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THE PERSONAL SELF
COACHING - A GOOD FRIEND OF THE WILL
TRUE AND UNTRUE ALTRUISM



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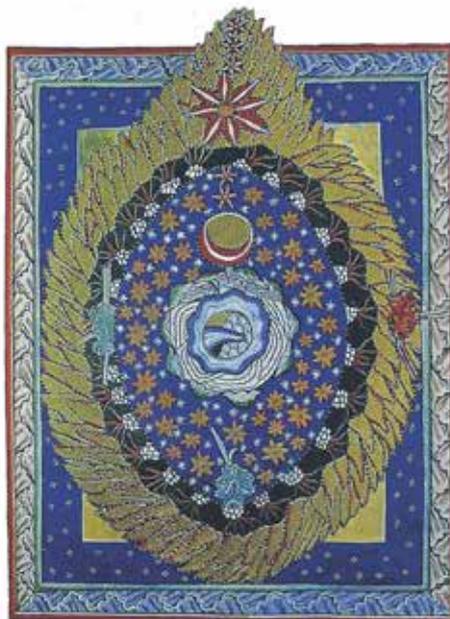


PSYCHOSYNTESIS

Petra Guggisberg Nocelli

THE WAY OF PSYCHOSYNTHESIS

*A complete guide to origins, concepts,
and the fundamental experiences
with a biography of Roberto Assagioli*



EDITORIAL

Translation by
Gordon Leonard Symons

Dear readers,

“Unity in diversity” is the leitmotif of this issue of the magazine and we decided to choose as a cover image a mosaic in which a half-hidden red flower gives the title to the work. The flower is meant to mean that each of us gives a name to our own time and life. If that flower were not there, the work would no longer have its value.

Those who send articles, those who read them, those who deepen and disseminate make the mosaic of mankind more and more clearly defined, even if at first glance it might seem to be a set of unconnected tiles. We as editors thank you for the opportunity that you give us to unite many threads participating in one project.

I would also like to point out that articles from abroad are starting to arrive, I should say from the world, from psychosynthesis friends, thanks to the enthusiasm of Gordon Symons, with Fulcrum in London and thanks to the silent work of the Gruppo alle Fonti.

The psychosynthesis of the institute founded by Roberto Assagioli has been invited to Bulgaria and other countries are in negotiation, the books of Assagioli have been translated into more foreign languages and the self-development approach is travelling far beyond its original Italian borders.

I wish you good reading,

Patrizia Bonacina

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UNITY IN DIVERSITY

Translation by Gordon Symons

In order to establish proper relations between human beings and human groups, it is necessary to understand, accept and practice a great principle or truth, which is at the basis of life itself in all its manifestations: that of

UNITY IN DIVERSITY.

Life is essentially, inextricably ONE.

76 This was intuited by all the great philosophers, who put a single principle at the basis of reality, even though conceiving it and naming it in different ways. This was the revelation of the higher religions, which can be summarized in the words “the omnipresence of God”. This is the inner experience experienced by all the great mystics, who in their unitive states of consciousness have seen and heard: “God in all and in all, and all and all in God”. This is ultimately the last conclusion of scientific investigation that is discovering and demonstrating how all material things and all the forces of nature are different appearances and modalities of a single, all-pervading energy.

But the true nature of this unity must be well understood and applied. Unity should not be understood as uniformity and absence of any differentiation, but in a functional, dynamic and organic sense.

The essential unity of reality and life is poured out and expressed in an infinite richness of beings and forms that together constitute the grandiose Universe of which only a small part is revealed to our senses, but of which scientific instruments reveal ever greater wonders of the infinitely small and the infinitely large.

The relations between the substantial unity and the boundless multiplicity are regulated - as far as we are given to know - by two great principles:

1) Polarity

2) Diversity of functions

Understanding them will be facilitated if we examine how they operate in that exact compendium of the universe constituted by the human body.

1) Physiology and Biology have shown how organic life is essentially based on Polarity. The fundamental polarity is the play of the opposing functions anabolic or assimilative, and catabolic or dissimilative. Through the first, the organism feeds, absorbs, transforms and stores substances and energy; through the second it releases them, uses them and consumes them, both to maintain its internal life and to defend it from the outside, both to affirm it in the environment, and finally to propagate. In the human body these functions are performed by different organs and groups of organs; there are some glands with internal anabolic secretion and other catabolic; the parasympathetic nervous system is anabolic, the sympathetic nervous system is catabolic. These functions are antagonistic, that is, apparently “inimical”, yet one would not make sense without the moderating and compensating action of the other. In fact, excess of anabolism produces obesity and autointoxication; excess catabolism produces wear and tear; if they go to the extreme they both lead to death.

2) The necessity or the purpose of the diversity of functions are obvious. The more the living organisms have evolved and perfected, the more these differences have increased, moving from the simplicity of the single-celled Amoeba to the complexity of the human body. In the latter, the unitary life that animates it requires the harmonious co-operation of well-differentiated organs, such as the heart, the lungs, the liver, etc., and coordinated in functional processes, such as the digestive, circulatory, respiratory, etc. Here too there is a clear anatomical structural distinction and a strict necessary functional solidarity.

Let us now apply the fundamental truth of unity in diversity, and the principles that govern it, to the life of humanity and to the relationships between people.

It has been said very well that “the spirit of humanity is an indivisible whole”. To this we must add that the life of humanity is - or should be - analogous to that of a human organism, with its apparatuses, its organs and

its cells, constituted by various groupings of individuals. I will not dwell further on the principle of polarity since I have dealt with it extensively on another occasion (see: The balancing and synthesis of opposites). I will examine only one example that is very current, and one of the most acute problems afflicting humanity: the conflict between conservative conservatives on the one hand and revolutionary innovators on the other. It is not difficult to recognize - for those who can observe "from above", without passions, fanatisms and preconceptions in one sense or another that the excessive and undisputed preponderance of both the one and the other tendency would be harmful. The first would lead to fossilization, arrest and death; the second to disorder, to anarchy and to dissolution. Because living humanity requires at least a mutual adjustment of the two tendencies. I said "at least", because "the balancing of the opposite poles" is not accomplished only through their mutual moderating action "horizontally", on the same level, so to speak. In many cases it can be implemented even better by the intervention of a regulatory principle operating from a higher plane and with higher and more powerful energies than those in play and in conflict.

In the present case, this Higher Principle consists of a synthetic and spiritual conception of history as the unfolding of human evolution towards a higher Goal, from the intuitive vision of a divine Plan. In this conception the intellectual, moral, aesthetic and social "values" achieved in the past are not disowned but are freed from old forms which are no longer adequate, are re-experienced and re-expressed in different ways and adherent to the present, and integrated with the new "values" conquered by the progressive consciousness of humanity.

It can also be said that the proportions between conservative forces and innovative forces must not always be the same, but can and must vary according to historical periods. In the transition periods and at the beginning of a new cycle (as in the present moment) it is good that the revolutionary and innovative forces prevail, while in the middle period, when the parabola of a civilization is at its highest point, it is good that the stabilizing forces operate in such a way as to give the time and ease necessary for the specific qualities of that era to flourish in beauty and to bestow their precious fruits.

3) Diversity of functions. In this field, as in the previous one, it is unfortunately clear that "the organism of humanity" is still far from having achieved the development and balance of a healthy and normal body. Its cells, tissues and organs are still in a state of disorder. Men still do not know - or do not want to - understand and appreciate individuals and groups different from them by nature, quality and function, and this prevents collaboration and mutual integration necessary for the good of all. A great help in implementing that understanding and appreciation is given by the knowledge of the various psychological types and their respective functions.

We do not realize enough how big the difference is between these various human types. Although they exist materially side by side, they actually live in different worlds and have almost no psychological contact with each other. Consider for example the four basic psychological types described by Jung: the sensory or practical type, the emotional, the mental and the intuitive. Imagine that four people, each belonging to one of these types, respectively, are observing the same landscape from a height. The man belonging to the practical type will turn his interest to the agricultural and commercial aspect of what he sees; he will try to calculate the area of the fields lying beneath his eyes, the profit they can make and what those lands can be worth.

The second person, a musician, in contemplating the play of lines and masses, the contrast of lights and shadows, the various dissonances, will feel the soul of that landscape, will be pervaded by a particular emotional tone. Thus, while the result of the observation of the first can be a purchase contract, the contemplation of the second can give rise to a symphony.

The third observer will turn his attention to the natural factors that have been at stake here: the climate, the geological constitution of the soil, the fauna and flora and the various scientific problems deriving from it. A geological and zoological monograph could therefore be derived.

The fourth, on the other hand, will be induced by the beauty of the landscape to turn his soul to God, to contemplate the glory of his visible and invisible creation; he

will feel the unity of life, communion with God, and the effect could be ecstasy ...

If each of these four people then wrote what he perceived, felt, thought or intuited, in their writings there would perhaps be few equal phrases, and those who read could hardly believe that they had been inspired by the observation of the same scene.

This observation of the fact that men live side by side, but in fact in different and almost separate worlds, is of great importance.

This fact reveals to us the true cause of many fundamental misunderstandings, of many unjust criticisms, of many antagonisms which complicate our lives and which create an incalculable quantity of unnecessary suffering. Thus, for example, for a practical, simple and positive man, a complex and changeable female psyche remains an incomprehensible mystery, and for her part the woman of this kind will not be inclined to appreciate the simple and solid virtues of that man.

The artist is often considered, by practical men, as an oddball and somewhat ridiculous. When Ariosto presented his Orlando Furioso to a cardinal, he had the following answer: "Messer Ludovico, how did you manage to put together so much balderdash?" ...

And many consider the poet, as Carducci said:

"A loafer who
Goes around acting the boss in the cantons
With his eyes turning
From the angels to the swifts."

On the other hand, the artist often shows an exaggerated contempt for the modest, but often necessary bourgeois virtues, and does not feel the dignity and the value of the constant search for the truth accomplished by the scientist, the thinker.

To eliminate these barriers of misunderstanding that sadly separate men from each other, a serious study of individual psychology is needed, done as early as possible, when the character is not yet fully formed and crystallized within rigid limits.

Such a study can make us understand and appreciate the different types from the one to which we belong - it reveals the necessary social and spiritual function, shows us the gifts that can come to us and that even bring us continuously without realizing it. Thus, the foundations of a better evaluation and of a true fraternity among men are created.

We should not be surprised that individuals and human groups so different from each other do not understand and appreciate each other, and that when any reason for dissension arises they fight bitterly. Yet they are all necessary to form a truly human civilization.

A world composed entirely of "practical" types would be a very dry and gray one; a humanity composed of pure artists could hardly survive; a community made up of scientists alone would be too one-sided; the strong-willed ones, desiring domination and isolated from each other, would destroy each other, and the same would happen for every other kind, without the integration brought about by others.

It is therefore clear how appropriate, indeed necessary, is the knowledge, understanding and cooperation among the various human types - based on the recognition that they are part of a living and inseparable unity.

INTERVIEW WITH ASSAGIOLI

Solange De Marignac - January 1970

Translation by Gordon Symons

Solange De Marignac

I should like to ask you four questions:

1. Many people fear that old age brings with it physical limitations and that these have a damaging influence on their moral and intellectual capacities. May I ask you, who have been seriously affected with regard to your health, how do you see this problem?
2. We often hear people say: "I am too old to change". You, who believe deeply in evolution, would you like to give your opinion in this matter? Do you have a sense that you can continue to improve yourself, or that there are certain aspects of your thinking which need to change?
3. If it's not indiscreet, can we ask you what you think about death, in particular your own death?
4. Finally, how would you reply to someone who asked you "How should we grow old well?"

Roberto Assagioli

1. Our moral and intellectual capacities are not necessarily influenced by our physical limitations, even when serious, at any age.
There are many examples of this; I will just mention Charles Darwin, who was only able to work for 1-2 hours a day; William James, whose health was precarious during all his life, and above all, the shining example of Adele Kamm, who, confined to her bed by a spinal illness, exercised an apostolic benefit for many sick people.
As for myself, my considerable physical limitations due to my age do not seem to be influencing my capacities, as I shall say presently.

I even gain some advantages from some of these limitations. In my view, much depends on our attitude. A serene acceptance of our limitations, such as partial deafness (and this is valid for all limitations, not just physical, and who hasn't got limitations?), greatly reduces their negative influence. They can be considered as a challenge to be overcome, thus prompting compensations and even super-compensations.

2. I can declare sincerely that I am able to continue to develop, and that I am applying myself no less actively, and perhaps better than before. My thinking is constantly developing; new aspects of reality often present themselves to my mind. This arouses joy and enthusiasm in me, but it is not without drawbacks, because I feel driven to change and to improve (at least I hope so) that which I have written in the past, although I realise that I might do better to write something new with the time that is left to me on this earth.
3. I neither desire nor fear the death of my body, because I am deeply convinced, not only of the afterlife, but of the perpetuity of life. I am convinced that the "spiritual nucleus" which is our very essence, is immortal, and that its manifestations will be renewed with an ever wider consciousness and an even greater creative power.

4. In order to age well, one should do what I have called "the psychosynthesis of the ages", that is, to keep present and alive in us, to some extent, that which is best and most valuable to us in each age. The openness to the world and the sense of wonder of the child; the fervour of the adolescent, the dash and dynamism of the youth, the equilibrium and maturity of the adult, the many fruits of experience with their gifts of wisdom which come with old age. In this way, the old person has the privilege of becoming again a child with children, a youth with the young, communicating with benevolent understanding with people at each stage of life.
Thus, while withdrawing gradually from participation in external living, the old man (and this is equally valid for women), can become a solid point of support and a centre of beneficent irradiation for those around him.

IS MAN RESPONSIBLE FOR HIS DESTINY? REALITY OR ILLUSION?

Translation by Damiano Pagani

It is worth mentioning some considerations in this regard, to be able to freely choose on which side to stay... Do we live by chance or by necessity?

Is our destiny preconstituted and channeled, or are we free to go in any direction?

Are we prisoners without the escape from a life that we can only suffer, or is there in us the power to determine the course of our life?

It is worth mentioning some considerations in this regard, to be able to freely choose on which side to stay ... We can recognize different positions.

The deterministic view: determinism is the idea that all things that happen in the present and in the future are a necessary consequence caused by previous events.

There are more rigid forms: everything is predetermined so that even man is not absolutely free, cannot make choices, is pre-destined, from before his birth (destiny and predestination), and intermediate positions: there is a 'quota' of free will, but some things are determined (libertarianism). Therefore theories for which free will is compatible with a certain determinism. Destiny as a term generically refers to a set of inevitable events that occur according to a timeline subject to necessity and which lead to a final predetermined consequence.

