

# ECOLOGY OF SOUL – The Ecology of Personal Relationship & Couple Counselling

## Methodical Empathy for Relationship Maintenance and Development with Psychophonetics

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It is obvious to a growing number of people everywhere that what was once considered ‘normal’ relationship does no longer exist, and what does exist – does not feel normal to most people, namely: relationship, without special effort put into them, does not feel to most people to be what it should be in their hopes and ideals. Unhealthy repetitive patterns can destroy the most beautiful love stories, and only a new level of self-awareness can change them.

Standards of personal relationships are changing, slowly but surely. They only change because some people are changing consciously. In my observation only about 2% of people would choose to form personal relationship the way their parents did. No great role models. Nothing for us to follow. And the status quo, what is vaguely called ‘normal relationship’ after the great ‘honeymoon’ wave of falling in love – is not brilliant for most people, and the teenagers are not impressed.

Which is why I believe that the most important news of our time have very little to do with what dominates the front pages of our newspapers: wars and politics and economy and gossip. Very little of all that will be remembered in the future. But the way in which we choose to form personal relationships and the way in which we choose to parent our children, which is different from the way the previous generation did it – that is the real quiet revolution, the news that matters, the real evolution of human consciousness.

Every human relationship is a unique eco-system combining the complexity of body, soul, spirit, sexuality, spirituality, individuality versus community, clashes of unconscious sub-personalities and of values, egos, power struggles, unhealthy parental dynamics, projected unhealed wounds, light and darkness, love and hate, tenderness and aggression, both real and projective, and, underlying it all – the challenge of real communication and the challenge of creating a good, nurturing, stable home for the children. All this has been in a crisis for the past 50 years, and for good reason: we cannot do it the old way anymore, and the new way does not exist. We have to create it consciously.

Psychophonetics and its Methodical Empathy process enables higher and deeper self-awareness of individuals in relationship, sharpening the awareness of one’s own internal eco-system and giving a better chance to understand, to manage and to upgrade the complicated combined eco-systems of personal relationship – into a powerful opportunity for personal and social development.

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I have been a counsellor, psychotherapist and couple relationship consultant for over 30 years in many countries, in all the 5 continents. The form of counselling that is the preferred one for me is couple counselling: the cutting edge of new consciousness. When I am there, completely with a couple of people who are honestly struggling to save their relationship from self-destruction – I know that I am at the cutting edge of human consciousness, actually *doing human* evolution with these people – consciously. Whatever [positive change a counsellor helps an individual client to create – is not yet a social change. The client has to go back home to relationship, family and work – and to try to bring the higher self-awareness created in the counselling session – into the social/relationship setting. It may work or not, one cannot control the effect of one person’s upgraded self-awareness – on another. But when a counsellor helps a couple to achieve not only an individual higher level of self-awareness – but a higher level of interaction and of relationship – the development is not only individual, but a social one: the social unit itself, the relationship itself – has evolved. They take it home with them.

Over the past six decades of my life I experienced in my own short life the rapid evolution of environmental/ecological awareness world-wide. From being considered the obsession of a few marginal hippies and extreme communes in the 70's – environmental awareness became practically a mainstream deadly serious business, effecting every aspect of personal and of life including politics, economy, science, sociology and international cooperation. We made huge steps in this regard, accelerated in the face of ever growing unavoidable evidence of preventable, human-made environmental catastrophe. But the awareness of the crisis of the ecosystem of human relationship moves at a lower pace, probably because its dynamics and consequences are less visible to the naked eye. But here is a common ground to the way humanity as a whole is dealing today with these dual challenges: crisis management. Things have to become really bad before we wake up to the fact that we have to do things differently.

As time, age and experience progress – I realise increasingly that in working with relationship development I am engaged in the middle of 5 powerful eco-systems that interact simultaneously with each other all the time:

1 + 2: The internal ecosystem of the human constitution, personality and spirituality. That by itself makes at least two system of the two individuals involved in the relationship;

3: the space in between them, the relationship itself as an eco- system;

4: the relationship between the 3 above systems and the rest of the world. That includes children, parents, family of origin, nuclear and broad families, friends and community, work and colleagues, finances, careers, the world. In the counselling session it is me, the counsellor, that for a short time (90 minutes in my practice) – represents the world to the best of my ability, consciously or not.

