

# Vision Quest into Symbolic Reality Publications

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## Introduction to Sandtray-Worldplay™: The Tool



As developed by  
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*The Light of Consciousness is reflected in  
the Crystal of Creation and the Mirror  
of Your own World.*

Sandtray-Worldplay™ is a transformational method that supports growth, development and healing in diverse psychotherapeutic, educational, spiritual, legal, business, familial, communal, nature and intercultural settings. Using different shapes and depths of trays filled with different colored and textured sand, earth, or water, along with fire, air, man-made and natural miniatures, Sandtray-Worldplay offers people direct access to their deepest consciousness so they may align themselves with the innate wisdom of their own Psyche, be present with each moment regardless of prevailing conditions, and create an integrated, authentic life for themselves, their family, their community, humanity, nature, and the planet earth.

Sandtray-Worldplay Journeys are offered in attractive but simple healing environments to people of all ages, backgrounds, cultures and circumstances. We engage in this unique method of sandplay, supported by meditative reflection, centering, natural rhythmic movement, music, drama, expressive arts, travel, and explorations in nature. We journey into the depths of our individual and communal being. We explore the *growing edge* of our *life stream*.

A *Sandtray-Worldplay and Dynamic Expressive Play Journey* inevitably takes us directly to our Soul, our Spirit, our Ancestors, our Self, our Family and our Community. Coming into the presence of our own Selves, our Life, and our Universe, we learn to embrace the play of our consciousness to enhance our lives.

As we experience the integrity, wholeness and wisdom that result from such play, we become more rooted in ourselves and more interested in living in familial and global community with one another and the earth. We also learn how to embrace and support others on their transformational healing journey.

### Introducing the Space and the Tool:

To create Worlds in the sand you need at least two waterproof trays, approximately 20 in by 24 in and 4 in deep (26x28x4), with a level bottom that is painted blue. Place each tray on a waist-high work surface<sup>1</sup>. Fill the



trays halfway with either moist or dry sand. Make available additional water, sand and tools. Provide an extensive collection of small man-made or natural objects (see photo above and lists in the following section) that may be stored on shelves, in baskets, or drawers. Add other inchoate art-and construction materials and building blocks to increase the scope of expression. Do not forget candles, incense, crystals, and fresh flowers. Let them be readily available to the builder. Add stepping stools.

### Suggestions for Sand and Trays to hold it:

1. General Size of the tray: 20" by 24" and 3 to 4" deep. Without using peripheral vision, the builder can see every part of the tray. Each portion of the tray is readily accessible to the



builder for manipulation. Trays may vary in size. We do not use very small trays because of the trauma factor: many clients will not be able to use a small tray session after session because Worlds can become too 'charged' when the play space is not large enough. It

may be unnecessarily difficult when tabooed, and conflicting forces do not have 'enough room' to negotiate different ways of meeting. It is preferable to use the regular sized trays that are nearly square so that there is nearly equal space from center to the periphery.

You may wish to add a circular tray, 26" to 28" in diameter, which increases the sense of wholeness, i.e. the at-one-ness of all that is. Octagonal and triangular trays are

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1. Usually one tray is used during each session. Sometimes two or three may be used. The most that have been used by one client in one session is 14 sandtrays. You may wish to keep several extra trays on hand: these may be used for 'mucky wet' work; different colors of sand; water trays or extra trays. One very deep tray is essential if you work with pre-school children or clients who have experienced trauma.

whimsically interesting, but do not seem to have any particular merit in and of themselves.

It is good to have larger sandtrays for trauma -, family - and couple work, (approximately 34" x 36" x 4"). The author finds a 5 to 6 square feet sandtray most helpful when working with certain individuals who need a large space to integrate many different experiences, and when working with families and/ or groups.

