

In-between a way of staying in touch with solutions

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Summary: reading the article by McKergow & Korman we were very engaged in our discussion of methodology and meaning. In this paper we seek to share our point of view and our reflections upon it, and we also hope to contribute to the SOL-Dialogue and generate a dialogue on methodology.

We work as coaches and trainers in business contexts mainly in Italy.

We teach and use an SF Approach, NLP and Systemic Constellation Work in the tradition of Matthias Varga von Kibed; this is therefore our cultural background and also the leaning we make out in the “in between” theme.

We were very stimulated towards a dialogue on the McKerkow & Korman article¹.

We have been very struck by the words “in-between”. As many SF practitioners who shared in SOL-List and in SOL-Ning², we appreciate the general viewpoint of the article, its simplicity and its clearness.

In reading we had some doubts concerning two strong phrases: “people are not controlled from inside or outside”

As systemic consultants we often see in practice how systemic equilibrium works in companies and also how SFW³ helps to change an “inside controller” such as Belief, personal traits and so on.

Given our systemic bases we cannot step aside from them and we also note how, examining them, they produce positive stable effects over the medium/long term.

As “systemic executive coaches”, we have often to choose our position vis-à-vis our client: to the left or to the right, in front of or behind (meaning: do we push or pull our coachee?). Or: we have to stay in between, in a position related not to the client or the Coach but to the Coach-Coachee bond. We have to deal with relation *and* solution, and not Coach *and* Coachee; this means the “optimal position” for solution orientation (optimal in term of space and time – structure and future).

What is *in-between* for us? We feel the real power of this approach is in these words.

In-between summarizes for us, the quality of an SF Approach (SFA).

In our view, the first point for SF practitioners is Attitude, and we build attitude from the inside to the outside including both just staying “in between”. Staying in-between summarizes our sentences “just suspending judgement”.

We cannot not judge, and training oneself not to do it is in our view purely an illusion. More simply we can realise that we are doing it and take the time to suspend judgement.

We all have some beliefs and we are sure we are involved in a systemic equilibrium, but what works, in our view, Trust in us. When we are trusted by the clients resources, it works. We do not need to believe in this and so we do not need some academic acknowledgement, we just remain Trusted.

It is the Intention that works: ours and that of the clients. As facilitator in constellation work we know that very well⁴.

To show this we wish to share a number of experiences.

¹ Mark McKergow, Korman In Between pag. 4

² <http://home.ease.lsoft.com/scripts/wa.exe?A0=SOLUTIONS-L> <http://solworld.ning.com>

³ Acronym of Solution Focused Work in the tradition of Steve de Shazer

⁴ Guni Baxa developed a lot of exercises

We understand the power of Intention in just participating in a workshop lead by Siegfried Essen⁵.

In his workshop he performed a short interview (what do you need? What is your system like?), he chose the elements, asked to set up, and then he just said to the representatives: “you are free to find a good position for yourselves”. All happened and it worked well many different times. Very simple but not so easy. It was not the word that worked but his Intention manifested when he said “You are free”.

It worked perfectly not because “systemic energy” works, not because the client changed alone. He, the client, was helped by the Siegfried Essen Essence. Just because he was “In-between”. It’s the presence that makes the difference.

When we met Steve the Shazer in Milan, he just stayed with his client as did Siegfried Essen, the same quality, the same simplicity, the same Essence. We remember he closed his eyes and did not look at the client.

Close to us there were NLP practitioners who became very nervous, because in their eyes Steve was not building rapport in the NLP tradition with the client.

For us it was just wonderful, clean, clear and very effective.

When Insoo Kim Berg came to Milan she showed us a Peter Szabo video interview.

We had done a lot of work in SFW and so we didn’t focus on the words, on the technique but we were just oriented towards the process he achieved, in his eyes, body, volume and tune, the quality of how he stayed “in-between”.

Many of you will find a lot of similar examples.

In our opinion, it is not building solutions, while just staying in trust with the possibility we can find together, we and our clients, a useful solution for the clients.

Another aspect of “in-between that we wish to pinpoint is that being in-between we do not tend either for a before (past) nor even an after (future), but we are simply in the present. Our view is that it is this capacity to remain in the present that aids the client to enter the NOW⁶.

“Suppose a miracle has happened and you wake up tomorrow, what has (now) changed?”

It is “now” that they feel the experience of transformation and it is only in the present moment, and remaining present, that they can access the possibility of a solution. In in-between, remaining in this quality of now there is a greater possibility of a solution appearing or becoming accessible having “ecological-systemic” elements concerning Being and not the mind.

We are grateful to the authors of In-Between and we “buy into” this term as a bridge to understanding the Art of SF practitioners as being the capability of staying in between, simply suspended between the concrete and ideas.

We are developing a methodology to transform this Trust-Attitude into a reproducible, repeatable and transferable technique (way).

Any feedback will be appreciated very much.

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⁵ Autopoietic constellations [Praxis der Systemaufstellung]

⁶ Eckhart Tolle: “The power of NOW” http://eckhartolle.com/the_power_of_now