

THE POTENTIAL OF THE HUMAN GROUP

Translation by Greta Bianchi

“What is the link between the individual and the Universal? It is the group –which takes us to *group consciousness*. We can first unify ourselves with just one other individual in the highest aspect of love, then we can join a small group, and then a bigger group, and little by little larger groups until we reach a certain degree of universal awareness”.¹

Roberto Assagioli

Let’s think about the most beautiful things we have achieved in life. Most of them, we did together with someone else. They are not individual, but collective, group achievements involving at least two people. There are few things we can do on our own. We achieve the most beautiful dreams of life together with other people.

If we think about it, no major change has ever occurred thanks to individuals. Jesus Christ himself had to form a group, and so did the Buddha. Assagioli created the Psychosynthesis Centers.

Big changes can be conveyed through groups.

The individual grows and is seen within the family and the community, within the human race, supported by other kingdoms of nature: this is the context from which he emerges. The path of psychosynthesis leads to the identification and development of individual potential. However, if a group consciousness is not developed, the individual remains in his egocentrism, in the need of self-assertion and of “being right”, isolated from the others.

Assagioli said: “Self-awareness is human but not spiritual. [...] Self-awareness is the point at the center of consciousness [...], it means consciousness of one’s personal ego, of one’s interests, of one’s pleasures, so it has

nothing spiritual in itself. In contrast, the Self is another thing, it is a whole other level. [...]. Normal self-awareness is separative, self-centered, conservative”.²

He also wrote: “[...] the realization of the central self is not all that is to be discovered. In fact, in a certain sense, it is only the beginning. After reaching the awareness of the central “I”, which is at first naturally and rightly centered on itself and separative in order to assert its own unique individual and separated identity, we realize that this is not enough, and that there are other and higher states of consciousness to identify ourselves with. These stages [...] include the recognition of the self in others, group consciousness and the realization of the Higher or Spiritual Self.”³

It is therefore necessary to transcend the personal ego, since self-individuation contains in itself a form of separateness. The development of the individual goes through group consciousness, collaboration and interdependence, as ways of overcoming self-centeredness, isolation and individualism.

Groups, like individuals, go through some evolutionary stages. A group can be more or less evolved, and it can devolve in the same way it can evolve.

What affects the well-being of a group? The features that characterize “right human relationships”⁴: the degree of mutual acceptance, trust, security, mental understanding, emotional responsiveness and interpersonal understanding. In other words, interpersonal harmony.

For this reason, the development of inter-individual psychosynthesis is indispensable for the creation of groups based on right human relations.⁵

What makes a group strong? A group does not stay together just because there is well-being within it, but also because its members actively collaborate to achieve group goals. It becomes strong when it overcomes the difficulties to reach goals together. In other words, the sense of strength depends on the degree of group consciousness, collaboration, mutual support, reparation and mastery in overcoming and transforming internal and external difficulties, and the united achievement of common goals.

The fact that some ideals can be lived together, and some goals can be achieved, creates the psychosynthesis of the group. It develops thanks to the sharing of ideals, goals and the will to realize them in a shared way. The quality of this psychosynthesis, of course, is different according to the degree of evolution of the group.

An evolved group is one that has developed a unanimous consciousness and is in contact with the Soul of the group. Just as there exists an individual Self, there is also a Self of the group. This Self is not the sum of the souls that compose it: it is something more and different. Each group has its own Soul. This imprint, this Soul, is independent from the members that compose it. When one enters a group, he enters a field of consciousness, in which everyone is influenced by this Soul. It survives when members enter and leave the group. Psychosynthesis also has a soul that persists even though there are people who come and go, enter and leave it.

The more one is in contact with the Soul of the group, through a unanimous consciousness, the more evolved is the group.

The non-evolved group is the one in which the leader plays the role of “pack leader”, of the “father master”. In it are present the dynamics of dependence/counter-dependence, “we are good, the others are bad”, “witch-hunt”, “scapegoat”, expulsion in case of disagreement. In short, there is no adult group consciousness. The only way to evolve in this context is through conflict, because within it there is no possibility of personal development. In a more evolved group than the previous one there begins a process of adult psychosynthesis: in the same way as the conscious “I” plays the role of coordinating and harmonizing the different sub-personalities, the leader coordinates the wills to foster and develop group awareness and responsibility. In a context of this type the leader does not act as a leader, but as a servant.