The deterministic interpretation of causality is found in those philosophical currents which, conceiving the universe as created by an ordering Logos, deny the existence of chance as everything happens 'out of necessity', claiming that the case is only an 'ignorance of the causes'. In fact, the concept of chance has always been opposed, with the current suffrage of scientific theories, to the concept of cause.

Unlike determinism, indeterminism recognizes the existence of chance, giving chance the meaning of an occurrence that occurs without a definite and identifiable cause or an event that happened due to causes that certainly exist but are not known, 'non-linear', disconnected or better 'intricate', that do not present a cause-effect-necessity sequence, that is deterministic, such as to allow the identification of them and the predictability of the effects.

Case as a term has an unusual plurality and is subject to various and not always defined uses or synonyms in the sense of randomness: episode, coincidence, contingency, example, eventuality, accident, event, eventuality, fate, fate, fortune, juncture, imponderable, hypothesis, occurrence, possibility, probability, affair, combination, fact, circumstance, situation, occurrence, destiny, traversal, conjuncture, problem, unforeseen, emergency, occasion, etc. , synonyms that place this term on the border with the own irrationality of an event commonly conceived as out of the control of human reason.

It is evident the extent of the influence deriving from the assumption of one or the other of these two positions which also inspire the various psychological models:

- Man is completely helpless and then ... Luck - Misfortune - Impotence...
- The man has a form of freedom and then... Freedom of ... Learning...

We can sterilely oppose the two positions or compose them.

How? Inserting the evolutionary concept.

By evolution, in Psychosynthesis, we mean the process of growth, of progress, of passage from potential to current, operating in every level and in every aspect of the manifestation; the uni-verse is evolving (towards one) and all beings, from the largest to the smallest, participate in this process towards that perfection which consists in the full manifestation of the Essence in the Form.

This evolutionary tension corresponds to a profound reality, active both in the processes of nature and in the human being, where the two supporting pillars progressively meet: The Self (the Essence) and the Personality (the Form).

The approach, the union, the integration, the synthesis between Self and Personality take place gradually, through interpenetrating levels, promoting, step by step, the path of growth and development of self-consciousness and producing the emergence of progressively more inclusive levels of life and action (contact with the will), of an ever clearer awareness of the meaning to be attributed to one's being in the world and to the events that characterize it, and consequently to progressive degrees of freedom and ability to understand and to want. And this is where the discourse on free will is inserted, which is the philosophical and theological concept according to which every person is free to make his choices. In

the religious field, free will implies that divinity, however omnipotent, chooses not to use its power to condition the choices of individuals. In ethics this concept is the basis of an individual's responsibility for his actions, 'for better or for worse'.

Free will: freedom - will - self-determination

But being free to choose, does not mean absolute and omnipotent freedom and man learns that soon!

With the progress of self-consciousness, man becomes aware that there are active laws that regulate life and which he cannot disregard.

From an existential point of view these laws represent the Will of Life to manifest itself in the form and act specifically on the various levels (i.e. law of gravity, of attraction and repulsion, law of action and reaction, law of equilibrium...).

They are also operative in the human being and represent the intrinsic modalities aimed at achieving the evolutionary purpose, that is to bring to fusion the two human components: the personality of biological origin and the 'spiritual spark of divine origin': 'Illumination' - 'Self Realization'.

Laws guarantee not only the achievement of the purpose, but also the functionality of the whole system; they act synergistically among themselves and anyway anywhere on all levels, even if in different forms.

Man can: undergo them - know them - adapt to them - dominate them, consciously subjugating himself - manage them - collaborate, using them for their purpose: this is where our free will is played, according to which we can accelerate, slow down or even temporarily deviate from the evolutionary process, delaying our and the others' evolution, until we can even destroy the experiment 'planet Earth'.

If we start from the hypothesis that we are grafted into an evolutionary process, which has a purpose, a direction, we cannot ignore the hypothesis of a Law of Cause and Effect.

What is it about?

“Certainly every earthly event has its invisible cause behind it and it itself is a cause in power”

Understanding the conditions from which an effect is produced has always been the purpose of the different branches of science and philosophy, and is the basis of every religion. For most of the sciences and philosophical currents the law of cause and effect is the most universal of all laws. It governs all phenomena, from the grossest to the most subtle one. All the forces of nature, both physical and mental, obey this law and can never transgress it.

Every event is the effect of some invisible force that interacts in harmony with the law of causality: from the vibrations of electrons to the revolution of the Earth around the Sun, from the fall of an apple on the ground to the raising of a limb by willpower. Likewise every ac-

tion of the body or mind is the result of forces or energies that determine its cause and at the same time what is the effect becomes in turn the cause of some other result, which in turn produces other gross effects. and so on in a chain of causes and effects that continue to occur uninterruptedly. Moreover, we have always tried to go back to this way from effect to cause, until the cause of the causes, the First Cause, which in any case remains a mystery hidden in time or in the Eternal.

In eastern philosophies and religions, the law of cause and effect is called the 'law of karma'. This formulation, further developed in the eastern-inspired spiritual teachings of the Masters of Wisdom, can help us to understand its purpose and function in the evolutionary process, as far as we humans are concerned.

The 'average man', who has not yet begun to ask himself questions, has no awareness of his own or of the others' evolutionary process nor of its purpose lying in the unconscious, therefore behaves according to his own needs, desires, conditioning etc., mostly in a misaligned way with the purpose of the evolutionary process itself, producing imbalance and disharmony, both on an individual, relational, and collective level.

The 'law of karma', through the effects produced by the misaligned actions, tends to bring him back on the 'right path' (the evolutionary path, valid for him in his specific phase) proposing events that basically represent lessons, which can be passively suffered (procuring often a lived experience of suffering), but then as the conscience matures (thanks to the events produced by 'karma') it becomes a lively opportunity to learn.

'Karma' is therefore the sum of the effects of causes we have established in the past and which continue to exert a profound influence on our present actions. In itself it is neither positive nor negative, like any existential situation, it is only there, in the present reality to indicate the changes to be made.

But this is not always possible, because the ability to generate new causes that over time can produce desired effects is connected to the ability to 'think' and consciously use the power of the mind. As long as we live focused on the physical and emotional plane, we take mass effects; as we evolve, our power and our ability to hurt or to help increase, as well as the responsibility for

the effects we can produce in our and others' lives. (The more you evolve the more you can act for better or for worse!)

'One word alone, one thought, to create empires of evil or empires of good'

The motivations that drive us to action are of fundamental importance.

In fact, in front of 'karma' the interior attitude is fundamental, which can transform it into 'Dharma'.

We must learn to live in 'Dharma', that is, in harmony with the laws of the cosmos (which means order), to find our place, and thus achieve the joy of self-realization.

A free good will is able to alleviate the sometimes heavy severity of 'karma', but to this end we must recognize that we are followed in earthly life by a series of negative actions that have survived. So, thanks to this understanding, one can bear the misfortunes patiently and lighten them through the constructive use of free will and some good deeds: here is how to facilitate the melting of karma!

'Who is a slave to the past does not think about the future and stops. Errors must be a bridge for new knowledge, not obstacles. All the many mistakes that are committed in life can be turned into useful fires if you do not give in to discouragement'

We live in a world of effects, we ourselves in our personality are some effects, our relationships are effects, our living conditions are effects ... Often we persist to change ourselves and life by trying to change the effects, which makes difficult and largely vain our actions and produces in our lives only vicious circles, self-regenerating.

To move to virtuous circles, which spiral out into an ever brighter future, we must change, starting from ourselves, trying to understand the mechanisms that passively determine us and, through the will, beginning to train ourselves to be promoters of new, constructive causes, in line with the evolutionary direction.

In us there is the power to consciously promote causes and 'give life'.

It is linked to the presence of Psychic Energy, the spark of Life, which can be contacted and used by us and which manifests itself in us as that dynamic impulse we call Will and which comes from the most 'profound - elevated - central - the Self'.

This power is in us. We recognize how we have already experienced it when we have set ourselves a goal in a persistent way; let us not let it act in an uncoordinated, unconscious way, based on ignorance, for materialistic and separative reasons, as it currently happens for much of humanity.

'Everyone has a power to administer for which he is responsible'

Let us remember that this power still acts, also unconsciously, determining individual and collective consequences.

So what is the freedom of Man?

- That which derives from the conquest of awareness
- That which arises from the contact with our intrinsic will, placed at the center of ourselves, which gives us the power to choose, not as much the what, as the how, not as much to avoid the effects, as to promote new causes
- That which manifests itself as understanding, acceptance of reality and its limits and obedience to the laws of life
- That which is realized in living and not in letting oneself be lived, in being active and not passive, in choosing the attitude with which to stand before events
- That which drives our thoughts and actions, knowing that it is not as much important in the world where we are, as to which direction we are going
- That which does not pretend to understand the causes of the events at all costs, that can be clear or mysterious, even if we can think that nothing is random
- That which knows that destiny is not fortune or misfortune, but is built in the commitment in the present
- That which is not afraid of the future and the unknown, but walks upwards expressing itself in the total assumption of responsibility before life
- That which knows that the only freedom is in the joy of becoming oneself
- That which knows that being free is a state of consciousness, which arises from the liberation from tyranny and self-imposed servitude and is affirmed in the elevation
- That which dwells in the heart and thanks for being able to live the Adventure of Life.

CREATING A TURNING POINT IN EDUCATION

Translation by Alberto Gabba

Conversation at the “GoodWill Center” in Darjeeling (India)

«If the Eastern method can awaken us from our sleep, the Western one can avoid that, in the meantime, it turns into a nightmare.» Ken Wilber

The fundamental purpose of this contribution is to present an *ontology* (a discourse on the nature or fundamental essence) of the *turning point in education*. This article is based on some ideas related to the theme of the “nature of the turning point”, shared in my report at the last National Congress organized by the Centre of Varese, applied to education.⁽¹⁾ The article comes from the working out of notes, transcripts and annotations of a meeting event that took place at the “GoodWill Center” of Darjeeling (India) on March 7, 2018, between a group of Italian educators, which I belonged to, and a group of local teachers and professors.

I had been invited to participate in this journey on the “*Education for the Nascent Humanity*” in August 2017 by Marina Bernardi, president of the Community of Living Ethics founded by Sergio Bartoli (Assagioli’s pupil). The purpose of the journey was to bring together a group of young educators in order to visit some areas of India (the new educational schools of Auroville, the work of the GoodWill Center in Darjeeling, the teachings on education of Agni Yoga at Crookety House, etc.) and to lay the foundations of a work on the *education for the nascent humanity*.

This article relates about small part of the journey that concerns the event at the GoodWill Center, opened by the Community, inspired by the principles of Assagioli’s psychosynthesis and, in particular, aimed at creating

opportunities for letting know and developing its *educational* and *transpersonal* aspects in Himalayan India. The meeting, organized in this centre with local teachers and professors, aimed at creating the opportunity to start a *meaningful conversation* that could identify some thematic groups about the education of the future, trying to identify and isolate a *common denominator* between East and West. In fact, as written by prof. Margaret Wheatley:

«There is no power equal to that of a community that converses with itself about what it wants. *Meaningful conversations* generate the power to change, create, or transform institutions, values and points of view about the world. If we want to bring about change, we need to reunite the community, find out what’s important for it, and then connect all this to similar conversations.»⁽²⁾

The part reported here (slightly revised in form, but faithful in content) is the recording of a moment of interaction I had with a local teacher, Ava Rai, from which emerged some very important ideas, which will be the based for the next considerations and observations in the present work:

«*MV*: [...] I think that today, here, we have a profound opportunity to start something really meaningful regarding the mission of our time (giving birth to a new form of humanity) and to the theme of our journey: *education for the future*.

We are in this Centre because each of us has taken a position for the future of human education as something that concerns him or her in person, and here, together, we can explore some issues of fundamental importance that unite us, that transcend the very different backgrounds we start from.

The opportunity here is to start a *meaningful conversation* on the education of the future, trying to identify and isolate a sort of *common essential denominator* - if it exists - from which to start, the core of a structure deeper than any content that differentiates our formations. Nucleus in fact means: the point from which something exists, beyond which there is nothingness.

To start this conversation, I would like to invite you to

stay together for a moment in a survey, a space or a glade - in the form of an *open question*. In the great Western educational tradition, Socrates taught that true *wisdom* is never a product of 'seeking answers', but of 'living in the questions' the most profound and radical questions of life, using every answer that we obtain as a further opening, expansion, question. Plato defined this process: *the expansion of the soul*. The inquiry that I want to open concerns precisely what we feel to be - among the different questions that come to our mind - the *question of decisive importance for the future of education*. It would be important to be able to identify any self-evident criterion or underlying structural principle that might *transcend* our contents and background. In the *Crito*, Plato converses with the homonymous character, and teaches us that without a criterion (from the Greek *krino*: 'I judge') it is impossible to judge any aspect of reality.⁽³⁾

To be frank, I believe that - if this criterion exists - it has to do with, or in a certain sense is a *function of*, a more abstract background that unites us all: the *spirit*, the *theme* or the fundamental *mission* of our time.⁽⁴⁾ We are *already immersed* in this spirit of time, which is as invisible for us as the air we breathe and as the water is for the fish. It is destined to be indeterminate as long as it remains not distinct, not noticed, but exactly for this reason it is *decisive*.⁽⁵⁾

But what I can say is that if this spirit cannot be grasped *directly*, we can, in a sense, do this through its phenomenologies or manifest effects. And one of these is the *total crisis* that characterizes this time, and which involves every field of human life (education, democracy, politics, medicine, economics, psychology, philosophy, etc.). Being in crisis is not something specific, but (involves) *all human identities and meanings*. We are on the threshold of a total anthropological crisis, of a radical crisis about the identity of what it means to be human. And education (*ex-ducere*, 'to lead out') can be seen in this context as the most important theme of the mission of our time, since it concerns 'pulling out' a new humanity, that is creating a turning point related to what it means to be 'human beings'. This survey is an open invitation to start from the most difficult (but most important) question, to do our part for the transformation of education as we have learned to know so far ...

A.R.: Regarding the invitation to the conversation that has been opened, and the most important and decisive thing in this direction, I want to say this: observing my life, as a mother and as a teacher, I had a tendency to focus on *doing* something as a teacher and not on *being a teacher*. The books we study are designed to teach us *what to do* and *how to behave*, without giving any importance to what it means to *be a mother* or to *be a teacher*. When you think this way, bringing attention to doing, rather than to the *presuppositions of education*, you cannot really create an impact and you cannot really alter anything thoroughly, because *you move and act like a blind man*. So far, a lot has been taught - and I myself have learned - on the content of the subject and on teaching, but almost nothing on the *being* of the child and the teacher, and on the *being of education* in general. As far as I am concerned, the most important thing to start with is to lay the foundations for a great investigation into the presuppositions of human education according to the old paradigm, and from there to move to establish an *entirely new one*».



