

THE RIGHT TO EXIST

Translation by Achille Cattaneo

The title of this intervention arises from an exclamation that came out of me in a moment of great fatigue. I deliberately use the word “fatigue”, because we often abuse the term stress, almost amplifying everything that this word carries with it. Saying that I am tired instead of stressed, in my opinion, honors the labors of the mind and the body and also the physiology of our lives, often at the limit of our energies.

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So, one day I was very tired, I felt weighed down by too many tasks, physical, mental, which, like ballast dragged me into a kind of depressive slime. It was not the first time that this feeling had overtaken me. Suddenly, from the depth of my stomach, going towards my throat, this exclamation came out: **But I too have a right to exist!**... Almost angrily; as if someone, or something, obliged me to follow a way of life which is not mine!

This was accompanied by a sense of “inner sulking” and I reflected on this expression, “a right to exist.” The anger turned into a crescendo of anger and helplessness. Why impotence? In reality no one forced me to do what I was doing..., no compulsion. Why I forced myself to act in a certain way without anyone, in fact, (except myself) asking it of me? The helplessness that I felt was born inside me; I was powerless to govern some of my parts, at the mercy of senses of guilt of duty and, maybe, deep down, still an insinuating desire, a craving, a search for affection and approval.. **still?**

And yes! Personal psychosynthesis never ceases, and just when it seems to have finished a carousel ride within our own personality, if you lose your grip, you are likely to take a good tumble. Some parts I had already recognized, encountered, but these were still not well integrated with each other, and demanded more care and understanding. So, the important thing is to get up, see where we

stumbled, take ourselves in hand, and do another round of the “carousel” within us... to meet ourselves once again, and again and again.

But there had to be something good in that exclamation of mine. **The Right To Exist.** And here is the reason why I decided to share these reflections “out loud”, which mark a kind of *continuum with the theme that I investigated last year, about the three forms of love: denied love, rediscovered love and conquered love*, which in this context I cannot return to, but which for a greater disclosure, you can find published in the Psychosynthesis Institute Magazine, April 2016, n ° 25, to which I send my contributions.

I just restart from the form of “conquered love”, which is related to the perception of personal value, not only in terms of self-esteem or rather, of how much “I value myself”, how much is my value, how much I am worth (as when you estimate precious objects, art, archaeological finds) but value in itself, because **I exist**. And yet, the awareness of our own weight in the world is not an achievement that lasts forever. It has to be renewed, refined, activated in every moment of our existence, just as the right to exist. We could say that every day we are called to Life from Life, then living becomes an act of awareness, of presence. Let’s look at the etymology of these two words: RIGHT and EXISTING, as is usual in the homes of Psychosynthesis. The term “right” comes from the Latin “rectus” – “directing”, and I need say no more. In the dictionary we find various meanings, the first one is the one that most interests us: **direction**, which calls to mind the vision of psychosynthetic Will.

Let’s see the second, more normative, legislative, those involved in the jurisprudence know this well, public, private, administrative law...

The third meaning, i.e. the possibility to assume a certain behavior within the society: protection of civil rights... in the opposite direction are also Duties.

We take into consideration, for our research, the meaning of direction... **right**, just as the direction, in part linked to the act of the will, but also, in particular, to the meaning, the purpose of our life: what direction has my life taken? And about the existential theme also let’s seek the

etymology of **existing**.

Existing, also derives from the Latin, and means being in the reality. It consists of the two components **ex** which means outside and **sistere**, staying; literally staying outside. The word from which it derives is also interesting: Existence, that is “total possibility of concrete relations with the spiritual or material reality”, which is well linked to the philosophical movement of Existentialism, which also is part Psychosynthesis. Existentialism in fact starts from the analysis of existence and clarifies the relationship between man and being (meaning society and the world).

After this brief etymological research let us turn to the following question:

“How aware are we of existing, how is the quality of our existence, how are we in touch with the reality of Life? Do we shy away, do we fear it, are we passive or actors on the stage of Life? “

We pause and return to the right to exist, which as you may have already understood, largely depends on our willingness to be in the flow of our life, to stand in our life (*sistere*) even if this occasionally shakes us, strikes, throws us out of the saddle, to use the metaphor of “riding life,” and every time we go up, willy-nilly, without having fully understood, however, the reason for our fall. (Curious expression “unwillingly”... a bit out of use, but that means that it is contrary to the will, not willing. So there is always a will even if it is “not willing”). The falls are the opportunities to understand that the direction taken is not the right one, in line with our own, intimate and unique, evolutionary project, but the opportunities of the life are only waiting to be accepted, understood, and we resume our “race”.

