

PEARLS ON A STRING PSYCHOSYNTHESIS ON FACEBOOK

Translation by Donatella Randazzo / Gordon Leonard Symons

I have found a very active group on Facebook, named *Psychosynthesis in the world*. I have immediately signed up, attracted by its title, in line with the aim of this column. The purpose of the group is described in the information section of the page: *“This is an opportunity to connect people who are working with or interested in Psychosynthesis. The international congress in Rome ended last weekend and one of our international needs is connectdness. So welcome everybody to this group”*.

Founded in 2012, and made up of about 1300 members, the group is managed by three people: Will Parfitt, Gerhard Schöbel and Eike Tuts. It is often used as a platform for the dissemination of members’ personal events, despite the notice from its administrators, clearly visible, stating *“Please don’t use this group for advertisement. Don’t get me wrong: it’s nice to know about all the wonderful seminars and therapeutic offers ...”*.

On the other hand, such a use is probably inherent in the nature of Facebook. Nonetheless, as the page achieves the goal of putting psychosynthesists in contact, and as a “showcase” it also offers the advantage of informing about the release of new books or articles on psychosynthesis, or reporting significant images, or historic materials. Its innovative function, typical of Facebook, is that of being a quick way to ask questions and start discussions, to inform on psychosynthesis topics and also, as in our case, to make us aware of the centers in which this practice is taught and diffused-

Some psychosynthesists are very active on this page, in particular, I am struck by the amount of information, updates and materials made available by Kenneth Sorensen, the Danish psychosynthesis researcher and author of two books and numerous texts. Thanks to him,

I learned of the existence of the “Synthesis” periodical, published by the Synthesis Institute of San Francisco in the 70s and widely distributed to its over 27,000 subscribers; the pdf files are available online on Kenneth’s website. I also learned from him about recent developments on the diffusion of psychosynthesis in Kiev, in a post dedicated to this topic. In his role as speaker and popularizer, he also advertises various psychosynthesis magazines in electronic format accessible for free, providing the link, including ours which, in his article of 5 November 2019, he described as a “wonderful magazine”.

In particular, I wish to cite his words posted on February 27, 2020, the day of Roberto Assagioli’s “birthday”, as they are particularly inspired and have helped me to re-contact the spirit of connection between psychosynthesists, essential for the creation of the spiritual airways between the nations.

“I think Roberto Assagioli will be happy today when he looks down on the progress of psychosynthesis, so many new groups coming into being and new books and projects are being birthed.

When I think of Roberto, I sense a gentle soul, with a sharp mind, penetrating wisdom and a big heart. [...] If I should wish for a birthday present to this dear soul, it would be to galvanise and energise more collaboration, appreciation and loving cooperation among the many PS centres and individuals in the world. The world needs a vibrant and living psychosynthesis community in a polarising world, so there is no excuse for staying in small ethnocentric bubbles; we must strengthen the work for the synthesis of humanity, without delay”.

Sharing this aim, I continued my research on Facebook, and was intrigued by a post by *De Broedplaats voor psychosynthese*: *“Thanks for the invitation. We keep the psychosynthesis fire burning in the Netherlands with education, events and our network. See www.broedplaats.academy”*.

Attracted by this fire, which seemed cheerful and crackling, through the link I reached the *De Broedplaats* center in Amersfoort, The Netherlands: founded in the 70s of the past century as an Institute of Psychosynthe-

sis, which became Psychosynthesis Academy in 2014, since last year it has assumed its current name; the pages being written only in Dutch, I made abundant use of the Google translator, with its strengths and weaknesses.

In the menu bar, the word “network” stands out leading to a page which presents the four key points on which their effective network between the center and the local territory rests: the first level are the meetings at the Center, consisting of evenings together, films, dinners, workshops and lessons, to participate in which, as “ambassadors” of psychosynthesis, an annual registration is required; the potential members are advised that to participate “knowledge or experience of psychosynthesis is not as important, as the will to grow, curiosity and the desire to meet like-minded people”.

The two following key points, always giving credit to the automatic translator (but not entirely trusting it!) are aimed at those who, having already undergone training in psychosynthesis, have decided to give it a prominent role in their practice or in their work: these members, defined as “entrepreneurs” by De Broedplaats through the annual fee are allowed to gain visibility on the center’s website and newsletter, and receive advice and suggestions for an effective wording and appropriate positioning on the web. An even higher level of enrollment, for “partner” members, also provides for the inclusion of three activities in the annual program of the center, including the classes engaged in the training courses. A virtuous circle is thus established between the center and the member, in which both refer to each other, to the full advantage of the diffusion of psychosynthesis: those who experience it in the partner’s practice or business are encouraged to attend the center and benefit from its activities ; the center in turn presents “accredited” professionals who creatively apply psychosynthesis in various working areas thanks to its openness and vision of life, and the meaning it brings to it.

The fourth key point, available for all members, is the blog as a space to “share the inspiration” or tell their story and experience, thus testifying the change brought about by psychosynthesis.

The *De Broedplaats* website is modern, it uses beautiful essential graphics with a clear organization of information and a language full of metaphors and inspiration for the visitor.