[Darjeeling GoodWill Center] From left: Dr. Pratap Singh Rai (prof. of Buddhist Ethics, Director of Bhadra Sheela Memorial Institute), Mauro Ventola, Virginia Benzi, Marina Bernardi.

The Turning Point: the Decisive Criterion

«Perhaps we are at a time when the night of the world is approaching midnight. Perhaps this era of the world is coming in the time of extreme poverty. But maybe not, maybe not yet. Long is the time, because even terror is ineffective until mortals have made the *turning point*. But the turning point is made by mortals only if they recover their *essence*». Martin Heidegger

The event at the "GoodWill Center" allowed us to bring to light one of the decisive ideas for starting our work: *the turning point*. This term can be traced back to the work of Martin Heidegger, considered in the history of philosophy as the main philosopher of the twentieth century. In his statement, Heidegger approaches the turning point towards the essence, the fundamental and substantial being of something. As far as the establishment of the human *being is concerned*, the turning point has a particular nature. Here's how two dictionaries define it:

- *Dictionary A*: Turning point
 - a) Change of direction
 - b) Crucial (existential) change
- *Dictionary B*:
 - c) Moment of decisive change in a course of events.

If we look at the etymology of the word (according to Assagioli this is a real “psychological technique”), we discover that in Italian *svolta* (turning point) is a term coming from the Latin *svoltata*, that is “turned”. The act of turning consists of turning our sight to a different place and implies the act of vision. For that specific being that is the human being, *the turning point is the product of seeing something in a new way* - which allows to see possibilities that were not present before. In the centre of the turning point is an alteration of a certain undisputed, not examined view of the world. This is the ground for the educational work for the future. The determining power of a particular view of the world is depicted by the anthropologist Henry Jules, in his book *Culture Against Man*:

«In a society in which the competition to seize the fundamental cultural assets is one of the pivots of action, one cannot teach people to love each other; on the contrary, it becomes necessary for the school to teach children to hate each other, avoiding showing it, because our culture cannot tolerate the idea that children may hate each other. How does school satisfy this ambiguity? [...] Boris had difficulty in reducing 12/16 to the minimum terms and could only get up to 6/8. The teacher asked him quietly if that was the maximum he could get to; the maximum he “believed”, the teacher insinuated, that he could get to. The other children raised their hands, eager to correct him. Boris was quite unhappy, with his mind probably paralyzed. [...] After a minute or two [the teacher] turns to the class and says: ‘Well, who can tell Boris what the divisor is?’. A forest of hands is raised, and the teacher calls Peggy. Peggy says that four is the greatest common divisor. [...] Boris’s failure made Peggy’s success possible; his unhappiness is an occasion for her exultation: here is a typical situation of the current American elementary school. To an Indian Zuni, Hopi or Dakota, Peggy’s performance would seem incredibly cruel, because the competition, gaining success through the failure of others, is a form of torture unknown to those non-competitive cultures. Considered from the point of view of Boris, the nightmare on the blackboard, perhaps resulted in a lesson of self-control, so as not to run screaming out of the classroom under the enormous pressure of the public. [...] At school the external nightmare is internalized for life. Boris was not just learning arithmetic, he was also learning the *essential nightmare*. *In our culture to achieve success we must learn to dream of failure even at night*».⁽⁶⁾

In the context of a significant work on education for the future and for nascent humanity, there is a *crucial distinction* that must focus all our efforts, commitment and energy:

- A work aimed at generating an *alteration of the content*, of doing, improving or changing.
- A work oriented to generate an *alteration of the horizon*, of the underlying vision of things, of the basic assumptions of a reference model.

Paradigms of the Alteration and of the Turning Point
«What you see depends on how you look. Since observing is not only receiving, unveiling, but at the same time a creative act». Søren Kierkegaard

In other words, there is a substantial difference between working *in* the education (*content*) or *on* the Education (*horizon*). In the latter case, philosophy has often spoken of *transcendental*. Transcendental here does not mean something supernatural, but the hidden and implicit conditions that make possible an experience. It is the space - the whole of what must be present - *behind* the appearance of a phenomenon, so that it can manifest itself *in the way* it does. The event described by H. Jules does not emerge by chance; its existence (from *ex-sistere*: “being outside”) is made possible by the horizon behind certain assumptions and values (including “competition”). *So, if we want to achieve a turning point in human education, we must be able to alter that horizon.*

The word *horizon* is Heidegger’s favourite metaphor to refer to the transcendental sphere. A horizon can never be *objectified*, and at the same time no object can exist without an implicit horizon that hosts it. The horizon concerns the *network of conditions* relating to the possibility of existence of something; to have access to what Ava Rai pointed out, that is to the possibility of altering the *being* of education, *being* a mother or *being* a teacher, what is required is to alter the horizon. This means that a work aimed at obtaining *noteworthy* contributions for the future of education must first take place from the appropriate reference paradigm. The word paradigm comes from the Greek *paradeigma* and over time has taken on the meaning of “vision of the world”.⁽⁷⁾

The considerations made so far led us to state the existence of two general paradigms:

- The *paradigm of change* (or incremental improvement).
- The *paradigm of the turning point* (or of the ontological transformation).

Actually, these are two ways of *conceiving* the work on education, which inevitably determine the way we *relate* to it and therefore our *interaction*. As a result, the paradigm we *choose* has domino-effect implications. We can

discover the most important differences between these two paradigms by observing the configurations that they take, from at least seven angles:

1. *Genesis or source.* The word ‘genesis’ comes from the Latin *genēsis* and from the Greek γένεσις whose root is γεν - of γίγνομαι “to be born”. Saying “genesis or source” of the paradigm we intend to examine the aspect of birth, origin, formation. We refer to the question: where do these paradigms come from or how do they originate? The paradigm of change has its source *in the usual and customary way of seeing things* : it is inherited, since it is based on the pre-understanding that man has breathed and internalized by osmosis from a certain historical-cultural environment.⁽⁸⁾ An individual does not choose these pre-understandings, he does not think them, but they are the unexamined assumptions *from which he* thinks, and correspond to the sphere that M. Heidegger called the “unthought”. Whenever a man wants to *change* or *improve* something, he *always* moves within these pre-understandings. Unlike the first, the genesis or source of the transformation paradigm *finds its origin in a creative act*. The philosophers of the great scholastic theology held that true creation is *ex-nihilo*: “from nothing”. Creating really means “bringing something to light” and doing it from nothing. But it must be distinguished that it is created *from the nothing of itself*, and not *from absolute nothing*. In fact, every creation always derives from our *being*, and is proportioned and allowed by our being. From the point of view of psychosynthesis our being has *two dimensions*⁽⁹⁾, and therefore this creative act must require - as it were - two movements:

- An *act of awareness* (and therefore, to a certain extent, of liberation) from implicit assumptions inherent to culture.
- An *act of intentional creation* of new presuppositions, inherent to a culture closer to the laws of the world of life.

2. *Intention or future.* Each paradigm has an intention or a future that becomes its ‘organizing principle’. Intentionality, starting from Franz Brentano, is conceivable as a “tending towards” something, as a “will towards” an object. It concerns the irreducible internal tension of a form of reality, and indicates its basic design, its project, its vector: the goal for which that something is

drawn, towards which it tends. The ultimate reduction of every psychic activity is its *intentional essence*. And for this it is very important to understand what the two paradigms tend towards. The paradigm of change: it tends to improve, alter, change an aspect of the future, but within *what is possible* (according to a certain vision of the world). The paradigm of transformation or turning point: its tension is to offer *new possibilities*, and in particular to *create a future that otherwise would not have happened* (and therefore “impossible” according to the same vision of the world).

3. *Direction of attention.* Referring to the ten laws of the psyche declared by R. Assagioli, we know that where attention is placed, there follows energy. We must understand clearly that every paradigm *preforms* and *pre-orientates* the attention of people in a certain direction; a paradigm is never neutral. If we remove all the accidental and momentary elements, and after having made various ‘cuts’ we look directly at the *substance* of the way in which these two paradigms organize our attention, we discover the following:

- In the paradigm of change, our attention is focused *within* the boundaries, limits and definitions of ‘what is possible’ within a given vision.
- In the transformation paradigm, attention is focused on what is *outside* the boundaries, limits and definitions of ‘what is possible’ within a given vision.

4. *Operating mode.* The Webster Dictionary defines the word ‘function’ as: «The way something works, the action or the normal or characteristic behaviour of something». In the paradigm of change: we work on what we are *doing*, on the *process of the action*. In the paradigm of transformation: we work by altering the way in which something *is*, in an indirect and radical way, that is through the alteration of the implicit horizon in which that phenomenon *exists*, from which it *appears*.

5. *Definition of human action.* In each of these paradigms, human action is conceived in a certain way. In the domain of change: action corresponds to a *series of material activities aimed at altering something (content) and obtaining a certain effect (result)*. In short: the action is seen and conceived from the point of view of the phenomenic Ego.⁽¹⁰⁾ In the domain of transformation: action is seen and conceived from the point of view of the real Ego (which is a pro-creator Ego)⁽¹¹⁾: *a series of stances on the future (resolutions*⁽¹²⁾*) that have the power to create new, otherwise non-existent “possibilities for life”*.

6. *Ethical conception.* With the word “ethics” we mean: the investigation of the source of human behaviour in relation to the categories of ‘good’ and ‘evil’. In the paradigm of change: the notions of “right” and “wrong”, “should” and “should not” are already given by an implicit system, undisputed and taken for granted. One moves within a *world of options*, organized by a series of stereotypes established by the specific culture (*cultu-*

ral imperative). In the paradigm of transformation these stereotypes are made explicit and made relative. It works “beyond good and evil”, removing any stiffness and absolutism from moral stereotypes. Every ethical direction is possible (*world of possibilities*), provided that it respects the intelligence of the circumstance, and the functional utility to the laws of life (*vital imperative*).⁽¹³⁾

7. *Relationship with risk*. Finally, the two paradigms pre-orient the relationship with risk. The paradigm of change (survival-oriented) is designed to win, ascertaining and controlling things, *avoiding risks*. The paradigm of transformation (oriented towards greater vitality) is designed to give itself fully to a **noble** possibility,⁽¹⁴⁾ and we deliberately and freely assume the risks necessary for its manifest realization. This relationship with risk is indicated - among others - in a Handwritten Note by R. Assagioli (AS 6631):

«A wise will has, in the right time and place, *to be able to dare*, assuming responsibilities and risks. It is necessary to have the courage to make mistakes, to give in life its right part to the ‘unexpected divine’».

And by the theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who wrote from the concentration camps:

«Thinking and acting with the next generation in mind, and being ready to go away every day, without fear and without worry: this is the attitude that is practically imposed on us and that is not easy, but it is still necessary to keep bravely».

A Culture for Nascent Humanity

«**Culture is the spread of light, in the darkness of matter**». *The Portal, Città della Pieve*

One of the most significant *synthesis* achieved in the journey on education is that most of the current attempts for intervention are not sufficient to have an impact on *the formal cause* ⁽¹⁵⁾ of the real educational crisis that humanity is going through, which makes it unique and peculiar, compared to all previous ones. Much of the practices, attempts, expected results, perceived possibilities and actions carried out, move within a paradigm (culture) ⁽¹⁶⁾ created in the image and likeness of the same configuration of the human Ego (egoic-separated) that is in crisis. What is *required* at this moment by the appeal of our time is to rethink education *entirely*, selecting the paradigm of the turning point, to offer to the future *an education for life*. We need not make an improvement, but to *create new alternative bases for a change and transformation of being (ontology) of education*. The great challenge is to work on the elaboration of *a new horizon*, from which a new way of *seeing* things and of *interacting* with them can take life. The real source from which the being of education comes, is the horizon of meaning.

The *fabric* of this horizon is made of language, it exists in language. As M. Heidegger says: “Language is the

home of being”.⁽¹⁷⁾ Creating a new culture on education is nothing more than *inserting new conversations onto the general conversation of education according to the categories of our time, to alter it in a meaningful way*. A culture, in fact, is nothing but a *shared conversation*. The creation of a new culture takes place when a critical mass of human beings develops a new language, different from the previous one, which then becomes a common language, a new pre-understanding or a horizon from which to see things. As individuals, our challenge is being able to *give voice* to real human “I” and to incorporate its principles into a new horizon delivered. In its essence, it is a *semantic revolution*.

