



# Gestalt NEWS Foundation

BIANNUAL INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION NEWSLETTER OF THE GESTALT PSYCHOTHERAPY AND TRAINING CENTER  
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## Gestalt Psychotherapy Continuing Education Program

# Working with children...



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That was the subject of this year's continuing education program that finished after two 3days and two 2days workshops that took place between January and April 2016.

To moderate these workshops we invited accomplished trainers from abroad. Joanna Hewitt Evans from the UK and Nurith Levi from Israel while from Greece we had Antigoni Orfanou and Maria Farmaki our centers consistent associates on these subjects.

In this program we covered extensively particular issues concerning Gestalt therapy in children...

## IANOS

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**Gestalt Foundation  
Channel on YouTube**

**18th 4day Gestalt Psycho-  
therapy workshop  
12-15 May 2016**

**Gestalt  
In Organizations  
Program**



Winter 2016, a difficult winter. Not cold but unstable, subversive, scary, heavy, "sad" and not only for Greece but also for the rest of the world. Uncertainty prevailed in our everyday life,

the landscape became volatile, social turmoil and people in a constant struggle to survive and self regulate. And still, we witnessed amazing acts of solidarity, humanity and offering.

The GF team does not give up, we continue to look forward, to create to offer and evolve.

Educational and experiential workshops, groups and lectures covering various interesting and provocative subjects were held.

There is a wide range of activities to review, but, on this issue, we will focus on two programs: the Continuing Education Program "Working with children" and the thematic series of workshops "Gestalt in Organizations".

Two very successful programs that provided, not only a breath of fresh air, on a personal and professional level but also knowledge, experience, quality of connection and a support system.

Our collaborators were impeccable and creative.

The participants were excited and willing to open up and share their experiences.

Spring is here and summer is coming..

I wish for this issue to bring you hope, to arouse you emotionally and excite your desire for peace and relaxation.

Enjoy your reading and your summer



**Despina Balliou**

Sc. Counseling Psychology, Gestalt Psychotherapist, Trainer & Supervisor, member of EAGT. Trained in Traumatotherapy's method EMDR. Holder of the ECP (European Certificate of Psychotherapy). Accredited by the National Accreditation Center for Continuing Vocational Training. Founding member of Gestalt Foundation. Founding member and secretary of the board of the Hellenic Association for Gestalt Therapy

## 18th 4day Gestalt Psychotherapy Workshop «Earth, Water, Wind, Fire..., Flesh...: The Experience of Being»



Once again the Valis Resort Spa & Conference Center hosted our centers' annual 4day workshop.

"Earth, Water, Wind, Fire..., Flesh...: The Experience of Being" was the title of this 4day workshop and it shaped the specific themes for each group category. So in this 4day encounter, through theory and experience we tried to expand on human nature as an alloy of body and soul, as a "whole", as "flesh", as "being", as "a living experience" of contact and withdrawal.

This year our trainees had the opportunity to meet and work with new trainers like Katerina Siampani, Kostas Michailidis and Nia Pappa, as well as with our main trainers, already all acquainted with. For our mental health professionals' group we invited Isabelle le PEUC'H, our colleague from Ecole Parisienne de Gestalt and our experiential group was lead by Nia Pappa.

The whole event unfolded smoothly leaving behind, as it always does, strong emotions, experiences, memories and a lot of knowledge.

**LOGOTECHNIA**

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**IANOS**  
ΑΛΥΣΙΔΑ ΠΟΛΙΤΙΣΜΟΥ

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## ...at the IANOS Cultural Center»

**Comment on Kostas Michailidis lecture:  
"Shame ...the shadow of existence",  
Athens, Tuesday, October 6, 2015**

For me shame is and always will be a significant issue. And when I attended Mr. Michailidis lecture I realized that I wasn't alone in my feelings on that. It was very important for me to find myself with other people who each think and feel ashamed as I do for various and different reasons. This allowed me to feel more at ease and intimate with my surroundings. I found that I had a lot in common with people who cannot reveal themselves to the public, their friends, and their families and even to themselves.

It gave me the opportunity to overcome part of my shame and allow me to find myself in this happy, as I view it, circumstance to reveal myself to you.

