

## Discussion Group Topics

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***"Life Love Sex Death...and other works in progress."***

Below is a list of some core themes pertinent to *"Life Love Sex Death and other works in progress."* These topics, while interrelated, are separated and informally categorized here for the purpose of facilitating discussion groups, Q & A sessions, and workshops.

### **Monologue Writing / Editing / Comedy / Live Performance**

- Monologues and Solo Performances: writing from one's life and personal experiences
- Committing to a single work over a period of years; remaining effective and interested after 300 performances
- The editing process; facing the truth about one's work and making choices that serve the whole of the project; packing the tightest snowball: finding the courage and willingness to delete some of your "best" material
- Controversial theatre; the fine line between provocative/uncensored and exploitative/abusive; the responsibility of writers, directors and performers to their audiences and to the world.
- Recognizing the authentic creative state; the paradox of faking it and being real about faking it
- The transformational experience of live theatre: exposing pain and truth-telling; the fine line between baring one's soul and self-indulgence; giving 100% in a performance and knowing when one's personal process has gotten in the driver's seat and the audience members have been thrown in the trunk!
- The thrills and challenges of performing with no fourth wall; how to use *everything* in the room, including interruptions and disrespectful audience members
- Discovering and maintaining self-respect, integrity, and dignity as a presenter of Live Art; honoring one's service and gifts to the world; is it true that the show *must always* go on? where do we draw that line?
- Using live performance and interactive theatre as a means of self-study/world study
- Death to the Ego / Jumping off the Cliff: "dying" to the performance process and opening to one's fullest presence—on stage and off, finding the courage and willingness to truly let go; moving past the need for approval (on stage *and* off)
- Utilizing humor as a safe vehicle for expressing pain, trauma, and emotionally-charged issues; creating safety on stage and in the entire venue
- Bridge-building and forging peace: The intersection of the Performing Arts and the Healing Arts

- The effect of one's creative work on the world; feeding dualistic thinking, paranoia, separatism, and hatred through the arts; opening hearts and minds through the arts
- Zen and the Art of Live Performance: When does the show *actually* begin? How long after curtain call does the show officially end?

### **Sex / Gender Roles / Sexual Identity**

- Diffusing the emotional charge about sex and sexuality; normalizing sex
- Creating safety and commonality in the world around the subject of sex
- The *universality* of love and relationships
- The myth of sexual labels: Gay, Straight, Down Low, Metrosexual, etc. *Realities or mental constructs? Does this terminology clarify or confuse?*
- Using labels as a means of domination, control, exclusion, and self-protection
- The side-effects of "Queer as Folk," and "Queer Eye for the Straight Guy"—stereotypes, identities and images. Are these shows benign in terms of the messages they send to the general population?
- Unconscious self-loathing in The Gay World, and how it's mirrored and insidiously reinforced in the media
- Moving past Gay Pride; the perils of remaining trapped within the confines of the LGBT community; self-acceptance and integration; exploring and embracing the next step for the LGBT community in the world; integrating sex into the whole of one's life versus making sexual orientation one's primary identifying feature; hiding inside the ghetto of one's sexual identity group
- Men and emotional vulnerability, expressiveness, and intimacy; *The Forbidden Fruit of the Industrial Revolution: Men's Secret Attraction for One Another*

### **Psychology / Modern Life / Love / Relationships**

- The epidemic of co-dependency in our culture; re-claiming one's basic right to say *no*; fear of honest communication; withholding one's truth and the turmoil that results
- Power-testing: exploring one's identity in relationships without hurting others; the purgatory of 20-somethings: caught between two worlds
- Healthy use of power in relationships; the misuse of power in relationships
- Modern life: Our lost sense of community within the Nuclear Family Holocaust model; the absence of models of respectful, healthy, loving relationships; lack of elders

- Daily Life, Technology: computers, cell phones, isolation, disconnection, alienation, despair; *too much* information; lack of physical contact; apathy
- Knowing One's Shadow / Keeping the Pitbull on a Leash: The key to safety in relationships—interpersonally and globally
- The Multi-Chakra Extravaganza: connecting the upper and lower energies; accepting and celebrating all parts of oneself; integrating heart, mind, sex, and spiritual energies into one whole being; using “spirituality” to rationalize one’s avoidance of sex, money issues, negative emotions, and earthly pursuits

### **The Connection Between Life and Love and Sex and Death**

- Why intimate relationships scare us “to death”
- The interrelatedness of life, love, sex, and death
- Surrendering control in love versus treating relationships as a game of chess (attempting to conquer one’s opponent)
- Facing, dealing with, communicating about, and practicing death in one's daily life
- Being present with death, literally and metaphorically