? Finished the watercolor by putting a golden color around the entire body.*

*I revisited the watercolor and added more color and other shapes and colors still thinking that I was developing a relationship with my body's heart. I used chakra colors finishing off by putting a violet energy headdress.*

*Then used watercolor to inspire the doll.*



# Metaphors

Along with symbols, metaphors are also important elements of the healing doll process. “Metaphor is the lifeblood of all art,” says dancer Twyla Tharp. Your dolls as metaphors will help you take what looks strange or feels uncomfortable and transform it into something that looks familiar. I love how my healing dolls have helped me find new ways to connect to both my remembered and forgotten memories of facts, fictions, and feelings. Twyla says, “You remember much more than you think you do, in ways you haven’t considered.” Metaphors show the relationship between your outer experiences and inner feelings. A metaphor makes intuitive sense and serves as a guide in your dollmaking design process.

Metaphors can also help you understand the meaning of your dolls. Have you ever seen a matryoshka doll, also known as a Russian nesting doll? It is a set of wooden dolls of decreasing size that fit one inside another. The dolls are often used as a metaphor for the recognizable relationship of object-within-similar-object. For instance, the nesting dolls may serve as a metaphor for an individual’s different ages and stages.

You speak the language of emotion everyday using metaphor. Consider how these emotional metaphors may be used on a healing doll:

- Having the blues
- In a black hole
- In a purple rage
- Green with envy
- Tied in knots
- Butterflies in my stomach
- Blowing off steam
- Frozen in fear



Metaphors can speak to physical aspects as well. Expressive art therapist Barbara Ganim says, “Numerous studies in mind-body medicine have revealed that the type of illness or disease a person develops is often a metaphorical reflection of what is going on emotionally in that person’s life.”

Likewise, in *Women’s Bodies, Women’s Wisdom*, Dr. Christian Northrup says heart disease is frequently thought of as a metaphor for the fear of opening one’s heart to love. Blocked arteries can be a metaphor for the inability to allow the joy of life to flow freely.



A metaphor can even describe you. The Janitor of Emotions: Taking Care of Others Feelings is a doll I created when I was trying to balance my needs and what I call “their needs”—the needs of my children, husband, parents, extended family, and art. I began with a drawing of a janitor. It was a metaphor of the energy it took to feel other people’s feelings and think I somehow had control over them. After I drew the image, I wrote:

*I am a caretaker of feelings*

*A janitor of emotions.*

*Cleaning up messes...*

*Dirty depressions*

*Sloppy sadness*

*Frozen fears*

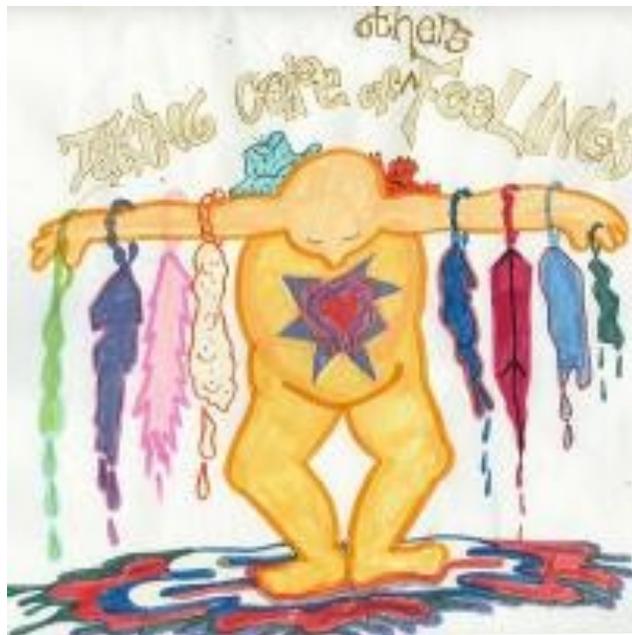
*Anxieties, angers*

*Whatever you need cleaned up, call me.*

I then wrote: *I no longer have room to take on another feeling.*

*I am loaded down to the point of exhaustion. I feel tense, tightness in my neck and shoulders. My eyes throb from seeing others’ pain. I sleep only to awaken to more exhaustion. My body aches to breath clear air only for me. I release the weight of others’ emotions so that I may experience my own a new.*

I used this drawing and writing to inspire the doll. The Janitor of Emotions created an opportunity to tell a story about an aspect of my life. I felt a release after I made the doll, an honoring of a stuck place I now knew and could change.



## Telling the Story of Your Doll

Your immune system is influenced by your emotions, images and thoughts. These all intermix with your imagination, especially through the arts, to enhance your healing response. I often use dialoguing with my non-dominant hand to discover the stories I am telling myself through my dreams and dolls. Sometimes the story of my dolls comes first with my setting an intention; other times the story and meaning come after she is made. The meaning comes through insight when I least expect it.

Narrative psychology is the science of storytelling and healing. John Fox says in *Poetry Therapy* that “there is a three-fold healing potential of image making:

- Power of an image to evoke a creative response
- The capacity of images to serve as containers of feeling
- The capacity of images to inspire a voice for feeling.”

The Janitor of Emotions became a metaphor for how I was feeling and the art of the drawing and the doll created an opportunity to tell a story about an aspect of my life. There was release after I made the doll; an honoring of a stuck place that I now know and can change.

The metaphor of art allows us to touch profound feeling without being threatened. The symbol which is created helps us to take on the qualities we seek in order to feel healed or whole in spirit, regardless of the state of our minds and bodies.

Pat Samples writes in her book *What to do When Your Body Hurts*,

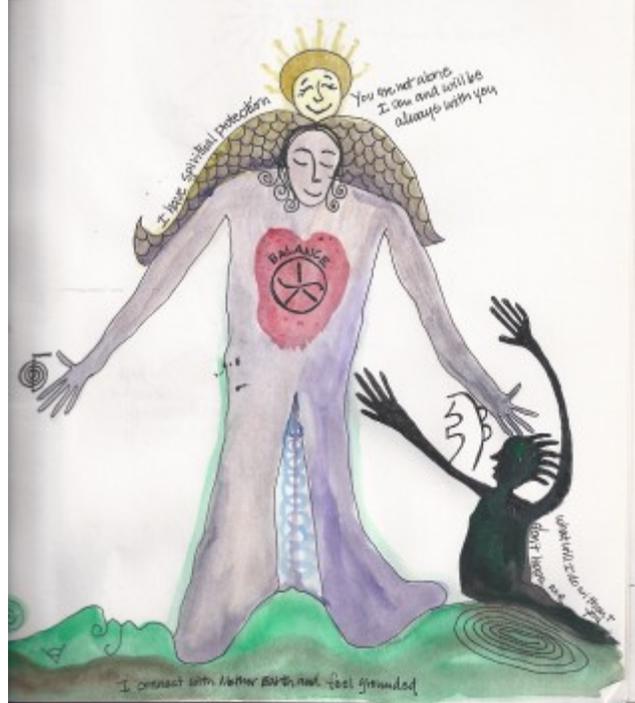
*Sometimes pain is best understood through metaphor. Ask yourself what this pain reminds you of. What is it like? Probe further once you get an answer by asking what that reminds you of. Keep exploring until a memory or metaphor arises that rings true. Consider what this memory or metaphor may be asking of you. Develop it into a story and see what opportunity or insight emerges.*



**Releasing prayers to Spirit**



Prayer Pocket Doll first came in visual journaling, then came the doll.



