

INTRODUCTION TO MASK & CLOWN THE NION-POCHINKO TECHNIQUE

A False Face Mask, Clown & Medicine Wheel Training

~~Dates of the training: Spring 2006~~

7 days training 'Mask & Clown'

~~Location: Netherlands~~

Organisation: info@papadansclown.com

New and more Joy! NION (Ian Wallace) developed a basic which is faster and more easy to make your masks which give more joy and time to play, 6 directions out of 1 mask!

Photo right: [NION and les Spirales, Toronto 1981, photo by Gordon Wallace](#)



Are you willing to take the JOURNEY?

Facing yourself in the six directions a **GUIDED TRAINING of SELF-DISCOVERY**

The masks you make are maps of your **INNER BEING** leading to **SELF-REALIZATION**

By facing ourselves in each of the 6 directions:
EARTH - SKY - NORTH - SOUTH - EAST - WEST
and making a mask for the energy rhythms in each, we can open to the awareness of our creative potential by surrendering to the energy of each mask and exploring its "CHARACTER" in **INNOCENCE** and **EXPERIENCE**
We give birth to the seventh mask: The **TRICKSTER, CLOWN, FOOL, HEYOKA, MESSENGER OF THE GODS**

Introduction to Mask & Clown The NION- POUCHINKO Technique *written by Ian Wallace (NION)*



Creativity, innovation, and the need for inspiration is common to the human experience. This workshop is for people from all walks of life who have a desire to connect and play with their creativity. No previous experience or training is necessary.

Based on the technique evolved by Canadian visionary Richard Pochinko, it is a form of creative exploration drawing on three traditions: American circus clown, European clowning and Amerindian trickster/mask.

This is an internal mask process with emphasis on communication, gesture, body language and voice. It is a workshop of self-discovery, a way in to the creative source using your unique energies to create a clown/trickster.

Participants will be guided through the following series of games, exercises and mask-making which will awaken and encourage the ability to trust the inner voice, increase awareness, and develop an honest response to internal impulses as well as external events:

CENTERING – 6 direction medicine wheel, rooting of sound

NEUTRAL MASK – starting place, Necessity, Economy, Universal

WALKING TO THE WALL – being in the moment, your place in time and space

LOOKING FOR A FEELING – listening inside, seeing with the whole body

POLARITIES – balancing universal energies: Love/Fear, Masculine/Feminine

COLOR RHYTHMS – movement, sound and emotion evoked by the color spectrum

MEDICINE WHEEL MASK – facing 6 directions, sculpting in clay with eyes closed

PAPIER-MACHE – building and painting the paper mask

MASK WEARING – allowing the color and form of the mask to create a character

RETURN TO CHILDHOOD – playing with the innocence of the mask

WAVING GOODBYE TO SOMEONE YOU LOVE – touching the heart of the mask

SEVENTH MASK – your 6 direction mask gives “birth” to your Trickster/Clown



More about the training: The NION- POCHINKO Technique

(a catalyst for creative awakening, written by Ian Wallace (NION))

Mask is used in all cultures as a tool for connecting with the spirit world, in communication with natural forces, EARTH, AIR, FIRE, WATER, and in celebration of fertility, planting crops, marking the seasons.

It is an entry into the mystery of other realms guided by MASKED performers, trickster, storyteller, shaman, dancers. Like the KACHINA and MUDHEADS of the HOPI, and the clowns of the [Pochinko False Face Society](#).

CLOWN, TRICKSTER, ZANY, is a figure in all cultures, the intermediary between the 2 worlds, the speaker of TRUTH. They stir things up, defy convention, frighten and amaze us with their physicality, outlandishness, other worldliness and zany, colorful antics that make us LAUGH UNTIL WE CRY.

What we do in this training:

Sculpting your own mask on clay with the eyes closed provides an opportunity to listen inside, and is a key to uncovering your creative source. The mask is built using papier mache and paint, becoming a tool for self-discovery through a series of improvisations with emphasis on gesture, communication, body language and voice, by passing the thought process. Your mask leads you into the creation of a personal clown/trickster. Trickster medicine wheel takes you on a journey facing yourself in 6 directions, making 1 mask with the 6 directions (was 6 masks), mask 7 is trickster/clown/buffo/zanii/heyoka...



Neutral Mask



This is one of the masks we use in training. Neutral is a clearing, centering presence, a place of illumination in which there is no past or future, no questions, no character, only observations and statements. Not too fast, nor too slow, like the neutral in your car, a starting place, ready to receive. An empty vessel removed of the inhibitive traits of the wearer, the actor. An intermediary between the wearer and the spirit character mask world of play.

