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Transforming problem orientated focus -> solution orientation

From “constructed reality“ (Prof. Dr. Paul Watzlawick et al / MRI Palo Alto) > through “discovered reality“ (Heribert Döring-Meijer FroL / CLARO Karlsruhe) > to “newly- found“ reality by making use of various forms of constellations within the frame work of “systemic counselling” by inter alia re-visiting, -processing and counselling of traumata.

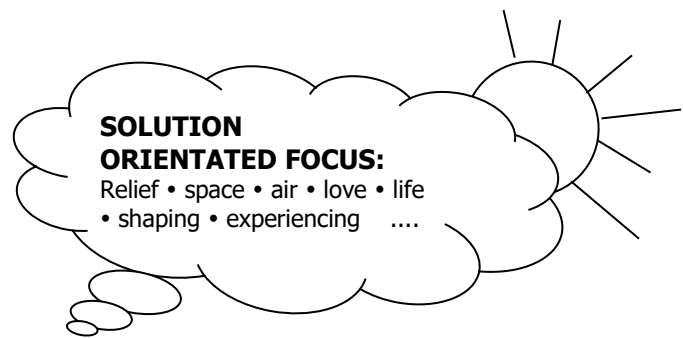
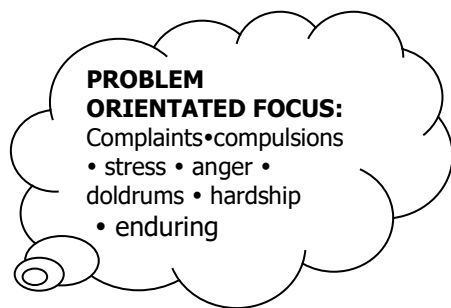
Development of systemic practice

During the previous century the limits of feasibility in individual therapy session, coaching, consulting and supervision were experienced by “consultants”, psychotherapists, psychiatrists and their “patients / clients” alike, since predominantly depth psychological concepts and individual-related therapies were applied. The paradigm of an irreversible pre-set reality laid the basis for treatments and at the same time taking notice of traumas. Persons with so-called “pathological behaviour“ were “treated“ and silenced with medication, or removed from their “system“ (e.g. scape goats / bearers of symptoms / index patients) and their trauma was often not recognised which “landed” them in psychiatric institutions / hostels / homes etc.)

Often pathological, self-inflicting violent behaviour and reactions like addiction, aggression, sexual abuse, traumatic experiences were regarded “as normal”, since it sometimes already had been experienced in the family of origin. Viewing behaviour and its subsequent experience from the angle of difference, what makes the difference, was in many cases lacking. Belonging to a ‘specific’ social class or group together with the lack of flow of information and communication, re-enforced such behaviour.

Approximately 50 years ago a new understanding developed which perceived systems as being “alive and open” similar to the principles of nature. Families, organisations etc. were found to function according to similar principles. Simultaneously, the humanistic and holistic psychotherapy emerged, as well as counselling and group therapy.

From linear- causal thinking patterns	II	To systemic thinking
Individual related approach		Processing inter personal problems
„Sick“ person treated with (medication, psychiatry)		Observing the individual’s interaction with others, thereby paying attention to significance in behaviour (e.g. a noticeable shift in the family system after the recovery of a sick person)
Removal of the symptom carrier / scape goat from the system		Interaction of the system when the symptom occurs
Reality is fixed and irreversible		Reality is being constructed / Language defines reality
Actions show clear consequences		Actions and outcomes depend on a multitude of factors – they are thus unpredictable / There is a continuous flow between preservation and change.
Influence can be changed externally		Active self-regulation / Systems are alive and open



The systemic paradigm

> **Gregory Bateson** / MRI Palo Alto and the Palo-Alto-Group followed the premise that the fundamental unit of life and its development **is not based on the individual organism**, but rather is influenced by the reference system, in which the individual is embedded in. Exchange processes between individual and reference systems are essential.

> **Milton Erickson** American psychiatrist (1901-1980), founder of modern hypnotherapy, fundamentally influenced the development of resources and solution orientated brief therapy as well as the strategic and systemic family therapy.

