

Shrink Rap Radio #173, September 13, 2008 – Prison Dreams and Fairy Tales
David Van Nuys, Ph.D., aka “Dr. Dave” interviews Dana Houck,
D. Min, Ed. D.

(transcribed from www.ShrinkRapRadio.com by Susan Argyelan)

Excerpt: *One of the other things that I did that might be interesting is that I used a lot of fairy tales and myths. Actually, one of the myths that they liked the most was the Odyssey. And it was amazing that these guys – some of them wanted to watch it. That was the TV show version of the Odyssey, and we’d sit and we’d analyze that. And they found themselves in that, and they wanted to watch that three or four times a year just to try to get what they could out of it. Like dealing with the Cyclops, the one way of thinking, and then being seduced by Circe and Calypso. We’d talk about that and how many years it’s going to cost them to be seduced, and what seduced them to get them into prison.*

Introduction: That was the voice of my guest, Dr. Dana Houck, a Jungian-oriented psychotherapist who used dreams and fairy tales in his prison work for ten years. You can learn more about his fascinating background by going to our show notes at www.ShrinkRapRadio.com. Now, here’s the interview.

Dr. Dave: Dr. Dana Houck, welcome to Shrink Rap Radio.

Dana Houck: Well, thanks. It’s good to be with you.

Dr. Dave: Well, you know, I’m trying to recall how we came to set this up. Do I recall correctly that you’re a listener and you sent in a comment, and I saw your professional credentials, and then that’s how I came to invite you? Or, did it happen some other way?

Houck: I’ve been a listener of yours for a little while now, and I really appreciate all the things that you do and all of the people you interview. It helps open up a lot more avenues for me. I believe I responded to a questionnaire on your site...

Dr. Dave: Oh...

Houck: ...and I talked to you a little bit about what I used to do. I think you interviewed some psychiatrists, and one of them worked in a prison?

Dr. Dave: Yes, yes.

Houck: And they’d never really done any therapy with inmates. And I’d worked ten years for the state of Minnesota in a prison doing therapy, and doing Jungian therapy.

Dr. Dave: Yes. Now I do remember that you turned in a survey, and I was reading through the surveys. ‘Cause I was looking back through the e-mails, and I was saying, “Now, did I get an e-mail from him telling me about his work?” And now it comes back to me that it was through your survey answer. And I saw that, and I realized that you would make a good guest. So, you sort of started to go there, but let me have you start out by telling us a bit about your background.

Houck: I had been in the prison for a little over ten years. Before that, I worked as a psychologist in the State Developmental Center in South Dakota, and before that, I worked in Sioux Falls, South Dakota and came to Minnesota ten years ago.

Dr. Dave: Well, I was hoping to have you go back even further than that. (laughs)

Houck: (laughs) Okay.

Dr. Dave: You describe yourself both as a minister and as a Jungian therapist. Which came first?

Houck: Actually, I was a minister in the United Methodist Church. I went to seminary a long time ago, I got a Master’s in Divinity and a Doctor of Ministry and actually still do serve a small church right now on weekends.

Dr. Dave: Mm-hmm...

Houck: And from there, it just seemed that it wasn’t quite satisfying enough, and I actually had dreams that seemed to indicate I did need to know more, so I went back to school and got my Master’s and Doctorate in Psychology and Counseling.

Dr. Dave: Okay. Well, that’s an interesting story. And then somehow, you got involved with the work of Carl Jung. How did that come to happen?

Houck: That was just some personal things when I was doing some work, just doing some internal struggling about looking for more purpose in life, looking for some deeper meaning. And, I ran into a Jungian analyst – a therapist – and from there, I guess it’s history. I enjoyed it; I learned a lot about a lot of things and about myself, and a lot about people. I guess I really enjoyed the depth psychology, moving down deep into what made me tick...

Dr. Dave: Yes.

Houck: ...and what was going on inside of me and what the call was.

Dr. Dave: It sounds like the search for meaning was a central thread for you in your life for some time, first drawing you into the ministry and then later (inaudible) psychology.

