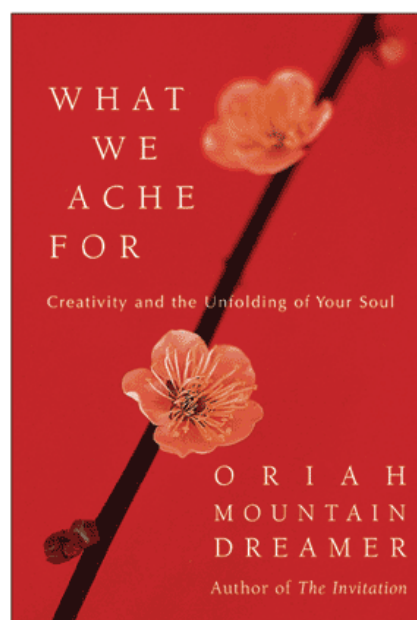


Mirror Image

Many years ago I apprenticed with a spiritual teacher who used to hand out what he called *Warrior Task Assignments*. This was a very grand sounding term for tasks given to students to help them shift out of their habitual ways of doing and seeing in order to become more fully present and available to life's experiences. One of these assignments was to do your normal daily activities one hundred and eighty degrees from the way you were used to doing them for one whole month. The only rule was to do no harm to yourself or someone else. So, if you normally slept in until the last possible moment, you were required to get up an hour early. If you were habitually early for things, you were to arrive late. If you usually planned your meals carefully, you were to eat whatever happened to be available when mealtime rolled around. If you normally went to work well coifed and stylishly dressed, you went in without make-up in an old sweat suit. You get the idea.

Write a story about spending one day doing everything opposite to your usual habits. It may help to write in the third person. Imagine how others around you would react. Fill in the sensory details and let your imagination conjure the experience. How would it feel to do things differently? Liberating? Oppressive? Depressing? Sinful? Disorienting? Where would it not matter and where would it be very difficult? In what things would it seem almost impossible? Let your writing allow you to step away from your habitual ways of doing things and imagine things differently.



Based on *What We Ache For* by Oriah Mountain Dreamer, published by HarperSanFrancisco, 2005

Although Oriah enjoys receiving writing from her readers, the number of messages she gets makes it impossible to send individual responses.