This is an example of visualizing or imaging a story from one of my art journals.  
Can you image how any one of these images could be used to inspire a healing doll?



## Healing Doll Muse

### CREATIVE ACTION

Draw, paint, or doodle an image that represents a feeling, pain or problem in your life. Once completed dialogue with your non-dominant hand with the image. This is how I came up with the poem and words for the Janitor of Emotions. Seek and discover the story the image is trying to tell you.

Ask these questions with your dominant hand writing and answer with non-dominant hand writing:

- Who or what are you?
- How do you feel?
- What causes you to feel this way?
- What do you need from me?
- What do you have to tell or teach me?
- What story do you want to tell me?
- What characters from a fairy tale are you like?

Answer the questions with your non-dominant hand representing the image.

# Archetypes & Anthropomorphic Dolls



The five healing dolls that are made in this healing doll process: Guardian, Scapegoat, Loving Kindness, Talisman and Inner Healer, are archetypes. Archetypes are characters, images, and themes that embody universal meanings and basic human experiences. They keep the same characteristics regardless of plot or time period. An archetype is a symbolic expression of a character, behavior, or image that is universally recognized and evokes deep emotions. Some examples of archetypes include Mother, Father, Mother Nature, Angel, Goddess, Clown, Child, etc. Friends, family and even strangers will play out these archetype roles in your life. You will recognize them as you through their appearance, facial expressions, shapes and colors of faces and hair, body sizes, costumes—everything involved in making a doll. Knowing about archetypes will add to your toolbox of meaningful symbols and images that will more likely than not show up in the healing dolls you create.

Author Caroline Myss says that “archetypes are universal patterns of behavior; that they are part of our personal mythology that began before you were born. In her book, *Sacred Contracts*, she writes that there are ten archetypal patterns reflect the primary power issues that

define women today, including their underlying struggles with personal empowerment: the Advocate, the Artist/Creative, the Athlete, the Caregiver, the Fashionista, the Intellectual, the Queen/Executive, the Rebel, the Spiritual Seeker, and the Visionary. Did certain images, people, or stories come to mind as you read through that list? Would you be able to draw these archetypes or at least find pictures of them in magazines?

In *The Four-Fold Way*, Dr. Angeles Arrien writes that we carry four archetypes inside us. Each of these teaches a way of expressing, then opening, our hearts to bring ourselves into alignment or center. These are the Warrior, the Healer, the Visionary, and the Teacher. They are each connected to a “universal salve” of healing: dancing, singing, storytelling, and silence. The Warrior makes things happen—not just react to what happens—in her life. She uses the rattle to call in dancing. The Visionary uses the ability to speak truth without blame or judgment and uses the bell to bring in singing. The Healer archetype focuses on what has heart and meaning and uses the drum to call in storytelling. The Teacher stays open to outcome, rather than attaches to it. She uses sticks or bones to bring in silence, calm, and wisdom. Can you see images of dolls from these ideas?





In her book *Way of the Doll*, Cassandra Light talks about her yearlong classes in which she noticed her students' dolls would fall into five different realms: the Human, the Personality, the Feminine, the Masculine, and the Quintessence. Within each of these realms are certain archetypes. For example, the Human realm includes figures of the Mother, Father, Child, Elder, and even Pets. The book is filled with pictures of the realms in doll form.

Elinor Peace Bailey uses a simple dictionary definition for archetypes; "patterns or models from which all things of the same kind are copied or based." Her book *Doll as a Messenger—The Body's Language* she invites her reader to select the messenger from the archetypes. She says that it's important to find the right messenger for your message, and I might add for the right visual symbol of the story you are telling through your dollmaking. She offers categories of archetypes: storyteller, gatherers (peddler, shell seeker, bag lady); family figures, professional types (doctor, lawyer); clowns, wise women (prophets, wizards, crones); and fantasy or mythical figures.

My personal favorite archetypes are from the Hero and Heroine Journey: hero, or heroine, threshold guardian, mentor, guardian, shadow, ally, trickster, shape shifter and herald.

As you begin making a healing doll, and finish one or two, look at her and notice if there is an archetype within her that may want to start up a conversation with you. If you show your doll to a safe witness, chances are the universal energy and meaning of an archetype will speak to the witness, even if you had no intention of this while making of the doll.





Anthropomorphism, or personification, is giving human form or other characteristics to anything other than a human being. These dolls have some part of them that look human. An example would be creating a bird or animal doll with a human face and/or other traits, or giving human emotions or motives to forces of nature, such as the doll I created called Blue Moon River Woman (page 21) or Gaia Contemplating Her Earth Self seen to the right. When you see these dolls they may have animal faces, hands, and feet on a human torso, and they will be costumed as if human. The easy way to wrap your mind around these kinds of dolls is to think about how an animal with a human face could express emotion, like a protective mother bear or a sacred, healing tree icon.

Folklore, rituals, ancient stories and myths worldwide involve animals as part of a sacred experience, a special relationship we have with the world. Animals' behaviors and traits, regardless of culture and location, teach us by example. They allow us to see how our lives can be lived more simply and with purity of thought and emotion. They invite our imagination and intuition, rather than intellect and rational mind.

Animal healing dolls, whether real or mythical, are often called totems or power animals. An animal image may come forward for you while moving through this process as a Totem, Mythical Kin, Spirit Healer, Guide, Wise Healer, or Talisman.

They animals can be symbols of our relationship with ourselves and with life. Each creature has its own power and opportunities to work on different lessons. In classes, I would keep the book *Animal Speak* by Ted Andrews near as a resource to deepen a participants understanding of why a particular animal's image would appear as important in the healing doll process.

For most of us, animals held a special place in our life. Perhaps you had a stuffed animal or favorite animal character you liked from a movie or book in your childhood. Maybe you had a family pet that held a special kind of love energy for you.



In the Bear Shaman to the left, Carol used parts of a Beanie Baby™ stuffed character. She opened up the seams and used the ears on the hat, the paws as feet and part of her power shawl.

As you move through the healing doll process you may discover that an animal figure or a doll with animal parts or qualities fits perfectly as a guardian, scapegoat and talisman or any other healing dolls.