5: the relationship of all the above to the spiritual world, individually and as a group, mostly unconsciously. I, as a counsellor, represent that as well, to the best of my ability: 'The Friend of Humanity'.

What is my job? Gardening skills. Every relationship is a living garden. A personal garden is a perfect metaphor for personal relationships. You cannot *have* a garden, you can only *do* a garden. If you don't do the actual *gardening* of your garden – the most beautiful garden will decay, disintegrate and die. There are jobs to do everyday, every season, and they require knowledge, skills, and actual work. But it is easier to be a good gardener of an external garden: you can see it. The 'garden' of personal relationships is invisible, and what you do not see – you cannot manage. WE do not see the internal dynamics of all the above 5 ecosystems with our normal physical senses.

The first task of the counsellor in light of Psychophonetics is making the 'Relationship Garden' visible to the partners. But the only practical starting point for that is the making of the individual/personal ecosystem visible to the individual him/herself. As long as the hidden dynamics in the personal and the interpersonal ecosystems are visible to the counsellor only – no real development will take place. The couple cannot take the counsellor home with them, and long-term counselling is, in my view, unethical and un-sustainable. It can easily become just another kind of dependency. The role of the couple counsellor in our approach (Psychophonetics Counsellors) is to train the partners in making the invisible dynamics visible, and providing upgraded self-manageable principles, tools, and processes that they potentially can take home with them and continue applying that upgrade on their own.

Psychophonetics is a method of making the invisible dimensions of human dynamics – visible. Visible not to the counsellor – but to the client. The first level of that is the Methodical Empathy conversational process, in which deep perception of internal dynamics becomes a mirror through which the clients start to see them for themselves. No question, no advice, no lecturing. Just providing empathic evidence of perception, making the invisible visible. The second level of making the invisible visible is the use of the human body as the deepest mirror for the depth of one's soul to become visible to one's consciousness. The deep-intelligence processes of Sensing,

Gesture/movement, Visualisation and Sounds activate the inherent potential of deep self-knowing into conscious reality.

Once the internal dynamics of one's own ecosystem becomes visible to the client – the invisible dynamics of the interpersonal ecosystem become visible also. Only then can the process of training for real change begin.

The following is a list of 'Relationship Upgrade Processes', skills for the creating, maintaining, cultivating and growing 'The Garden of Personal Relationship'.

### **7 Conditions Rituals for 'Upgrading Relationship':**

**I often spoke in this publication about 'The 7 Conditions for Sustainable Human Development' which is a Psychophonetics development of Rudolf Steiner's introductory level of spiritual development.** It provides a strong structure that can transform relationship challenges into personal and couple development in couple counselling. They are:

#### **1<sup>st</sup> Condition: commitment to well being**

- **'Body feedback' of relationship dysfunctions** - Long term intimate relationships create a common energetic environment which we sometimes call 'The Third Body' which has its own life. It can be well or unwell, vibrant or stagnant, uplifting and depressing. Symptoms of unwellness of that combined Third Body can appear through each of the individuals involved, and therefore the un-wellness of individuals in the combined energetic body could be an indication of something that is wrong in the combined body. Every aspect of the health of every participant is therefore a concern for the combined Third Body of the relationship.
- **Restoration of tenderness:** harshness, anger, reaction or cold-heartedness expressed by one person in the relationship will effect the other and the intimacy itself: to the tenderness, the safety and the warmth of the collective will be damaged. They can only be restored by the individuals involved taking individual responsibility to the damage.

#### **2<sup>nd</sup> Condition: commitment to empathy**

- **Reflective Listening:** Listening is not common. We tend to hear what we hope for, what we fear, what we assume, what we know already, what we already oppose – rather than what is actually being said and intended. Responding to an expression of a partner immediately without confirming that the expression was heard and understood – is a common but a low level of relationship-intelligence. Establishing a culture of 'reflective listening': making sure that we got the message right – can remarkably uplift the level of communication in any relationship.
- **Methodical Empathy** as a spiritual exercise: Methodical Empathy is the conscious attempt to hear what is said and experienced by another person *from their own point of view*. It is the major outcome of Psychophonetics processes. Even on the basis of initial skill of Methodical Empathy - the standard of safety, warmth, good will and trust can be restored to any relationship.