> **Ludwig Wittgenstein's** (1889-1951) philosophy influenced various systemic schools of thought. Philosophy, as he saw it, was not a theory, but rather an activity in which communication carried a special significance. "Keep silent, if you can't speak about it." There is no such thing as **"basic truths everywhere – even though the earth is round at many places!"**

> The development of **Steve de Shazer's** brief therapy was influenced by Wittgenstein's works. Real constructivists like **Bateson, Glaserfeld and von Foerster** stood all in direct contact and communication with Milton Erickson. This led to a new school of thought, being an interdisciplinary between philosophy and systemic theory and practice.

> Human behaviour and experience cannot be regarded as the outcome of an individual intra-psychological process, but rather as interaction between the individual and its surrounding context. **"Illnesses"** e.g. psychosomatics, or addictions etc. are **no longer** regarded as a defect of the individual only, but rather seen as **coherent, sensible and „for the moment“ appropriate behavioural reaction within the respective context.** All behaviour forms part of a greater whole.

> The same applies to the development of symptomatic behaviours, whereby the symptomatic effects within a system are regarded as particularly significant.

> It was assumed that the system influenced each person within the system (**circularity**). A change of paradigm took place, since the assumption, that the problem of an individual was not related specifically to him/her, but rather influenced by the system itself, essentially changed the thinking and therapeutic and consultative approach.

> Furthermore it was assumed that each family member and each family system intrinsically carried the capacity to heal itself as well as the wish for change.

> **"Maps"** (they are not the territory) lost their rigidity and became more flexible.

> In the first place, the so-called **„reality“** was understood as **„constructed reality“**.

> Constructivists dealt with the question as to how human experience came about.

> Each person **constructs** his/her own **reality**. Reality constructs consist of first and second orders (not the map forms the territory, but is only a description of it). Construction is formed through language.

> The theoretical findings of Gregory Bateson, Milton Erickson, Virginia Satir, Paul Watzlawick and Steve de Shazer and last but not least Bert Hellinger lay the foundation to various systemic models and approaches.

> To **systemic practice, the theoretical background of constructivism** plays an **important role**, because it shows a fruitful change of paradigms by accepting the „inter-subjectivity“, contrary to the objectivity. The „inter-subjective“ view allows to see the world not only from one's own position, but takes into consideration, that everything is interconnected.

Important systemic therapists and models:

- Salvador Minuchin
- Boszormenyi-Nagy (Multi-generational perspective)
- Milton-Erickson
- Steve De Shazer
- Helm Stierlin (Heidelberg model), Gunthard Weber, Gunther Schmidt, Fritz Simon
- Selvini Palazzoli (Milan model)
- Virginia Satir / Paul Watzlawick / Palo Alto (Mental Research Institute in California)
- Bert Hellinger (Multi-generational perspective, Orders of Love, Movement of the soul etc.)
- Gunthard Weber (Organisational constellations / Love's hidden symmetry)
- Heribert Döring-Meijer (Family tree setting / „The discovered reality“)

“Invented” (constructed) reality Paul Watzlawick, „discovered“ (seeking) reality Heribert Doering-Meijer, „detected“ (observed) reality Bert Hellinger

Fundamental hypothesis of constructivism (Milan team, MRI Palo Alto, IGST Heidelberg)

- ⇒ Reality 1st order/ 2nd order (Territory/Map or analogously “facts/stories“)
- ⇒ In the 1st order we construct our own reality by describing and attaching a deeper meaning to what we regard as „reality“ and „true“.
- ⇒ Construction is created through language
- ⇒ All (!) human behaviour is appropriate, if seen in context (example: referee)
- ⇒ Viewed from the perspective of the individual, all human behaviour is to be honoured as a meaningful attempt towards solving a problem.
- ⇒ Frequently the solution, meaning the attempt, develops into a problem (e.g. Sleeping disorders / sleeping tablets, depression / addictive substances)
- ⇒ „More of the same“ as an attempt to solve a malfunctioning solution (addiction)
- ⇒ Fundamental position of the therapist of multipartiality/neutrality and state of not knowing.