Writing down this few sentences on my experience, that afternoon at "IANOS", I would like to focus on the interactive approach of the presentation, between the lecturer and the audience. The questions, the answers, the dialog, the experiences, the anxiety that we shared was the motive that lead to a warm encounter between strangers. This, in connection to the immediacy, gentleness and calmness that came from our lecturer, kept everybody engaged until the end of the lecture. It would be



worth mentioning the reciting of a wonderful poem by Mr. Michailidis. A poem that anybody from the audience had the opportunity to comment on. For me it was the moment when I felt



most comfortable and from the audience reaction I believe that it was a sentiment shared by most. Through this presentation I had the opportunity to come one step closer to understanding my own feelings of shame and to feel safe to share my thoughts and actions with other people...

**Anna Kaliakatsou**

**Comment on Victoria Askaridou's lecture:  
"Laistrygonians, Cyclops, You won't encounter  
them unless you bring them along inside your  
soul" Thessalonica, Friday, November 27, 2015**

A baby, a baby for years is hiding inside my body...

... I'm listening to that and I'm wondering what am I doing here today at IANOS?

One answer is, certainly for my beloved Victoria but also for that known-unknown little one that I try to connect with for so many years now.

"When the sense of I AM is destroyed, the deprived child that we all carry inside us infects the adult with an insatiable longing for love, attention, tenderness"

Maybe these were the most resonating words of the whole lecture.

Images, experiences, relationships, connections, families, parents, me... a quick flash back pass in front of me eyes, like a small film of my own life. It upsets me and it touches me existentially.

My own traumatized "I am" with which I entered adulthood. Luck of trust, low self esteem, and shame, an unspeakable need for acceptance and unconditional, limitless love, explosive reactions, irrational demands, wrong interpretations, expectations.

As the lecture progresses, concepts and situation are described, like addiction, codependency, contribution, inversion, attachment, separation anxiety, perfectionism, control, intimacy, and loss of true self... these concepts bother me and upset me.

The simplicity in Victoria's words, her tender and thoughtful presence, both exuberant and discrete allows me to let

myself follow my own inner journey. Her deeper knowledge of my inner child helps me to feel safety and trust. It invites me to let go, to relax, to imagine, to dream, to empathically observe without criticism. Her glance provides me with support in this difficult meeting between the child and the adult. Her words touch me and put me at ease. I'm thinking of my experiences, how I translated them, how I interpreted them. The risks that I take.

What I have. The people close to me. Anything, whatever whoever I lose. I understand that nothing is permanent and given.

I realize that I have never felt how essential I was for myself.

It created a need for me to expand my boundaries, to go deeper, further, to chart both, me and the little child inside me, our own course.

It brings to mind the words of Charlie Chaplin: "to do whatever truly satisfies and brings me joy, whatever I love and makes my heart smile in my own way and in my own pace".

"To live in the moment with maturity, fullness, acceptance, serenity, simplicity, wisdom..."



My inner child claims its own space inside and it asks to connect with my adult self, to integrate, to become one, TOGETHER...

The lecture finishes...

My stomach is tied up, a tear rolls from my eyes, my heart is grateful and a sweet smile covers my face. I whisper to the little Cristina: we did good to come here today; we heard all that concern us...

**Christina Iakovidou**

**Comment on Katerina Siampanis' book presentation: "Walking together ...a Gestalt Psychotherapy view on dementia", Thessalonica, Friday, December 18, 2015**

Katerina Siampanis' book "Walking together ...a Gestalt Psychotherapy view on dementia" was presented on Friday the 18th of December 2015, currected by Mrs. Magda Tsolaki. Marina Theofilou moderated the conversation and gave her own touch by reading excerpts from the book while Antonia Konstantinidou took part in the process bearing multiple attributes: as a Gestalt psychotherapist, as a trainer, as a fellow traveler in Katerina's journey from the beginning, as a simple observer in the beginning of her involvement with Alzheimer disease till the writing of this book.

The love, dedication, the willingness to communicate and Katerinas' patience was her starting point that lead to her training and specialization that completed her journey with the diligence that characterizes her as a professional.



The book, which describes the different kinds of dementia and the problems faced by patient and caregivers, reaches out not only to a specialized audience but also to all who are involved in Gestalt psychotherapy of patients with chronic conditions as well as those who live or come in contact with elderly people.