Back to the Facebook page, and continuing to explore it, I realized that it is possible to find out who all the members of the group are: in their presentation, FB gives priority to my “friends”, then other members that I don’t know are listed: if among their information is included a psychosynthesis institute or center to which they belong, this can be a way forward in the future to discover new realities to be included in our inventory.

Next I decided to follow one of the three administrators on the FB page, giving my preference to Gerhard Schobel, whose affiliation to a center located in Switzerland, in Basel, allowed me to move relatively little from Holland.

Thus I entered the *AEON, Zentrum fur Psychosynthesen und Ganzheitliches Heilen* and learned that the Center was founded in 1991 by Gerhard Schobel who organized seminars, workshops and also offered individual support in the field of psychology, spirituality and alternative methods of healing. Gerhard’s passion and enthusiasm for psychosynthesis can be found throughout the site, and in particular I co-vibrated with the positive aims stated in one of the pages: “*The founder of psychosynthesis, Dr. Roberto Assagioli, understood psychosynthesis primarily as a training path and only secondarily as a therapeutic direction [...]. It is an enrichment in every phase of life and helps to understand the deep secrets of being human*”.

A blog is also active on this site, which publishes short articles on current topics, provides explanations on the path proposed by the Center, or on the meaning of psychosynthesis. In the first blog article, “*Psychosynthesis - everything except the ordinary*”, Gerhard explains the reasons why, after more than 35 years, he has remained faithful to it, despite his numerous interests in other disciplines. Here are just a few of the many points listed in his article:

It was the first psychological model to make a clear distinction between psyche and soul.

It conveys a fundamentally optimistic, affirmative attitude towards life and sees the hidden potential behind pain and suffering.

It addresses the higher spiritual levels that convey meaning and vision

It is a psychology of the will, i.e. it helps to release life energy and to realize incredible potential.

Above all, it is a psychology of experience. It is not primarily about concepts, but about experience and how it can be meaningfully integrated in everyday life.

The experiences made in the exercises can be immediately implemented in everyday life.



It helps to integrate the personal spiritual needs into everyday life, which leads to more fulfillment and zest for life.

It is a wonderful method of self-realization and helps to recognize the inner beauty.

It is a psychology of love, connectedness to all life and peace.

From the “Link” page I noticed the entry for another Dutch center, the *Institut voor Psychosynthese*, located in Hilversum. To learn more about the panorama offered by the Netherlands, I also visited this site and found out, again thanks to the Google translator, that the institute was founded in 1985 and that from 2000 to 2015 it offered a degree in psychosynthesis.

The welcome sentence to the site visitors, concerning their orientation program in psychosynthesis, is quite pleasing: “*Learn how to listen to what your heart tells you in four days, without losing your mind*”.

A menu entry leads to the *Foundation for the promotion of psychosynthesis*, also created in 1985. Its mandate is to: offer support to students, through scholarships and loans; publish and / or translate literature in the field of psychosynthesis; and surely, support and stimulate the production of projects promoting psychosynthesis.

In this case too, as for De Broedplaats, I am struck by the presence of a “psychosynthetic connective tissue” created by the Institute which, as the website explains, “maintains some continuous contact with a large group of psychosynthetic graduates who together form an active and motivated network in society (www.psychosyntheticus.nl).

I wanted to visit their site, intrigued by the title of “psychosyntheticist” with whom all those who write on the site presented themselves, and which really seemed to be a common matrix extending beyond any specialization in the classic fields of application of psychosynthesis, for example therapeutic or educational. As a group, they declare that they “offer support, guidance and coaching for people with professional responsibilities, advice to governments, public or commercial organizations. The phrase “unity in diversity” comes to my mind straight away: besides the traditional subdivisions of the fields of application of psychosynthesis, new figures are

being created in the direction of coaching, such as “Co-creators of social communities” or “Guides for people in search of one’s own potential”.

The “psychosyntheticus” community refers to the site of the Institute for the training aspects of psychosynthesis, while the Institute presents to its site visitors the community and the services it can offer in the area, also providing guarantees on their training in psychosynthesis.

I signed up for their newsletter, which arrived promptly: the events reported on the website are presented in a sober and clear way.

The tour I have taken this time, to the Netherlands and Switzerland, has stimulated the emergence of a few symbolic qualities: enthusiasm, renewal, organization, inspiration. The spirit of psychosynthesis I have met is strong and steady, its fire burns and transforms.

As I was completing this article, I thought that all the Centers where psychosynthesis is taught and spread through a structured training programme, could be represented in a Google map, showing their location, contact details, website url, and the basic information that can allow contact. Starting to visualize ourselves as a planetary community can happen even through this simple exercise, if it is done in a spirit of collaboration. On the website of the Institute of Psychosynthesis in Florence, there is a link to view the map and the address to contact to have your psychosynthesis center included. Will you join us?

On the website of the Institute of Psychosynthesis in Florence (www.psicosintesi.it/english) there is a link to view the map with the instructions and the contact to have your Psychosynthesis Center included. Will you join us?