Intervention techniques:

- ⇒ Circular questioning (gathering and obtaining information through: „differences, which make the difference“)
- ⇒ Positive connotation / reinterpreting (⇒„Reframing“ NLP)
- ⇒ Paradox
- ⇒ Symptom prescription
- ⇒ Together, the therapist and client/customer create new realities. These need neither to be „true“ nor „real“. The created realities should just be more helpful than the previous constructs....

When the client/patient/customer/individual is able to accept his/her place within a system (**eg. mobile**) and is willing (decides) to change his/her attitude in life (the mission context must be clearly defined) **only then „actual“ systemic family or individual therapy can commence.**

In order to ensure the integration of the systemic-phenomenological approach in accordance with Bert Hellinger and deriving from it, the **“systemic therapy and consulting”** according to the Milan school, Heidelberg model and the Palo Alto Group with patients/clients, **preliminary work was necessary -> even sufficient!** (exceptions prove the rule)

The discovered reality (Heribert Döring-Meijer) is a link between the “constructed“ and “discovered“ reality. With the aid of a completed family tree (genogram) and a resource- and solution orientated preliminary briefing a preliminary working hypothesis/assumption will be established between client and therapist/consultant. Working on a **family board**, engaging in **sculpture work** or a constellation can result in a sustainable solution. Or, if something „new“ has been discovered/constructed, then already a process has been initiated – a constellation is superfluous. A constellation is not always necessary. **The discovered reality** is in some cases initiating and sufficient enough to commence a „healing“ process. The so-called „bad“ (e.g. addictions/ or

anxieties as safeguarding of worse – it initially brought relief) contains often not only the „good“, but also some resources needed, to find suitable solutions.

The systemic therapeutic or consultative approach within the frame work of the invented reality:

- establish together with the client a family tree according to HDM
- integrate other humanistic psychotherapeutic approaches (possibly Gestalt- and body therapy, psychodrama, music therapy etc.)
- new body sensations and experiences
- Resource orientation < > solutions orientation „**do more of which is good and which works well**“
- Comparison of „problem-patterns“ with „desired-patterns“ or „exceptions“.
- Experiencing the own formative capacity and strength
- Acquiring alternative ways of living and releasing of old patterns
- „**Stale**“ to be translated as information regarding **justified, credible needs**.
- Possible counselling of family and relatives
- Examining the **dynamics of the system** with **logs** / the **family board** (according to Doering-Meijer) together with the patient
- Sculpture work with groups / useful utensils (items)
- Structural constellations
- 10 solution orientated imperative acts in counselling and coaching as by HDM

Bert Hellinger: „Family constellations show“ the „discovered reality“ through the „constellation settings“ and „the movements of the soul“.

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Phenomenological approach according to Bert Hellinger

- ⇒ *The „knowing field“ show the reality/the truth for this particular moment*
- ⇒ *The therapist trusts the exposed with an unintentional centeredness*
- ⇒ *The therapist only relies on facts (meaning, s/he is only working with the 1st order reality)*
- ⇒ *The therapist assumes the side of the persecutor/ the “bad”, the excluded*
- ⇒ *We are part of a „greater soul“, which takes us into „her duty“. This results in multigenerational systemic entanglements*
- ⇒ *The Orders of this „greater soul“ – the so-called universal orders, influence the members of a system in specific ways. The most important orders are:*
 - ⇒ *Equal right of belonging (⇒Life)*
 - ⇒ *Precedence of rank (⇒Growth)*
 - ⇒ *Precedence of the new contrary to the stale (⇒Development)*
 - ⇒ *Balancing between giving and taking (⇒Individuation)*
 - ⇒ *Boundaries of conscience (individual, family, clan, organisation)*
 - ⇒ *Persecutor/victim mediation*

Interventionen:

- ⇒ *Restoration of the universal orders through*
- ⇒ *Constellations*
- ⇒ *Inclusion of the excluded/forgotten members of the system*
- ⇒ *Step-by-step re-arranging the picture i.o. to find a “good” solution*
- ⇒ *Process work*
- ⇒ *Rituals*
- ⇒ *„solving sentences“*

Translated by:
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