
Snailyman

From Giving Love, Bringing Joy (WECAN 2003)

— Wilma Ellersiek, translated by Lyn and Kundry Wilwerth

The Snailyman creeps from his shell.

He stretches out his feelers well.

Stubb! Stubb!

He pulls them back again

and creeps back home,

the Snailyman.

A note on touch: It is also possible to draw the snail in the child's palm. Be very gentle, as the center of the hand, the ego-area of the hand, is especially sensitive. Caution is needed for very young or sick children when touching the palm. First start on the back of the hand, later in the palm, or take turns. The adult needs to sense what the children enjoy and what is healing. Role exchange between adult and child is also possible.



Illustration by Friedricke Lötgers

TEXT:

TOUCH:

1. *The snaillyman creeps from his shell.....* The child's right hand (loose fist) rests on bed, table, or left palm of adult. With your right pointertip, draw a spiral unwinding to the right on the back of the child's hand (starting in the middle) down to the base of the thumb. Speak melodiously at "snail's pace." Lengthen word syllables.
2. *He stretches out his feelers well.* Insert your thumb- and pointertips in the space between the child's thumb and pointer at the base. With the nail side of your fingertips, slide along the inside of the child's fingers and thus stretch the child's thumb and pointer as "feelers." Having arrived at the child's fingertips, hold the "feelers" in their stretched position for a while.
3. *Stubb! Stubb!* Now remove fingers and tap against the "feelers" with your thumb- and pointertips. It should be surprising but not scary. Gentle touch.
4. *He pulls them back again.....* Gently push the child's fingers back into a loose fist.
5. *and creeps back home,* With right pointertip, starting at the thumb base, now begin to draw an involuting spiral (to the left) on the back of the child's hand until you have reached the middle of the hand. Speak at "snail's pace," melodiously. At the end, "back home," tickle hand delicately.
6. *the Snaillyman.....* Gently cover the child's loose fist with your hands (the Snaillyman sits safely in his shell). The voice remains floating at the end.