The actress, Mrs. Maria Bagana, attended the presentation and besides sharing her personal experience, read two poems from the book. "The Rare Gift" by Kiki Demoula (1994) and "Description of a picture" by Katerina Siampani (2011).

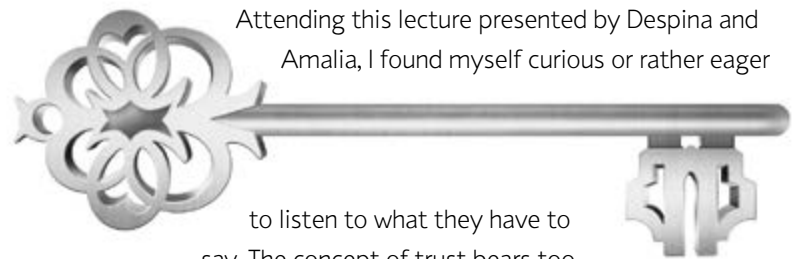
The presentation conclude with music, provided by Mr. Manolis Gerbakaniss' vocal ensemble, that sang some of Katerinas' favorite songs that resonated not only with her, but also with a lot of the participants. ("S'agapo giati eisai Oraia", Traditional, "Tou Mikrou Vouda", Mikis Theodorakis, "Athanasia" Manos

Hatzidakis, "T'agriouloudo" lyrics Pythagoras and music Christos Nikolopoulos)

**Christina Hatzilakou**

**Comment on Despina Ballious' and Amalia Kapouleas' lecture: "Trust: the key defining human relationships", Athens, Thursday, January 21, 2016**

Trust... An overused concept. Its existence gives birth to feelings of safety, warmth, intimacy, connection, responsiveness, acceptance, cooperation, stability. Its absence leads to feelings of insecurity, cautiousness, suspicion, frigidity, alienation, withdrawal.



Attending this lecture presented by Despina and Amalia, I found myself curious or rather eager

to listen to what they have to say. The concept of trust bears too much gravity for me.

The lecture begins and the first surprise comes up: the video "birth".

"We are thrown in to a prefabricated world that expects our arrival and in that world we develop..." That is what Despina suggest and for the first time I realize that this is what it really happens... we are thrown, and what next?

Then the baby forms his first bond with his mother and the rest of the people of his environment and based on this bond, he will develop the way with which he will create his own relationships from baby to adulthood. "From cradle to grave..." I hear Despina saying and my stomach tides up to a notch. It sounds so final... "In this process of developing our first bond of trust lies the key building block that help develop our relationships..." she continues and now is time for the second video, a baby who tries to take his first steps. He crawls, he gets up, he finds support, he falls and he gets up again. He repeats the same pattern countless times without stop, without getting tired. He explores his environment? He satisfies his curiosity? He tests his strength? He tests his capabilities? One by one and all that together. Images that we've seen numerous times with our children, with our children's children, our friend's children without realizing that all this effort, insistence, repetition, curiosity, exploration has to do with the sense of trust. These innocent creatures take the risk to put aside their safety and become familiar with their environment,



their strength, their weaknesses, their capabilities, their limits. What do they ask from us? Nothing more than the emotional caring, recognition, confirmation, support, acceptance. How many mothers really actually realize that?

“Trust, confidence includes risk and uncertainty...”

I wondered how many of us are willing to take that risk, and I found out how important that is when I heard that “...when we don’t trust we live to survive and not to evolve, to create, to enjoy, to love...”

But this final “from cradle to grave...” constantly haunts me. I was thinking that it is so unfair, and then with relief I heard that “it doesn’t matter whether we carry insecurities and difficult relationships in our baggage, because trust is a circular process and that can start developing at any time...”

“...to open the door to trust what is essential is to leave a space inside of us, to allow someone to become important to us... to allow him the space to discover us, to approach us, to feel us... Life without trust is unbearable...” is what Amalia said.

New stimuli flooded my mind while a lot of my questions were answered, elucidated, clarified!

I found that the way these two lecturers highlighted this particular subject was thorough, articulated, creative, astute and presented with great sensitivity. Also I enjoyed the musical closing that provided me with joy and optimism.