If creating a new paradigm - or culture - is generating a new shared point of view (language), we need *words that are well founded, sufficiently clear and powerful*,⁽¹⁸⁾ but also more *radically human*.⁽¹⁹⁾ We could say powerful words (masculine) in the measure in which we will develop a great silent (feminine) *listening*. These words cannot be invented. We must train the perception of that *inner voice* that is always ‘measure’ of our identity, reality, humanity. But we could never understand the insights of that voice by improving or changing one of the various responses *within* the presuppositions of our way of seeing things. Rather, as the philosopher Hans-George Gadamer has clarified in his *Truth and Method*, the insights will come from the measure of our ability to live in the *school of questions*, questions so powerful as to redirect the axis of the assumptions that found our paradigms:

«[New insights] always presuppose an *indication* in the direction of an *opening area* from which the idea may come, that is, always presuppose *questions*. The real nature of the sudden idea (*insight*) is perhaps not so much the realization of the solution of a problem, as the sudden realization of the question that advances in the opening and therefore makes an answer possible. Every sudden idea has the *structure of the question*».⁽²⁰⁾

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- 3) Plato, *Critone (Crito)*, Bompiani, Milan 2000.
- 4) J. Ortega y Gasset, *Il tema del nostro tempo (The Theme of Our Time)*, SugarCo, Milan 1994.
- 5) As RD Laing wrote: «The set of the things we think and do is limited by what we fail to notice. And since we cannot notice what we fail to notice, we can do very little to change, until we notice how not to notice shapes thoughts and actions».
- 6) H. Jules, *Culture Against Man*, Random House, New York 1963
- 7) T. Kuhn, *La struttura delle rivoluzioni scientifiche (The Structure of Scientific Revolutions)*, Einaudi, Torino 2009.
- 8) «A paradigm is a view of the world constructed on the basis of implicit assumptions, accepted definitions, comfortable habits, values defended as if they were truths, and convictions projected as reality. Therefore, paradigms are deeply linked to the socialization of adherents and practitioners: the paradigms tell them what is important, legitimate and reasonable. Paradigms are also normative, asserting what should be done without the need for long existential or epistemological considerations. But it is precisely this aspect of the paradigms that constitutes their strength and weakness: their strength because it makes action possible, their weakness because the reason for action is hidden under undiscussed assumptions of the paradigm itself». (M.Q. Patton, *The paradigm debate and utilitarian synthesis, in Utilization-focused evaluation*, Sage, Thousand Oaks 1997)
- 9) «Self-consciousness, or I-consciousness, has two characteristics: one introspective, the other dynamic. This can be expressed in various ways: for example, 'I perceive myself being and willing'; or 'Because I am, I can want'». (R. Assagioli, *L'atto di volontà (The Act of Will)*, Astrolabio, Rome 1977)
- 10) «[...] What we are aware of is only what can be called the Phenomenic "I", which all the changing states of consciousness, thoughts, feelings, etc. refer to. But this phenomenic "I" is only the manifestation of the real "I", the permanent active principle, the true substance of our being.» (R. Assagioli, *Psicosintesi. Per l'armonia della vita (Psychosynthesis, For the Harmony of Life)*, Astrolabio, Rome 1993)
- 11) The connotation of the real "I" as "pro-creator" has been well explained by the philosopher Marco Guzzi: a living subjectivity capable of inserting new information that alter the structure of the universe. (M. Guzzi, *Fede e rivoluzione (Faith and Revolution)*, Edizioni Paoline, Milan 2017)
- 12) Resolution is the most radical of the acts of will, based entirely on the "I". Paul Tillich writes: «[Heidegger] [...] analyses a phenomenon to which he gives the name of 'resolution'. The German term that designates it, Entschlossenheit symbolizes the unlocking of what anxiety, submission to conformism and self-isolation have closed. Once this has been unlocked, we can act, but not according to rules given by someone or something. No one can direct the actions of the 'resolute' individual - no God, no convention, no law of reason, no norm or principle. We must be ourselves, we must decide where to go.» (P. Tillich, *Il coraggio di esistere (The Courage to Exist)*, Astrolabio, Rome 1968)
- 13) J. Ortega y Gasset, *op. cit.*
- 14) M. Ventola, *L'Evoluzione possibile dell'uomo (The Possible Evolution of Man)*, Iemme Edizioni, Naples 2016.
- 15) The word 'formal' in philosophy is usually opposed to the notions of 'content' and 'matter'. Logical formal: in the teaching of Aristotle, is the internal logic that brings matter from the power to the act, following an implicit ideal model. For the Greek philosopher, form has a logical priority on matter ("Of all things we can speak inasmuch as it has a form and not for its material aspect as such" - Aristotle, *Metaphysics VII*). The formal logic describes the movement of human rationality that is oriented to identify the substance that is independent of any content.
- 16) It is essential at this point to distinguish the notion of culture. By culture (or anthropological culture) we can understand that complex and set of models, modalities and structures of meaning that man has elaborated, and which he delivers and transmits in various forms to respond to certain types of issues of shared interest or fundamental importance (in the article: the problem of how to educate a human being for being fully human).
- 17) M. Heidegger, *Lettera sull'«Umanismo» (Letter on «Humanism»)*, Adelphi, Milan 1995.
- 18) As F.W. Nietzsche rightly guessed: "Truth needs power" - or is forgotten by history.
- 19) The aim of education for nascent humanity, in fact, is realized in new schools for the new generations of human beings.
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TRUSTING YOURSELF THE CONQUEST OF SELF-ESTEEM

Translation by Achille Cattaneo

According to Umberto Galimberti's Dictionary of Psychology, trust is *the reassuring state that derives from the persuasion of the reliability of the surrounding world, perceived as being well disposed towards the subject.*

Let's try to imagine ourselves at the back of the supermarket checkout, or sitting in our armchair at the cinema. Who is behind us? A stranger, or maybe someone we know only by sight? We would entrust our back or not for a "touch" just more than random ... and why?

Trusting is always a risk, a bet. If we could trust everyone and always, trust would no longer have value, it would be "inflated". And then, can the fact that we trust someone, even if motivatedly, protect us from his possible error? Although if in total good faith, an error is always possible. So, what would happen to the error in which a trusted person can fall ... would we deny him our trust from now on? And finally, how important is the way, the attitude with which the error is faced or its eventual reiteration?

In fact, while the child trusts because he has no choice, the adult can choose drawing from his own experience. That is, to one's awareness of the type of patterns, of introjected relationship models.

After Freud's *innatism*, we witness to the passage from the EGO psychology - based on the "drive / defense" model - to that of the "relationship" as it is the same model that structures the drives, the needs, the desires, as it is well represented in the *Theory of object relations*.⁽¹⁾

According to Erikson (and then Balint, Winnicott), **basic trust** begins to be structured already during breastfeeding - but today we know that it begins also before, at

an intrauterine level: phase in which the soul asserts its right to be there, to "Incarnate" in *one's own body* that is accepted into the world, which is welcomed by the surrounding environment, acquiring the security that allows him, in opposition to what he feels to be reliable, to recognize evil and negativity. This is why anyone who receives this kind of trust from the child receives a precious gift. But also a great responsibility.

In this period, the presence of traumatic circumstances can affect, in fact, the basic trust with consequent repercussions against a depressive or neurotic-impulsive background in adult psychology. Betraying the trust of a child is "polluting" the meaning of our future. On the other hand, honoring the gift constitutes a real "developmental ecology".

In adolescent psychology, the theme of trust / mistrust is accompanied by that of the friend / foe. In other words, there is a significant presence of what Renzo Carli calls the "collusive myth" of the group, that is the symbolization of the "other from oneself" according to the code and the language of *familism*, that is the negation of the stranger and the affirmation of the 'friend / foe, through an emotional mode of totally self-reported relationship (e.g. in the school class the boys-teacher relationship is turned into a "parent-child" clash).⁽²⁾

Furthermore, trust has its roots in our biological structure of mammals. Those who are more confident are better in health, their defense system is not always alerted, it is not hyper-adrenalinic, he does not risk autoimmune diseases. That is, there is an objective evaluation of the external world, free from subjective projections, because there is a self-evaluation, an attribution of the "sense of self-worth for oneself and the others" for the person, also through the promotion and "playful" training "in the group to which they belong: small conflicts, discussions, comparisons in which humor and self-irony lighten the demanding task of individuation, are important evidence of growth for self-recognition as a subject.

The purpose of the family, its only "product" - always according to Renzo Carli - should be to facilitate the release of its younger members from the family itself. But this is not always the case; on the contrary, the

rule seems to have become that of looking with distrust not only to the outside world but, even before, to his own creative resources to face and resolve conflicts and “problems”. It often seems that parents, not trusting the abilities of their adolescent children to face the extra-family experience (and thus expose themselves to the consequent risks), actually doubt the instrumentation that they themselves have provided. As if they were continually showing them a “toolbox”, but without allowing them to take advantage of it and experience it and testing its effectiveness. So that they then acquire mastery and skill in use, but also the responsibility to decide which “elements” deemed outdated or inadequate are possibly to be set aside.

What are the personal relationships that we remember with more joy? What are those really positive for us? Perhaps those in which someone gave us confidence.

Mistrust creates distance, trust intimacy, knowledge, learning, structuring and enrichment of the personality, sense of the future and possibilities.

Self-confidence and therefore “self-esteem” arise from the knowledge of one’s own conscious and unconscious components, which constitute the personality. This is why we can consider **self-esteem as a process** in which we “gain” knowledge and mastery of our “inner realm”. And in this process *risk and error* are fundamental. The first to test our courage and our capacity for discernment; the second to acquire important information about ourselves and the outside world. Estimating, evaluating, observing ourselves trying to identify and recognize old judging or penalizing modalities, means discovering our “internal observer”, the Ego, as a reflection of the higher Self and therefore the reflection of an unconditional, accepting, welcoming love, not “self-justifying” but self-aware of the lights and shadows that make up our personality.

The knowledge, the evaluation “in itself” of the value of complexity, of that “constellation of representations of the Self” observed by Ogden⁽³⁾, but then better defined as “multiple soul” and “subpersonality” by Roberto Assagioli, is the assumption of the process of Psychosynthesis that recognizes the indispensable existence of these diversified groups of personality

around a unifying center, around that energetic “magnet” that is the Ego, a constant element but all to be experienced in the process of personal growth. Being able to “play on several tables”, knowing how to manage one’s existential anxiety distributing it in more forms, is what describes a health strategy not only in our “chronological” adolescence, but in the whole journey of development and growth of our personality. Conversely, the reduction and withdrawal in rigid and mono-oriented models often indicates the pathological discomfort.

Trust is also a very powerful “medicine”. In the helping relationship and in psychotherapy it is the premise for the success of every therapeutic process.

The “therapist or counselor-client” alliance is based on trust, on the attribution to the other (therapist or counselor) by the person in difficulty of the “positive” contents of oneself that cannot yet be recognized “for themselves”, receiving back the confidence in the possibility of growth, of evolution, starting from the recognition of one’s personal value by the other. In the process of the aid relationship, together with the various phases or stages related to the progressive mutations of the conditions in which this relationship takes place, the “scope” and the “quality” of trust must also change. From the initial one, mainly projective - both as expectations / pretensions and as total / magical attribution - we can gradually reach a motivated, disenchanted trust, we could say “disidentified”, which considers the other no longer as a phantasmal and absolute entity (the “good” mother), provider of unconditional love and acceptance, but as a person, other than oneself, “You”, with all merits and faults. If this happens, it means that both participants in the relationship have become free and aware subjects, freely interdependent wills that become available at any further step on the ground of self-realization and mutual recognition and support.

Trust is also letting go, abandoning oneself to Life, getting out of the illusion of being able to control the whole external world, to pay more attention to our inner world and to the resources of trust, courage and creativity in the good, which represent the full manifestation of Transpersonal will. A dynamic manifestation that takes the form of the good, strong and wise energy of the Ego or personal Self.

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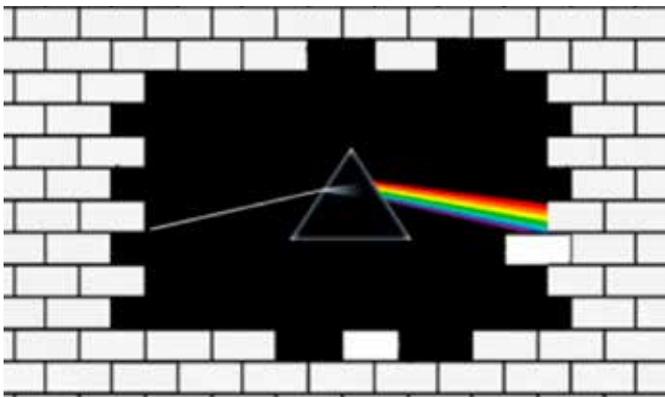
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**“WE MUST BE PSYCHOLOGICALLY
AND SPIRITUALLY POLYGLOT,
WE MUST LEARN TO BE TRANSLATORS...”**

R. ASSAGIOLI

THE WALL OF SILENCE AS CREATOR OF BRIDGES

Translation by Greta Bianchi

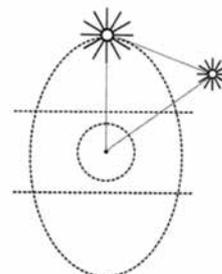


REFLECTION: A few weeks ago I read the article by Piero Ferrucci “On the threshold of mystery” and what was later published by Marina Bernardi, “Reflections on Psychosynthesis today”. One of the main topics addressed in these two writings was the relationship between Psychosynthesis both as a conception and a psychological, educational and (self)-formative practice and the other fields of human knowledge related to spiritual, philosophical, esoteric, religious etc. beliefs and systems. More specifically, the two writings reasoned on the “wall of silence” that Roberto Assagioli desired between Psychosynthesis and these other fields. I have wondered about this topic quite a lot and I will share here some ideas that perhaps will allow us to look at the “famous” wall as a possibility of building bridges. I do not know if these ideas can contribute to the current debate and find some practical application, but I hope so. Assagioli was deeply convinced of the many misunderstandings and “serious difficulties” raised by the use of language when talking about psychological realities, especially the transpersonal or superconscious ones, and he used to clearly affirm it. More specifically, he identified three clear orders of impediments, offering specific solutions or antidotes for each of them.

1. The first difficulty concerns the use by the human language of metaphors and symbols based on material things to designate realities that are not material at all (e.g. the word “soul” in Italian - anima - derives from the Greek “anemos”, which means “wind”, while “to think” -pensare- comes from the verb pesare -to weigh- understood in a material sense, and so on). The antidote identified by Assagioli to this first difficulty involves the commitment by the Psychosynthesis practitioner (but not only) to “recognize and always keep in mind the symbolic nature of every expression, verbal and of any other forms.” The words are therefore symbols and must be considered as such. The invitation to recognize the symbolic, metaphorical nature of words and language leads us to the other two obstacles identified by Assagioli concerning precisely specific characteristics of symbols:

- their being unilateral
- their dual and contrasting nature.

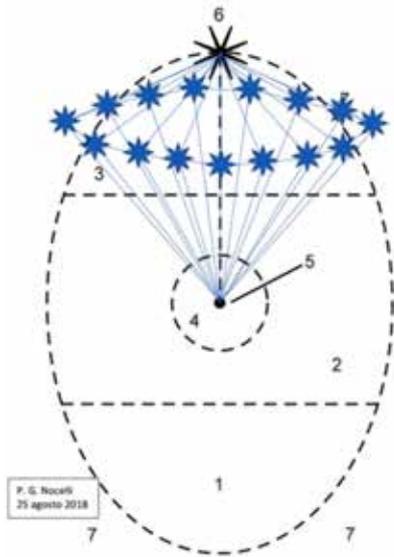
2. When we refer to the “dual and contrasting” nature of symbols we mean that they can reveal reality, they can be a link, an intermediary that facilitates contact with the truth that they indicate. On the other hand, they can veil it, thus becoming a trap that drives us “out of ourselves”. In fact, Assagioli reminds us that “the man who takes them [symbols] literally, who does not reach reality passing through the symbol, but halt at it, does not reach the truth”. As a Buddhist saying that I love very much goes: “When a wise man points at the moon, the fool looks at the finger”. The Psychosynthesis practitioner is therefore responsible for committing himself to distinguish the finger (the symbol, the word, the belief, the doctrine and so on) from the moon (the indicated reality / truth) and then to focus his attention on the latter.