Houck: Yeah. I think a lot of that came from some personal issues when I was young. My father died when I was young, and I guess I was looking for some answers as to why that would be, and what that meant for me.

Dr. Dave: Mm-hmm...

Houck: And so, that's how I began to look for the answers to those questions, and that led me down this road.

Dr. Dave: Yes, yes. Now, one of the things that I was struck by and that we'll be talking about, I hope, is your use of dream work in prison. And, it made me wonder if you're familiar with the work of Jeremy Taylor, who's a Unitarian minister who defines his ministry as dream work, in fact.

Houck: No, I'm not. That sounds interesting.

Dr. Dave: Yeah. Let me recommend him to you. He's written several books, and I think the first one that he wrote, which still leaves a strong imprint in my mind – I think the title actually is Dream Work, if I remember correctly. Jeremy Taylor. I actually... You should look back in the archives for the show, because I interviewed him. Very dynamic guy. Also, very much influenced by Jung's work, and also somebody who's done some dream work in prison settings, so I think you'd be really fascinated in his writing.

Houck: Yes, sounds like it.

Dr. Dave: Plus, he does workshops all over the country. He might be in your area at some point. Okay, so you spent ten years working in a prison. How did you come to do that in the first place?

Houck: I was working in South Dakota and actually had a series of dreams that said I needed to move on to something different. And so I applied to the prison, and it just kind of got lost for a few months. And then I got a call that basically said, "Come on over. We have an opening; we'd like to have you come over." So, I answered the call and I interviewed at the prison, and everything just fell into place. I was looking for a challenge, and I got it, so...

Dr. Dave: Yeah. I was going to say, didn't you have any apprehensions about going to work in a prison? (laughs) I know I would.

Houck: (laughs) To be honest with you, when I first started, I did. I remember the first day I walked in to go to work, after the interview, and they shut the sally-port doors. And I went, oh, my! What did I get into? 'Cause you hear those doors clang behind you, and you know that there's a... If all the quote, all the "bad guys" are on the inside, what am I doing in here?

Dr. Dave: Yeah.

Houck: So, there was some apprehension just because I'd probably believed all the movies and all the hype of Hollywood, but actually it wasn't that bad. But to be honest with you, I was a little bit nervous about doing it.

Dr. Dave: And then, as you got to be there for some period of – well, for ten years – did you ever fear for your physical safety? Were there ever incidents where you felt physically threatened?

Houck: Actually, no, I didn't. I was, I was kind of surprised as I thought back about my ten years. I never was threatened. I think...

Dr. Dave: Are you a big guy with lots of tattoos?

Houck: (laughs) No, but I can get 'em cheap!

Dr. Dave: (laughs)

Houck: (laughs) Actually, I'm not that big a guy. One of the things I found, though – that if you're fair and treat everybody equal, they kind of respect that. It's when you become kind of a jerk and use any type of power that you may have that they get a little bit riled. And then the games are on.

Dr. Dave: Mm-hmm...

Houck: But, as long as I was honest with them and upfront with them and fair and consistent, they... I had no problem at all.

Dr. Dave: Well, that's great. You know, one of the impressions that I have – and by the way, I know you've got some podcasts on your website – and I listened a bit and found it to be very informative. I'm interested in the whole idea that prison can be sort of a university for learning to be a better criminal.

Houck: Yeah. There, since you have all these people – there were 1,100 inmates in the prison that I was working at – they get, I mean they're all packed together pretty tight, and they can sit and talk to each other about how to make meth, where to find it, where to get the best weed. And they also make a lot better connections. If they have dealers that are still on the inside and they have all their friends still on the outside – it depends on who gets in or out first – you learn a lot. I learned a lot about different things, about where to go and the best street corners – and this, just listening and overhearing people talk.

Dr. Dave: Yeah. Now, you got really fed up with the bureaucracy in the prison system. Tell us about that.

Houck: Because of when I left the prison, it was not a good thing. It was nasty in there. Actually, the hardest part was dealing with the administration.