**Elsa Aggelidi**

**Comment on Katerina Papathanassiou-Pehlivanidou’s lecture: “Menopause: An End or a Beginning”, Thessalonica, Friday, January 22, 2016**

It was with great joy that we listened, on that Friday, Katerina talking about a subject that concerns all of us: women, because they’re the ones who go through this transitional period and men because they have to live with women experiencing the symptoms of menopause.

Katerina mentioned that men also go through menopause, something that most of the audience didn’t know.

The information that Katerina presented on the subject, in



her usual thunderous way, were overwhelming. The “cohabitation techniques” that she suggested in order to help people cope with the symptoms of that difficult period were easy and accessible to everyone.

Her answers to the audience’s numerous questions and concerns were humane,

informative and reassuring.

She gave us the “provisions” for this transitional journey.

Thank you, Katerina.

**C.H.**

**Comment on Giorgos Diplas’ lecture: “The role of the “Useless” in the Creation of Beauty», Athens, Tuesday, March 8, 2016**

Walking up Stadiou str. on this March afternoon I was contemplating. I was walking and thinking. What I was thinking was the title of the lecture. The title and the lecturer. The role of the useless in the creation of beauty. The title made me a little anxious. On the one hand my interest in this subject and on the other hand my inability to fit it somewhere inside of me, to let it rest somewhere.

As I was approaching IANOS that spring afternoon, weakness and interest were fighting to coexist inside of me. Walking up the stairs I recognized also my expectations from this lecture. That was the calmness I needed for this coexistence. From anxiety to calmness. That was what I wanted to take with me leaving. That was what



I was hoping for. That was for the afterwards. But for the now, what did I have in front of me? I had the presence of the lecturer. The presence of Giorgos Diplas; a presence that calms me down. A presence that transcends the action, transcends the moment. I’m well aware of this sensation. I know it and I trust it. Holding on to that sense I sat down to my chair and waited for the lecture to begin.

And the surprise came in the beginning. Next to Giorgos there was a woman sitting. A woman from Africa. She spoke of her experiences, her life over there. The surprise turned to interest. I was interested in meeting her, learn about her. All my senses were suddenly alive listening to that woman. I was having a good time, I was enjoying myself!!!

Yes but... the thoughts started coming... and then the torture begun. What all this have to do with the lecture? What does life in Africa have to do with what I came here to listen to, today? My mind started to take over and it started asking questions. And it demanded answers. And in this process the lecturer stated his presentation. He didn’t let me down. He spoke about the useless and the creation of beauty. He presented it etymologically, he presented it philosophically and he presented it artistically. And my mind



calmed down. It took what it needed. And slowly it withdrew. And then my senses walk up again. And I was left with a smile on my face and laughter inside me. I laughed my heart out. I laughed at the game of the useful that my mind played on me. And I remembered all the times that I feel useless in my life and my struggle to be useful. I remembered all the times I felt out of place. And I remembered an old proverb: "the vine was crooked then the donkey eat it" I lived with that proverb for many years. That night leaving IANOS I sensed that something has changed. The proverb has changed, now it was: "...the vine was crooked but it was beautiful..." That was what I took from this lecture. Giorgos Diplas, thank you!!!