### CREATIVE ACTION

Look up a list of archetypes on the Internet or other resource. Carolyn Myss has an extensive list and description of archetypes in her book *Sacred Contracts* or can be found online at <http://www.myss.com>

What archetypes do you recognize as ones that appeared or are appearing now in your life? Write them in your journal, draw them or put a picture in your journal of your archetypes.

Make a paper doll of several archetypes.

Do any of your archetypes fit within the five dolls within this healing doll process, i.e. a Guardian, Talisman, etc?

Write down the qualities you admire and/or value in yourself or another. Notice if there is an animal that seems to have these qualities.

Did you have any stuffed animals or a special pet when you were a child? If so write about them in journal. If you have a picture or can find one on the Internet put that in your journal.

Create a dance or write a story or poem for your archetype.

## Blue Moon River Woman

Once upon a time there was a beautiful river finding her way among the hills, forests, and meadows. She began by being a joyful stream of water, a spring always dancing and singing as she ran down from the top of the mountain. She was very young at that time as she came to the lowlands she slowed down a bit. She was thinking about going to the ocean.

As she grew up she learned to look beautiful, winding gracefully along the hills and the meadows. One day she noticed the clouds reflected within herself, clouds with all sorts of colors and forms. She did nothing during these days but chase after clouds. She wanted to possess a cloud, to have one for herself. But clouds float and travel in the sky and they were always changing form. Because of the nature of the cloud within the clouds, the river suffered very much. Her pleasure, her joy became just chasing after clouds one after another. Despair, anger and hatred became her life.....chasing..chasing.

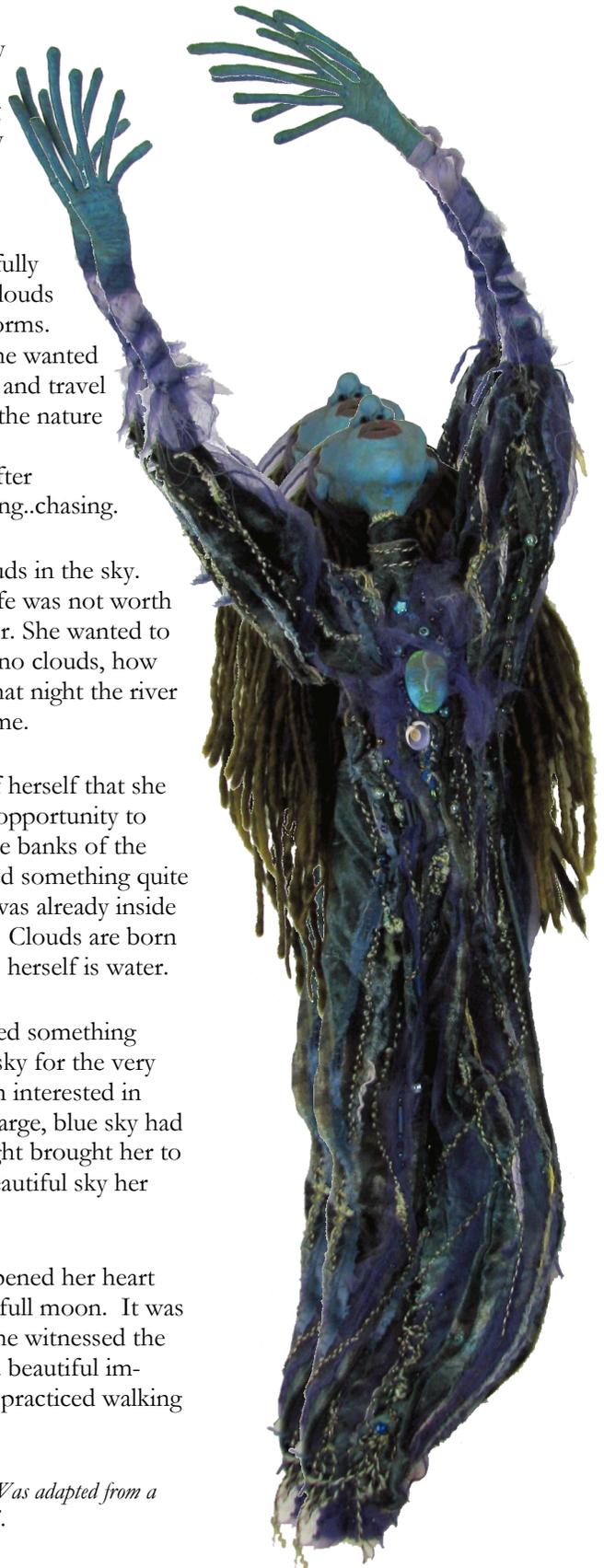
Then one day a strong wind came and blew away all the clouds in the sky. The sky became completely empty. The river thought that life was not worth living, because there were no longer any clouds to chase after. She wanted to die, to ease to exist. She asked this question, "If there were no clouds, how can I live at all?" But how can a river take her own life? That night the river had an opportunity to go back to herself for the very first time.

She had been running so, so long after something outside of herself that she had never seen before – in herself. That night was the first opportunity to hear her own crying, the sounds of water crashing against the banks of the river. She was able to listen to her own voice. She discovered something quite important. She realized that what she had been looking for was already inside of her. She found out that the clouds are nothing but water. Clouds are born from water and will return to water and she realized that she herself is water.

The next morning when the sun was in the sky she discovered something beautiful that she had never seen before – she saw the blue sky for the very first time. She had never noticed it before, she had only been interested in clouds, and she missed seeing the sky. She realized that the large, blue sky had been in her heart from the beginning and this immense insight brought her to peace and happiness. And she saw that with the vast and beautiful sky her place in the world would never be lost again.

That evening something wonderful happened. When she opened her heart completely to the evening sky she received the image of the full moon. It was a blue moon, beautiful and round, like a jewel within her. She witnessed the full moon. She had never imagined she could receive such a beautiful image. And her water, the clouds and moon joined hands and practiced walking together slowly to the ocean.

*Originally told during a sermon at a Unity Christ Church many years ago. Was adapted from a story by Thich Nhat Hanh called THE RIVER AND THE CLOUDS.*



# Feelings

Making healing dolls will bring out feelings—often ones you think you’ve hidden or stuffed. When I show one of my dolls that symbolizes a deep healing process about anger, sadness, or fear, the person viewing it will often say it’s too scary or ugly. Often I hear, “Is that a voodoo doll?” or “Why would you make such an ugly doll?” Despite these first responses, most people are still drawn to dolls made from the creator’s deep emotional regions. They want to hear the stories and meanings of the dolls.