Dr. Dave: They were worse than the so-called criminals, it sounds like.

Houck: Actually, they were. They really were.

Dr. Dave: Yeah.

Houck: It was, I mean to be honest, point-blank, it was like working for the Nazis. They monitored everything. I mean, they'd monitor, they could take over the computer, they monitored it, and they monitored your time and how much you were gone for lunch – they'd get it down to the second, almost. So, Big Brother was watching. Actually, it seemed like they only wanted one form of psychology, and it was basically cognitive psychology. And I had been doing this for oh, about seven years, when they said, "No, you can't do that anymore." And actually, I did a quick analysis of the groups that I ran. I ran, at one point, I was running about six different groups and had a couple hundred people. And they had been released, and then I did a quick analysis of how long they'd been out and how long they were in the group, and found that if they'd been in the group for six months, basically, they had a 3% chance of coming back to prison. But, the one day, I was told...

Dr. Dave: And how does that compare to the normal recidivism rate?

Houck: The normal rate's around 40%.

Dr. Dave: So, in other words, this was dramatically effective.

Houck: Right. But I was told I couldn't do it anymore because it was the wrong theory of psychology.

Dr. Dave: And, what was the "it" that you were doing that was not...?

Houck: Actually, dream analysis. I was told I was never to interpret a dream while I was in there again.

Dr. Dave: Wow.

Houck: So, basically, I ended up doing things kind of in a covert way. When I was crossing the yard or walking across the yard, some of the people that I'd worked with would come up, and we'd cross the yard and talk about dreams and some of the other issues that they were having.

Dr. Dave: Well, let's talk about the dream work. What was your approach to it, how did prisoners take to it, and so on?

Houck: What I did was, we had a, I had a group of individuals – I did some individual therapy as well. But most of it happened in a group setting with about 10-12 inmates in a circle. And they'd come in, and we'd talk a little bit, and they'd share some dreams, and we'd just kind of talk to them about what some of the directions that the dreams were taking...and what the dreams are trying to get them to understand about life and about, sometimes about their crimes – some things that they hadn't really looked into yet. Basically, I was just trying to understand how they got stuck and what brought them into prison – because there's actually a pretty interesting, lot of different reasons why these guys ended up in prison. Sometimes they came into prison to get out of the situation they were in. I remember having one individual who was, his dad was a big farmer. And he was in line to inherit this great big farm, but the problem was, he didn't really want to be a farmer. And so he would often go out and get drunk, and then one night he was drunk and he took a gun over to his neighbors' house, that were good friends with his mom and dad, and began to shoot the gun up in the air, not shooting at anybody. But because he was discharging a firearm, he got a year and a day and came to prison – disgraced his family, basically, and that was his way out of not being on the farm anymore. He wanted to be a graphic artist, and so after he got out of prison, he went into graphic art. But he didn't know how else to get out of the condition that he was in, so he did something not quite right and ended up in prison to get out. And his dreams – we talked – his dreams began to point to that kind of thing, that he was not where he was supposed to be and that he needed to stand up and go his own direction.

Dr. Dave: Well, that's a great story, and I want you to feel free to throw in any other stories that come to mind. Now, did the other prisoners get engaged in this process of (inaudible) this person's dream? Did they have ideas and kind of chip in with their own impressions of what the dream might be saying?

Houck: Yeah, we... I would open it up, because the thing that we noticed – that I noticed, especially – is that when someone would share a dream, a lot of these other guys could begin to relate to pieces of it. And so, while it was that one individual's dream, it became part of everybody's dream, and they began to throw ideas, or sometimes they would challenge each other about what they were saying. They knew each other from being on the inside and dealing with each other day and night, and so they'd often keep each other honest, which was kind of fascinating. What happened in the group is that the group actually became more of a community once they got in it and they were working with each other, and they would actually look out for each other on the yard – make sure that they were being honest, sometimes make sure that they were being taken care of. Because we'd get, often, we'd get gang leaders in the group and we'd get people that were just trying to do their time and get through. And, there's all kinds of games that are going on in prison, anyway. So, some of these guys would actually protect other members of the group just because they knew what they were about. They knew they were trying to be upfront and honest and trying to better themselves, or develop themselves. So, it really became kind of fascinating to watch. And then, they would bring these stories in to the group as well, so that the dreams of one