2. Source of trays: Aside from having them made of sealed wood by a carpenter and ordering them from mail order houses, you may use flat bottomed photo developing trays, such as Cesco-lite trays, either lined with blue adhesives shelfpaper or painted. You may also contact Vision Quest Images at [www.Vision-Quest.us](http://www.Vision-Quest.us) to order durable, shallow and deep blue plastic sandtrays weighing about two pounds each.
3. Source of sand: 0-30 or 0-60 mesh white or natural silica sand. In California, RMC Lonestar (1-800-227-5186) is a good source: request lapis luster, garnet, green, glass bead sands. Salix Corporation in Salt Lake City, Utah (1-877-531-8600) offers fine orange and white sands. Their black sand tends to be 0-30 mesh, which is too rough. Request 0-100 mesh black sand.
4. Earth: Adding ordinary earth from your area to a sandtray makes for a very special earthtray that can evoke the experience of grounding and many other helpful teachings.
5. Have plenty of water. Reserve an extra tray for flooding- and water play. Be creative and install a drain with plug on bottom of the tray.
6. Provide plenty of candles, tin-foil boats with small sticks and dried rosemary, for experiencing light, smoke and fire play.

## **Suggestions for outfitting the Sandtray Room<sup>2</sup>:**

### *Basics Supplies:*

1. At least TWO trays: one wet and one dry
2. A pitcher of WATER available
3. TOWELS or a FINGERBOWL with WATER
4. A brush to clean off the images before returning them to the shelf
5. KLEENEX
6. A CAMERA: digital or a 35mm camera is preferred
7. Notepaper for notes
8. A tarp/area rug/cloth for protecting the floor from sand when the play becomes vigorous; you may also install a linoleum or tile floor; a good broom or dustbuster and dustpan
9. Your reference books: your own journal of your Sandtray-Worldplay Journey and your journal of how you animated various images and symbols in your own collection, multicultural and multiethnic mythology and folktale collections, science dictionaries, metaphysical, spiritual, and religious studies, symbol books, currently popular stories, etc.

### *Your basic categories of miniature objects:*

1. Multicultural People and Humanoid Life forms: grouped together as females, males, couples, children, and social groups. Show a full range of activities, behaviors, professions, sizes, emotions, attitudes, races, cultures etc.
2. Animal and animal communities: show individual variation in color and size
3. Plant life, reflecting the lifecycle from seed to barren branches to broken branches
4. Natural objects of all sorts: rocks both ordinary and precious; polished and natural woods; seashells; feathers; bones; eggshells; tumble glass; dried flowers; lichen; bromeliads; etc.
5. Glass beads and marbles
6. Environments belonging to different cultures and historical epochs: furniture, houses, monuments, hospitals, schools, fire-and police departments; churches etc

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2. See Dr De Domenico's Sandtray-Worldplay Manual and The Experiential Home Study Module for further details about setting up a sandplay space. Contact [www.Vision-Quest.us](http://www.Vision-Quest.us) or [sandworldplay@rcn.com](mailto:sandworldplay@rcn.com) for more information.

7. Transportation and communication of all kind
8. Pre-historic and fantasy creatures of all different sizes and color
9. Miscellaneous art materials
10. Modern and ancient miniature art sculptures; 20th century heroes and heroines and villains, cartoon figures
11. Sand and Water tools
12. Planetary, earth and space symbols
13. Food
14. Topographical and geological symbols: caves, tunnels, arches etc
15. Reflective surfaces and illuminating objects: mirrors, lights, candles, and torches
16. Ordinary, cultural and mystical treasures of all kinds, including treasure boxes, dragon treasures, gold coins, national and political icons, etc.
17. Magical figures: magicians, sorceresses, priests, priestesses, ghosts, elementals, nymphs, Gods and Goddesses, including satanic and angelic beings and personalities, etc
18. Death objects, birth objects, tombs, wombs, incubators; hospitals and recovery centers, war and weapons; blood; (food-dye or red play dough)
19. Fabric of different colors and textures; different colored string; rope; wire;
20. Indigenous, religious, sacred and spiritual images from different cultures and epochs
21. Plastic, pewter, wooden, golden and colorful images
22. Fences, blocks, stones, street signs etc
23. Broken, hurt, and fragmented objects, including various animal-plant body parts
24. Play-Dough or Stick'em for attaching objects together during play

Please note the categories that are missing in your sandtray playroom. You are not creating a 'collection of fine art'; instead you are collecting a reference library of human experiences that occur in all planes and dimensions. When you begin your collection: Get a few things in EACH category first, so your collection is diverse and complex. For pewter, gold, black, white, ethnic diversity: spray or paint ordinary objects. Later you may be able to afford these more expensive items. To add ancient images to your collection: make them out of clay/plasticine by copying the designs from books. For couple, family and group sandplay provide a rich and extensive collection of images that truly reflect the diverse experiences that arise for humans in all dimensional realities.

