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## Notes: Klinghardt Family Constellation Therapy

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### **History of Family Constellation Therapy**

- Started in the fifties, the concept that a person's suffering in this lifetime can't be accounted for by their own life history. You have to look in the family history. Idea went through a series of researchers (I didn't catch the early history). Hellinger was a later, prominent one.
- Klinghardt saw that psychological counseling didn't help the families in a lasting way. You could discharge anger but in a few days it was back. He discovered Hellinger in 1995 and saw that the effect was profound.
- Only one person in the family has to do the work. It can positively affect the entire family.
- Reason for effectiveness is the **five levels of healing (Klinghardt concept)**: "Most of us have an idea that we are more than a physical body."
  1. Physical body
  2. ? body (missed it) - homeopathy and acupuncture (maybe the energetic body or field right outside the body?)
  3. Mental body - psychotherapy, homeopathy works here, emotional freedom technique (EFT). Unresolved traumatic events that happened from conception to now (timeline of current life)
  4. Intuitive body - past lives, ecstasy, meditative states, curses. Family constellation works here. Where negative actions of one family member to another hangs over the entire family. You know the issue is here when the counseling doesn't work. It creates a lot of the "fate" in the family. Autism is a "fate." It is never too late to change your fate. "I used to believe in Karma, where the things you did wrong or didn't learn revisit the current life. 95% that I thought was caused by past life is really caused by family issues in the current life. If you do something about that, you can change your fate. I still believe in fate but differently."
  5. Your relationship with the divine. This is a direct relationship and should not be interfered with by any therapist. This is a private, personal, unique

connection with the divine, or vice versa, that the divine is expressing itself through you in a unique and personal way. Family constellation therapy can affect family members

- There is an order between:
  - Husband/wife. Husband's role is to ensure safety for the home, woman gives birth.
    - Becomes different when the woman carries the rifle and the men try to breastfeed. The role confusion leads to less optimal sex.
    - Fundamental: should be deep mutual respect for each other. Deep romantic love lasts 3 wks to 6 months. True love starts after that and foundation is respect. In most of his clients, the women have lost respect for the men. And the men have other issues with the women.
    - Bonds are created through good sex, having children, spending time/life experiences, clear definitions between the roles
    - Exchange of giving and taking between partners that is balanced. Most of the time the women put in more energy into family relationships than the man does. This is often the reason that the love dies, and that is why the respect dies.
    - This sounds very conventional and catches you in the wrong way. Burt (? this could be Hellinger) (80 yrs old now) says that: "The proper order between husband and wife is that the woman follows the man and the man honors the family."
    - Man's responsibilities are to make sex good in the couple and to honor and take care of the earth. This balances out woman's role to follow the man. Usually what happens is that the woman follows the man, but "he doesn't give a shit" and then problems happen.
  - Parents/children. Parents give and children take. The order is violated the moment parents expect the children to give back to them. It's a one-way street. No conditions that you call me on Fridays, you visit on Sundays, etc.
    - Children are supposed to give the loving energy forward to either their own children or to their communities.
    - If this order is observed, the wealth and wisdom of the family grows.
    - When the ancestral flow of energy is disrupted, i.e., when the parents expect that children to love them, the energy is reversed/blocked. The later generations have to start from scratch. One or two generations after a trauma like Holocaust, the people have lost their love skills, their ability to relax, and it will take 2-3 generations for the skills to regenerate.
    - We see that both mother and father were deprived of energy from ancestors.
    - Whatever little love there is in the parents can't be received because the children become resentful. When the resentment is present, the ancestral energy is blocked, and the children then become unable to have energy to pass forward.

- Very few cases of individuals who can spontaneously love who didn't receive it first from their parents. Rare to find it in orphans, adopted children, or survivors from WWII (Holocaust).
    - If you're German, there were 2 world wars, Napoleon, the Plague. There was not a single generation that wasn't disturbed by mass loss of life through war or illness. U.S. is different, with less history. Americans have "sweeter hearts," more open than average European.
    - Many of you know you come from troubled homes, and you know the work it took to develop yourself into a person with an open heart.
      - Children in the family
      - Ancestors
- Needs/Wants
  - Biological - Air, water, food.
  - Emotional warmth in early life. Children die within a few months if that is lacking.
  - Need to belong. Usually it is family of origin in the beginning. Then later it is social groups.
    - Distorted version is gangs.
    - Very important discovery. The fear of losing family is greater than fear of death.
- **Seven dynamics** (didn't cover all seven)
  - I follow you. (2 year olds). Children who lose parent early commit suicide, have early death from accident, develop brain tumor or seizures, unconscious following into death. Many illness in children is that unconscious drive to follow.
  - (missed second dynamic) Sometimes they'll try to follow an ancestor that died early.
  - I do it for you - Anorexia. It's a form of leaving while in the body. Often it keeps dad in the family, because there is strife between parents.
  - Atonement for guilt - Let's say there was a betrayal but family benefited from it (got rich). There is a guilt there. Only way to remove guilt is to atone for it. The betrayer feels like they can get away with it, but it surfaces later as guilt in the later generation. No right to be successful, that everything is wrong about them. Often the illness and the family struggle is atonement for some injustice 2-3 generations back.
- Other remarks
  - Hellinger lives on Austrian/German border. Married to a descendant of Beethoven. (!) (can this be right? Beethoven didn't marry or have children, did he?)
  - Lot of this work being done in Israel.
  - Learning case: Worked with young woman who had suicidal mother. Changes/movements in the constellation therapy between mother/daughter. Mother called daughter that night, said she had stood on railings of bridge to jump that day and had sudden appearance of angel in form of daughter, who said don't jump. Left the bridge with feeling of

transformation, that her suicidalness had left her. They compared time of suicide note with time on therapy video tape and they were exactly the same. Mother was not present for therapy but dramatically impacted.