individual became sometimes the dreams of all the different men in the group. They used bits and pieces of it. And, the best part is, they began to see themselves in some of that, in the dream, in some of the discussion. I had a... One day, we had a group of college students come into the, and talk to some of the inmates I was working with. And, I didn't realize it, but I picked four people that had been in, that were in for murder, and one drug dealer. And the drug dealer was listening to these other guys talk about their story, and then somebody asked him about his life. And he just kind of looked at him, said, "I just had a really interesting realization that...well, all these guys murdered somebody. They killed him very quickly. I just, with the drugs I sold, I just killed people slowly. So, I'm no different than they were."

Dr. Dave: Wow. What an insight.

Houck: Yeah, and it kind of shocked, it shocked everybody in the room, and it shocked me that he came to that.

Dr. Dave: Yes.

Houck: So, it's a...there were lots of... And, the use of dreams, actually helped some of these guys move beyond where they were. A lot of these guys had been in detention centers – juvenile detention centers – since they were 14, 16 years old, and they'd been dealing with various psychologists. And, one of the interesting things that happened is that they'd learned the language and the jargon very well. And, so they'd come up with what they thought was the right answer just to get me off their backs sometimes. And, I would push, because the dream would say they're not really dealing with it. So, what I would often say was, "You're not giving me the – you're giving me the right answer, but you're not giving me the real answer." And, that would frustrate them because they'd say, "Well, this basically got me through all these other years, so what are you looking for?" And, what I was looking for was something from deep inside, near the heart, and just from their head (?). And, once they understood that, they could spot that in other people as well, when they began just to give the "right answer," as I called it, and not something that was going to help them grow and develop.

Dr. Dave: That's great. That's great. What do you think it is about dreams that leads to that kind of group cohesion that you were talking about?

Houck: I think that it's becoming real, and that what's being presented is very real. And, a lot of these guys are really looking for that reality that is more than what they had been given. Because, again, their soul is actually asking for help, and... Because sometimes, I would get very, pretty harsh with some of these guys and really confrontative, and then that's when you asked if I'd ever been threatened, as confrontative as I often got, I was never threatened. Actually, what I felt is that if I would be pushing somebody – and I usually knew when to stop – but if I'd push, if they really got upset, I knew that the other people in the group, the other inmates,

would probably jump up and make sure that nothing happened to me; at least that's what I was hoping.

Dr. Dave: (laughs) Yeah. Right.

Houck: It felt that way.

Dr. Dave: Yes.

Houck: But, they were looking for some truth, and the dreams basically told them the truth. And beginning to unravel the truth of the dream, they understood, and they knew that all I was doing was giving them what they really needed to hear, instead of some other jargon, or some other nice, quick, cute little answer. They were hearing something deep – and deep from inside of them – and that's what they really wanted and they really liked. Often, I would get the comments that, "This is the first time anybody's ever really told me the truth."

Dr. Dave: Well, that must've been very gratifying.

Houck: Yeah, actually, it really was. It was quite moving.

Dr. Dave: Yeah. Well, you know I'm really on the same page with you in terms of believing that dreams speak a kind of universal language. We all dream, we all dream every night... And, it's funny, at the same time, that dreams seem to be so mysterious and so confusing at times. But there's another way in which they really do lay bare the primary emotional issues, and those emotions are so universal that we can really recognize them and relate to them and one another.