3. Finally, with the expression “unilaterality of symbols”, we want to indicate that they are able to express solely “one aspect, one modality, one partial conception of a given reality”. The Psychosynthesis practitioner is requested to overcome this difficulty by using “different symbols to indicate the same truth” and by synthesizing the different symbols that he uses. In short, he must be a polyglot (knowing and speaking various languages) and a skilled translator (being able to express the same idea using different symbolic reference systems, skillfully switching from one to another). Then the use of language, oriented by the desire to build right human relations, becomes functional to mutual understanding.

function of the kitchen is different from the function of the bathroom and that of the bedroom. Even in a wonderful open-space (“Casa Assagioli”?) you would carry on cooking on the stove, sleeping in the bed and washing in the shower. However these reflections of mine still revolved around a disappointing representation of the wall as a “thick barrier of bricks”.

At some point, however, my attention shifted from the defined and heavy idea-image of the “wall” (the finger?) to the other idea-image left in the background, more blurred and distant, of “silence” (the moon?). And it was as if suddenly I saw this wall for the first time. The “wall” which Assagioli wanted for delimiting the space of Psychosynthesis can actually be something dif-



SYMBOLS OF TRANSPERSONAL EXPERIENCE*

- Symbols of introversion, of interiorization
- Symbols of deepening, going to the depths of our being
- Symbols of elevation, of ascent
- Symbols of expansion of broadening our consciousness
- Symbols of awakening
- Symbols of light, of illumination
- Symbols of fire
- Symbols of evolution, of development
- Symbols of empowerment, of intensification
- Symbols of love
- Symbols of the way, the path, the pilgrimage
- Symbols of transmutation
- Symbols of regeneration, of re-birth
- Symbols of liberation
- Symbols of resurrection, of return

*R. Assagioli – *Lo Sviluppo transpersonale*

A few weeks ago, while walking along the shoreline of the Ligurian Sea observing the gentle and transparent toing and froing of the backwash, I meditated upon the image of the “wall of silence”, its meanings and its functions. Some notions which are already clear came to my mind: walls (such as the Berlin one) are used to prevent, divide and separate something from something else; walls are also necessary to delimit and distinguish different spaces, defining respective functions. No one would ever dream of denying that, in a building, the

ferent from the wall of Berlin, which is, an insurmountable barrier of bricks. It can instead be transparent and light. Potentially, it has always been. As a matter of fact, it is a wall made of a very special material with specific properties: THE SILENCE.

At first, this image of a delimited Psychosynthesis, surrounded by transparency and peace of silence, may appear very romantic, but nothing more. In truth, it has interesting implications that can clearly indicate the type

of mental functioning that the Psychosynthesis practitioner is requested to cultivate when he approaches different systems of beliefs, doctrines and metaphors.

As we all know, in Psychosynthesis the silence has very precise meanings and functions, much deeper and evocative than the simple absence of words or the lack of communication. The regular and daily practice of silence has the function of developing the ability to maintain a “zone of disidentification”, of recollection, in the midst of the noises of everyday life.

The inner silence is also, above all, the necessary condition for the development of intuition, the psychological function through which we can truly enter into a relationship with the transpersonal dimension within us and begin to dialogue with it (and thus, also, to open up and authentically dialogue with others as “We are the Self, that Self are We”). Moreover, according to Psychosynthesis, the possibility of an experiential contact with the superconscious sphere is precisely a function of the degree of inner silence that we are able to achieve.

So here it is that, understood in this way, the “wall” wanted by Assagioli becomes a boundary that does not much defines different fields of knowledge and their contents, but different modes of mental functioning. And the material which it is constituted of, silence, becomes the substance that builds that bridge that leads us “beyond”: beyond the language that separates and divides, beyond the mind that categorizes and judges and, above all, beyond the literalization of multiple metaphors (whether they concern the fields of spirituality, esotericism, philosophy, religion and even science) that men choose from time to time to plaster and color the same archetypal existential experiences, the same perennial truths, the same immediate data of the consciousness that are presented to us again and again, universal in every time and culture. I mean the well-known internal illuminations, to aesthetic experiences and artistic creation, to scientific intuitions, to the impetus to heroic action, to the ethical and humanitarian impulse, to the courage to go towards the novelty beyond the limits of the known, to profound vision, to inventive genius, to ecstasy, to the pursuit of freedom and happiness, to the

game, to self-transcendence, to beauty, to conversion to Love, to higher feelings, to solidarity, to brotherhood. It would be nice to complete the list. Silence leads us “beyond”. It brings us (back) home, in that place that is source and spring, from which every word, metaphor and symbol draws its origin.

Silence allows the trained Psychosynthesis practitioner to observe transparently the different belief systems, the different doctrinal formulations and the various languages. The “wall of silence” becomes then a filter capable of distilling, extracting and merging into Psychosynthesis what, in different systems, indicates a universal, common dimension, distinguishing it from what is particular, an expression of the specificity given by the constraints of time, space and temperament to which the individuals and human groups that have shaped those beliefs, languages and doctrines have been and are subjected to. Disidentification. Perhaps this very universal dimension of human experience is the most proper object of study of Psychosynthesis, as it is especially interested in what is potentially able to unite all human beings, as many as possible.

Assagioli expressly, programmatically wanted that anyone could recognize himself in the psychosynthetic approach: people started off on a more or less defined path of spiritual research, as well as the agnostics and atheists; the artists and politicians, the mystics and the doctors, the yogis and the scientists, the sportsmen and the therapists. He wanted that Psychosynthesis could be accessible to everyone without pushing anyone to give up his particular language and metaphors already adopted and to convert to other languages and metaphors, hence changing the cover but not the book.

To achieve this goal Assagioli chose as official language what he considered to be the most suitable to support this universal vocation of Psychosynthesis: the empirical, concrete, pragmatic language of science. And it does not seem to me that in the present historical moment we have a more functional reference system, able to create a common ground of understanding that allows dialogue beyond particularisms and personal beliefs of individuals or groups. While itself remaining a symbol!

Let me give an example of the concrete application of what has just been said which, in my view, illustrates clearly this tension. Psychosynthesis considers the hypothesis that the transpersonal Self is a psychic reality that can be experienced. On the basis of this hypothesis, some exercises propose the imagined encounter and the inner dialogue with the Self. Assagioli recommends that these exercises are preceded by a psychogogic moment in which the concept is presented in the following way: the Psychosynthesis practitioner adapts his own language to the mentality and beliefs of each another and does not expect the opposite to happen, that is, he does not expect the other to change his beliefs to adapt them to his. It is not at all a matter of instructing, or worse, converting people by presenting them with new concepts or beliefs. It is simply a matter of using the language (always bearing in mind that words are symbols) to introduce an experience that, by definition, is beyond all words and which can only be grasped intuitively. To do it in the best way - that is, so that people can seriously consider this hypothesis worthy of being verified through an experiential path that involves an inner training - it is necessary to adapt the words to individuals or groups. For example, religious people can be told that the expression "Transpersonal Self" is an objective term, used in psychology, to indicate the soul; to agnostics, we can lay before the hypothesis that there is a higher center in every man and say that there is a considerable number of human beings who have had the experience; to atheists, we can illustrate the idea of potentials existing at the unconscious level not yet implemented, which can show us precious guidelines in our lives, and that represent the expression of a deeper authenticity. And so on. This example concerns the concept of transpersonal self, but the principle that it illustrates can be transposed to the other basic concepts of Psychosynthesis.

CONCLUSIONS: The "wall of silence" desired by Assagioli undoubtedly wanted to separate different fields of interest and study (the scientific, empirical one of Psychosynthesis from that of spirituality, philosophy, esotericism and religion), to distinguish spaces and to designate functions. However, nowadays, we can perhaps try to look at this wall differently, focusing our atten-

tion on the material it is made of: SILENCE. This means shifting the accent from the contents that should be on this side or that side of the wall, to the kind of inner attitude, of mental functioning that silence invites us to cultivate towards every content. In other words, to move the accent on the container.

Here then the "wall of silence" can become a very precious tool to emancipate the Psychosynthesis practitioner and psychosynthesis from the literal thought and a powerful antidote against its ever-present corollaries: fanaticism, fundamentalism, separativeness, incommunicability and conflict. It is in a mind trained to silence that those skills that make a Psychosynthesis practitioner a good practitioner can sprout: being a polyglot and a skilled translator. This is how Assagioli expressed his opinion on this matter:

"Truth is One - but its presentation is different and different levels, according to the kind of people to whom we address ourselves. One has to talk to each other in their language. We have to be polyglots psychologically and spiritually, learn to be translators (...)"

R. Assagioli

"In the silent mind there are the roots of intelligence and love"

C. Pensa

THE PERSONAL SELF

Most of the time we are continuously involved in life events, usually involuntarily as we become caught up in the vagaries of existence. Sometimes this is due to external matters, whether family life, work, or in other ways where we can feel victims to circumstances.

This may leave us feeling on edge, not sure of our position in the world (or even our right to be in the world.) Meanwhile we are beset about internally with fantasies and the dialogues we have with ourselves about our life concerns.

Then there are the unconscious events that bind and limit us – unrecognised complexes and patterns of behaviour that depend for their being on past events, often long forgotten or, at best (or worst) dimly remembered and feared. In such conditions, it is no wonder, as Assagioli put it (1975) ‘that man is often discontented, insecure and changeable in his moods, thoughts and actions. Feeling intuitively that he is ‘one’, and yet finding that he is ‘divided unto himself’, he is bewildered and fails to understand either himself or others.’”

Such a state is decidedly uncomfortable, but worse, it leaves the person limited in their expression and experience of life, tormented by self-doubt, discouragement and despair. Assagioli continues: “No wonder that he, not knowing or understanding himself, has no self-control and is continually involved in his own mistakes and weaknesses ... No wonder that man, in his blind passionate search for liberty and satisfaction, rebels violently at times, and at times tries to still his inner torment by throwing himself headlong into a life of feverish activity, constant excitement, tempestuous emotion and reckless adventure.” Anything to avoid facing up to the inner sense of failure and fragmentation.

The small ‘star’ at the centre of the egg diagram represents the personal self, our individual ‘I’ who experien-

ces all these different states of thought, emotion and sensation. The ‘personal self’ experiences everything but, paradoxically, most of the time we are not even aware of its existence (as we are caught up instead in identifications with one or more of our subpersonalities which we will explore in depth in the next section.) But the more we work on ourselves, the more we start contacting the ‘I’ and making it a living, experienced reality and the healthier or more whole we become.

The personal self is a reflection or spark of the spiritual or transpersonal Self. It is important to realise here that although they are essentially one, there is a large difference between the personal self and transpersonal Self (which you will notice, in Psychosynthesis, is usually written with a capital ‘S’ to distinguish it from the personal self.) To become centred upon the Self is a sign of spiritual attainment, but awareness of the personal self, from where we can effectively direct the personality, is the primary goal of Psychosynthesis.

This then inevitably leads to a clearer contact with, and understanding of the Self. A useful analogy for this is of an orchestra (the subpersonalities) who need a conductor (‘I’) to direct their ‘music’ into a harmonious composition. The conductor also ensures that all the members of the orchestra get a chance to have their needs met (their turn at having their ‘instruments’ heard). The conductor also has a direct line to the composer (the Self).

In the formation of every subpersonality there is inevitably an equal ‘shadow’ part created; for instance, a subpersonality who likes intimacy will have an ‘equal and opposite’ subpersonality who prefers solitude and to hide itself away. Managing the delicate balance between these ‘light’ and ‘shadow’ parts is no easy task. Our need for intimacy and solitude is constantly changing and we have a need for both.

A good starting place for creating a balance between apparently opposing energies such as these is getting to better know the ‘conductor’, the personal self. Such self knowledge is gained through reflection, deep inquiry, and experience, and brings greater understanding of

the choices we have made and of our potential for change. We may find we know others better through knowing ourselves and, conversely, we can know ourselves better through our contact with others. Further, through deep contemplation of our relationship with self and others, we restore inner balance and can focus on the presence of the Self.

The experience of self-identification, of having an 'I', distinguishes our consciousness from that of the majority of other sentient beings on our planet. As said, this self-consciousness, however, is usually experienced, not as pure self-consciousness, but rather mixed with and veiled by the contents of consciousness, that is, everything we are sensing, feeling and/or thinking at any time. We usually live our lives identified with these contents of our consciousness, so it follows to fully experience self-consciousness we need first to learn to disidentify.

Most people tend to be generally more attached to either thoughts or emotions, and can thus be described as mentally or emotionally identified. Such identification are useful at times, even necessary, but to live a balanced life as well as being able to disidentify, we need to cultivate the spheres of experience in which we are deficient. For example, people predominantly identified with their thoughts (sometimes termed 'mentally-identified') need to increase their awareness of their feelings rather than diminish or decrease their mental awareness.

If we picture the situation as one where mind and feelings are unequally developed, and therefore of unequal size, the technique is to increase the size of the smaller so that it matches the size of the larger. This is balance through upward growth and inclusion rather than through decrease, which is both unnecessary and inefficient.

Through deliberate disidentification from the personality and identification with the personal self, we gain the power to choose either attachment to or disattachment from any aspect of our personality, according to what is most appropriate for any given situation.

We also have to remember, as Ferrucci (1982) reminds us, that the "Personal and Transpersonal Self are in fact

the same reality experienced at different levels; our true essence is beyond all masks and conditionings." Thus we may learn to master and utilize our whole personality in an inclusive and harmonious synthesis.

Will Parfitt

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COACHING A GOOD FRIEND OF THE WILL

Translation by Achille Cattaneo

This phrase of one of the Founding Fathers of Coaching, John Whitmore, placed at the beginning of his book “Coaching”, expresses in my opinion the fact that between Will and Coaching - as interpreted above - there is a basic affinity. It is not my intention here to deepen it, nor even highlight the existing differences, trying my hand at theoretical subtleties. I would rather say that, based on my experience, “coaching a person” means for me very simply “*accompanying him in performing an act of will*”. Literally. When then an individual has trained sufficiently to get to do self-coaching, the act of will is able to organize it on its own.

That coaching is an action-oriented tool clearly emerges from its origin in sports: an area where the improvement of performances to achieve the goals implies for the athlete a continuous and growing work of education and solicitation of his star of the functions.

The coaching is structured as a methodology aimed at ferrying the individual from a condition of identification into problems, needs, desires and thrills of change in a future state of achievement of goals, development and satisfaction: a state achieved through the definition and pursuit of a sequence of steps taken, in fact, with *awareness and responsibility*.

