

PSYCHOPHONETICS

CRISIS AS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION

By Yehuda Tagar¹

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*Ring the bells that still can ring
Forget your perfect offering
There is a crack, there is a crack in everything
That's how the light gets in.*

Leonard Cohen

“On the other side of the next crisis- the next stage of my development is awaiting” (YT)

Every drastic personal life transition is potentially a crisis requiring a new dimension of us to manifest. If we manage to mobilise a new resource, then a step in our development takes place. If we fail to do it, diminishing damage takes place.

In crisis we are born and in crisis we die. In between these two thresholds, many other crises await: the changing of teeth, first day at school, loss of a dear one, change of home, all the tests of our lives, becoming a man or a woman, becoming a professional, being in a new position, any conflict, starting and ending relationships, becoming a father and a mother, all the beginnings and the endings and the losses of our lives. In the face of every crisis, if we listen inwardly, the human soul is saying: *“I, as I am now, cannot cope with this challenge. But another potential power in me is waiting to be born through this. But I, as I **can** become, can deal with this crisis and grow stronger from it”*.

Crisis means that we cannot continue as we are. We have to change. The immune system depends for its strength on constant crisis: if new bacteria enter the blood, a new anti-body must instantly be created to confront it. It either makes you stronger - or it kills you. Many educational processes are based on crisis: a test is presented, a new capacity, consciously developed, must be mobilised to confront it or else you fail. A baby just born cannot breathe through the naval cord anymore, he/she becomes blue and a cry is expressed, resulting in using the language for breathing for the first time. We are never ready in advance for a new crisis.

¹ Psychosophy, Psychophonetics and Anthroposophical Psychotherapy practitioner and teacher, director of Psychophonetics Institute International, Psychosophy Academy of Central Europe, Eskola Empatia and the British College of Methodical Empathy.

No-one likes a crisis, no-one wishes for one, yet historically the most powerful steps in human evolution resulted from the way we dealt with crisis. The history of Europe in the 19th and 20th centuries can be described as a sequence of crises and responses to crises, resulting in the rapid evolution of consciousness. The French revolution led to the Napoleonic wars which led to European national and social revolutions; these led to the conservative reaction of the mid 19th Century, when the Three Empires revolution crushed the revolutions. The expansion of the empires led to the colonial process and industrialisation; these led to the clashes of nations, social classes and opposing ideologies: socialism, women liberation, fascism, Bolshevism and unfettered capitalism that led to the great depression, to Nazi Germany and WW2; that led to the final destruction of Central Europe and the Cold War, which, at long last, led to the shifts of consciousness in the second part of the 20th century and to the cultural revolutions of the 1960s and 70s. That led to the oppressive conservative reactions of the threatened regimes in the 80s, which led to the collapse of communism and the Berlin Wall in the 90s, and the emergence of new global environmental and human rights new consciousness, in light of which the old way of doing business becomes less and less acceptable.

Now we are waiting for the new crisis that will force us either to create new ways of doing business or to the next destructive reactionary chaos with its inevitable reactions. It is a cycle: stagnation>crisis>new consciousness>reaction>stagnation>crisis.

Every crisis has two aspects: a *Horizontal* and a *Vertical* one. As I walk my earthly path from past to future I am faced with a new crisis on the *Horizontal*: to start with I try to use my past awareness and capacities to deal with the new challenge. It does not work. Dealing with a new crisis on the basis of past faculties of soul - results inevitably in destructive chaos, regression and stagnation. I need to create something new.

Crisis is the moment to open up to the *Vertical* aspect: a new awareness, new faculty, new power, new idea, new choice has to enter from the Horizontal aspect with a completely new possibility for the 'I' - through the existing 'I', creating the new dimension of 'I', what we call in Psychophonetics: 'Nova Ja'.

For the holistic practitioner of personal development, counselling and psychotherapy such as Psychophonetics – crisis is an opportunity for healing, transformation, and personal growth. Whenever a man or a woman cannot continue with their present identity, self knowledge and personal strength in the face of a new challenge, then we become the 'midwives' for the next step in that person's personal development.

When people come to a holistic practitioner asking for help in the middle of personal crisis, they don't usually present a wish for personal development. They just want to survive the crisis, maybe to prevent a repetition of such crisis in the future. But if all we try to do in soul-work is to make people feel better, to diminish pain, to get used to the new condition, we are acting like symptomatic pain killers making no long term contribution for that person's development. We are missing an opportunity.