Houck: Yeah... And I found they really wanted to get to that emotion, as tough as these guys sometimes pretended they were. It was amazing what would happen when the emotion would come out, and they really appreciated that. One of the interesting things that I started doing toward the end when I was there was, the dreams began to point to... at least for some of them that had been in the group for a while, about issues concerning restorative justice. And I had an individual who had one dream – he was an artist; he was really a very good artist – and the dreams began to say, "All right. Now it's time for you to try to restore and bring yourself back to wholeness, but also return something back to the community." And he had a dream that was basically said that... He was in for murder, and his wife was... He murdered his ex-wife, who was also pregnant at the time. And the dream basically said, "Because of your crime, what you're going to have to do is you're going to have to paint. But what you need to paint are pictures of children who have died, and of the other inmates that are in the group." And one inmate happened to have a, his daughter was killed in a car accident while he was in prison, and he had a picture of the daughter. And this inmate had to paint a picture – a portrait – of this daughter. And as he tried to do it, he said it just ripped his guts out. Because he had to look at the picture and realize what he'd done, but also try to capture the essence of this

little girl. And it took him months to do it. We'd talk often about how difficult it was; he didn't think he could do it. And I just kept telling him he had to do it, and finally, one day he finished it. He brought it in, and it was quite a big portrait. And he showed it to everybody. In the portrait's eyes, you could just see that he caught the essence of her soul. And he passed it around, and everybody looked at it, and I had to pass a Kleenex box around behind the picture, because it moved everybody that much. And it was really interesting to see that kind of emotion coming out.

Dr. Dave: Wow. You know, I think a lot of times when we hear about somebody who has murdered his pregnant wife, a lot of people would have the reaction, "Well, this person is a monster; this person's beyond the... is somehow really different from other people."

Houck: In a fit of passion, I don't know if anybody's that much different. And that's what I came to learn, is that some of these guys are pretty wicked people, but if they get the chance to begin to look inside themselves, they begin to confront that monster or that wickedness and begin to work with it. That's kind of what most of them really wanted to do, because they got tired of that lifestyle. They could see that it wasn't going anywhere. As a lot of them would say, "Being a drug dealer, the retirement system's not that good." So, they'd look at their lives and say, "I have absolutely nothing anymore," which was a good place to start. But a lot of these guys were pretty wicked at times. Some scared me, but you learn to deal with it.

Dr. Dave: Well, you know, that raises an interesting philosophical question that I – philosophical, psychological – I'd be interested in your take on it. Because you've got one foot in the world of theology and another foot in the world of psychology, and often, psychology is accused of kind of letting people off the moral hook, you know – that everything can be reduced to problems of childhood or brain chemistry or something like that. So, on the one hand, you have those sorts of naturalistic explanations that account for things, and some people feel like, well, that could be used as an excuse. On the other hand, you have this viewpoint of sin or wickedness, kind of an absolute judgment. Can you say anything about that dichotomy?

Houck: Yeah. As I worked with the inmates, the statement, "There by the grace of God go I." The only difference between a lot of those guys and other people on the outside is they got caught. For some of the crimes, some of them, what they did was vicious. I mean, some of the stories that I could tell you would – I mean, they curled my toes when I heard them and often made me very angry. But again, this part of the human condition that there's that shadow side, and if they are not aware of it, they'll act it out or do something that's going to hurt people big-time, or destroy people. So, what I would do was simply say, "Okay. This is the way your life has been; this is how it got up to this point. Well, we could look into it, but what we need to do is find out what you're supposed to be doing." And, often, the reason they committed the crime was to avoid what life was actually trying to get

them to do and trying to get them to be. So, even though they committed a terrible, terrible crime, the point is, is what can my life, what can their life become? And how do they begin to restore what they've taken? How do they give back what they have taken? So, the idea of theology and psychology actually, I thought, worked really well, because I wouldn't let them off the hook. They would have to go into the crime and understand why they committed it, and then I would have to figure out what am I going to do with it. I had an individual that he, basically, he projected his soul onto a woman that didn't even know him, and he was stalking her for a little bit. And one night, he was standing outside her house when the boyfriend said goodbye to this girl that he fell in love with. And he followed the man to his house, and then basically beat him up with a baseball bat and left him in the yard to die and went across the street and watched the guy kind of struggle, and went back and beat him again and was going to pour some gasoline – I think he actually did pour some gasoline on him but thought better of lighting it. That's kind of a wicked thing to do, but he began to understand what had happened and what he was doing by projecting his soul onto the woman, and how he felt that she couldn't be with anybody, and he was going to take anybody that got in his way, out. And once he began to look at that and understand that that was happening, and he needed to pull that projection back into himself, it changed his life. He relaxed and began to understand that there was another way to live life then and own his own life, rather than trying to give it to somebody else.