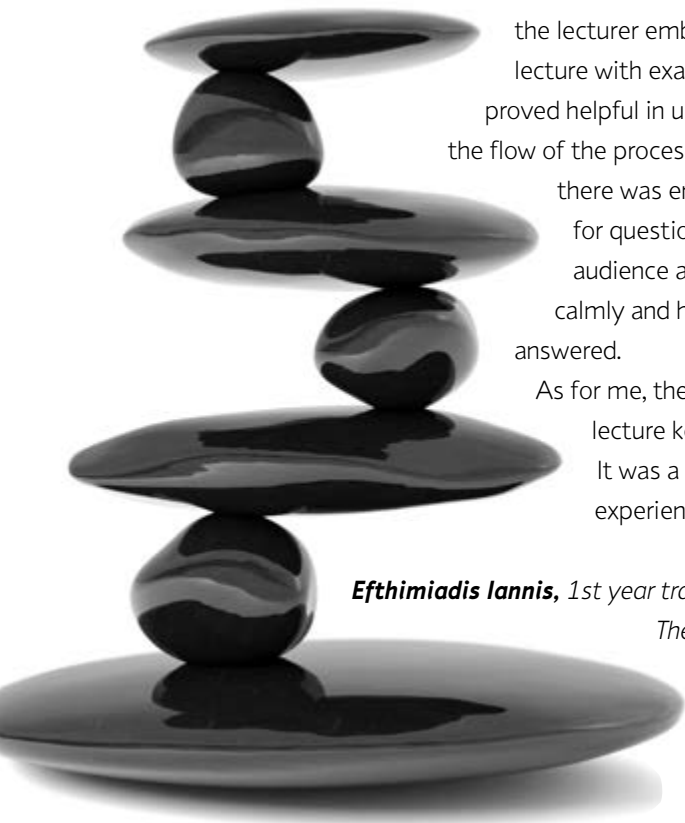
### **Kostas Michailidis**

### **Comment on Eleni Moushlehs' lecture: "I trust me..." the freedom of self-support, Thessalonica, Friday, March 18, 2016**

The lecture on self support was exceptionally helpful. More specifically we discussed what support is and what are its contingencies, what is not supportive and what is the contribution of psychotherapy on this issue. The whole lecture was based on the bibliography of Gestalt concepts and several specific points

were mentioned. Further more, the lecturer embellished her lecture with examples that proved helpful in understanding the flow of the process. At the end, there was enough time for questions from the audience and the lecturer calmly and honestly answered. As for me, the flow of the lecture kept me focuses. It was a very useful experience.

**Efthimiadis Iannis**, 1st year trainee in Thessalonica



### **Comment on Konstantinos Kostas' lecture: "Creativity and Freedom" Tuesday, April 19, 2016**

I'm sitting in front of my computer and I'm searching of a way to begin writing... I'm missing some kind of clue on what I was asked to write about and I'm wondering how the others came about it. Personal experience or theory? I'm thinking without coming to a conclusion... You just faced the difficulty of freedom, I hear Konstantinos say... I find myself facing freedom and I don't know how to handle it... I'm afraid that what



I would freely choose will alienate me from the others... and then I come face to face with the fear of loneliness and death...the easiest way is to follow on the footsteps of others, follow their course... that way I would be liked and safe...but not free and creative...I will be missing the awareness of myself; of who I am, of what I want; what contact do I want to have with my environment; what my environment asks of me and how do I respond? If I don't answer to those kinds of questions; how do I allow myself to exist free? How can I create a healthy relationship with someone else? And here is where I include the creativity of my freedom...so I'm thinking...I need acceptance... if I accept who I am I would be free to create!!! So that is what I choose to do here, after a real and authentic meeting I had with Konstantinos that afternoon.

**Lydia Kanellea**, psychologist, Gestalt Foundation trainee



**“Please mind the gap”**

The 3day experiential workshop, coordinated by Despina Balliou and Nia Pappa used physical movement, authentic dialog and the contact with nature to focus on the expansion and signification of the gap, by deepening into the quality of the connection, of the relationship and in the end the creation of a living life... (Friday, September 25th – Sunday, September 27th, 2015)



I meet the strange fellow-travelers of my life  
Those who I share dreams and anxieties with  
Like luminous, shaking dots in the gap  
Strangers, shy and courageous in the same time  
Willing to share in the risk of exposure  
One by one we shed the clothes of untroubled shame  
We stood naked, we hold each other hands  
We begun



I bared my anger and my guilty Ego  
I became a witness to ceremonies of separation and reunion  
I hugged and I was hugged  
With wet eyes I recorded scene of identification  
With devoutness I silently bowed departing souls



I stood guard to cemeteries of love  
I held trust tightly from the hand  
Whatever is lost could be owned  
Absence a space for birth  
Freedom, condition of acceptance  
The journey ends with the Sun setting  
We made a transient monument with our rags  
We placed burial tribute, in honor  
The biggest monuments the ones we built inside  
That where from one we became many, together  
We carry the soul who faced the Suns' ring  
Tide irrevocably to the course of time