“What do you want to achieve today?” And “how will you recognize that you got it?” are the two typical questions that the coach asks at the beginning of a session. Do you also feel the shiver of responsibility in the customer? And the lack of any propensity to be offered solutions by the coach? The point is that the client at that time hopes to get results still out of reach, while the coach is putting in the relationship all his confidence in the fact that the customer can draw a state of consciousness that will make him go beyond the limits he perceived and lived as real. In its young history, coaching has gra-

dually extended from the strictly sporting, to the organizational / business and then personal, in various forms: and in fact “what is your goal?” is a valid question for anyone, in any situation, places the responsibility of promoting a change in his life.

I wrote above that coaching is “literally” to travel together an act of will. I precise that there are various coaching methodologies and that the “literally” I refer in particular at the School that I followed: maybe not for all the Schools it could be said and it is correct to specify it. The fact is that, when I was introduced to the “model of coaching conversation” of the Master I attended, I was completely astonished while I was saying to myself “but this seems to me the act of will!”. In reality it is not so, because the five steps of the model group the six stages of the act of will in a slightly different from the latter: but the steps to be taken and their sequence remain the same and maintain the inimitable completeness and efficiency of the Assagioli method.

The first step - that of *establishing the focus* - explores and summarizes the four elements of the first stage of Assagioli: evaluation, motivation, intention and objective. The focus is summarized in this last one because the coaching wants to be incisive, therefore defined, not vague. But coaching requires awareness and therefore is not interested in forming “achievers” who jump like tanks on the target as in a blitzkrieg of unhappy memory, trampling everything and everyone just to conquer it (however, such people generally do not feel the need for a coaching, in case the organizations propose it to them to acquire a more systemic vision, expanding awareness beyond the limits of their ego).

As for the act of will, this first step is perhaps the most important, at least for certain types. It goes without saying that accessing coaching implies already possessing a considerable amount of motivation: and it is equally obvious that the correct coaching approach in this area is expressed in identifying how to increase them, certainly not in analyzing why they are scarce. Returning to the objective, especially in the first meeting of a path, the path itself is defined; but then every single session must have its own session goal - consistent with that of the path - that anchors in daily practice what decided. Coaching does not allow vagueness and, of *intentionality*, emphasizes the propulsive energy value, but struck - politely - the alibi that sometimes is hidden:

- “I intend to improve my fitness”, the client begins;
- “So what do you propose to do?”
- “1, 2, 3, 4, 5...”
- “and among these actions which is the priority for you?” “and then?” “and after?”; “**so today what do you want to work on?**”; “what result do you want to achieve?”; “so what is the most urgent initiative to take?”.

Therefore, the client is constantly asked to choose, always in the discretionary area of his / her adherence to the methodology.

The second step is to widen the possibilities of action conceived by the client: it is the stage of *deliberation*. Here is the coach's ability to promote the client's ability to get out of his habitual problem solving path and make him/her to explore new ways of solution or, at least, new alternatives.

- "If you think of other situations that you know that are similar to yours, what worked in those?"
- "What is the consequence of the alternative A?";
"And that B?";
- "What other resources could you access? What kind? Where do you track them?"
- "What could happen if ...?"
- "How can you get this that you miss?"

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The answer to this last question often reveals the need to stop the process hitherto followed and to open another front of work; the same can happen after exploring more possibilities of solutions. Back then the above verification: "**so now what do you want to work on?**"

The first result of the coaching session is for the customer to choose a SMART goal: synthetic, measurable, current, achievable, timed. It is therefore the stage of choice, decision and affirmation that the client makes at the same time: after a sequence of twists and funnels, he arrives at the actual session objective, which can naturally coincide with the initial one, but which - if not coincides - testifies the maximum possible focus to give concreteness ("I want to complete my paper for the GTA within three weeks") to what follows.

What follows is the *action plan*. Here, perhaps, is the greatest resemblance to the act of will in its planning, programming and direction of execution steps. The questions asked by the coach become more and more practical and anchor the planned actions in time and space: "what do you have to do to reach your goal?"; "In what other ways could you?"; "What is the most important action to do this week?"; "On which other people / groups influence your effort?" And "how could this help you?"; "What dates do you feel you can respect?"; "how long does it take?"; "When you begin?"; "How much will you work every day?".

You understand that such an approach, if it is very va-

lid for behaviors and actions, to adapt to changes in moods and changes in consciousness must be blurred; but, in fact, I wrote that between Will and Coaching there is only affinity, certainly not that they are completely overlapping. At this point the fourth step, the *elimination of obstacles*, takes its particular importance. It is a matter of identifying the barriers that could prevent the successful completion of the action plan: for example missing skills, issues concerning power, excess of ambitions, inadequate budgets, individuals, structures, roles that are put in the wrong direction and etc. Assagioli makes the point 2) of planning and calls it verification of feasibility, that is to say the comparison between the feasible and the unattainable or the feedback on the adequacy of the pre-established times. So I have nothing else to add, except to reiterate that it is always through questions that the client is led to reflect on and to develop effective counter-plans.

The last step provided by the model I am presenting is that of the *session synthesis*, which is carried out by the client. He is asked to follow with his own words the strategy by himself prepared with the connected action plan and to reiterate the precise dates for the results of the same: it is the final operation to reiterate the responsibility of the client and the effectiveness of the work played.

Methodologically, you see that the coach works almost exclusively through the sequence of questions-listening-questions: these come to constitute a succession of stimuli which solicit, from the client, the level from which only self-input to change can start: the mental/ higher/ design one, typical of the will. Energy follows the thought ... And here I stop, precisely because it was not my intention to fully describe the coaching or transmit "the soul". Much better can do it the book mentioned at the beginning, "Coaching" (I have it in the 2003 edition Sperling & Kupfer), in which John Whitmore - husband of Diana Whitmore and died in April 2017 - writes to the 15th chapter dedicated to "coaching and search for meaning": "*many years ago my wife and I discovered with great interest the depth of thought and the great capacity for intervention of psychosynthesis, whose theories, from then on, have permeated my coaching activities*" (pages 175-176).

It is also for these words, and for the testimony that John Whitmore has given it, that I can affirm that Coaching, as I have known it, is a good friend of the Will.

Francesco Viglienghi

Note

A much broader and more rigorous analysis of the conceptual and operational relationships between Psychosynthesis and Coaching can be found in the essay by Nuriel and Piero Righelli "Coaching e Psicointesi: il Coaching Psicointetico" - Edizione BCSmedia, Roma - 2012.

TRUE AND UNTRUE ALTRUISM

Translation by Silvia Trolli

Altruism is the most convenient answer to the solitude and an essential requirement to our psychophysical health. The best solution aiming to put our obsessive thinking off from the false self, as Buber and Frankle underline.

“Why should we benefit the world? Apparently to give help, in fact to be beneficial to ourselves” (Vivekananda).

- Does the true altruism exist? Let us look over the **untrue altruism** aspects.
- altruism as a reaction to a sense of guilt, it refers to expiation, repair. Many people acting the voluntary service give reasons for that.
- An altruism linked by a depressive mechanism turned to create and maintain relationships. A dependence takes origin towards the helped person “until I’ll be useful to him, until he will need me, he will not leave me”.
- Often an altruistic mood can be settled up on a narcissistic and megalomaniac subpersonality. The aim is a self-ostentation. A strong need of showing off, of display.
- The altruistic action can be a way to escape from myself, my inner world, my problems.
- Altruism, unexpectedly, can show a projection of aggressiveness aiming to keep the other person in subordination.
- We can find another altruism, not so misleading, but inappropriate, as to become detrimental and dangerous. It comes up due to a form of egocentrism (as for the funny story of the “merciful monkey”, which, moved by compassion, takes a fish away from a river just to prevent it from drowning and puts it on the top of a tree)
- Altruism then can become for someone goods of exchange in order to earn a place in Heaven (it borders on fanaticism)

It is not easy to be an unselfish person because all our actions as a matter of fact are reactions: they are connected to our personality and our past life

As long as we want to achieve the true altruism we need to perceive our emotional maturity..

It includes:

- overpassing selfishness, egocentrism, narcissism
- To be able of giving, to be a very helpful person, altruism
- To keep solving the problem of loneliness and lack of communication.

A child in his first years is egocentered.. He may happen going on his egocentrism as an adult for different reasons of the inner psychology, childhood trauma, dynamics on the family of origin

Gurdjeff said: ”Only a sane selfish man can be a real unselfish man”. We cannot give what we don’t possess: to make highly charity we have to become rich. He who does not possess, what can he give? How many kinds of richness or indigence do exist? We can cross material wealth and spiritual poverty.

As Vivekananda reminds us, we can offer **three** kinds of help:

- Spiritual=on the roots
- Mental= on the branches
- Material= on the leaves

Before helping other people we ought to be able to watch clearly: otherwise it could happen as if a blind man would guide another blind man

True altruism is a quality spreading from our soul and potentially all of us possess it.. It is an expression of our Transpersonal Will. It includes a certain aspect of fullness, of accomplishment: to give does not mean to be lacking, but to spread out (as the symbol of theSun).

True altruism requires impersonality, while often after an altruistic action we expect thankfulness and gratitude, and if we don’t have something in return we feel hurt

and offended: these are examples of deceitful, interested altruism.

Altruistic attitude is an open mood in our heart, from where it arouses a behaviour which appears altruistic in facts, in actions.

“Perfect action is made on the maximum self-profit and the maximum no-interest”(R.Assagioli)

Altruism and Charity: all religions improved charity as for a profound sense of guilty towards money (Seneca writes to Lucilio:” No one condemned philosophers to indigence”). Some notes on the gnostic Gospels say :” if you’ll give charity, you’ll damage your soul”. And also :”Your right hand must not know what your left hand does”. Charity is something different from sharing: often a charitable person happens to help other people feeling them inferior to himself ;that is a form of “self-elevation” and “fanaticism”.

Altruism and Unselfishness.:A true altruism is a” spontaneous motion, not a purpose, a goal; it is an outcome of the overflowing (“ to be radiant”)

Some meaningful sayings:

“Blessed is not he who receives, but he who gives”

“The real altruistic man behaves on this way to everyone, not towards a single person only”

“Altruism is a spontaneous motion, it deals with the here and now”

“The more we’ll get Altruism as an intention, the more it will be difficult to succeed in fulfilling it”

“We cannot be altruistic making plans for ourselves: it is impossible”

“Be happy and you will be good”(not the opposite)

“Unfeasible project is do well for everybody, nevertheless we can anyway show goodness to everybody”.

Mainly it is up to :us to understand the deepest meaning of the famous evangelic speech:” Do love your neighbour as yourself”: the “as” means “because” it is you” .

Let us remind that ”near” means “the next”, “the closest” : So . it is a nonsense to imagine an abstract love to very far people. Even if they are an integral part of ourselves as Human Beings. To overpass the illusion of Separableness.

The idea of Love (as for the idea of God) rises or subsides in connection to our degree of conscience evolution.

From Altruism to Service: growth, as an expansion of our Conscience, is closely related with unselfishness. Assagioli reminds us that.” In lifting ourselves we serve, in serving we raise ourselves” ,

THE YOUNG ASSAGIOLI AND A PORTRAIT OF A PAINTER MONK

Translation by Achille Cattaneo

The more frequent visitors to the Institute of Psychosynthesis will recall, perhaps, that they have already seen the drawing presented here. More than one finding it disturbing for environments intended for rest, but also perceived as too private to display it in official rooms, had been hung in a disengaged space, near a window, without much curiosity about who the author was - he signed it with an elegant monogram – some curiosity, (but not enough to provoke a search) for the singular fact that among the rare paintings of the last house of Roberto Assagioli was the portrait of a monk ⁽¹⁾. Not a very suitable place, to be honest, to preserve it well. Works of art on paper, and in particular drawings, love the penumbra: the less light there is, the better and longer they live. But if for the survival of a drawing the ideal condition is darkness, not so for human stories, entrustable to the common memory only on condition that they will first be able to illuminate them so much that they can be re-composed, at least in part.

I am therefore grateful to Elisabetta Matteucci, curator of the monographic exhibition project on the Livorno painter “*Oscar Ghiglia Classic & Modern*” in progress from 6 July to 4 November at the Matteucci Center in Viareggio ⁽²⁾, for having reawakened my curiosity towards the artistic events folds of the story with an exploratory call on the origins of the work, documented but of unknown location: the drawing was thus recognized and brought back to Oscar Ghiglia (Livorno 1876 - Prato 1945) and the opportunity was taken to try to preserve its fortunately still discreet condition ⁽³⁾ and find it a more appropriate arrangement.

Here is the starting point: the *Catalog of the Exposition of the Society of Fine Arts in Florence in 1906* reports,

as owner of the *Portrait of Willibrordus Verkade*, Roberto Grego Assagioli, eighteen at the time, still fresh from moving to Florence to study medicine and surgery at the Institute of Higher Studies and yet already introduced into the most significant and lively groups in the local cultural context.

This year, 1906, was fundamental. In February, the third and last series of the anti-positivist and pragmatist “Leonardo” magazine began (an adventure that had begun in 1903, which ended abruptly in 1907), sensitive to the requests for renewal and the promoter of mystical-platonic aesthetics and a growing interest in religious life and thought, theosophy and spiritualism.

Assagioli collaborates variously, enthusiastically: as editorial secretary, helping to support it financially with paternal approval, signing reviews and contributions, but above all making him a spokesman for all his numerous contacts, in the frequent study trips in Italy and Europe. It is the year in which his relationship with Giovanni Papini (Florence 1881-1956) and Giuseppe Prezzolini (Perugia 1882 - Lugano 1982) becomes more intimate and confidential, before the subsequent fading and the clear divergence of their roads, on the eve of the first world conflict. Younger by a few years, Assagioli is eager to be liked by the two directors, for whom he nourishes sympathy and admiration; having overcome an initial insecurity he rapidly succeeds, generous and brilliant as he is, perfectly used to the life of the bourgeois and aristocratic salons, affable and courteous, open to every aspect of the thought that involves the culture of the inner life. The correspondence with both, at the time published in its entirety ⁽⁴⁾, amongst the useful information for rewriting the story of cultural relationships of the early Florentine and Italian twentieth century, it also contains some that directly link Assagioli both to the monk of the portrait and the portraitist.

For in-depth and critically updated news on the latter I refer to the catalog of the exhibition of Viareggio and a rich essay by Rossella Campana a few years ago in which is mentioned, among other, Assagioli ⁽⁵⁾, restricting me here to remember the Oscar Ghiglia too had an active part in “Leonardo”.

