

On Becoming a Jungian Sandplay Therapist: The Healing Spirit of Sandplay in Nature and in Therapy

Lenore F. Steinhardt

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Lenore F. Steinhardt has authored her second Sandplay book, focusing on her process of becoming a Jungian Sandplay therapist. Steinhardt began her career as an art therapist and has since accumulated 25 years of experience training and working as a Jungian Sandplay therapist. Much of her Sandplay work has taken place in Israel, which is a complex and culturally diverse society. Jungian Sandplay was first developed by Dora Kalff (1980), who saw Sandplay as a form of psychotherapy that gives a child a 'free and protected space', thus allowing the child to process unconscious conflict that brings about healing.

A Sandplay therapist offers a tray of wet or dry sand in which clients are invited to create stories using miniature and natural objects. Discussion about the story created in the tray may follow, if the client wishes to do so. Jungian Sandplay has its own language and practice, and is based on a philosophy of the human being's capacity for growth, spirituality, transformation, and self-healing.

In her book, Steinhardt engages the reader by exploring her personal journey with Sandplay, and she provides some fascinating case studies. One example is that of 'Delphine', a 43-year-old Jewish woman originally from Morocco, who was a client of Steinhardt for more than 10 years. One of the metaphors Delphine frequently uses over time is the fisherman without the rod, which in Steinhardt's interpretation symbolises 'the patience and readiness of the ego to access deep treasures from the unconscious. Meanwhile, there is no rod or fish. It is a time of waiting.'

Steinhardt's case presentations are accompanied by appealing, high-quality colour photographs of the sand trays. Throughout the book, Steinhardt describes the transformative nature of Sandplay by focusing on some key Jungian themes, the role of archetypes as they represent recurrent patterns in the psyche, symbols, metaphors, numinosity, nature, masculine and feminine, ocean and earth, boundaries, life and death. Steinhardt guides the reader through the Sandplay process and provides clear instructions about what kind of objects the therapist should have available, as well as giving details about how to introduce Sandplay to the client.

Other important procedures, such as recording the session and exploring transference and countertransference issues, are also discussed. Steinhardt describes the process of becoming a Jungian Sandplay therapist, as conceived by Dora Kalff, which involves the therapist undertaking an initial Sandplay personal process with a certified Sandplay therapist. Jungian Sandplay therapists also train in approved programs and complete many hours of supervision, as well as writing two papers that focus on

the use of symbols. Steinhardt makes reference to the International Society of Sandplay Therapy (ISST), which offers training opportunities and organises international conferences.

This book would appeal to educational and developmental psychologists working with clients of all ages who are interested in developing their Sandplay skills or indeed gaining more of an insight into this therapeutic approach. Steinhardt's fascination with Sandplay is contagious and can provide anyone working in this field a sense of excitement at the possibility of providing a safe and creative space where a client, young or old, can bring a healing process into their life.

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Reference

Kalff, D.M. (1980). *Sandplay: A psychotherapeutic approach to the psyche*. Boston, MA: Sigo Press.