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## Cinema therapy groups

About the cinema therapy group, facilitated by Birgit Wolz:

Cinema Therapy Group for personal and spiritual growth:

Using movies to help yourself through life's changes

A new cinema therapy group is forming for the 1st Quarter of 2003. We will meet on Piedmont Ave, in Oakland, on Wednesdays 7:15 to 8:45 p.m.

The existing Monday evening group (7:15 to 8:45 p.m.) may have new openings in March 2003. □

In these groups we will explore metaphors, plots and characters from certain movies to:

- understand emotional issues, find new ways of thinking and feeling, elevate sights, enlarge imagination and creativity
- evoke personal qualities like courage, tenderness, flexibility, authenticity, and spiritual awareness
- find new meaning and fulfillment in life.

Group exploration and exercises will enable members to search the hidden depth of their unconscious to open up to the strength and resources that wait to be discovered there. □ We will explore a new way of watching films that connects members to their higher possibilities long after they leave the group: they will be able to let movies inspire them to explore alternative ideas and paths during life's changes; they become a catalyst for healing and growth.

In these ongoing groups we meet weekly for an hour and a half. There is an initial 12-week commitment. New members can join every 12 weeks, if there is an opening in the group. □ Every other week members watch a specific movie at home, if they have not seen it yet. □ The movies will address different issues, qualities, emotions, and life questions — everything from uplifting films to movies, which inspire a new perspective, or model the development of new, inner resources. They may range from "The Shawshank Redemption" to "American Beauty" to "Field of Dreams".

We will explore the impact, the symbolic process and the mythical messages of these movies.

We will use supportive exchange between group members, as well as guided imagery, writing and drawing exercises.

The group size is limited to eight members.

Movie expertise is not required.

There is a fee of \$35 per session.

### About creating your own cinema therapy support group

You can create your own cinema therapy support group by watching movies together and share how these films affected you afterwards or you can come together to discuss your insights after everybody watched a chosen film on their own.

For best possible outcome I recommend the following guidelines:

- Allow each group member to choose a movie for everybody to watch. It is best if the film touched the person who chose it or had a special meaning for him or her. This process can be supported by the [Guidelines for Choosing Films](#). If no movie comes to mind choose from [Film recommendations](#) or cinema therapy books (see [cinema therapy bibliography](#)).
- Familiarize yourselves with the [Guidelines for watching films](#) and discuss guidelines. Decide how you want to use these guidelines. Do you want to modify them according to your group's specific interests and needs? Discuss how many meetings you want to spend on processing how one specific film effected you.
- Avoid getting stuck in critiquing the movie. Instead, focus on questions like: "How did the movie touch me, positively or negatively?", "If the film had a unique message for me, what was it?", "What new ideas for new behaviors did the movies introduce?", or "Did I experience something that connected me with health and wholeness, my inner wisdom, or higher self as I watched the film?"
- Usually group members respond differently to mood, meaning, symbolism and characters of films. Respecting these differences helps everybody to learn from others.
- Make an agreement about confidentiality in the group. It is usually best to keep confidential what group members share about themselves.
- Discuss the length of each meeting time, how frequently and for how long you are planning to meet or whether you want the duration of the group meetings to be open ended. □
- Group members often form close bonds. Everyone's presence is important to develop and maintain trust. Let each other know ahead of time, if you cannot make it to a meeting and when you are planning to leave the group.

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