

THE ACCEPTANCE IN THE PROCESS OF GROWTH

Translation by Achille Cattaneo

I consider the acceptance a crucial stage, a condition for our own real growth and for the resolution of many internal and external conflicts.

I distinguish an acceptance of ourselves, as primary stage, and an acceptance of the other (the neighbor, the world) as a result.

I believe the acceptance the base, the only viable platform from which - like a trampoline - the man can take the momentum to go diving in a more genuine way, more authentically into the life. In psycho-synthesis the phase of self-acceptance it is closely connected with that of inventory. Inventory - as for traders - means to record, catalog, make a list of what we can observe of ourselves. And in accordance with the fact that the observer is different from what he observes, this inventory requires de-identification.

The work of self-knowledge is often long and difficult, but will serve little purpose if it does not follow the time of acceptance. True acceptance has - as far as I could find - a huge dynamic potential that frees much of the creativity of the individual (creativity innate but blocked due to the energy cost of the defense mechanisms). There is an inverse relationship between the level of self-acceptance of a person and his defense mechanisms, and it is obvious, as we will see in a bit .

I was talking about true acceptance to understand that there are various degrees, and achieving full self-acceptance is a difficult goal. I know from personal experience and through work as a psychotherapist how, almost always, the moments of acceptance are partial: acceptance is in fact more than a technique a process, it is gradual, and it is like taking off a curtain after another, a mask after another, to get to see our original face. An acceptance superficial, incomplete, sometimes gives

us a bit of euphoria, that breaks soon: often it is only a sub-personality that observes and accepts the limitations of another.

True acceptance must go in deep and be total: only then it will unleash the creative and propulsive force of which I said.

Acceptance is connected to the continuous observation and study of Self. But above all acceptance means deciding to live together with our temperamental equipment, with the psycho-physical type we belong. Often the process of acceptance is a journey from pathology to typology. After all we can do - as the sculptor - who takes something good from the material we have; but the fact remains that working in the right way on our raw material we can transform - in the words of the alchemists - our metals into gold. Acceptance is not resignation, even though I could see that for many people, for a long time, these two terms are synonymous. Indeed acceptance is precisely the opposite of resignation because - pragmatically speaking - makes people free and able to go confidently towards life.

Then acceptance should not mean to indulge themselves, be passive in the face of our limitations as facing something ineluctable. Acceptance not only precedes, but makes possible the transformation; it is just the start of transformation (and , once again, it comes in mind the preparation of the raw material of the alchemists for subsequent transmutations). Only one who has accepted himself, his current intra-psychic and external situation, can afford to work for a change. The resignation is static, while acceptance is dynamic. The resignation remains stuck in the past, does not pay accounts; acceptance is projected into the future.

The acceptance also takes us back to the concept and the experience of totality, and we may well see that the perfectionist is precisely the one who is not acknowledging himself for what he is, looks at all the ways to flaunt an idealized Self. This idealized Self is especially tyrannical in his need for perfection, and contributes to the creation of giants with feet of clay. Who lives presuming to be his idealized Self (false self-image) and is identified with this, is constantly

forced to defend this false image; he must defend and preserve it coercively just because it is false and therefore inconsistent, without real basis. We know that the defenses cost, and when we come to neurotic defenses they have a cost so high that deplete the individual of much of his energy, subtracting it to creative applications.

The neurotic man lives always alert, always on the defensive around the clock, and against all. Using an analogy, we could say that he looks like a fool who leaves constantly on his alarm system, instead of limiting it to when he is away from home. And an alarm system on, continuously consumes a lot of energy. We observe then a vicious circle: the more the person defends himself the more needs to defend himself, because shrinking day by day his potential energy very little remains for a fuller and more real life. And the more he nourishes the false image, the further is away from his true Self. Acceptance stops this vicious circle by changing this perverse mechanism. In fact, those who truly accept, they cease to see life as a struggle and can only afford to be spontaneous, natural. If anything, as Maslow says, he goes from false to real problems.

Why do we not accept ourselves? The roots of non-acceptance can often be found in the family, especially in those families in which there is the bad habit of making comparisons and confrontations. I refer to those fathers and mothers that establish in their children the germ of the inferiority or the diversity, with phrases like: "Did you see how good is the daughter of Tom?" Or "You should be like Dick!"; and, in the family: "Your brother is brought to you for studies" or "Look at your sister how looks good!"; etc. It is obvious that the ugly duckling or the Cinderella will feel disadvantaged and little equipped. Who does not accept himself obviously fails to do so and, in a sense, can not do it. He sees in himself something unpleasant, ugly, dirty, weak, false, etc. And seeing himself in such way, so unacceptable, so unfinished, he will tend to seek a neurotic modus vivendi, a way of life that outweigh his flaws. So then sometimes he becomes overly hetero-dependent, in the sense that the others are called to fill his gaps, to complete him, to enliven

his idealized and false image; other times he will tend to isolation (especially in order that his bluff is not peeled), closing himself to the others and living in the depths of his imagination, a sense of superiority. Still, he can adopt iper-compensative solutions and pretend to manipulate his next depending on his neurotic needs.