Your feelings are messengers delivering essential information about what’s going on inside you. Feelings are meant to be felt, understood, explored, and then released. The more you try to hide from or ignore a feeling, the more persistent it can become. Most of us have learned to push down and bury our feelings, not knowing the language of emotions or ways to express them. Many women have especially learned the message that an expression of anger is unpleasant, unfeminine, and unattractive. Most men have learned it is not okay to cry because it would express weakness. Left buried, the pain and wounds fester and grow. Stuffing them doesn’t make them go away; it just pushes them into your physical energetic system, which could result in illness or disease. In *Art and Healing*, Barbara Ganim says:

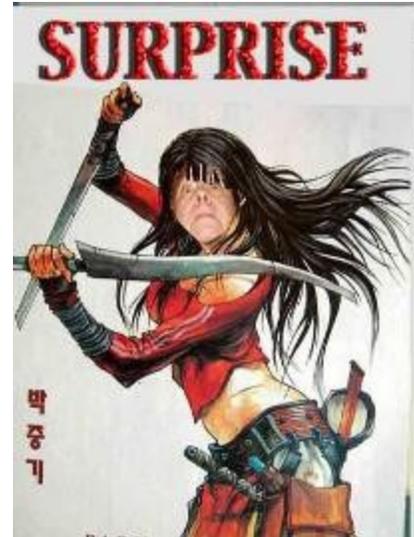
*Emotions and feelings are conveyed through the body on the waves of our electromagnetic energy field. What many call the good feelings like happiness, joy, peace are pleasant and create a state of relaxation allowing a flow of unblocked energy to move through your body. The other unpleasant feelings like anger, sadness and guilt activate a stress response which creates blocks of energy in the body. Blocked energy causes physical pain that could eventually result in deterioration along with immune system dysfunction. This could lead to illness and disease setting in.*

In this piece from her book, she recommends starting with these three steps and simple exercises:

Step One: Get in touch with your pain and emotions. “You can’t heal if you can’t feel.”

Step Two: Once you’re feeling that pain or emotion, try and connect it to your past to uncover where that pattern of pain began.

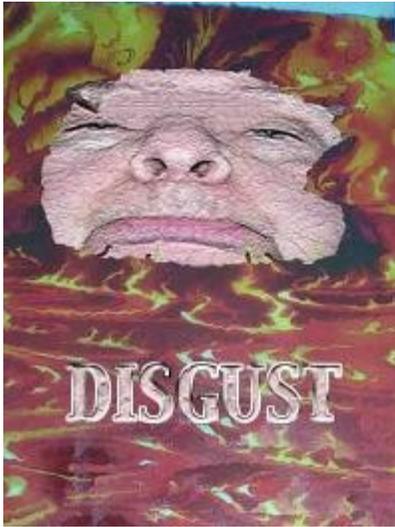
Step Three: Embark on a healing ritual that will help you surrender that pain and anger once and for all.



Student’s Feeling Paper Doll Hero



Student’s Feeling Paper Doll



Dollmaking can be that healing ritual. It can help release these stuffed feelings. This is one of the most important parts of this process. Stuffed or blocked feelings come through and appear in your dolls even if that is not your intention. Angry and ugly faces almost always appear when participants in my classes are learning to make faces from clay. I have seen many a beginner make a face she doesn't like because it looks angry or sad. She smashes the clay and starts again, but the same face reappears. Because we're used to blocking such feelings, this can create an immediate block in the creative process as well.

Life coach Debbie Ford said we can all find what is holding us back in life: "To go deeper, you have to be radically honest with yourself. All of your emotions are there to guide you." I encourage my students to accept what is coming through them and to work through the energy of the feeling by naming it, telling its story, and dialoguing with it. When a student makes an angry or ugly face, paints it,

and applies it to a doll, the energy of that emotion moves through her and creates a shift.

In this process, you will make a doll about pain—the Scapegoat. Creating a doll that expresses your feelings about pain can help you get in touch with the emotion that created the pain. It allows you to see the colors and shapes that describe the feelings in your body. Making the doll may not resolve the issue, but expressing a feeling about how something feels in your body can change or shift your perception of the situation. It can offer insight and allow you to experience a sense of relief, even if you cannot change the pain. Art therapist Ilse Gilliland calls this a "personal symbolic process where the artwork is the therapeutic tool that brings the artist in touch with herself, centralizing the energy and the mind into a clearer more focused awareness, as well as validates the feelings and emotions as responses to life."

A key element of exploring your feelings through dollmaking is creating the doll's face. Our faces express our feelings to the world. In every one of my classes, student first hesitate then struggle with making faces. The face is important to the overall meaning of the doll. It is the first thing people look at, and the number one question dollmakers get asked is, "Where did you get the face?" Therefore, if you're going to make a healing doll, I suggest that you make the face yourself rather than use a mold, or use a mold and change the face to express a feeling.





Making the doll's face can in and of itself change the depth and direction of the process for you. Or perhaps the overall symbol of the doll—regardless of the face—is what will raise consciousness and produce a change. I say as long as you're working with heart energy and approaching the process with personal integrity and honesty, do whatever you hear your intuitive, creative self say to do.

Sometimes when you make the face, it will look like your own. I think this is important to acknowledge and accept, as these are *your* healing dolls. So let it happen. You can always add to your technical skills in dollmaking—

it's a lifelong process. At this point, make the doll image and see what happens. In other words, do not let the face-making part of the process stop you from making the dolls.

## Feelings and the Body

Feelings are first recognized in the face, but they don't stop there.

A healing doll expresses your feelings, your message or story through its form, its figure, its body.

When I teach I will ask the doll makers to first set a healing intention answering the question, "What will you feel when you look at your completed healing doll?" "What will be her feeling story?" Once stated I ask them to put their own bodies into the position of that feeling or story, as if they are the completed doll. Then we look at the body language. What is the position of the head, neck, shoulders, arms, hands, torso, legs and feet? For example, your hands reaching up toward the sky or tightly wrapped around your waist? What would a doll sharing an angry or sad story look like? What size will her head, shoulders, belly, hips, hands and feet be? Will some of these body parts need to be larger or smaller than normal to emphasize the feeling, message or story.

In *The Doll as Messenger*, Elinor Peace Bailey details stages of human experience or consciousness. She says these are: innocence, awakening, shame, anger, sexual objectification (think Barbie doll), reconciliation, empowerment and crone/truth teller or wise guide. Each of these human experiences have a message that usually shows up as an image in the form of an archetype and a feeling expression. What images came up for you when reading these?

Was there just a face? A body part? A whole body?

When you create healing dolls you are creating a container for you to make an emotional connection with yourself. These dolls can be a way to see your story and the making of a healing doll gives you permission to move through a process to create change in your body, mind and spirit.