Sources for Images:

Vision Quest Images at [www.vision-quest.us](http://www.vision-quest.us)

Toys of the Trade at [www.toysofthetrade.com](http://www.toysofthetrade.com)

Sandplay Toys, e-mail at [lisa@sandplay-toys.com](mailto:lisa@sandplay-toys.com)

Sacred Source at [www.sacredsource.com](http://www.sacredsource.com)

Fine Toy Stores

Toys-R-us, Walmarts, Drugstores, Joanne's Fabric Store, Michaels

Museums, galleries, religious Stores, New Age stores

Airports, amusement parks, and other domestic, import stores, and worldwide Souvenir and

Tourist Attractions

E-Bay

Flea Markets and Garage Sales

Make them yourself

*Procedure for Sandtray-Worldplay therapists getting to know their images:*

When adding new objects to your collection, experience them first. Notice:

- What experiences arise when you spend time with them?
- What experiences or stories do they bring to you on different days and at different times?
- What do they mean to you?
- How does your psyche use them in sandtray play?

After you have used them, look them up in a symbol or a mythology dictionary. Then, notice how your clients use them: keep a log of the type of experiences they evoke in different Worlds. You may notice that there are no short cuts to experiencing and that interpretations are wonderful mental exercises, can create exciting stories for you that unfortunately often bear little resemblance to the actual realities embodied by the characters in the Creator's World! Indeed, life and its meanings are relative to the prevailing circumstances of the observer and the play. There is no easily objectifiable reality in a sandplay: In time, you will learn that it is very exciting to help builders/creators animate their own symbols, learn how to experience deliberately and consciously in the many different dimensions of reality, weave their own dynamic, living story and then share it with you.

*Therapists and Facilitators need to experience their own personal Sandtray-Worldplay process:*

Sandplay evokes very deep realities. It cuts across many familial and cultural taboos as it activates the deep, primordial integrative forces of the psyche. Whether an educator, a trained expressive-, art- or play therapist or whether an accomplished verbal, behavioral, or cognitive clinician, each sandplay facilitator needs to use the sandtray for his/her own personal growth and development before integrating the tool into the play- and consultation room. Personal experience in individual journey sessions, couple sessions, family sessions, group sessions and experiential training groups is essential. Each practitioner needs the experience of using the medium by him/herself in their own playroom for at least twenty sessions – otherwise he/she has little indication that he/she is able to trust the psyche of the client-at-play.

*Sandtray-Worldplay Training Opportunities:*

Sandtray-Worldplay Trainings are offered by Gisela Schubach De Domenico. Her training studio is located in Oakland, California. During May-June she offers trainings in the Portland, Maine area.

You may inquire about private Journey Sessions and private training/consultation.

Her small group experiential Vision Quest Into Symbolic Reality Workshop and Training Series offer Sandtray-Worldplay Journey Days, Nature and Wilderness Retreats, Monthly Women Circles, Monthly Consultation and Journey Groups, and Level 1-6 Sandtray- Worldplay Intensives (5-9 days each).

Dr De Domenico, or a certified Sandtray-Worldplay Trainer, will travel to your agency, group, or organization. In 2005 her work is being sponsored by Round Oaks Center in Charlottesville, the Kentucky Play Therapy Association in Louisville, and the Georgia Play Therapy Association in Atlanta.

For your convenience, a home study Sandtray-Worldplay course is available. This course is suitable for Clinic Study Groups, University Sand Play Therapy Courses, educators and teachers who want to develop some salient skills before or after coming to the ST-WP intensives with Dr De Domenico.

Journeys to Ancient- and Modern Sacred Sites are in the planning for 2006.

Contact Dr De Domenico at [www.vision-quest.us/VQISR/schedule](http://www.vision-quest.us/VQISR/schedule); [sandworldplay@rcn.com](mailto:sandworldplay@rcn.com);  
Phone at 510-530-1383.

Gisela Schubach De Domenico. Introduction to Sandtray-Worldplay: The Tool.

For Sandtray-Worldplay Bibliography:



Contact

[www.vision-quest.us/VQISR/publications](http://www.vision-quest.us/VQISR/publications)

and

[www.sandtray.org](http://www.sandtray.org)