The problem of those who do not accept themselves it how being accepted by the others. A good education is the one that makes the child feels like everyone is unique and unrepeatable, and the attitude silliest and source of suffering is desiring to be different from what we are. Because each must be unique and unrepeatable, there is just no one to compare with is legitimate. There is no a standard of personality, at the most, we can we talk about identity among men in the sense of unanimity. Acceptance takes us back - if accurate - to recognize and express our special equipment bio-psycho-morphological, to bring forth so our temperament.

All this is manifested by spontaneity, fluency, creativity and joy for life; especially with innocence, typical quality of a child not yet conditioned and, as it is written in the Gospels, we should come back as children to realize the Kingdom of Heaven. Acceptance means yet the end of the fight, active surrendering to the leadership of our Self. And living here and now, day after day, without pre-occupations for the future or regrets for the past. In psychoanalytic terms, acceptance also means interrupting the mechanism of removal, because you have the courage to face the removed and to accept it as part of us. In this way, we re-integrate elements and forces that belong to us but we had locked in the cellar: we give them free access to our house (personality).

It is common experience, in psychotherapy, that once looked in its face, we are no more afraid of the removed, it is no longer a monster, or the devil behind the door. Often we, by undoing vital parts of ourselves, as instincts and impulses, end up creating the hell in us: we are divided in two, a good and a bad part, but it is improper operation because both parties are part

of the our totality. With the border between good and bad within us we create civil war and disperse precious energies, because every conflict costs. The agreement puts an end to the conflict because it cancels the division between parts of ourselves: the bad parts are then reintegrated and transformed, and we are richest in psycho-spiritual terms.. Among the various types and ranges of acceptance we have: self-acceptance (of which we have said). The acceptance of factors and natural events (for example, to accept that winter cold face, that rains today, etc.). Acceptance of the limits of time and energy that each of us has (and this leads us to seek the essence and simplicity). Acceptance of passing time: in other words, aging and death (each season has its fruits, death is part of life and is transformation). Acceptance of pain and suffering (sometimes only the pain, if accepted, can shake us from the comfortable routine and let us turn to the most important values: accepting the pain means we can use it and transform). Acceptance of the other.

Acceptance is finally finding our own place in the world, among others, and want to live, sometimes claim it. Moreover, only those who can accept themselves can love themselves: in fact as could we ever love (and we see it better with things or people) what we do not accept? Accepting - loving ourselves leads to an accept-love one's neighbor (and life) consequentially. Accepting it also means becoming humble and fully human; see that there are in us, as in the others, strengths and weaknesses, virtues and vices, limits and potential, growth rates different from ours. To conclude this brief notes I would add that the acceptance must not become an excuse for taking off responsibility in life, a say, so that's just me ...! We have to accept only what cannot be changed, what instead is open to change, if we do not like, when appropriate, we must strive to change it. But acceptance itself, as already said, is the beginning of the transformation and leads to that existential position of totality that is the only consistent with the existence.

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BUT WHO DO YOU SAY THAT I AM?

Translation by Achille Cattaneo

Since the Psychosynthesis is a practice, not a theory, speaking of the Self seems a priori impossible, precisely because many have or have had direct experience? Not to mention that even those who had, hardly should speak of it: both for retention and because it seems this is an ineffable experience, not translatable into words. The Self remains a mystery, but it is permissible trying to probe, to approach, attend. In what way?

A) With the theoretical speculation, that in the absence of other still remains permitted, albeit somewhat hypothetical. Assagioli too legitimates after all this when he says that the approach to the Self is sizes in three phases:

- 1) To believe that the Self exists
- 2) To believe that you have a Self
- 3) To be the Self

in which the first two stages are evidently also speculative, and only the last fully experiential.

B) With the techniques usually used in the relationship/dialogue with the unconscious contents. In this case, especially invocation, prayer, meditation, application, dialogue.

C) But above all experiencing that particular dimension of the Self to which all potentially may or might have access, that is the Ego. Especially if we take into account the fact that - as well Massimo Rosselli reminds us - the Ego is also called by Assagioli "personal Self", the Ego being the reflection of the Self in the space-time dimension, which is that of the personality.

But even by representing only a reflection, the Ego is anyway also an expression/manifestation/aspect of the Self, and then experiencing the Ego means at the same time also making an experience, albeit partial, of the