## Numbing and Stuffing Feelings

When I first designed and created the small feeling characters, The Fulls (Ragefull, Tearfull, Fearfull, & Joyfull) I showed them to a group of children who gathered together in a Children Are People group. Children Are People offer programming to at-risk youth in grade kindergarten through high school. “Participants receive caring attention from positive role models who help them focus on possibilities, not limitations—paving the way for positive futures.” When I asked the group of children what they thought of my feeling characters several of them said, “These are great, but one is missing!” What could that be, I asked. One of them said, “Numbfull”! I asked for an explanation and another said, “We don’t talk about feelings at our house, so when we have them we are told not to have them, or are punished if we showed them, so we stuff them!”

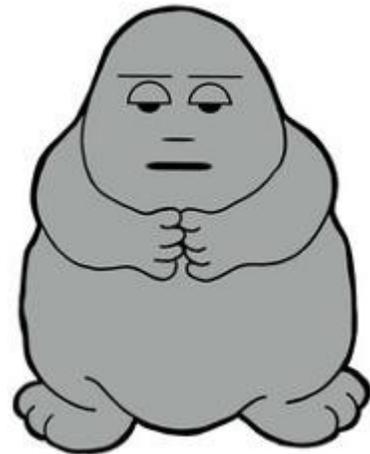
The Fulls (KOBE Feeling Dolls) live in Numbfull when they don’t feel accepted or safe enough to be experienced or expressed. We try to bury, block, deny, and repress our feelings in order to get rid of them, only to discover that we have stored them. It takes physical energy to keep these stored feelings hidden away.

Numb is gray for a purpose. When we stuff our feelings or try to hide them we lose our color – we look and feel like a gray cloudy day. Numbfull's message is that when feelings are not expressed they have a stifling, immobilizing effect on our bodies, minds, and spirits. After this insight from these wise children, I would often walk into a workshop with these little feeling dolls under my shirt, just to start the conversation.

Making a doll can provide insight about how stuffing feelings impacts your body, mind, and spirit. It’s a reminder that stuffing these feelings is a choice. I made the doll shown to the left to explore what it might look like inside my body when I try to stuff a feeling. She looks stressed to me, holding her breath to keep the feeling inside. At the same time her insides are in turmoil, agitated by all the energy feelings have. I want to say to her, take a deep breath and let go, you will feel better after you do.

**I think a creative act can shift something, will wiggle loose some blocked energy that will lead you to take action toward your next healing. When I make a healing doll or put images and words in artful ways into my visual journal I am wiggling loose healing possibilities. I see these creative actions as inviting my intuition to play with my life events and see them as invitations to a healing journey.**

(written to online Medicine Doll group)



**Numb from KOBE feeling dolls**



**Stuffing Her Feelings**  
Barb Kobe



**Stress from**  
**KOBE Feeling dolls**



## CREATIVE FEELINGS ACTION

### FEELING FACES

If you are a beginner, you might first practice making your doll faces using face molds from a craft store before beginning the healing doll process. Play with the molds in order to build confidence with the clay and with facial features. I use air-dry clays like Crayola Model Magic and Creative Paperclay. There are other kinds of air dry clays available. You may like using polymer.

Then play around making faces without the molds. Most of us have not had experience with feeling identification and emotional communication.

### BIG CHALLENGE! Feeling Faces Exercise

Your assignment is to make ten feeling faces.

Take digital pictures of yourself making feeling faces. Hold the camera at arm's distance from your face and click away. (Using a digital camera allows you to delete the ones you don't like.) Once you get a few you like, print them out and make paper dolls with them. Exaggerate the feeling by positioning the body of the paper doll in ways that express the feelings of the face. Choose colors and shapes that also help express the feeling.

### FEELING RESEARCH

Go to the Feelings Research questions on the next page. It guides you through a series of questions to explore emotions. It may provide insights that will allow you to express your feelings in your dolls and deepen the healing experience. This is a fun and eye/heart opening activity to do with family and friends.



**My Courageous Friend Maureen Carlson**

# Feeling Research

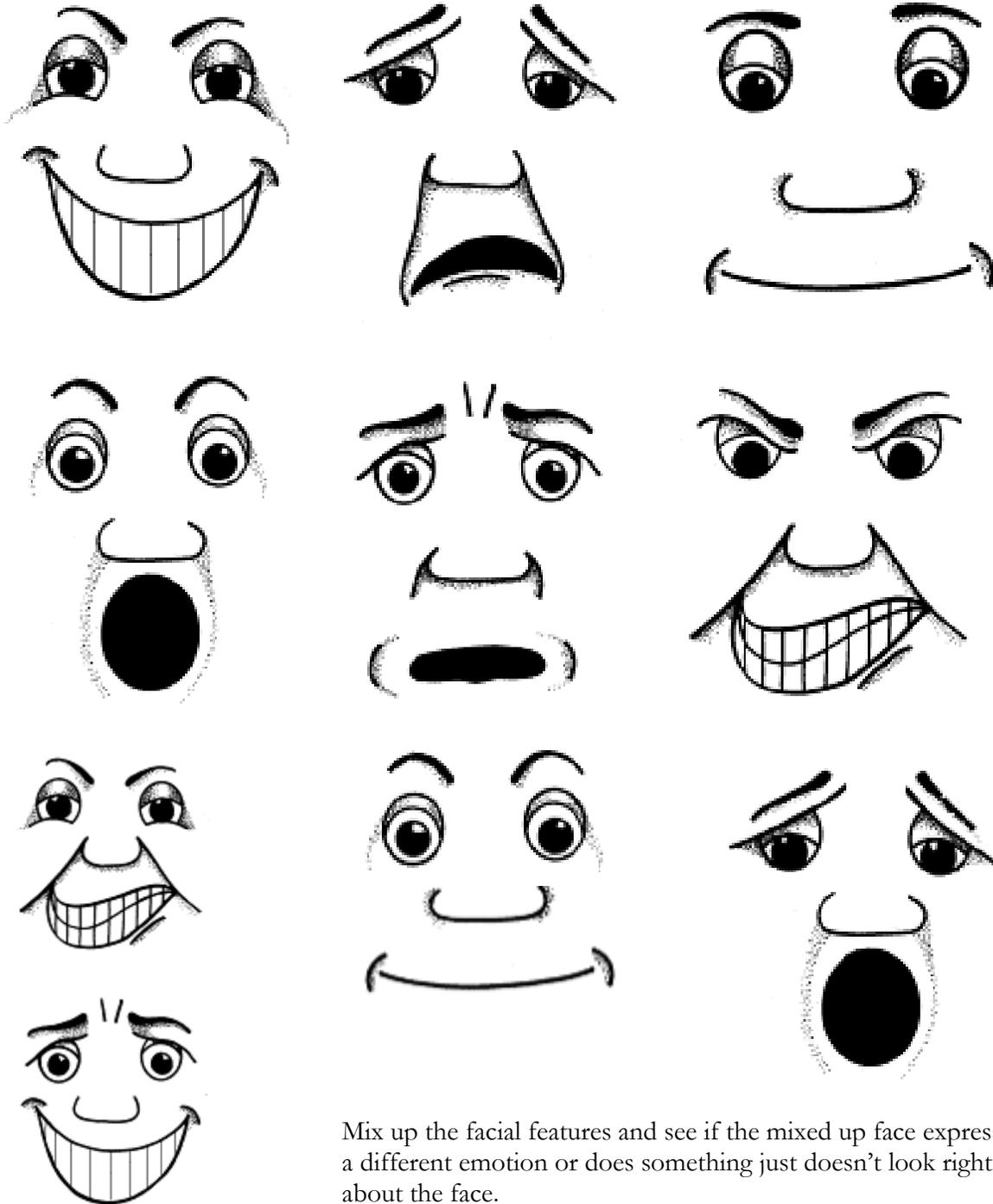
I designed this feeling research instrument while using my feelings puppets and dolls in adult's workshops about emotional intelligence. You can use this list of questions to conduct feeling research with yourself, family, and friends. It may create a great dialog and wonderful insights. The goal is to have people discover a variety of perceptions and beliefs about feelings. It can also build empathy skills.

