

## Interview: Yoga Angels Press on Imagery For Kids

on 21 November, 2007 07:57:00



**DR. CHARLOTTE REZNICK.**

**Hello Dr.Reznick. I have been doing research on your work and have learned about you. I have a few questions for you.**

**Q---Did you always know that you wanted to work with children? Radha- Age 17**

A---Since college.

**Q---I see that you have been teaching at UCLA. How long have you been a professor there?**

A---I'm a former associate "clinical" professor. What UCLA does is bring in people from the field to be clinical professors. It's very different from being on campus than being a part of the regular UCLA faculty. I'm faculty but I'm CLINICAL faculty. I volunteer. I train graduate students in assessment of children and adolescents.

**Q---How long have you been there for?**

A--- I have been there for twenty years

A---I know, how old are you?

**Q---I'm 17 years old.**

A---Oh wow you are so young!

**Q---THIS WAS BEFORE I WAS BORN!**

A---So this is basically what I do too help the students of UCLA out.

**Q---And for all twenty years it been volunteering?**

A---Oh yes. (LOL)

**Q---What were your first initial goals once graduating from USC?**

A---I actually took it in two parts because I started being a psychologist in the schools of South Central (the inner city) and now I'm in private practice. I was there for fifteen years. I really wanted to help kids feel okay no matter what was going on around them. I started developing the imagery work when I was working in the inner city because of one school. I was a psychologist full time at Trinity Street School where there are 1200 kids. I was a psychologist there full time. 800 children out of the 1200 were in very bad shape. They were very depressed, angry, not doing well in school - just not happy kids. That was about two-thirds of the school. I'd say that one-third of the school were just okay. And so, What I started doing was going into whole classes of 28 kids. I would teach them some of the imagery/ relaxation skills to help them get in touch with their hearts, help them calm down, help them find a little vacation spot - somewhere they can feel safe. I did a workshop for the teachers. Whichever teacher wanted to sign up I would then go to their class. I went into their class for about 30 to 45 minutes, and I was going to 20 to 25 classes a week. To connect with them, I asked different questions that might be important to their lives, such as: "How many friends do you have?" "Would you like to have more friends?" (also re doing well in sports, academics, etc. I tried to meet them at what level they were, no matter the age difference. I'd tell them that I was going to teach them a way to get some of the things that they wanted. Then I would lead them into little imageries, and afterwards we would do drawings. And from their drawings I was often able to see where they were inside or how they felt that they didn't normally show the world.

**Q---What is Imagery for Kids?**

A---I think that's a good question. It's basically teaching kids to connect with their wisdom inside through their imagination, through creating pictures or through their thoughts or ideas, and helping them change if they want to, or find peace in their lives!

**Q---How does that happen?**

A---I created different tools to help the kids. The first thing I teach them is about the way they breathe, which is similar to what you do in yoga or in meditation. And I call it the balloon breath. I tell them to breathe in to their belly about two to three inches below their navel and it calms them down. That's the first thing. If that's the only thing he/she learns then that's all they need. It helps them connect whether their eyes are closed or open. I prefer closed because there is a whole other world inside I tell them as much as there is outside there is just as much and more inside. But it's fine either way. In the beginning I didn't use the term meditation because it wasn't such a popular term. Now it's much more accepted.

**Q---Yeah back then I believed it was more controversial because "meditation" was either aligned with a religion or something not safe. So I understand where you're coming from.**

A---And so it's just deep breathing and it calms you down and it helps you clear your head. Just depending on who the audience was I could just speak to them on different levels, whether it's a cognitive level, or an emotional level or a spiritual level. Let me give you an example. We take imaginary trips, and one of the trips we took was to go to outer space. The idea was to go to another planet that was like earth but a little bit different. A perfect earth that they could create and learn from, where they could meet some being or animals from that planet, receive symbolic gifts to help them improve their lives, and bring it back with them to use on earth. Some kids bring back love, or medicine, or caring. One little girl even said that she had seen God which was amazing. Another imaginary trip is to find a Special Place where they can feel safe and feel loved. I wanted to design it in such a way that once they open the door to their Special Place they can bring in anyone that they want. They just have to love and accept them just the way they are when they walk through the door. Everything in your Special Place should be positive. I tell them it's similar to watching TV. If you don't like the channel you change it. It's the same way with their Special Place. If they don't like it they can change it right away. It's teaching them that they have some power in their lives because a lot of children don't feel like they do. Many of the kids that I work with also have much anger for different reasons. They might take that out on the kids at school. Either because they're being hit on at home, or their parents aren't giving them enough attention, or... By being able to calm themselves and able to create that special place inside, it's relieving for them.

**Q---Do you work only with children or do you work with adults as well?**

A---I work with young children, older children, teens and parents.

**Q---In a sense you have to use your imagination with your work. Is it easier for children to use their imagination or is it easier for the parent?**

A----People would think that it is easier for kids. It's not necessarily that way. Some kids really have a hard time and some adults don't have a hard time. The kids that see me usually have emotional issues or problems so they can already shut down and have difficulty accessing their rich inner world.

**Q---What do you believe is the best quality that you have gain from working with children? Why?**

A---Compassion, they teach me to open my heart.

**Q---Say you are having a hardship in your own personal life but have a session in 30 minutes and you are not emotionally equipped to do the session, Are you still going to move forward with your sessions or would you reschedule?**

A---I can sit and meditate for awhile and put my problems aside. I center myself first and then I focus on the child. Plus when I help someone else I help myself.

**Q---While working with other children do you ever clear anything for your own personal life?**

A---I would be touched by what the other children are going through. The healing is not going only one way. It is definitely all connected.

Reprinted from [YAP - Yoga Angels Press](#)