



**TRANSITIONS CARDS**  
**How to become visible?**  
**GUIDE**

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# Transitions - talking through images guide

Methodology and illustrations of cards  
by Dagna Gmitrowicz

## **AIM:**

The aim for creating dialogue cards, crafted particularly for the “talking through images”, was an attempt to answer the following questions:

How a young man can be motivated to embark on their own initiative?  
How to empower one’s self-driven motivation, belief, and self-agency?

During numerous art therapeutic sessions conducted with various personalities in an art studio, 4 major processes emerged, which can lead a young person to strengthen their self-agency in everyday life.

Four separate processes:

HOW TO BECOME VISIBLE?

HOW TO REDISCOVER YOUR DREAMS AND MAKE OWN CHOICES?

HOW TO REGAIN ONE’S ENERGY?

HOW TO BECOME A BUTTERFLY?

Within the project - Sparkcatcher- a series of cards was created, later series were made independently from the project.

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## Cards: Transitions - How to become visible?

The first series of cards is based on “**talking through image**” and it responds to : how to become visible?

**How to become visible in the reality that surrounds us?**

**It appears that young people often do not take on any initiative in order not to attract attention, and to protect themselves from external criticism, responsibility, sense of failure, and sometimes even in order to hide from potential disappointment.**

These people accept **different strategies how to become invisible** (defence mechanisms); they run into the world of fantasy, do not express their needs, deliberately miss points of reality that they feel uncomfortable with, put on the mask of strange behaviors, take a role of a small child, keep a dialogue with their inside fear, critic, escape into nature, blindly devote oneself for the sake of others.

**The dialogue cards** express through images phases of a **symbolic portrait**.

A face can emerge from background, from hardly visible lines into the shape of a distinct form. The visible face can take different attitudes towards the environment, reflecting some defence mechanisms, for a therapist/facilitator to transform and work with.

**The cards stimulate dialogue through metaphor**

## What is “talking through images”?

This is a therapeutic process based on creating an artistic work **with** a client. The process does not focus on a solitary work of a client, contrary, it opens towards a dialogue with a therapist or a coach. **The artistic work becomes a language, the two people can speak.**

A therapist , or a coach could put oneself in a client's shoes and together develop new elements of their common work. A therapist is to trust their intuition, but ask if they can add an extra element e.g an open eye, some colour, line etc. A therapist does not have to justify their decisions, it is important to trust one's impulse and check on a client what changes it provokes.

*Talking through images emerged as a technique during lasting many hours sessions in my art studio. Through analysis, research and effect comparative sessions, it appeared it enables a direct contact with a client in a more natural way. It reaches, in a non-invasive way, the realms of unknown sources, which can trigger a change.*

# How to work with the cards?

Cards are designed to work and create **with** a client (extra drawing, painting, adding elements), they create a symbolic image emerging from background and becoming visible in reference to reality.

1. Print the board (you can choose between two formats: smaller and bigger). Cut the cards out. Cards can be printed black and white, the thicker paper the better. You can laminate the cards and use whiteboard markers for multiple use.
2. Collect stationery - crayons, markers, colour pens, paints, depending on how thick your paper is.
3. Invite a client for a session - "How to be visible" (providing the client feels urge to work with the subject)
4. Let the client pick a card he is most driven to.
5. Work with this one card only.
6. After picking the card, ask what is so important about it.
7. Then ask how they could want to build it up, change.
8. Ask if you can join in (more supporting question in the following paragraph)
9. The session should not take longer than 60 minutes.
10. The process should leave a client with a feeling of complacent. You can return to the card at the next session.

*Drawings in this particular collection represent feminine side, masculine side is still under construction, so possibly cards are meant mostly to work with women, however the trial phase did not confirm that. Cards are, therefore, to be used by men and women.*

## Supporting questions:

Here is a list of common supporting questions, it is only a suggestion, you are encouraged to explore on your own:

### **After picking a card:**

- Follow your intuition, your feeling, draw/paint the way it suits you. It does not have to be pretty or suggestive. May it be just yours. Your symbolic portrait for today.
- This cards holds all you need, fill it with all the elements of your symbolic portrait that are important for you today. All that is meaningful and you simply fancy. It may even surprise you.

*As a contributor you may show interest what appears on page. In most natural and easy way. It is important the process progresses in ease and feeling of openness. There is room for laughter, jokes and guessing.*

## **During the session:**

If the facilitator draws/paints something:

"Look, I had the feeling that it had to be painted in this card, what do you think about it? Does it matter to you? "

"Do you feel like changing what I've painted/drew? You may do it, it's your card "

„What in your portrait is visible to other people? What is visible only to you? Add to the portrait those elements.”

- BACKGROUND: What appears in the background of the portrait, in its surroundings? Any symbols? Colors?
- What would you like people to see in your portrait, what they had not seen yet? Please, highlight it on the portrait.
- What else would you like to communicate to others? Draw/paint it on the portrait.
- What could appear in the portrait to make it even clearer, more visible?
- If you turn the card upside down and see your work from a different perspective, what would you tell me? Was there anything new to you? What would you paint / draw?

If the leader notices a symbol, an element, the value that intrigues him, may ask a question like:

And what would happen if you made a slight change in the portrait ... ..

"What other quality would the open eye bring?"

"What would happen if the mouth were visible?"

"What would change if you removed the mask from your portrait and reveal your face?"

"What would change if the child grew up?"

"What would change if fantasy elements became real?"

"What would change if the whole face was visible?"

"What would change if was removed the blindfold from eyes?"

"What would change if there was only one face visible?"

If the client replies that he doesn't know what to answer, ask if he wants to draw a modification on the portrait, to check it out. You may work on this modification together.

**Please, take care not to force anything. Let everything go as the client wants. You could mainly ask questions, provoke change and expand awareness.**

## **At the end of the session:**

- Is there any other symbol, detail which could be added to strengthen your portrait?
- Is there anything else you would like to add to your symbolic portrait in the future?
- Now, after the session, tell me, do you have any ideas for action, change in your life in the near future? If yes - what would it be?
- It would be good if the client at the end of the session had the opportunity to take a photo of the card or take it with him/her.



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