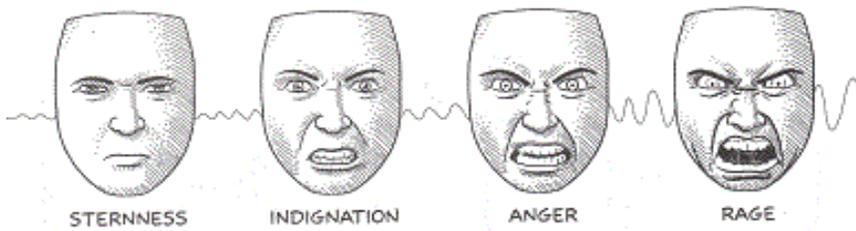
Choose one feeling—such as anger, sadness, happiness, or fear—and answer the following questions as they relate to that feeling. There are no right or wrong answers.

- · This feeling happens when \_\_\_\_\_.
- · How is this feeling useful?
- · Do you need this feeling to survive?
- · Is it okay to express this feeling in a classroom? At home? What would happen if you did?
- · Can you learn if you are experiencing this feeling?
- · Can you be honest when you are feeling this way?
- · What does this feeling look like? Sound like? Feel like in the body? Smell like? Taste like?
- · How do you show you are feeling this way?

# Mixed Up Feeling Faces

Use the feeling faces images below and identify the feeling each is expressing. Create feeling face paper dolls from them and make the body express the feeling the face is expressing. What would angry hands look like? Sad feet? A scared body?

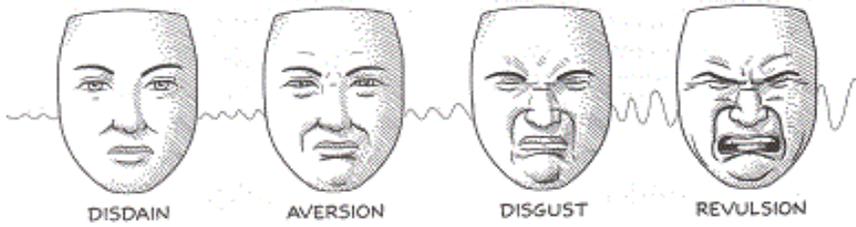




Here are some more to play with.

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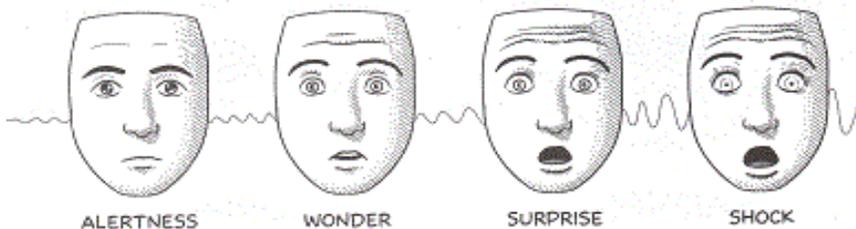
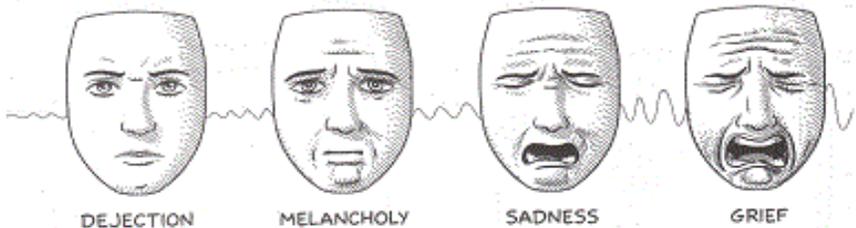
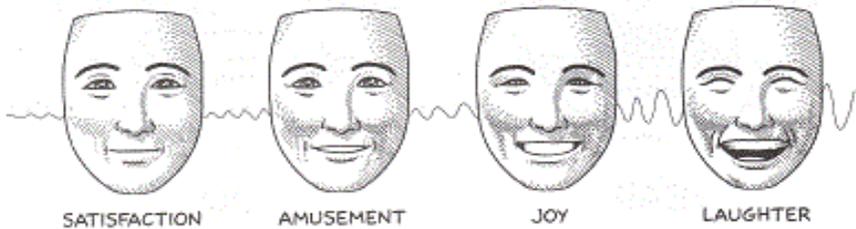
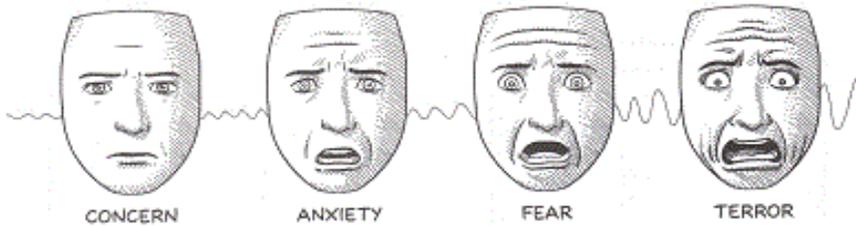
[themoralbusiness.blogspot.com](http://themoralbusiness.blogspot.com)



**MAKING CLAY FACES**

Visit my Pinterest page for ways to make all parts of dolls including clay faces.

<https://www.pinterest.com/bkobe/how-tos-for-making-art-dolls/>



# The Doll Body–Inner & Outer



You have chosen a doll as the art form that you will use to create healing. This kind of creative, expressive art is rooted in the mind-body connection. Working with a body form is a wonderful way to explore, play with, and express your creative self. During and after the dollmaking process, you have the opportunity to get “in touch” with yourself and your body, with your essence. As you view, touch, and hold your doll, it will mirror back your body’s feelings and stories, becoming a physical representation of you, your emotions, your body and more.