Dr. Dave: What an interesting way to talk about stalking as “projecting his soul” onto the woman. Just in case there's anybody who doesn't understand what you're saying there, just say a little bit more about what you mean by “he was projecting his soul” onto this woman that he was stalking.

Houck: Well, for me, in this case he was basically giving her all his feminine emotions, his feminine psyche, so that he wouldn't have to carry it. So, if he could give it to her, then he wouldn't have to deal with any of those personal things himself. That actually happened a lot for a lot of these guys in prison – whether they killed anybody or not – is that they projected those kinds of things onto a woman, and that's why they always felt like they had to have a woman nearby, so that they didn't have to carry. And they would often say that, “I would ask her, what do I feel? And what should I say at this point? Because I don't know what to do.” So, they gave to the female that they were with, everything that they needed to understand about themselves. That's what I call “soul projection,” is (I) gave somebody else what I'm supposed to be feeling.

Dr. Dave: Mm-hmm... I'm curious whether or not... You know, self-disclosure is always such a delicate issue in psychotherapeutic situations, and I'm just wondering if you ever shared one of your dreams with a group.

Houck: Actually, I didn't. Self-disclosure is really frowned on in a prison. You don't want to give these guys too much information. I would tell them a little bit about my background, but I usually never told them a dream that I had. I mean, I would

tell them some of the childhood stories that I would have – just a few of them, but you have to be really careful.

Dr. Dave: I can see that, particularly in that setting – that that could be a risky thing to do. What size group are we talking about? Typically, how many people would you have in your group?

Houck: I'd usually have 10-12 in a group.

Dr. Dave: That's a good size, yeah.

Houck: Yeah. Actually, and the interesting thing is, is that when I was doing, in the heyday of when I could do the groups, I did 4-6 groups a week and I had a waiting list of guys that were trying to get in. And this was all voluntary, and if they dropped out, there wasn't any penalty, but they all wanted...a lot of guys were trying to get in.

Dr. Dave: Were there any sort of benefits that they would get? I mean, would they get out of doing some work, or was there any external motivation that would've caused that to happen?

Houck: None. None at all. In fact, if they came to the group – and this is a, they call it a working prison, where they had a job – they would lose pay for coming to the group. But one individual – when I left, I was still somewhat doing the group kind of covertly – but he basically said, “If you had this thing at 2:00 in the morning, we'd all be here,” because they felt that they were suddenly being heard, and they were changing in ways that they felt were really positive for themselves. So, yeah, it was fun, and usually I had about 10 people that would do it.

Dr. Dave: If you could magically be made “czar” of the criminal justice system, how would you change the prison system?

Houck: I guess I would try to make it a little less like being in a military setting. A lot of these, some of these people that committed the crime are just one-timers, and some of them are career. But, what I would try to do is try to develop more of community – develop little groups within the prison, where they would, kind of like a therapeutic community within the prison. I found again, when I did the groups, I found that a lot of them wanted that kind of community. They didn't know how to be in community, how to actually have empathy for each other. And I think being in that kind of setting and looking out for each other actually helped that kind of process. Of course, I'm looking at it from a therapeutic point of view. But I'd also have some of the staff and some of the guards understand some of the processes that are going on instead of simply saying, having the power struggles between inmates and staff. Some of that's necessary, but kind of understanding what's going on with people as they struggle and sometimes rebel and react.

Dr. Dave: On your website, I noticed that you're working on a book called Lessons of Life from Hardcore Cons. What are the lessons of life that you've learned from hardcore cons?