To assume NEUTRAL.. we internalize **NECESSITY**

only what is necessary to stand, sit, walk, love, be... with **ECONOMY** of movement, gesture and express this necessity, this economy, in a **UNIVERSAL** way we always clear and prepare for mask work with **NEUTRAL**



In all ancient civilizations there exists such a creature revered and feared for he is the mirror of our foibles, our obsessions, our stupidity, our craziness in the native societies of North America, if the Heyoka or clown priest felt that the chief was full of shit it was perfectly acceptable for him to get up and shit on the chief's head. It was his job to toss convention up in the air to explore the atmosphere of seriosity that sets in - to keep us on our toes to show us a new perspective on life, death healing, to perform the most powerful healing of all to make us laugh.

Mask exercises

1. group attunementsanctify the space
2. power spot and small circle
3. charging your small circle
4. facing yourself in 6 directions
5. projection of polarities
6. return to childhood
7. waving goodbye to someone you love
8. mask exploration
9. mask notes



Photo right: Masked dancer from Jan Henderson, University of Alberta Class (Canada)

1. Group attunement

Print right: Ancestral Guidance by IOYAN MANI, Canadian Art Prints

Standing together in a circle in the centre of the room looking at each other, the community, reflecting back what you see from around the circle, making contact with each one, mirroring body movements, faces, etc.

Drop in impulse for yawn... stretch... sigh...do this 2 or 3 times to get in touch with your centre. Make a "huh" sound, easy, from the same place as the sigh....evolve it into a "huh, huh" then into "huh hmmm aah" getting the lips to vibrate, and the aah to pop out...then find a rooted "hmmmm" for yourself, listen to the sound around the circle, this is all with eyes closed. feel your feet drawn to the earth and your head drawn to the sky, easy, everything supported, floating, spaces between the joints and vertebrae, seeing the sound in the circle as light, and the circle being filled with the light of the group



2. Sanctify the space

Once you feel attuned to the group, begin to draw the light from the centre, through your body and out your back into the room ...turn out and begin to take your sound out into the room, using this as a warm up for body and vocal, claim the room with your sound and movement, claps, yells, rattles, coyote sounds, etc. until all dark corners have been cleared.

3. Power Spot and Small Circle

Once the room has been well claimed and cleared of old energy, move through the space with eyes half closed sensing from your gut for your power spot in the room for today. Have enough room around you to be able to turn fully with your arms outstretched. When you find the power spot, stand on it and mark the boundaries of a small circle around you. Its like the universe is a huge quantum batch of cookie dough and you are cutting your small cookie out of it for today, to charge with your own energy and to invoke particular energies in your own safely created space, done with belief and consciousness, you make this a ritual for yourself.

4. Charging your small circle

In the same way that an animal marks its space by peeing on it. You now use your unique sound and movement to claim and charge your small circle. Stand inside your charged circle, feel yourself filled with light, only what is necessary to stand, with economy in a universal way, you are a receptive vessel, ready to receive. With eyes still closed face toward the north.

Photo right: A dancing clown with mask in Cusco, Peru 2004



Cartoon right: A mudhead, from the Hopi, Native american tradition

5. Opening to the directions

I like to start with grounding to the earth.

See yourself standing on the Mother Earth, creator of life, provider of nourishment and sustenance. Send a quantum wave of light from your centre down through the layers of earth, sand, rocks, insects, worms right through to the very centre of the planet. Project an image of yourself right at the centre and reflect back to you standing, the feeling of this opening to the earth, allow your body to move and create sound for the feeling of being in the centre of the earth, receive the rhythm and express it in sound and movement, once you feel connected and open to the earth, give thanks for what you received and take that opening with you as you send a quantum wave of light up, through your body, out your head to the furthest star you can imagine, project your image, see yourself at that place and reflect back the feeling of being above, above, receive the gift as a rhythm of movement and sound in your body, let it fill you, know that you have opened and again give thanks for what you received. visualize the connection you have just made between below, below and above, above, see the line of energy and see your body, a vibrating electric energy moving and pulsing in the centre of that line. You are facing North, Project your image to the North, see yourself standing on the Earth, again, receive and express the rhythm, the gift of the North, for today. The north historically has been the direction of Mystery, the Unknown, do you see an animal in the north? Again after you have received the opening from the North and expressed it in sound and movement, give thanks and turn 90 degrees to the right to address the East. The East, where the sun rises, see yourself facing the horizon at Sunrise, new beginnings, eagle, ...do you see an animal, a color? Project your image through the space, reflect it back and receive and express the rhythm through sound and movement, give thanks for the opening and turn 90 degrees to the right to face South. South, heat, energy, red, coyote, rattlesnake...what do you see and feel from the south. Project, reflect, receive and express the rhythm of the South, know that you have opened and give thanks. Turn 90 degrees to the right and face to the West where the sun sets. see yourself on the horizon at the setting sun. Gentle endings, what gentle endings are happening in your life. Raven, whale, dolphin...what do you see. Project, reflect, receive and express this opening to the west in sound and movement, give thanks for this opening.