An even more evolved group is one in which the leadership is shared. This is possible when a leader is not necessary, because everyone has a sense of responsibility and group consciousness. In such a context the leader is the Soul of the group and members work together to reach a spiritual attunement.

In a group of this type one works in horizontal and vertical directions: for horizontal expansion and interpersonal harmonization, and for vertical elevation and spiritual attunement. The more spiritual attunement, the more interpersonal harmony.

Each group has its own Soul with a specific note and a plan to implement. This plan is included in the original purpose for which the group was born, however it is the Soul that holds it and the members are responsible for interpreting it.

The Soul of the group tries to manifest itself through its members: it shows itself to manifest its own note, its plan and will through the members and the activities of the group. The extent to which this is possible depends on the receptivity of the group. Furthermore, just as there are personal “foggings”, so there are group “foggings”.⁶

To this end, Assagioli left us some important tools to use.

Unanimity, Unity in diversity, can be achieved through attunement with the Soul of the group, thanks to receptive meditation and mutual sharing. A unanimous consciousness does not mean a flattening, but a unity generated by attunement with the Soul.

Receptive meditation can be practiced together in order to be in harmony with the Soul of the group, in order to:

1. Receive from the Soul information related to the next step of the plan to be implemented;
2. Share the information to make a group summary; At this point, the will of the group’s soul can be catalyzed thanks to creative meditation and achieved by a cooperative activity;
3. With creative meditation, we clearly and in detail see the next step of the plan, as established by the Soul and summarized by the group;
4. We implement this step through a shared group activity.

This working method was offered by Assagioli for “his special and urgent function of building the structure of the new civilization and the new culture in all its aspects”.

In support of this possibility, there are some scientific data concerning the relationship between mind and matter. They come from the PEAR project, started in 1979 at Princeton University and which lasted almost thirty years. In these studies, they tried to understand if the intentionality of one or more people could influence a random events generator (such as the launch of a computer-made coin in which, after thousands of tests, the result between head or tails is always 50%). From this research it emerged that the intentionality of an individual, placed in front of a generator of random events, is able to significantly shift the result. It also emerged that if a group of people do this, the difference is even more significant.

Not only that, but if a group of people has the intention to affect the result, even if it is not in front of the generator but in another place, the change takes place anyway, regardless of the physical distance.

This works even if the group intends to do so at a later date, such as the day after at a certain time. This suggests that the intentionality of a group can have effects beyond the limits of space and time. As if to say that intentionality acts from a transpersonal and universal dimension.

From this research it emerged also that if the group is composed in equal numbers of males and females the displacement of the result is three and a half times higher. This means that we should strive for greater gender equality in the groups.

It is even more interesting that the displacement of the result is six times greater when there is an affective involvement between the members of the group. This suggests that the power of group intentionality is proportional to the affective involvement that exists between its members.

To conclude, we can generate significant changes in the world if we work to develop group consciousness, attunement with the Soul and to implement, through creative meditation and group activity, the indications received from on High.

“Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them” (Mt. 18, 19-20).

Marco Moretti

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Notes

- 1) R. Assagioli, Gruppo di Meditazione per la Nuova Era. Istituto Cintamani, Roma, 1998, p. 126 (Lezione IX).
 - 2) B. Caldironi, L'uomo a tre dimensioni. Colloqui con Roberto Assagioli (1967-1971). Edizioni del Girasole, Ravenna, 2004, p. 63-64.
 - 3) R. Assagioli, Gruppo di Meditazione per la Nuova Era. Istituto Cintamani, Roma, 1998, p. 190 (Lezione XIV).
 - 4) According to Assagioli the necessary qualities to establish right relationships are: sense of responsibility, understanding, compassion, love, harmlessness, spirit of sharing; he also indicates goodwill as source of right relationships and foundation of harmony and unity among human beings (see R. Assagioli, Gruppo di Meditazione per la Nuova Era. Istituto Cintamani, Roma, 1998).
 - 5) Cfr. R. Assagioli, *Dalla Coppia all'Umanità*. Introduzione alla psicosintesi inter-individuale. L'Uomo Edizioni, Firenze, 2011; R. Assagioli, Gruppo di Meditazione per la Nuova Era. Istituto Cintamani, Roma, 1998.
 - 6) Cfr. R. Assagioli, Gruppo di Meditazione per la Nuova Era. Istituto Cintamani, Roma, 1998.
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