Houck: Again, a lot of this is like dealing with the soul projection. A lot of them are actually trying to develop into men instead of being boys. There seems to be a lack of ability for initiation into a type of manhood, and I found that actually, that's a lot what gangs are, is a bunch of young men trying to initiate themselves. And it can't be done; you can't pull yourself through that hole or have somebody your own age pull you through that knothole. And I found in the group that since it was an open group and they could stay as long as they wanted, some of the older men began to be mentors and began to help some of these younger guys grow and develop, and they would talk to them when the group wasn't in session. So, one of the things I found is that there are actually a lot of these guys who are looking for somebody to help them and teach them about what it means to get older and be older, and to be what manhood is all about. Also it –

Dr. Dave: Fascinating.

Houck: Yeah. That – actually, it was one of the key components, is to try to do that. I had an individual that had been – before the group sort of stopped the first time – had been in it for five years. He became one of the elders and mentors, and younger men would come up to him and ask him questions about things. And he'd try to correct them and hold them accountable. So that when the group wasn't in session, we had people that were trying to help others. In fact, I know of some instances where they actually stopped gang wars and sometimes a riot, because they simply said, "You guys don't want to do this. This is what the issue seems to be, so you guys need to deal with it."

Dr. Dave: That's really fascinating. What else can you tell us about your work with these guys?

Houck: One of the other things that I did that might be interesting is that I used a lot of fairytales and myths to...

Dr. Dave: Oh, yeah.

Houck: One of the other things that I did that might be interesting is that I used a lot of fairy tales and myths. Actually, one of the myths that they liked the most was the Odyssey. And it was amazing that these guys – some of them wanted to watch it. That was the TV show version of the Odyssey, and we'd sit and we'd analyze that. And they found themselves in that, and they wanted to watch that three or four times a year just to try to get what they could out of it. Like dealing with the Cyclops, the one way of thinking, and then being seduced by Circe and Calypso. We'd talk about that and how many years it's going to cost them to be seduced, and

what seduced them to get them into prison. We also told, I told The Three Little Pigs and the meaning behind The Three Little Pigs.

Dr. Dave: What's the meaning behind The Three Little Pigs?

Houck: Basically, it's the shadow, is the wolf being the shadow, pushes the... The first two little pigs aren't that aware, so they build their houses out of things that are pretty flimsy, which is that a lot of people do that – out of straw and sticks. They don't have anything really solid. And then if they don't, then they get eaten up. And the third pig built his house out of bricks, so he's a little bit more aware of what's going on and he realizes that the wolf probably doesn't have, doesn't really want to come in for supper, that he actually wants to eat him for supper. And so the wolf, since he gets beat the first time and talks to him about going and digging turnips in Farmer Brown's field. And the pig says, "Okay, well - " This is the version that Disney doesn't give you. And says, "Well, we'll go, I'll meet you out at 7:00," says the wolf. And the pig says, "Okay." So the next morning, the pig's out there at 6:00 'cause he knows that probably this wolf isn't all he's cracked up to be. And sometimes you have to be able to understand that not everybody has your best interest at heart, and you've got to be aware of that and dig into the unconscious and begin to see some of that. And that's why they begin (?) to dig the turnips. The wolf shows up at 7:00. The pig's already been done, and so the wolf gets upset and says, "Okay, tomorrow let's go and pick apples. We'll meet at the same time." The wolf says, "This time I'll be there at 6:00," and the pig's there at 6:00. He's up a tree and he realizes that he's in trouble because the wolf's down at the bottom of the tree. But he also knows that the wolf's greedy, and so he throws an apple. And the wolf wants everything he can get, so he runs after the apple, and then the pig runs down the tree. So the wolf keeps pushing him to develop further and further and further, and then finally, the wolf's getting upset 'cause he's getting a little bit hungry. And he talks to the pig about going to the fair the next day, and the wolf says, "I'll just meet you at the fair," and the pig says, "All right." So he goes to the fair, has a good time, and he buys a butter churn on the way home. But meanwhile, the wolf has no intention of going to the fair. He's just going to curl up at the door of the pig's house. So, the pig comes over the hill, looks at where the wolf is, and says, "There's no way in," but the only way that he can get in, then, is to climb into the butter churn and roll down the hill. And the wolf sees this thing coming and jumps out of the way. The butter churn crashes into the door and opens it, and the pig's safe. And the butter churn, basically, is the ability to separate and to discern what's going on. Again, the wolf has forced the pig to do all that. And then the wolf being upset, trying to find a way to eat this pig, says, "I'm getting into this house one way or another." And the pig's cooking the turnips and apples that he got a couple days before, and the wolf says, "Well, I'll climb down the chimney." And he goes down the chimney, and the pot's boiling, and the wolf falls into the pot. The pig puts the cover on the top, and that night, the story goes, the pig ate the wolf. So he integrated his shadow, and it began to nourish him rather than try to destroy him.