Hailed by critics as one of the most promising young Italian artists, he was making himself appreciated for his ability to “*reveal even to refined persons the hidden essence of things, especially in portraits*”. So did Papini write about him, who, among the ups and downs of a turbulent but authentic and enduring friendship, considered him a “Christian and psychologist painter” in whom a hard and difficult life had developed a sort of mystical intuition “*of brotherhood with the fragments of the universe*” ⁽⁶⁾.

Nearly everyone, knowing the serious economic conditions in which the large family of the painter then lived, worked hard as they could to help him. In January 1907 Assagioli wrote to Prezzolini, who had just pointed

out to him the critical situation: “A few days ago I met Cecchi⁽⁷⁾ who informed me of the sad conditions of Ghiglia. Reghini⁽⁸⁾ and I did as much and soon as we could, which is not much, but later we will do more. Meanwhile, I have made my studio⁽⁹⁾ available to Ghiglia to show his works to whoever he wants, and I’m almost sure I can make him sell something.”⁽¹⁰⁾

The delicacy and grace of his intervention evidently succeeded, at least in that juncture, in overcoming the resistance of the surly, sensitive and proud nature of the Livornese, and it is not excluded that Assagioli may have been an effective means for Ghiglia’s relations with the Florentine Jewish community in which he found numerous patrons and admirers.

But why, of 13 works exhibited by the painter to the promoter of 1906, Assagioli focused his attention on this portrait, so very intense and magnetic? And who was Willibrordus Verkade, here painted in pencil with a synthetic clarity of decidedly Nordic taste?

Papini has left a vivid recollection of him, in a chapter of *Passato remoto 1885-1914* entitled *The Benedictine Painter*, which recalls the first meeting with him in 1905, while he was immersed with Giovanni Vailati in reading a dialogue of Plato:

“And here, [...] suddenly, a new character opens the door and enters, never before seen. He was a tall, thin young man, with a bony face but illuminated by an unusual light, purer than the sun’s. He was all dressed in white, with the white cassock of the Benedictine monks. [...] He was a Dutchman and painter, he had converted and become a Benedictine and had studied in the monastery of Beuron, where they was trying to resurrect the true sacred painting of the Christian centuries. He was called Don Willibrordo Verkade and was a guest of the Franciscans of Fiesole, where he painted frescoes. But he did not tell us the reason for his sudden appearance and I, in the face of that ascetic and loving figure, did not have the idea to ask it him. [...] The eyes of Don Willibrordo sparkled, his words were sure and sonorous. All wrapped in his white chlamis, he seemed an redeeming archangel, rained from the sky to reform two reprobates who were about to fall into the abyss [...]”

*I saw the new friend several times, and he became friends with my friends. Oscar Ghiglia made him a beautiful green pencil drawing. Everyone loved him because we had never before met a monk of such generous intelligence, where poetry and holiness seemed to burn together with one fire. Don Willibrordo then returned to Germany and wrote a book, *The Torment of God*, which was a great success and where the visit made to me many years before was also told.”⁽¹¹⁾*

The monk in the portrait was therefore primarily a common acquaintance, whose name appears in the letters between Assagioli, Papini and Prezzolini. In August 1905, while Assagioli is on holiday in Switzerland in Engelberg, site of a resort and alpine excursions set up around a Benedictine monastery “worthy of the proud name of ‘monte degli angeli’”⁽¹²⁾ it was possible to him to visit the monastery minutely, on several occasions, welcomed with kindness and warmth by the monks, thanks to a letter of presentation by Don Willibrordo, remaining impressed by the collection of portraits of the abbots: “very important not artistically but psychologically” and full of “extraordinarily characteristic types.”⁽¹³⁾ The portrait, from a future psychiatrist and psychologist, is a genre that seems to appeal to him in a special way, even if it should be noted that only occasionally, at least in these youth letters, Assagioli refers to exhibitions, places and artwork. Even in those rare cases he is always limited to quick observations: summary brushstrokes of revealing impression, however, of how wide and rich his cultural formation and his aesthetic sensibility were. It is not his field of choice and he does not go into it. What interests him and ‘calls’ him is since then, the correspondence between beauty and interiority, between form and essence.

It is understandable, therefore, how he could deeply and consonantly both feel the artistic and human experience of Verkade, so bound and coherent, and the portrait made of him by Ghiglia with “feeling of the sacred and profound life” and with his peculiar ability “to relate with related spirits.”⁽¹⁴⁾

Father Willibrordus was born in Holland as Jan Verkade (1868-1946) from a family of wealthy entrepreneurs of the confectionery industry whose company still exists today. Leaving the twin brother with the management of the family business, he abandons his business studies and his country for the sake of art. In 1891, at only 23 years old, he was in Paris, at that time the undisputed capital of European art, where he met Paul Gauguin and became a member of the symbolist and theosophical group of the very young *Nabis* (Prophets), in particular linked to the theoretical core of the movement, namely Paul Sérusier and Maurice Denis. At the start of Gauguin from Paris, the following year, he moved with some of the group to Brittany. In the meantime his religious vocation has already manifested: he converted

to Catholicism and after a few months, in 1893, he came to Italy. He visits the Franciscan monastery of Fiesole and is deeply struck by both the monastic life and the art of the fourteenth century. His father tells him that he no longer wants to finance his travels and he replies that he has decided to become a sacred painter. He takes his vows in 1894 as a Benedictine monk and enters as novice in the monastery of Beuron, Germany, changing his name to Willibrordus. From that moment on, all his life takes place according to the Beuron painting school, founded in 1868 by Peter (Desiderius) Lenz. It feels as its mission to contribute to a new direction of art in which earthly and heavenly beauty, past and future, combine together, at the service of the Absolute. He travels all over Europe as a painter (in Italy he works in 1904 to decorate the crypt of the Abbey of Montecassino) and as ambassador of the Beuronese style which, at the time, arouses great attention, since it proposes to distil a synthesis between symbolism, art of ancient Egypt and Greece, normative use of the canons and proportions of the human figure and spiritualism.

For the artist monks of Beuron the laws of beauty are divine, mysteriously hidden in nature, and cannot be revealed except to colleagues equally convinced that the harmony of the universe is founded and regulated by numerical relationships.⁽¹⁵⁾

Prezzolini, for his part, visits Beuron in 1906 and 1908, - just as Verkade is planning to make frescoes at the convent of San Francesco in Fiesole, where he had been baptized - he publishes a very lucid essay on Beuronese art, defining it anything but primitive and, indeed, sophisticated and highly elaborated: “an art, I would dare to say, like those that are born at the end of a civilization, not those that are the first expression of a new”.⁽¹⁶⁾

The devastating drama of the war would soon irremediably lacerate that precious cultural fabric, complex and fascinating as delicate, made of dialogues, plots, exchanges and local and international relations: it would have done away with friends, thinning or interrupting relationships, generating profound creative crises.

Already known, having been examined elsewhere, is the progressive and irreversible cooling of the relations between Assagioli and Papini first and then with Prezzolini.⁽¹⁷⁾

Oscar Ghiglia in 1914 will retire with his family to Castiglioncello in voluntary exile, to escape the clamor of one more and more foreign interventionist Florence, and of those years he will leave a testimony in wonderful and moving pages of his correspondence. As for Verkade, in addition to never again having contact with the French colleagues Denis and Sérusier, with whom he had also shared so much, and who had repeatedly visited him at Beuron, he did not touch his brushes from 1915 up to 1924.

Bibliography e notes

- 1) At the current state of the cataloging of the Assagioli Archives, no document referable to the work has emerged.
- 2) E. Matteucci, *Così antico da sembrar novissimo*, in the exhibition catalog (*Oscar Ghiglia Classico & Moderno*, Viareggio-Torino, 2018-2019) pp. 15-33.
- 3) The design, still in its original framing, under glass, has undergone a simple cleaning and spreading intervention. The passepartout, blackened and partly compromised by humidity, has been replaced with an identical non-acid cardboard.
- 4) M. Del Guercio Scotti - A. Berti (edited by), *Roberto Assagioli-Giovanni Papini. Roberto Assagioli-Giuseppe Prezzolini. Correspondence. 1904-1974*, Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, Roma.
- 5) R. Campana, Ojetti, Ghiglia, Andreotti. *Proposte d'arte e critica a Firenze nel primo Novecento*, in the exhibition catalog (*Da Fattori a Casorati. Capolavori della Collezione Ojetti*, edited by G. De Lorenzi, Viareggio-Tortona, 2010) pp. 47-63.
- 6) G. Papini, *Oscar Ghiglia (Parole e sangue)*, in *Scrittori e artisti*, Milano 1959, pp. 1283-1284.
- 7) Emilio Cecchi (1884-1966).
- 8) Arturo Reghini (1878-1946).
- 9) Almost certainly it must have been his own personal study at his home in Via degli Alfani 46.
- 10) M. Del Guercio Scotti - A. Berti, op.cit., p. 189.
- 11) G. Papini, *Passato remoto 1885-1914*, reprint by A. Casini Paszkowski, Florence 1994, pp. 193-195, reported in E. Matteucci, op. cit., pp. 18-19.
- 12) M. Del Guercio Scotti - A. Berti, op. cit., p. 13.
- 13) M. Del Guercio Scotti - A. Berti, op. cit. p. 152.
- 14) U. Ojetti, Ghiglia, 1920, p. 132 quoted in R. Campana, op. cit., p. 57.
- 15) R. Campana, op. cit., pp. 49-51; F. Mazzaferro, *Jan Verkade, Cennino Cennini e la ricerca dell'arte spirituale durante la Prima Guerra Mondiale*, in letteraturaartistica.blogspot.com/2014/04.
- 16) G. Prezzolini, *La teoria e l'arte di Beuron*, in “Vita d'Arte” 1908, reported in F. Mazzaferro, op.cit.
- 17) A. Berti, Roberto Assagioli. *Profilo biografico degli anni di formazione*, Florence 1987 and M. Del Guercio Scotti - A. Berti, op. cit.

AT THE DINNER TABLE WITH

Translation by Achille Cattaneo

A new eating model, as old as the world

After decades of dieting trends, starting from the point diet of the 60s up to more elaborate schemes involving accurate weighing of all the ingredients, passing through the easy, magical, fast diets, based on nutrient-rich, flavorful, ready to drink mush, finally something is changing in the eating scene!

To the crowd of dieticians and nutritionists, who in various capacities have occupied the scene, holding the scepter of knowledge and know-how of weight loss and health, recently figures a little more prudent and compassionate have sprung up, committed to pass into the collective unconscious, now full of detailed information on food, an innovative approach to eating, which is called “intuitive eating”. Intuitive? Yes, that is, as reported by an online dictionary “what can be easily grasped, through an experience that does not pass only from the reasoning mind”. Thus, referred to nutrition, it means that to determine what and how much to eat during the day, it is not to the dictates of the diet that we must refer, but to the body’s intuitive ability or common sense.

Our meals, chosen in this way, would no longer be based on rules coming from the outside, but on personal feelings, and this would reverse the attitude of total split between body and emotions characterizing many diets, heal the breach among our levels and help us take a step forward in the path leading to our biopsychospiritual unity. If, with a slightly passive attitude, we have become enslaved to unrealistic eating patterns aimed at obtaining a model of physical body with which to achieve success or acceptance by others, the intuitive diet represents the return wave to the pole of wisdom, a natural attempt to regain balance from an extreme situation in

which we had bogged down. From this point of view, we realize that there is no innovation in this: it is only the return to what common sense would call “normal” eating, or rather, using a paraphrase in Assagioli’s style, to the “healthy” man’s diet, referring not just to the physical level, but including also emotions and mind. It is the rediscovery of a healthy relationship with food, which helps us to abandon the imposing and mortifying pattern of many diets, based on compulsion, on difficult, complex, abstruse eating, which makes every meal a difficult or boring task to be carried out. There is an epochal shift of our focal point, which moves from the scale to the body: a quantum leap.

How do you eat intuitively? Although the theory is immediately understandable, in practice it is not at all easy to sit down at the table and turn off the usual controlling mode of the “diet regime”, or the excessive loosening up typical of interludes between diets, to rely on signals sent by the body, when we have not yet established a relationship of trust, intimacy and collaboration with it. How can you possibly perceive the language of a perfect stranger? One should learn to ask oneself simple questions such as: “Is this true hunger? What would I like to eat, sweet or savory?” “Without letting the usual background noise, made of requests for immediate gratification or filling of emotional “voids”, affects our listening, or, if one is on a diet, the feelings of guilt, the need for transgression or virtuous obedience to the rules, prevents us to grasp the faint response of a body that has almost always been ignored, except for our claim, to modify it according to our purely aesthetic desires.

The explanation for this contradiction is provided very clearly by psychosynthesis: the relationship we have with our body is conditioned by our internal image of it: in many of us, according to the principle of the ideal model that always works, even if we are not aware of it, a negative unconscious image of our body is caused by equally negative emotions and thoughts, linked to our history and our self-esteem; at the same time, the idealized image of it, nurtured by the media and absolutely alien to our physical reality, governs our food choices and to some even imposes hours of gym, made of fa-

tigue or unsustainable boredom : a kind of punishment because we do not conform to what we think others would like.

This is why we refer to numbers, to quantities, as the only reliable source of information about our body and ourselves. How many kilos have I lost? How many centimeters has the circumference of my biceps increased? And from those numbers we draw the measure of how much we value.

Not to mention that, as stated by the american nutritionist and psychologist Marc David, if we do not like our outward appearance, and this often has little to do with how we really look, this can substantially affect our relationship with food, the type of food we choose and, in a vicious or virtuous circle, the type of body that we contribute to create. For example, if we perceive our body as a heavy burden, creating more hassle than pleasure, we will experience food in a similar way, and probably add a further contribution to our heaviness, consuming high-calorie and high-fat meals. On the contrary, if we are aware of the wonderful instrument that our body is, which works by virtue of amazing and miraculous devices of very high precision, we will choose foods easy to digest and rich in vitamins and minerals to encourage the continuous replacement of these mechanisms, thus contributing to a well-fed and energetic body.

On the other hand, as the American biologist Bruce Lipton asserts, and as Assagioli would have said if he had known Epigenetics, we are not victims of our DNA, but products of our thoughts and emotions. Our beliefs, emotions, stress and the way we eat can change the way our cells work, and modify our genetic material. If it is true that our emotions can be imprinted in water, what kind of environment do we determine for our cells? An area of self-love, or a matrix of judgment, self-condemnation and self-punishment?

To return to intuitive eating and eating for the “healthy” person, I want to present some of Dr. Ellyn Satter’s answers to the question “What does it mean to eat normally?”