Embodiment is the representation of a tangible or visible form of an idea, quality, or feeling. Your healing dolls will embody your creative process, thoughts, beliefs, feelings, symptoms, and pain; they will help you make meaning from these things.

I first heard the term interoception from Lisa Wimberger in her book *Neurosculpting*. The system of interoception as a whole constitutes “the material me” and relates to how we perceive feelings from our bodies that determine our mood, sense of well-being and emotions. You will find this in your brain as well called the *insula*, which seems to provide the basis for your personal emotional awareness.

These dolls will be expressive art. Playing and creating with body images offers you a structure to show or express what it means to you to let go of fear, disease, and concepts of pain. This kind of art making can energize your mind-body connection. As you make your healing dolls you will notice there is a definite feel to the doll when you hold her body in your one or both of your hands. It will also be interesting to notice how it feels when you hold a part of your own body. What feels the same? What feels different?

These dolls will become safe containers and boundaries in which to explore all manners of things you may have previously feared, avoided, hidden, and secretly believed. Your thoughts and feelings about your body image—how you feel about how you look—will influence the look of your dolls and the stories they tell you about your body. I believe making healing dolls will help you live peacefully and confidently in your body and experience your body as a vibrant, creative force. In essence, it will help you be at home in your body.

Dawning of a New Day. I created for my brother who had prostate cancer. Inner body had embroidered healing cells. Yes, it is anatomically correct!

Another inner.outer doll on page 9.



## Healing Doll Story



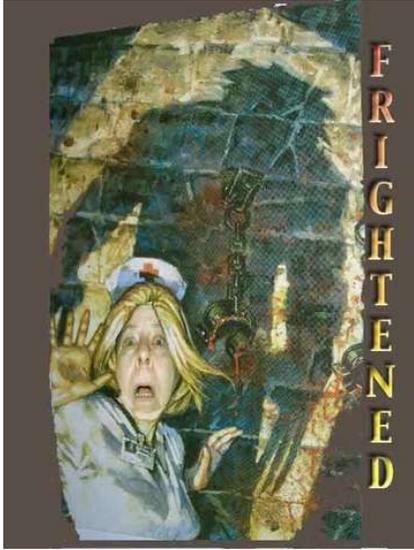
Online group member Kathryn shared her story about creating a grief doll:

*In late October, my nephew died after a car wreck. He was only 32. I can't even allow myself to fully imagine the depths of grief that his mother finds herself in. I help as much as I'm able, but there's not a lot of help for these circumstances except to continue to be there . . . listen . . . comfort . . . While I was consumed with helping his mother (who is my dear friend and former sister-in-law) I wasn't doing anything to honor or acknowledge my own grief. It didn't seem important at first because hers was so overwhelming, but I began to realize that I needed to do something for myself. Ignoring it didn't mean it wasn't there chewing on my heart.*

*For the three weeks following Peter's death, I didn't do anything creative at all. Normally I do some kind of creative work daily because I must, but it just wasn't in me, I didn't think. It seemed that all joy had been sucked out of me and with it, creativity. To even think about doing something "fun" just didn't seem right. Eventually, I realized that I needed to create a grief doll. I needed somewhere to put this emotion. I needed to honor my feelings and the best way, I have learned, is to do so creatively. I needed to see my grief concretely and let it ooze out of my fingers into clay . . . and so . . . I pulled out a ball of clay and began to make faces. In the space of just over a week, two dolls were created and I cannot even express how much it helped me to make them. It doesn't mean that the grief is gone, but it has been partially transformed. It's been honored and given a place. I don't even have the words to explain the change. It just is . . . changed and not so heavy.*

*The first one I made is more abstract and symbolic with the huge heart-shaped hole in her middle and dangling prism of tears and light. She cradles the hole, trying to comfort herself. Her name is Rue. The second one represents the head in hands pain and a stone-heavy heart which her body cannot even hold. It has fallen to her lap. She is Lugeo; Latin for "grief and mourning."*

*I just want to share that, in my experience, even if we have other creative endeavors waiting or in process, when something BIG comes up in our lives, we need to stop and give THE BIG THING its due time and attention. Acknowledge it. Honor it. Different people will do that in different ways, but for us dollmakers, chances are very good that making a doll is the thing to do; at least it was for me. Once I made Rue and Lugeo, I was released to create whatever else caught my fancy and the projects that had been waiting at the time Peter died. I've been busy with sewing and painting projects since then but the grief dolls had to come first.*





## Inner and Outer Body Parts and Feelings

Consider these body parts when making your healing doll. Will your doll have arms and hands; legs and feet? What size will they be? How will you make her torso? What will you use to make her head and face? What body parts such as eyes, noses, mouth and ears will you use in unexpected places to express a message and/or an emotion? Will her heart be on the outside of her body?

Art therapist, Erika Cleveland says, “Children often exaggerate the parts of the body that they are becoming aware of in their life at the time—heads, hands and feet are often hugely out of proportion to the rest of the body. And parts of bodies are used to artistic and practical effect in the art of regions such as Mexico, where “milagros” (meaning “miracle”) or metal reproductions of body parts are placed onto altars for healing.

In order to make my doll Shame On Me, I thought about the colors that remind me of feeling shame in my body—black and dark, blood red. I got in touch with what it feels like in my body to feel shame. I felt the weight of it in my arms and legs, so I put small plastic pellets in the doll’s arms and legs to weigh them down. My head hangs down when I’m trying to hide, so I found a way to make the doll’s head droop over the torso and hang down, looking at the ground. Finally, I created an image of a broken, cracked heart leaking love because when I feel shame, I don’t feel love from anyone, including myself. I then put her up on my wall as a reminder that I don’t have to hold shame in my body.

When I was having panic attacks I decided to create a doll that embodied what I believed panic looked like inside and outside of my body. (see doll to the left) I felt like my thoughts were jagged and confused as if they were roots coming out of my head. The expression on her face is one of trying to hold fear in, wanting to numb it. My hands and arms tied to my body at my center made me feel powerless. She was ungrounded and had no feet and the assorted of sticks going many directions indicated that. The dark red heart symbolized palpitations, as if the heart was coming out of my chest.

Remember that body parts can be different sizes depending on the meaning you are expressing through your doll.

Inner parts can be placed on the outside of the doll and parts can be on the inside. When it comes to this there are no rules.

If you are feeling too busy the doll can have more than two hands.

What is the story and feeling you are trying to express?



## Symptoms

Body symptoms can be doorways into bodymind. They can speak “organ jargon” that can furnish you with creative inspiration to use to decipher and and express your personal pain or challenge through your doll making. The location of the symptom may be the place were issues of possible healing and transformation can defined. Making healing dolls allow you to connect with your body. You become a detective in following the body’s clues. David Biro writes in *Listening to Pain: Finding Words, Compassion and Relief*, says that “Metaphors of pain have structure, form and purpose; the experience becomes a story that has several characters and a plot with a beginning, middle and end.” He also says, “Metaphor promises us control over experiences by supplying it with meaning.” I think this is key, the healing dolls become a symbol of a story whether a outward expression of a personal story or a character that lives in your body as a symptom, and part of an internal dialogue. You may want to play with meanings of symptoms and affirmations by visiting Louise Hays’ books and other offerings.