- Quality of what is possible during the room depends on those who are in the room. The circle is a healing tool.

## **Constellation Therapy - Cynthia Macluskie**

- Room made agreement to keep the content private.
- Everyone in the room called on to visualize their own deceased parents/grandparents. Ask for their presence.
- Klinghardt interviewed Cynthia briefly about family history, asking about siblings and miscarriages at various generations, relationships between people (brief descriptions). Identified some traumas. Chose the primary trauma to work on.
- People from audience were chosen to represent the family members. Cynthia placed the initial members inside the circle of spectators. Later, others were called from the audience by Klinghardt to represent other nonliving players.
- Klinghardt interviewed the family reps for body sensations, emotions, etc. They reported various things: numb hands, feeling heavy, various emotions. Wanting to move positions.
- Klinghardt then began repositioning and instructing family reps to say certain things. He started with the oldest family member (great-grandmother). Brought in a spectator to represent her deceased mother, had her lay down on the floor in front of the great-grandmother. Interviewed the other family member reps at various points. He kept bringing in other players.
- They said things like, "I don't know why you did\_\_\_\_\_. I leave the reasons with you. It is between you and God. Thank you for the life you gave me."
- Later in the exercise, they said things like, "I forgive you, I'm sorry. Thank you for \_\_\_\_\_." Sometimes the verbalizations were coached, sometimes were spontaneous from the family reps. There were also embraces, spontaneous and coached.
- Weeping began almost immediately into the exercise. Family reps wept and by the end, most of the audience was weeping. Very emotionally intense.
- As the exercise progressed, Klinghardt repositioned the members into an orderly arrangement, clearly signaling the generations. It looked like a family tree chart on paper, but with bodies in three dimensional space. Each generation looked forward, so that their eyes could see their descendants, the younger generations had their backs to the ancestors but they were present behind.
- At the end, the family was in an orderly, generational alignment, the strange/bad bodily sensations had cleared, the emotions were clearer and relieved/lighter. Cynthia was called in to rep herself towards the end of the exercise.
- The audience had a role, was involved. It was like the "witness role" was important to the healing effect. That the witnesses projected the energy into the universe and reflected the healing back onto the family.

## **Debrief Q&A**

- When you reconvene - have to sit in different position, to change the energy field.

- What if there are skeptics? Will it still work? Answer: Yes. Gave BMW example where they did constellation therapy with company executives. Had groups of people go in and move cardboard figures around. 86% consistency in how things were reported. “The room tolerates a certain amount of doubt anger, etc.”
- What happens if you don’t know your family’s history. Answer: You do know your history. You do know you had a father and a mother, and they each had a mother and a father. The only thing that really matters is to reestablish the flow of love between the generations. There is a moment in the exercise where that connection happens - we all felt it. This is when the real ancestors showed up.
- Talk about adoption: Answer: <http://hellinger.usa.com>. Adopted people don’t usually want to do this work. They say my adopted parents were great, I have no desire to meet biological parents. This is survival loyalty to adopted parents, don’t want to betray them. You bring in adoptive parents and also the biological parents. One of the harder things to do for the therapist, need thick skin and a lot of training. The movements that come up are not often politically correct.
- How do abortions play out? Main rule applies: anyone conceived in a family have need/right to belong. With adoptions, abortions, need to give that child a room/place in the family.
- Any way to do this prophylactically? Example: when the mother is too young, can’t afford it, father in jail, etc. Answer: The proper order is for grandparents or father to step in and be surrogate for a few years until mother is stable.
- Why do we have so much addiction and drug use? Answer: Our brain is wired to be addictive. It’s how we learn. In the past used drugs in ritualistic or religious contexts, with boundaries that made it safe. And now we’ve lost the cultural context. When there is a drug user in the family constellation, can’t be reached by ancestral love. Haven’t been able to solve/heal it.
- Can you do a constellation for world peace? Answer: Yes, Hellinger does this once a year, to solve conflicts on earth. Hellinger did this with Gorbachov and his results.
- Role of audience: Minimum size is two people - therapist and client. Some things require the power and consciousness of the group, like some of the things we did in our work today. The larger the group the better. The more powerful the presence of the ancestors drawn on.
- How do you know when you’re done? When the affected family member was “freed.” Even if all the relationships weren’t perfect, i.e., there weren’t connections between all family members, there now can be change in the psyche of the family. Klinghardt knew it was ok because there was a clear stream of love in the older generations, even if there were gaps later on. For the family member that didn’t respond, the influence from her other side of the family is prob at play. That would be next session. But that doesn’t mean healing didn’t happen in the later generation, the child affected with autism. Usually six to nine months after the therapy is when the breakthroughs occur. Effects backward (in older living generations), usually happen quickly. Energy going forward takes longer, hence the 6-9 month timeline.
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