Standing in the centre of your charged space, be aware of the three lines of energy going through your body. From below to above, from north to south, and from east to west. Where these three intersect that is your unique position in the universe, see yourself as a radiating point of light, going in and out, radiant and magnetic, this is your number 7 direction, (clown)

For a moment go back to the direction that felt most unfamiliar to you. Spend a few minutes there and dialogue with that feeling and find out more about it, if there is an animal or color there let yourself open to what their message is. Then, after a couple of minutes go to the direction that felt the most like home to you, fill yourself with that strength and find out more about what is there for you, an animal or color to dialogue with and embrace the energy.

Back to centre and aware of opening your whole sphere, radiant, magnetic, clear white light, necessity, economy, universal, a receptive vessel. Step out of your charged circle and turn to face it. Close your eyes.

6. Projection of Polarities:

The first one I use is LOVE/FEAR.

There is no thought or anticipation involved with this, no figuring out. You will be drawing from the Universal Bank of Love, and the Universal Bank of Fear. Whichever one you wish to begin with. There are 3 steps.

Step one: imagine yourself as a projector. Draw on the universal energy of Love and visualize yourself charging your prepared circle with LOVE. Keep projecting and charging until you feel it is done. When you are ready you step into your charged circle and allow the energy and rhythm of LOVE TO enter your body and flow through you. Give yourself over to the experience and without thinking about it allow the rhythm



of LOVE to take you on a journey in sound and movement and emotion. Its like a racehorse that you grab onto and it takes you for a ride. Constantly changing and evolving, don't get stuck in one rhythm, always find out something more, take it to its high point of expression and when you have had enough, step outside and shake it off. Return to neutral, clear white light, receptive, clear your charged circle and prepare for step two.



Step two: You now draw from the Universal Bank of FEAR, and project this energy into your prepared circle. Charge your prepared space fully and when you are ready, step into and experience the universal rhythm of FEAR through your body in movement, sound and emotion, again taking yourself on a journey to a high point of expression, then step out and shake it off.

Clear and prepare neutral for step 3

Step 3: This time you see a line down the center of your prepared circle and you draw on both energies and project them both into your space, charging your space with both LOVE AND FEAR. When you step into the space you do not know which one will come in first, whatever it is go with it to its high point of expression and then switch to the other, take it to its high point and continue switching back and forth, faster and faster. At the point of switching I eventually give them commands to Switch,(hand clap) 2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9, SWITCH, 2345678 switch, 234567 switch ...right down to 2, 3, switch, 2, switch and then just hand claps, urging them to get right in between the impulse, between Love and Fear and find something totally new, a new experience, stay in that space for a minute, and step out and shake it off.

Left photo, Koyalaa, also called Hano clown it is a priest who take cares of the Katchinam during the summer dances. www.peabody.harvard.edu/katsina

Take a minute to clear, and come back to the room, sit in a circle and share the experience.

I use a rain stick to signal transitions from one direction to another, or for any transition in the warm up. Once you have been introduced to the routine, and are familiar with the steps, I use only the rain stick sound for transition points, to keep you moving along. I say only what i need to, letting you know where we are moving to. In our opening circle of talk, talk, I ask what you are feeling or have been feeling recently, and to think of the feeling or emotion and we then find the Polarity for it. This is what we use in the Polarity section. The personal feelings that come up, and always the other side. Getting in between them takes you to a new place.

It doesn't take that long -

In writing it seems long, but in actual practise moves along quite quickly, and you control how much time is spent with each step, you sense

when they are picking up on things and when they are ready to move on. At the beginning when you are introducing the language, it is good to talk through the explanation of the three steps in the Polarity, emotional warm up, and say you will be talking them through it but just want to introduce the language before beginning.



7. Return to Childhood

Think of a place you lived as a young child, 3 to 5 years old. A place where you played. Remember and reflect on that place and time when your job was to play.

Improvisation

You as an adult will go back to that place. You see the street, it is the same -- the house and everything in it are just as they were. When you enter the house, it is just as you left it. Somewhere in the house is a room, attic, corner, etc. where you played as a child. As the adult you go to this place and enter, again everything is as you remember it. In this play room there is a cupboard, drawer or toy box containing all your toys and special things. As you look into the box you take them out, you remember what it was like, you may discover things you had forgotten about.