## Energy Healing

Energy Healing is a broad term for any therapy that stimulates the energy flow in or around the human body, otherwise known as the biofield, to restore balance on all levels, thereby enabling the physical body to heal itself. The following energy systems are rich with symbols, maps and diagrams that can be put on a healing doll as part of an intention or story of the doll. There is vast knowledge in books and on the Internet. I suggest you do research to see pictures of these systems that may serve as inspiration for ways of embellishing your healing dolls.



### Chakras

There are seven chakras are the energy centers in our body in which energy flows through. The theory believes that blocked energy the chakras can often lead to illness so it's important to understand what each Chakra represents and what we can do to keep this energy flowing freely.

### Meridians

These are energy channels 'transporting' life energy, called Chi or Qi throughout the body, used in Chinese Medicine (other names exist as well). Theory believes that there are blockages, leading to lack of energy supply to certain areas of the body, or a surplus of energy in other areas. This system is used in acupuncture, acupressure and many other systems of healing.

**Again Pinterest is a great resource for images of these things.**

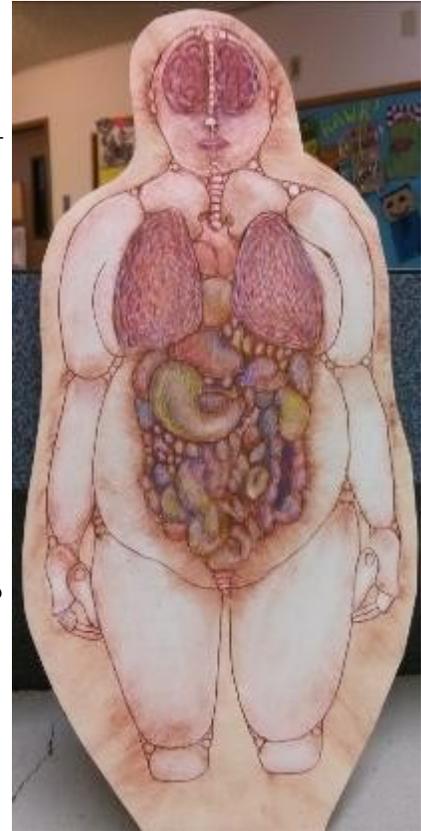
## Auras

The human energy field, also called biofield, aura and subtle bodies is comprised of several layers of energy. They are commonly known as the Physical Etheric, Emotional, Mental and Spiritual bodies. This theory, as well as, the chakras, has colors associated with it making for a great resource for putting color into and around your healing dolls.

## The Endocrine System

This system is comprised of various glands producing hormonal secretions that go directly into the bloodstream and lymphatic system which are then circulated to all parts of the body. These body parts can be visual symbols inside and/or outside of the body of the doll.

Your inner and outer symptoms may be the part of you that is trying to grow and develop in your life, your wise signaler. When it signals to you in your body, it's called a symptom. When it signals to you through a dream, it is called a symbols. If you pay attention and talk to these images by expressing them through a doll a healing process may begin in one way or another. Making art through a doll image offers ways to play with so many inner and outer parts of yourself.



*I think we have an added advantage being dollmakers. We can take words that describe a symptom, research the details about the system and turn it into a metaphor....and then using our creative toolbox engage with this knowledge through art making that mirrors back to us a new relationship we can have with our bodies. ...and when done we share the story of our lessons and learning that encourages our group to made new connections for themselves, explore deeper and make their own metaphors and images. All so creatively scientific.....*

*Barb Kobe*



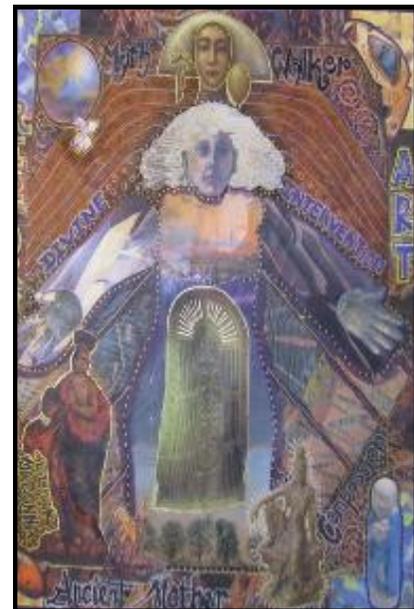


## CREATIVE HEALING ACTION

- Go through a variety of magazines or photography books that have photographs of people in various poses. Do quick sketches of these images using pencil and paper. Play with guessing what story their body positions might be telling.
- This is adapted from author Judith Orloff's work called *Decoding the Messages of the Body* in her book *Intuitive Healing*.
  1. Choose a symptom you have felt recently.
  2. Think about what when it first appeared. Ask yourself what life situation, thought, dream, event or news was happening when the symptom appeared.
  3. Consider what metaphor might explain the symptom. What might the symptom mean to you and your life?
  4. Ask, What does the symptom stop me from doing?  
What does the symptom make you want to do?
- Create a energy system collage with color and images of each system. Take some of the colors and images and apply to a drawing of a body.
- Create feeling face and body paper dolls.
- Design an inner and outer doll.



# Healing Doll Wisdom Transformation Card Deck



Imagine having your very own Wisdom Cards made from your art and doll images.

Creating your own will allow you to put your personality, style, themes, stories, myths, mantras and wisdom gathered through the year on cards. On the front of the card is an image of a collage, journal page, doll, etc. and on the back is the wisdom gathered while making the art making process.

**Start a page in your journal to keep a running list of your wisdom, discoveries, lessons, etc.**

What you will need:

- Cardstock
- Digital photographs of your art and dolls
- Ink jet printer
- Assorted decorative papers
- Magazine clippings
- Glue Stick (I like Elmer's Extreme)
- Paints
- Rushes
- Paper towels
- Gel Medium (matte)
- Colored pencils
- Clear Gesso
- Gel pens
- Paint Pens

## How to:

We can talk about this more on the Facebook group.

You can use the same techniques you are using to create collage in your Healing Doll Journal.

Do a search on Internet or Pinterest for art journal, visual journals.

Here are a few links:

<http://madebynicole.blogspot.com/2013/10/recycled-playing-cards-mixed-media.html>

<http://dailyreprievecenter.com/arts/archives/483>

Take pictures of your art and dolls with a phone camera send high quality image to your email.

Or

Take pictures with a digital camera and save images on your computer.