

TALK

Reactions to the first workshop on the management of sustainable relations

The workshop on sustainable relations had its first trial run in April 2008. Afterwards I spoke to my eldest son, a conceptual artist and art theoretician about the different responses in the group. He expressed surprise upon hearing my remark that people, already having a high level of education, and having worked in a professional environment for a number of years, still had to search for awareness, and find out that they were part of a system and most of the time just did what the system wanted them to do without really questioning it. But that is how it is. That is why the workshop on sustainable relations has been developed. It was the outcome of my own awakening, my own awareness, my awareness of the fact that we are able to create our own environment and do not need to do exactly what the system dictates. As a result, the sharp divide between work and leisure as two separated issues vanishes; both become intertwined in what is called unity or synergy (Maslow). That process which led me through many a struggle has ultimately provided clarity and peace in my life. My aim now is to strengthen my own unity and open the possibility for others to start experiencing the same.

In this first run of the workshop there were five participants. This report is on their and my experience during the three interactive sessions. The first session, was an introduction on how our brains restrict and deceive us. Immediately the diversity within the group became apparent. There was diversity in the different levels of awareness. One of the participants wrote in his comments: "We shared information in all openness." For this to happen in a first session, with people who do not know each other is in itself quite remarkable. From the point of view of the participants there is the need to experience what can be achieved by opening up and from my own personal perspective I discovered I had the ability to create the appropriate atmosphere for this.

Digging deeper in one's beliefs can visualize personal barriers in what one would like to achieve and it can create new possibilities. This is what happened with the group. One by one, the participants challenged themselves by questioning their own irritations. And one by one, they became aware of personal beliefs that restricted their own actions, experiencing that their current reactions were hindering them instead of helping. All this was done in an atmosphere of tranquillity, rest and ease, by no means suggesting that it was pure comfort. To get to know your belief can be quite unsettling at first. But "Peace has been restored," is how one of the participants described it.

In one way, we stand alone in life, turning the controls of our own behaviour. Obvious though this may be, it can at the same time be confusing in our relations towards others. Here we do not deal with ourselves but also with others. We do not respond to our own actions but also to the actions of others. This can make relationships very complex. Here we experience that our responses are often contradictions instead of movements in the same direction, like dialogue.

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