**Dimitris Diomataris**



**The fear of change**

Change is inevitable; it is a part of life. The ancient philosopher Heraclitus declared that “everything

flows” meaning that everything around us constantly changes and is in a constant state of flow. Nothing stays the same through the passing of time. Change is always coming. When we encounter it, we need to adjust to it the best way possible; even if it has to do with something that’s not necessarily pleasant like for instance, a divorce. The way we manage the changes that life brings us, more or less, depends on the way we comprehend what is happening to us, on whether we are optimists or pessimists, on how flexible we are to adjust in new conditions and on how deeply we understand our own self. Change brings fear. And that is natural. Even if we are not happy with the state our life is in, we find it very difficult to decide to change our patterns. Anything that can take us away from our “comfort zone” we view it as a danger, as threat. What is the “comfort zone”? What else but the familiar, what we are used to and therefore something that we understand as

safe. We will do anything to remain in this “comfort zone”. We will undermine ourselves by creating hurdles even afflictions, we will idly sit around, postpone, and we will rationalize every negative experience.



Everything starts with how much we trust ourselves; our self-confidence and how much worth we place on our life. Sometimes we need to let everything fall into rubble in order to lead our selves towards a more ideal reality.

**Charietta Liakaki**, Counseling Psychology Msc, GF graduate. She lives and works in Kalamata

In this program we covered extensively particular issues concerning Gestalt therapy in children...

First of all we emphasized the importance of the therapists' familiarity with his personal style concerning the creation of an initial bond, in order to be able to recognize that of the child so he can be present in therapy, as well as to examine creative ways to address children and to manage issues of insecurity bonds related to trauma.

The analysis of children's sexuality, allowed for the conditions needed in order to find a way of approaching it, based on Acceptance, Respect and Understanding of the innate reflex, responses as a part of children's sexual development.

Next the program focused on the issue of shame during infancy and childhood, as well as on what kind of therapeutic relationship should a therapist develops in connection to that.

Our last meeting focused on the therapist who is working with children and needs to be aware of the family field that they come from in order to better understand their reality, their background and the environment they live in as well as their part in their families story. Sometimes a therapist focus shifts between the image of the child, the identified patient and his family, who while it is present in the background, emerges as a secondary important pillar to the story developing in the process of therapy.

We explored such conditions in order to support the clear view of the therapist on how to utilize these dynamics to benefit the child's needs and with that we concluded the workshop.

### Working creatively...

Joanna Hewitt Evans is the wife of KEN EVANS and his collaborator in the training program Psychotherapy for Children and Teenagers, one of the leading programs in the European Institute for



**Hewitt Evans Joanna** (MA, MA. UKCP and EAGT registered Gestalt Psychotherapist, EAIP registered Integrative Psychotherapist is co director with Ken Evans of EUROPCS, European Centre for Psychotherapeutic Studies), **Antigoni Orfanou** (MSc Professional Training in Educational Psychology, Gestalt Psychotherapist and supervisor, Member of EAGT. She has worked as a scientific associate and researcher at the Psychotherapeutic Center of Piraeus at the Institute of Mental Health (EIPSI), as an educator counselor in Prefectures, rapporteur in information groups for educators, psycho-pedagogue in programs of psychosocial support to children who have experienced sexual abuse (UK),

Psychotherapeutic Studies active in France and the United Kingdom. Last year, in the corresponding graduate training program, I was privileged to present to Ken the work that we had co-created! But Ken is no longer with us. The sudden passing of this extraordinary person and trainer crashed the hearts of all of us in the Gestalt world.

This year I'm stealing this space, in this newsletter, to talk to you about my impressions from Joanna and the first 3day experiential workshop she coordinated entitled "Working creatively with attachment issues and developmental trauma".