- Choose the food you like, eat and finish when you are satisfied, not because “you must”
- Organize in time what to eat, in order to have nutritious food, without being so restrictive or wary to take away any pleasure
- in short, eating means being flexible, responding to hunger, taking into account your commitments, how close you are to a food source, and your emotions.

The “intuitive” name given to this modality of approach to food, healthy and normal, immediately brought me back to the star diagram, and to the function pointing upwards. There are indeed a series of steps, inherent in this mode of nutrition, which concern intuition.

When we are able to abandon the quantitative pole of nutrition made of kilos, centimeters, calories, portions, percentages, number of days and sizes - of which we are slaves - and establish a relationship of trust with our body, we move towards the pole of quality and from this position, through our meals we can offer nourishment also to our soul.

Shall we try it?

IMPRESSIONS NATIONAL CONGRESS VARESE 2018

Translation by Achille Cattaneo

This year the Congress of Psychosynthesis has made us meet again in Varese, inside the charming Villa Cagnola, with its beautiful park full of majestic and exotic trees, precious essences and with the beauty of a panoramic view that, alone, knew how to “open the breath”.

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After the usual introductory presentation - deep and engaging - we shared an intense moment, and I do not think I thought it only myself, with the feeling of being able to renew a hope, singing, all together, “Imagine” by John Lennon! We have tried to visualize a different future, in which also the utopia - considered by many useless and illusory - can have an important, propulsive role, a push towards dreams and visions able to give us the ability to make a necessary “change of course”.

How much energy does it take to find a model of renewal, a different way to go? How much time is needed to try to understand who we are, what is the point of our evolution, how important are for us harmony, beauty, freedom and what relationship do we have with our habits?

It is not easy to leave the known for the unknown, to cultivate dreams that can raise our conscience but which, too often, force us to overcome strong fears and seemingly impassable limits. Assagioli said: “*At the top there are no problems, below there are no solutions*” ... the difficulty is being able to get up!

We must start from ourselves to establish a new relationship with others, even if it is not easy to get rid of the “useless complexities”, the legacies that block us and know how to create an empty space to fill, because saturation prevents the introduction of the ‘new necessary’; It would be right to learn to turn our gaze to a new “being” and open ourselves to a crisis of authenticity that, while partially destabilizing us, can give us new visions.

To renew oneself also means to stop transferring one’s responsibilities to others or to continue with the role of the “*passive conservative*”, whether it be faith, culture, social problems and all that we abdicate too often. Looking only through the eyes of another (even considering his opinions to reflect) removes authenticity and desire to get involved. If identity evolves in the course of life, this also applies to the soul, our essence; one of the primary needs of man is to find his true humanity, a sense and a direction, to be able to enter, deeply, in the “path of growth”, to be himself with others (we always return to authenticity !), without losing individual consciousness and experiencing one’s true nature.

We should start in the educational field, from the school, integrating purely cognitive objectives with a creative and self-knowledge path, to help the child to discover his talents, to ask questions and not just to “know and repeat”.

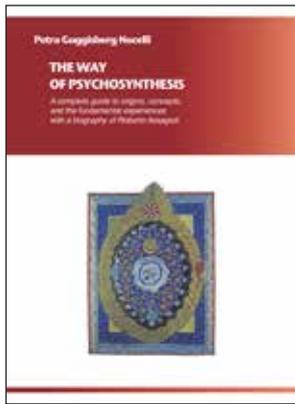
So why not try to promote, together with the Montessorian and Steinerian methods, a school of Assagiolian approach, following the proposals made in the past by a man so open to children and young people?

Another question posed: “Is it possible to renew starting from the old, from paradigms that simplify things?” Surely a base of knowledge is needed, but you cannot keep everything, you have to “know how to empty” from certainties that do not exist, try to use new eyes to look and still learn to amaze us!

In this moment of identity crisis, of painful loss of self and recognition of the other that has failed, the only way to recover one’s inner life is to change habits, learn to live creatively, to avoid that “*the day always covers the colors of yesterday*”. Each of us has his own way, we are not “*existential replicators*”, and the road traveled is always behind us, with a future to be experienced before. Today we need new bridges, between individual and collective growth, between the inside and the outside, without forgetting to accept and rationalize our, inevitable sense of powerlessness and going beyond the “neoliberalism” of our age.

One of the tasks of Psychosynthesis is to help man “to inhabit” the world, to focus on his abilities and to strengthen them with will, awareness and responsibility but, itself, will have to continue to renew - as Assagioli wanted - to avoid becoming, as someone has claimed, a “historical archive”. It is necessary to keep up with the times but attentive to the quality and needs of people, to encourage the culture that, to be widespread, must be continually recreated ... In short, do not ever rest ... so I wish, once again, good work to all of us !!

Laura Cerasaro



THE WAY OF PSYCHOSYNTHESIS

A COMPLETE GUIDE TO ORIGINS, CONCEPTS AND FUNDAMENTAL EXPERIENCE WITH A BIOGRAPHY OF ROBERTO ASSAGIOLI

CreateSpace & IngramSparks

ABSTRACT

This book is an invitation to anyone who wants to gain a broad and comprehensive overview of the evolution of Psychosynthesis, from the first written works published by Roberto Assagioli in the early 1900s to the great contributions of his students and other contemporary Psychosynthesis practitioners.

Who was Roberto Assagioli and how did his life influence his work? What important contributions did he make to the birth and development of the major forces of psychology? What is Psychosynthesis? What is the Psychosynthesis view of human nature and self-realization? What constitutes the essential core of this approach? In answering these fundamental questions, this book guides the reader through a fascinating journey to discover, step by step, the key concepts and experiences of Psychosynthesis. The most complete guide published so far.

MY WISH

I really hope that this book can sustain the enthusiasm of all those who feel a resonance with the message of Psychosynthesis, permitting each to recognize - independently from group or institutional affiliation, and beyond the numerous and inevitable differences which are to be respected and supported - that which unites us, that which moves us, at times on different paths, in the direction of the same common destination. This challenge has never been more urgent or vital. Succeeding in meeting it means to develop and improve the extraordinary

potential of the monumental vision that has been given to us. Roberto Assagioli's legacy gives us all the tools to realize this, as well as the methods for activating our Good Will.

REVIEWS

"In this book Petra Guggisberg Nocelli outlines with depth and clarity its history to this day, its main ideas, techniques, aspects and applications. An essential work for those who want to understand this adventure of the spirit." Piero Ferrucci

"A work of great love and deep scholarship, it is an amazingly thorough book and one we need. Dr. Guggisberg Nocelli has taken on a challenge in Psychosynthesis literature which has not yet been engaged in. I am so very happy to have it in the world." Dorothy Firman

"This book is a real path of research and development of psychosynthetic theory and practice (...) which allows us to look through Psychosynthesis in the multidimensionality of space and of time." Gianni Yoav Dattilo

"'The Way of Psychosynthesis' is a truly large framework that tends toward an essential completeness. This volume deserves to occupy a significant place in the recent development of psychosynthetic literature." Massimo Rosselli

"A great achievement: well written, informative, interesting and engaging. Every training organization should have it on their essential reading list and I will certainly be recommending it to my students." Will Parfitt

"The most comprehensive academic textbook on Psychosynthesis to date. I am happy for the cause of Psychosynthesis that Petra Guggisberg Nocelli has done such a magnificent work and contributed to the legacy of Psychosynthesis and Assagioli." Kenneth Sørensen

"'The Way of Psychosynthesis' is an intrinsic work of psychosynthetic spirit. A vacuum has been filled in the psychosynthetic literature. Definitely recommended as a didactic text." Vittorio Viglienghi

“The Way of Psychosynthesis’ is the result of a great research, a careful, meticulous work that deals with the development of the thought of Roberto Assagioli in a scientific way. This is a text we really needed. I consider this book as a guide for the planning of training courses in Psychosynthesis.” Franco Salvini

“An excellent text of Psychosynthesis, complete and exhaustive. It was written with the mind and heart and deserves wide circulation.” Alberto Alberti, Psychiatrist

“‘The Way of Psychosynthesis’ is a systematic and accurate vision of Psychosynthesis, which also takes into account recent developments in Assagiolian theory.”
Andrea Bocconi

PREFACE by Petra Guggisberg Nocelli

This book is born out of an attempt to answer a question often put to me by friends, patients, scholars and therapists of other orientations: “What is Psychosynthesis?” This question, despite years of practice and study, fortunately succeeds yet again and always to get me into trouble.

In trying to outline an inevitably compound and multifaceted response, I have been guided by the general purpose of providing the reader with a comprehensive and ample view of the evolution of psychosynthetic teaching, starting with the first writings from Roberto Assagioli at the beginning of the 1900s, up to the invaluable contributions of his own students and other contemporary psychosynthesisists.

It was a difficult a decision to finalize the writing of this text as Psychosynthesis is wonderfully vast, inclusive and fruitful, and I dare say “infinite”: an adequate mirror for the spirit of the human being. Therefore, many of the topics discussed would require further insights, for which I suggest with pleasure a reading of the volumes published by the various authors widely cited in the course of this work.

The Way of Psychosynthesis springs from the complete rewriting of my degree thesis that I presented in July 2000 at the Università Statale di Milano. At the time, I had devoted much effort, energy and passion to that work. And so, after 10 years, driven by an inner desire

that is bringing me back to reconnect the threads of the present with those of the past, I decided to resume what I had developed and update it entirely.

Writing this book really meant a lot to me, and marks the symbolic fulfillment of a long, difficult, and troubled period. I consider this text as the tangible fruit of a surprising process that involved me on multiple levels, reconciling myself with parts of myself and my past, relieving me and liberating an unexpected amount of will, joy, pleasure and satisfaction. The hope is that some of this energy can filter through the pages to reach those who read it.

I would like to conclude with a practical recommendation. This text lends itself to be read in an orderly and progressive manner, but can also be readily consulted as a manual, in its individual parts, chapters or paragraphs, according to the needs and interests of the moment: discover the biography of Roberto Assagioli, get an idea of the relationship between Psychosynthesis and Psychoanalysis, or between Psychosynthesis and Transpersonal Psychology, study the evolution of thought regarding the image of the individual illustrated in the Egg Diagram, learn about the techniques of the psychosynthesis process, analyze specific topics such as subpersonalities, superconscious, Ideal Model, and so on. I refer the reader to the Contents for a total overview.

PRESENTATION by Dr. Gianni Yoav Dattilo

It is with joy and heartfelt appreciation that I welcome the English edition of this excellent guide to the path of Psychosynthesis.

As a matter of fact Roberto Assagioli, the Italian psychiatrist, decided to publish his major books first in English, and paradoxically never saw the Italian translation of his masterpiece, *The Act of Will*, which appeared after his death.

The founder of Psychosynthesis was clearly aware of the importance of the English language in the international scientific community; and Psychosynthesis is in its essence international, going far beyond all cultural boundaries and barriers of any kind, in an overall spirit of synthesis and integration.

Petra Guggisberg Nocelli's lovely book was created in a period of fresh blossoming of works on Psychosynthesis, each having its own special physiognomy, a sign of creative evolution of our concept. Each chapter of this work, although having its thematic independence, is an organic whole and offers a real path in the research and development of psychosynthetic theory and practice. It gives the impression of viewing a harmonic Mandala, rich in colors, allowing us to look through psychosynthesis into the multidimensionality of space and time.

The Way of Psychosynthesis opens with a detailed personal and cultural biography of Roberto Assagioli, which makes it possible for a deeper understanding not only of the person, but also of the very genesis of his new concept of the psyche.

The second part examines the environment in which psychosynthesis is born and develops. Our orientation is re-examined and compared to the panorama of contemporary psychology: behaviorism, psychoanalysis, analytical psychology, the humanistic-existential trend, transpersonal psychology and the new frontiers of psychoenergetics.

The third part allows one to fully enter the psychosynthetic experience by exhaustively expanding the times and the ways of the path, the concepts and the fundamental diagrams, while taking into account the proposals for change and development. All this is essential if you hold to the idea of psychosynthesis as a dynamic process in continuous evolution in the various areas of application, rather than a static and definitive theory.

In the fourth part, among other things what is striking is that the fundamental ideas of our model, "the seven fundamental experiences of psychosynthesis" as the author calls it, are made accessible to the inexperienced public, while at the same time also very useful for the expert reader, offering new and original ideas of thought and experimentation. For example, issues such as disidentification and self-identification, will, the subpersonalities, 'I' and Self, the Superconscious, the principle of Synthesis—none of which are simple from a conceptual point of view—are dealt with clarity and depth.

Psychosynthesis does not come from nowhere and in

a vacuum; it has complex roots, still not yet sufficiently discovered and explored. The pragmatic spirit of our research has often favored the empirical and applicative aspects, but here we are faced with a true, complete guide to the visceral experience of psychosynthesis, where clear theories and practical ideas find a wonderful balance. The various themes are studied in light of the sources, thus favoring the possibility of new investigations, without weighty text and always bearing in mind that Psychosynthesis is basically a psychological practice to be experienced.

It is not often that a work is both a clear and complete introduction to a theme and also an in-depth study with spurts of originality.

Petra Guggisberg Nocelli was a brilliant pupil of the psychotherapy school of SIPT, and it is my great pleasure to welcome her contribution, written with a genuine psychosynthetic spirit which enriches our bibliography. This book will surely contribute to the dissemination of Psychosynthesis worldwide and I deeply trust it will be an invaluable general introduction for beginners and a precious tool for the seasoned practitioner as well.

LETTER TO THE DIRECTOR



Joann Anderson, former AAP Cochair, teacher, presenter, editor, and friend to the psychosynthesis community, died in Wenatchee, WA September 19, 2018, at the age of 84.

In 1973, Joann travelled to Italy for a month, where she studied with Dr. Roberto Assagioli (the founder of Psychosynthesis), after earning her master's degree from Fielding Graduate University in Santa Barbara, CA. She was associated with The High Point Foundation and Psychosynthesis International for many years, and was also active in AAP as Steering Committee Cochair and editor of AAP News. Joann maintained an office practice in Edmonds, where she offered counseling help to scores and scores of patients. In the Wenatchee Valley, was active in a writer's group, a book club, and served as regional president of the Philanthropic and Educational Organization (PEO).

She and her husband Bob celebrated 61 years together in June of 2018. Joann is survived by her husband, Bob; three children, Carol of Kalamazoo, MI, Doug of East Wenatchee, WA, and Paul of Spring Valley, CA; and two grandchildren: Jazzmine of Missoula, MT, and Tristan of Spring Valley, CA.



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