Sometimes it happens that we ask others for the Right to exist, and not only in terms of approval or search of affection, but above all, we require to legitimize our being alive, almost apologizing for existing. In therapy, with some people, I have just coined the name of a specific sub-personality: “Sorry if I exist”. As to ask for permission to live, a justification; I give all of myself so that you may recognize my right to exist. I live because I am useful to you, because I help you, because you love me, because I love you... and so on. Beggars of love, unable to justify, in the first person, the right to be alive, present, close to

reality. Why do I stress these terms? Because often we are living ghosts, absent in life: existential upholstery. Perhaps do you feel a pang? Do not worry, it means that you are still sensitive and alive. When there is gangrene, necrosis of the cells, we are already dead. Pain tells us that we are alive and that we can cure ourselves, take care of ourselves, and how?

I understand that it is not easy to get back on top when we find ourselves in the abyss of loneliness, loss, abandonment, despair, so the merchants of happiness try to rule us, with the use and abuse of drugs, of any kind, psycho medicines, lotteries, attractive and stunning TV programs, and more. What do we do in those moments of books, fine words of great sages, conferences, fast-food courses on self-esteem... but even the very techniques of psychosynthesis itself... we are in a sort of blender and we feel lost; we are in pain and that's it !

Let us pause a moment. Now this is the time to not run away from ourselves, even if the temptation is strong and the escape routes are so many; know how to stay, creating a moment of silence, inner silence, of mind, heart, body. Silence, and only in silence listening before to the beating of our heart that reminds us of Life, that we are alive, and then in the silence, slowly, feeling the friendly presence, calm, quiet, of our BREATH. If we can stop, staying in us, listening to us, through the silence, but in the company of our breathing and the beating of our hearts... partially we are already turning towards a glimmer of light, we feel that the engine of life turns on and through a quiet action, gently, we feel a rising sense of confidence that encourages us, step by step to come back to Life, with a new awareness.

Released from these swamps, we do better if we are provided with a **toolbox**, as a person said at the end of the Course Self-Training, we are more able, with a psychosynthetic kit, to choose what is right for us, for our typology, our temperament. This requires a self-knowledge, a reconnaissance about our personality, because we are often just unknown to ourselves, we come

across in our usual images that we drag up from childhood, or adolescence, which are outdated and obscure our true potential.

In fact, there is a major misunderstanding; when you embark on a personal path, both of psychotherapy, or personal growth; there comes a time when you think you have already understood all, or nearly so; we would like to freeze it like in a picture, that specific moment, that state almost of grace, hoping that everything remains unchanged. The wisdom of Assagioli's words instead remind us that "the illusion is the pursuit of stability, security, harmony or static peace. They cannot exist in human life, which by its essence is fluid, dynamic, ever-changing, as it is the cosmic life in all its manifestations. Stability, security, peace, exist and we can find them, but only in a higher sphere of reality, in the transcendent, where is our being, the Transpersonal Self. But it is an illusion seeking that stability and peace in our personal lives, which includes the different relationships with others. The spiritual Self lives in a sphere of reality that has laws and essence quite different from the sphere of becoming, of change, of evolution.

The personal human life is essentially the development, growth, implementation of latent energies, of superior abilities; it is fight and win and then necessarily involves conflicts, tensions, excesses (...), alternation of joy and suffering.⁽¹⁾

Often we truly are victims of ourselves, we forget that in reality we are better than we think, we get lost behind some tyrannical sub-personality instead of welcoming all our small hearts, some injured or lost, and bringing them back to the root of our being, where harmony is possible, thanks to the work of our inner center that directs and governs everything. But to do this, we need to gain knowledge of ourselves, without concealment or alibis. And then it can happen that we discover potential often ignored or not used. The right to exist, to adhere to the reality of life, invites us to take full possession of our talents, often overshadowed by the conflicts of the personality, or by ignorance, in the sense of ignoring. We have our wings bound by invisible and illusory threads, created just by ourselves.

All of us are fascinated by the idea of knowing that we

are **souls** inside our **bodies**, but how long is this fleeting awareness, how much time passes so that the weight of personality with all the thoughts, emotions, feelings, ambivalences, conflicts, become again sovereign and make us to forget the Reality of the Soul. The right to exist is one of the rights of the Soul, because otherwise the unique and unrepeatable project for each of us, would have no reason to be. The Soul demands allegiance from the personality and if this deviates, our life can really become a hurdle-race. I want to bring to your attention the term Loyalty because being faithful, staying loyal to ourselves, it is a theme that is close to my heart. On the contrary, too often we fail ourselves, we lose ourselves, lose the direction of what we want and what we are, we virtually sell ourselves in exchange for a few crumbs of affection or recognition. Beggars indeed, with false masks of "It's okay so".

The Right to exist, to stand out in our life, close to reality, ultimately depends only on us. Only we can allocate, legitimize, validate. It is located in the bowels of our being, as a precious treasure. The troubled parts of our personality often hide it, but it is present, is already within us; there we find our value, the spiritual essence of our true authentic identity, our identity as the transpersonal Self. The right to exist was born from the stomach cry, the beating of the heart, the expression of us and from making manifest our life plan, to which humbly, but not vanquished, we must come to an understanding.

Here, we have an expression to be taken into account: "being in accordance", in accordance with our life, in harmony, from the personal self to the transpersonal Self, this is the work of Psychosynthesis.