#### **3<sup>rd</sup> Condition: Taking responsibility to one's inner life**

- **Overcoming Reactions in personal relationship.** Defensive-aggressive reactions are the major source of damage to personal relationships. When the habit of reaction to reaction sets in – the relationship becomes a war zone, potentially destroying anything that is good in it. Overcoming them requires individual the effort to take responsibility for one's own source of one's reaction and to stop blaming the other. The other is only a 'provocateur'.
- **Owning Projections.** It is normal in as much as we see another person through the colouring of what they remind us of. In a long term relationship specific established projections can become a source of destruction: the partner becomes unconsciously your father, your mother, your teacher, your former lover, your enemy or your rejecter – all created projections of past experiences into present situations. Blaming your partner for something they are not, and there is nothing they can do about it. Time itself does not process projections. In the end you either acknowledge your own projections and own them, or you destroy your personal relationship with them.

#### 4<sup>th</sup> Condition: Respect for the different reality of different people and the balance between them

- **'Two Truths'**: the acknowledgment of the simultaneous co-existence, equally-valid *two independent realities* between two independent individuals in a relationship. Expressing, hearing, acknowledging and validating both realities – as the basis for further communication. The assumption that there is only one reality is self-ignorance, destructive to any personal relationship. Perceiving one's own reality as one point of view, and respecting the validity of another's reality – can be a starting point for the restoration of every personal relationship.
  - **'The Request Ritual'**: transforming expectations, disappointment, manipulations, controls and rebellions against control – with clear negotiation of personal requests from each other and free gifts from each other in response to these expressed requests. It can become the basis of upgrading unconscious 'contracts' with conscious ones.
  - **Restoration of respect.** The loss of respect to a partner is the loss of the relationship, the marriage, the partnership, even if staying together. There can be good reasons to disrespect a partner's *action*, but there cannot be many good reasons to lose respect for the partner *as a human being*. Disrespect to the partner's being comes from a heartless space in oneself. That can be confronted and transformed.
- **5<sup>th</sup> Condition: From chaos to consciousness of couple decision making.**
    - **How to make conscious decisions in a couple?** It is easy to fall into decision by the more dominant partner, which creates continuous conflicts. Creating a conscious process of decision making in a couple can upgrade the partnership in a decisive way.
    - Exploring Blocks of Will in common action. Not acting on common decisions in a relationship can damage it through the destruction of the trust and the respect to the partner who fails to deliver on decisions. It can become a source of bitterness and disappointment, but when made conscious it can also become an opportunity for personal development, an upgrade of the contract, of the communication and of the trust in the relationship.

#### 6<sup>th</sup> Condition: Conscious cultivation of gratitude and appreciation.

- The most exciting relationship can fall into habit and routine. We can easily forget why we are living with that person. The act of conscious appreciation requires stopping the routine of life and remembering why am I with this man, with this woman, out of all the people that I potentially could be with. "Why are you with me?" is a legitimate question. It is a risky process, because we may discover that there is no real valid reason left to stay with each other. That risk must be taken sooner or later, because it could also be an opportunity to remember and re-experience the good, real, underlying reasons of being with each other.

#### 7<sup>th</sup> Condition: Cultivating consistency.

- **Instituting Regular Relationship Meeting.** All common enterprises, initiatives, business and organisations require regular meetings in order to operate well. In most marriages and long term relationships this is not happening. But a relationship, let alone a family and a household is a very complicated operation, combining the personal and the organisational dimensions in one complex. Without a conscious decision about it – a couple and a family meeting will not happen. In order to secure and maintain any upgrade process for the relationship – regular meetings are required.

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It can be done. Our personal relationships, the foundation of our families, are the most important possession that we have, but we cannot just 'possess' a garden, we have to constantly cultivate and take care of it, like any other precious ecosystem that we live in.