Of course I was emotional as I was making my way to attend the workshop. She was emotional too following his steps in Athens. Personal moments, hers and ours, hidden in our eyes, in our words,

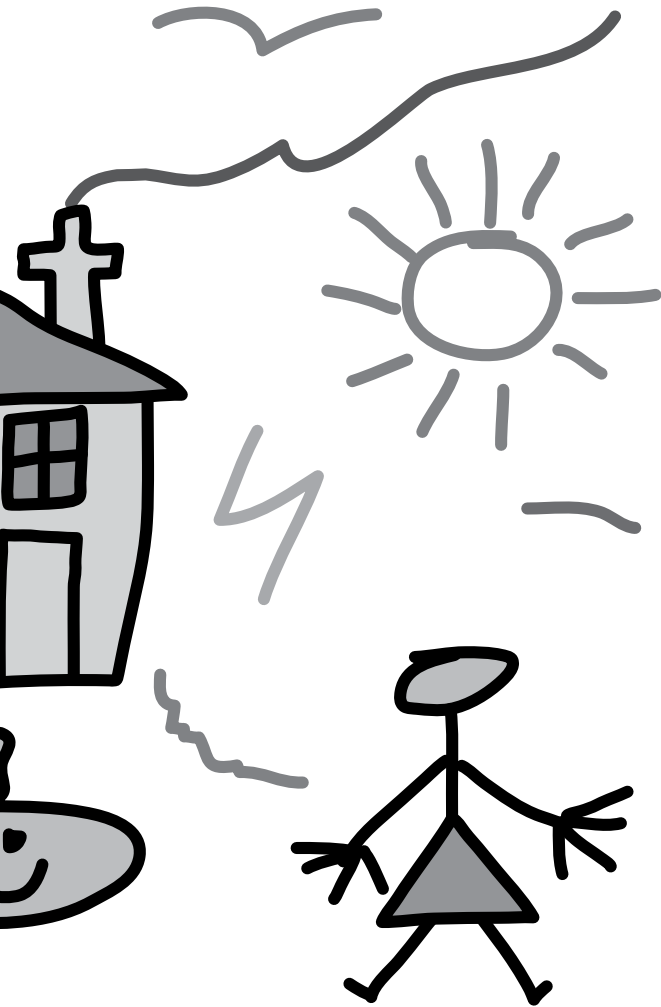
educator psychologist in three Municipalities of London, and, likewise, at private schools and Special Therapy Centers in Greece. **Maria Farmaki** Psychologist, Early Childhood Educator, B.A. Psychologist, Gestalt Psychotherapist. Member of the Pan-Hellenic Association of Early Childhood Educators (P.A.E.C.E), and of EAGT. Founding member of the Hellenic Association for Gestalt Therapy. Ex-president of HAGT **Levi Nurith** Ph.D. (an experienced Family Therapist and supervisor who specializes in work with children at risk and their families, Gestalt Therapist, supervisor, Chair of the Training Standards Committee in EAGT and trains regularly throughout Israel and Europe).

# Working w





# with children



in our tone of voice. We compared her to a quite fairy, calm, strong with her own style. The wife, the mother and recently a grandmother came to talk to us for the child inside us, for our children, those we already have and those who we are about to meet in the future. It was a great opportunity for us to familiarize ourselves and discuss about the decisive elements in creating a personality through the stages from our conception, pregnancy, birth and our connection to our families.

In these 3 days we followed the flow, we discovered, learned, played, bonded, felt moved. We also have done supervision. We understood that we affect our children through the way we bond with them. It can be terrifying. Maybe it is something that we want to avoid. Maybe we would simply like to help them, get rid of the "mistakes" we did and if that is possible, to liberate themselves. Maybe, it would be preferable to let "destiny" lead their way. Maybe we believe that they are our genuine "representatives", our offspring and we succeed when they succeed and we fail when the teacher or the neighbor criticizes them. The only thing that we are able to do is to be present even if we differ from them, to contact with them respecting their existence.

We can train them to meet the demands of life. And it is true that the biggest awareness comes when, through our capability to be

creative parents, we train ourselves again from the beginning. If we don't do that we simply repeat the ways our parents used in our upbringing or we go to a completely opposite direction. So it is certain that without realizing it, we stay trapped into something old that blocks our open connection and presence to both to what our children bring and to who we are now.

Teaching our children to adapt to their reality as individual human beings, to accept their responsibility instead of obeying our will, to calm themselves and to acknowledge their feelings, we give ourselves a chance to regain our lives. Children, who spent their time carefree, with joy and play, wish to experience that again and again with their family. The experience of pleasure gets established and motivates their relationships, social, friendly, romantic, throughout their life.