Play with these toys as the adult and when you find something that was really special to you allow yourself to get lost in the play and let yourself slip back into being the child again. Discover the innocence and timelessness of the play. You may remember songs or music, smells, qualities of light, patterns and colors and textures around you. We call this play energy, Innocence.



8. Waving Goodbye to Someone you Love



AS YOURSELF - Make it a real person

Someone you love very much is leaving on a ship. They are going somewhere far away and you may never see them again. You have both discussed this and for whatever reason, you both agree that it has to be, and you know that this is for the best.

Improvisation Action

You are in your room, it is the night before and you are alone. You know that when you wake up in the morning you will be going down to the docks to say goodbye to your loved one.

Experience the room - make everything as real as possible - be there with your thoughts and feelings.

Undress and go to sleep. When the alarm rings it is morning and you prepare yourself, get dressed and step out through the door on your way to see your friend.

At this point the action stops, you close your eyes and visualize the following sequence.

Kokopelli playing the flute (photo left)

Visualization - In your mind's eye, you see yourself making your way to the dock. You meet your friend, get them on the ship and say your good-byes. You see the boat start to leave and you see yourself start to walk back to your room. At this point the action begins again.

Action - You are walking back from the dock through the city to your room, having waved goodbye to your friend. Allow your thoughts and feelings to be there. At some point in this journey you get an impulse to go back and wave to your friend one last time--if you don't follow the first impulse, there will be another. When you decide to go back there is an urgency because the ship may be out of sight so you run back to see your friend. When you get to the head of the dock you look out and see the ship. Look along the length of the ship until you see your loved one. You call out and you wave goodbye one last time, then when you are ready, you turn and walk away from the dock. This is called EXPERIENCE

9. MASK EXPLORATION

Both of these exercises are used extensively for all mask exploration--adapting the situation to fit the environment and life of the mask you may be exploring. By allowing this to be real for your mask character you have an opportunity to find out more about who you are every step of the way. Who is it that you love? By looking around the room you are in you discover more about who you are. Keep allowing things to change and clarify themselves for you. There is a full range of emotional reactions that will inform you of the inner life of the mask if you keep giving over to the rhythm of the mask and leaving yourself in the background as the observer.

This afternoon while i was standing up the tree ferns that had been bent by the storm, as i raised the final one there was a beautiful crow feather crowning the top. thanks Jahsmiit



10. MASK NOTES: For making six MASKS of six DIRECTIONS



1. North
2. South
3. East
4. West
5. Below, below
6. Above, above
7. In, Out (Clown Nose)

Print above: Spirit of the Plains by IOYAN MANI (Maxine Noel, Canadian Art Prints)

If you have less than 120 hours of Studio Time you can make 1 mask or 3 masks of 6 directions

Three MASKS of six DIRECTIONS

my suggestion is to combine

- 1 North and 3 South
- 2 East and 4 West
- 5 Below, below and 6 Above above

For switching to a different mask, emotion, innocence or experience,color, or line.... it does not have to be instantaneous: your inner dialogue with the mask says change,- change to 3 innocence, visualize the mask, colors and forms 3 innocence, as you connect with the colors and lines, pop or flow into the change.

(<6 impulses!!!!!!!!!!!!>below) play with slow changes and fast ones

INNER DIALOGUE

-- this is the conversation you have with yourself (the mask rhythm) as you present yourselves and invite us (the public) into your world where you take us on a little journey and leave us with a new awareness.

The inner dialogue allows a focus and a calmness inside even though outside is in chaos. it is the computer programmer creating a running conversation (silently, or with key words being spoken if necessary as a baby clown.

Example:hi, here i am.... and there are all of you.... wow...."jeesh".... look at all the wierd people looking at me and not knowing what to think....migod, that ones a freak... i think i'll flap my arms, i'm surprized and embarrassed that i did it,

....i sense necessity of change <impulse 1>

....a slight inner tremor is sensed<impulse 2>

....its far off in the distance <impulse 3>

....my right shoulder starts to shake<impulse 4>

....it's going out of control <impulse 5>

....arm shoots up into the air<impulse 6>

....wow....something wierd just happened....to my arm.... but hey.... i'm

okay....i'm relieved....how are you all, wasn't that frightening..... i

mean..... i just shook... and started to lose it.....and so on.....

(my inner dialogue guides my journey)

The only actual word spoken in the example was "jeesh" sounds were generated by the feelings of being startled, or frightened, or relievedand so on.....



©June 24, 1997 (c.) Ian Wallace (NION)

