Your story as a river

Time: one to two hours · You need: a large sheet of paper (A3, for example), colours

Your sexual development has a course. There were calm stretches, narrow passages and moments when something opened up. In this exercise you paint that course as a picture.

A picture often shows connections that get lost when you tell a story. Suddenly you see your history in front of you as a whole.

How to go about it

Take a large sheet of paper, A3 for example, and colours you like using. Choose an image for your development: a river, a curve, a landscape or something entirely different. Then start painting. This is about expressing yourself, not about making a beautiful picture.

Questions to keep you company while you paint

- Which stages can your sexual development be divided into?
- What did each stage stand for back then, and what does it stand for today?
- What did you experience in each stage? Which shape and which colour fit it?
- Where did it get narrow, bumpy or steep?
- Did you have to climb steps or walk through valleys? How do you draw that?
- What did you have to fight for, and when was that?
- What did you experience that was so significant it should stand out in the picture?
- Which moods, perspectives and feelings belong in the picture too?
- Which colour fits which place, so that the picture feels like your story?

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If it gets hard

Painting can bring up memories that hurt. You can take a break at any time or leave a spot blank. Some things are easier to look at with someone else, in a session, at your own pace.

And then

Hang the picture up for a few days or put it where you can see it. What do you notice when you look at it with a little distance? If you like, bring it along to a session.

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