When a human being does not have what it takes to cope with the new challenge – for us it means that they are 'pregnant' with a potential new dimension of themselves. Our role is to encourage them to face the new challenge and to invoke a new strength, to take a step in their development. But first they have to wish for it. We are not there to replace their inner leadership with our external guidance but to coach them into a higher dimension of themselves through the crisis.

I worked with many couple in crisis over the past 20 years. I always feel that in couple-relationship counselling I am standing together with my two clients on the threshold of human evolution, creating a new possibility of change not just for them, but for all of us. Things cannot continue as they are. They are facing a danger of ending what they have together, often with a huge loss. They don't know what to do about it because everything they know – does not work for them anymore. This is a crisis.

Without exception, I have always found that the moment we can identify a potential individual developmental challenge which is urgently required if they are to survive this crisis – a turning point appears in their relationship, and the crisis becomes an opportunity.

They normally come with a passion to change each other. The moment they start to take responsibility for changing themselves, something new immediately starts to happen between them. They may not agree on anything else, but they may agree that they are in repetitive reactions to each other which are not helpful. The moment each one of them starts to take responsibility for their own automatic responses and try to understand to change them, the reactions change and they become visible again to each other as the man and the woman who they love and appreciate. A new possibility of renewing the relationship or for a peaceful separation opens up, because they made use of the crisis to take a step in personal development.

That is what it takes to transform crisis into opportunity. Blaming, reaction, defensiveness, accusation, desperate attempts to change the other, feeling a victim, feeling sorry for yourself, giving up, hating yourself for failing, analysis and aggression – these guarantee the loss of the opportunity and the

maximisation of the cost and the long term damage the crisis can afflict. When the 'I' is lost in the chaos of the reaction to the crisis – the 'I' is diminished. When the 'I' faces the experience, accept it, holds it, embraces it and starts to heal – we take a developmental step.

The following are some of the basic components of the process for turning a crisis into an opportunity for personal development, on your own or with support:

The 12 steps of Psychophonetics Developmental Crisis Management

1. **Full acceptance** - of the inner pain, turmoil, frustration, anger, hurt, reaction, aggression, being shocked – as inner facts.
2. **Invoking Self-Compassion** - Acknowledging and neutralising all the persistent negative voices of criticising yourself and putting yourself down. Then applying the natural healthy human response to someone else's suffering – to oneself.
3. **Acknowledging that a new challenge is present** – putting a stop to fighting the past, the fact that it happened, trying to change what cannot be changed, giving a break to the endless analysis of what went wrong.
4. **Acknowledging what is really needed now** - regardless of not knowing how to bring it about.
5. **Making a wish about it** - an expression of soul aspiration. Not a wish for changing others, external circumstances, past, fortune, friends. That is not going anywhere. A wish about your own change, a change that depends on you only.
6. **Choosing to experience the present experience fully as it is** - Confronting the natural tendency to turn your back and avoid the pain, and choosing to face and experience the suffering directly, physically, with compassion and courage.
7. **Getting perspective on the experience and observing it objectively** - By choosing to 'Enter' the present experience and feel it fully, the possibility is created to 'Exit' from the experience, visualising it and observing it objectively.

8. **Protecting your heart** - and caring for it. The heart is an organ of inner perception. It is both the most vulnerable and the most recoverable organ of both body and soul. Protecting the heart in the middle of crisis from anxiety and further hurt is completely possible if you know how to do it. And if you can do it for yourself, you can help others to do it for themselves.

9. **Taking responsibility for your contribution to the crisis** – however small that contribution is. The conscious attempt to accept, own, acknowledge and take responsibility for your part in the crisis – is the beginning of overcoming it.

10. **Mobilising the higher dimension of your being** – that is completely practical. Facing your limitations makes it completely clear which new dimension of yourself is missing here. Imagining it and identifying with it, invokes it into being.

11. **Applying the new higher dimension of yourself** - to the inner and the outer situation, and *do something practical about it* for yourself and for others.

12. **Becoming the source for that which was missing** - become the change in real life.

These are the major components of the alchemical process of transforming crisis into an opportunity for personal development. Acting on these prepares us both to prevent and to be more able to cope with any future challenge. Crisis is the labour pain for the birth of the new dimension of oneself – to one's own 'I' or 'Nova Ja'.