Dr. Dave: So, how did the prisoners relate to that?

Houck: They actually liked that a lot. They began to see that some of the things they'd been doing actually could help them grow, rather than just to simply destroy them. But, they had to become aware of that. And the best part was, was that I kept joking with them, said, "When you get out of prison, you're going to go back home and tell everybody you learned the story of The Three Little Pigs." And they'd all laugh about that, but they began to understand that the shadow was a lot, you have to deal with that a lot more than they thought. And that they need to integrate it and realize what they're about, and what parts of them are trying to destroy them. And they have to overcome that part. We looked at Lion King and Beauty and the Beast and showed those as well. I mean, it's all... And the hero's journey – we watched Lord of the Rings and all of the stories that dealt with the hero's journey of digging down deep within themselves to find out who they are and realize that the things that are happening in life – even the bad things that happen – are trying to force them to develop and to become an individual. So, those things were fascinating, and to watch them develop and put these things together... A lot of them said I wrecked their movie-watching because now they're always beginning to look at what's really happening in this story.

Dr. Dave: I see you've written a book titled The Hooded Lady Speaks: A Spiritual and Psychological Conversation. What's the reference to the hooded lady? Who's the hooded lady?

Houck: That was, it actually came out of a dream that I had, and the lady had a hood on her. And I never, I only got to see her face once. But in the dream, it takes off from a dream... It's a conversation with this other, this lady in a different realm that begins to teach about some of the different, the deeper aspects of life and what to look for, and how to keep myself honest.

Dr. Dave: Hmm... Who's your intended audience for that book?

Houck: Anybody that wants to read it, I guess. (laughs)

Dr. Dave: Mm-hmm... (laughs) What are you trying to get across in the book?

Houck: That within ourselves and within life there are guides, and what we need to do is just begin to listen, and not... Life isn't all as it seems, and if we begin to listen to a deeper part, we'll learn all kinds of interesting lessons and ways that we can respond to life differently.

Dr. Dave: Dana, I love your approach and the way that you come across. I think it's really such a tragic loss that you were forced out of the system, where I can really tell that you were of substantial benefit to people in that prison setting. And, I think it's a real loss to those folks. I'm wondering if there's anything else that you'd like to say here that you didn't get a chance to say.

Houck: I guess the thing is that one of the things we need to realize is that in most prisons, these guys are going to get out and hit the streets, eventually.

Dr. Dave: Yeah.

Houck: Eighty, ninety percent don't stay in there for life, so it's time that we, hopefully, help them, and by doing so, we help ourselves. I mean, my children have to walk the streets and I know what's on there, so... It doesn't make sense that we put that much money into just housing them. To have some type of programming that's going to actually benefit them. I actually get a lot of calls now, since I'm out of the prison, I get a lot of calls from the guys that I worked when I was in there, that want to continue what they were doing. And so, I'm trying to develop different types of groups on the streets now to hopefully help some of these people not go back in the prison, or stop them from the first place.

Dr. Dave: That sounds like really important work. Well, Dr. Dana Houck, I want to thank you so much for being my guest today on Shrink Rap Radio.

Houck: Oh, thank you. I really appreciate all you do and all the people you interview. I learn a lot.