I sense that the contact between the theory of how we develop bonds and the creation of fears, responsibility, demands and beliefs, has already helped me to consciously work with more empathy with my patients who are mainly children, teenagers and groups of parents. I share with you a key phrase: «in our work with children our purpose is to strengthen the bond between child and parent».

I have to acknowledge the team that worked with me. I met new therapists dedicated and ready to relate personal experiences with trust. It is true that when you work with yourself you can acknowledge and be present to the demand of your patient. My only acquaintance and friend, and the only male member of our group was Konstantinos Kostas who distinguished himself as the most polite and attentive one.

Joanna, I would like to thank you from the bottom of my heart for coming to us. I would also like to thank GF for inviting such important people who share with us their philosophy, their art and their knowledge. If they didn't come to us we should immediately go to them!!!

Thank you Joanna!!!!...

**Marina Theofilou**

## A meeting with my bonds...

A meeting with you was a meeting with the child I used to be and still am, a meeting with my bonds. The bonds with my parents, my grandfathers and grandmothers, with my neighborhood, my old friends...

Feelings of joy and sadness, nostalgia, love, sorrow... Familiar smells of sun and rain, spring earth and salty sea reached my present... and fragrances of fresh bathed soft skin mixed with spices and herbs of an always busy kitchen...

That was where your seminar helped me travel too and has brought me in contact with deep bonds of today.



It affirmed my trust and certainty, poked my anxiety, it motivated me with regard to unfinished businesses, brought up a

kind of wisdom and all that always under the light of love, faith, freedom and quality of contact.  
Come Monday I was little different...

**Despina Balliou**

### Children's sexuality

A 2day journey around sexuality and how it is an essential part in the psycho emotional development and the emerging sense of self from children who constantly grow and evolve to teenagers, adult, middle-aged, elderly, all of us.

We carried a lot of things in our luggage and we had to clean them up and decide what we want to take with us and what we need to leave behind. Introjections and criticism were a burden and an obstacle in our here and now contact. What do we really need?

Looking from inside out we show one another as a whole. With care and respect for the uniqueness of the existence, with space and time for the need that emerges in the here and now and needs to be seen, with curiosity for the different, the other and with a willingness to incorporate it, with parity and boundaries, with flexibility. From the perspective of the child and the caretaker, each for himself and for the others.

And somehow like that, we traveled to the "child", the "psychology", and "sexuality" in each and every one of us. We became the Child, the Psychology and our Sexuality. And we came very close to our authenticity, our essence. And we concluded:

**SEX**



I'm small, clever and fragile, I need tenderness and boundaries, hugs, acceptance, laughter, games and joy and I want to meet you. For many people I'm a mystery, I'm connected to the body, my emotions, my thoughts, my motives, my impulses and my behavior. Some would call me Science, others Art. I'm part of human nature. You discover me and you explore me, you experiment with me, you try, you smell, you lick, you taste, you touch and this is how you recognize your desire and you let go on the joy and pleasure that I bring to you through play.

I'm angered by injustice and I'm frightened by uncertainty. I feel pain when they reject me and I cry. I'm oppressed when they call me a good or a bad kid, when they start the does and don'ts, prohibitions and blockings lead to anxiety and shame. Then I hide, I don't take care of me, I judge me, I punish me, I feel lonely and maybe disgust, I develop fixations, perversions, frustrations and I live only in fantasy, as something bad.

So I want to ask you:

Don't overwhelm my body and my motions.

Allow me to tell you no and don't insist.

Let me dream.

If you leave me carefree with my instinct I will grow up with wisdom



and the expectation that the I will become We, a team where I can show myself and my identity\*

Personally I feel grateful for my team in this 2day workshop that gave me the experience of growing up with wisdom, where I "was shown" and I showed my identity.

\*is a compilation of essays we created in our groups during the 2day workshop

**Dora Loukidi**

### Shame

Shame. So familiar and at the same time so foreign. It makes me want to hide but the blushing on my cheeks gives me away and have the opposite result.

Do I feel shame because I exist? Or I feel shame therefore I exist? Children, from the moment they are born, are part of a field of interaction and shame happens and is experienced exactly in there. In individualization, contact, in setting boundaries, in the meeting of glances, emotions, senses in the limits of contact and in the background of this process, since I hide, I recoil, I almost disappear. According to the theory of Field; when the process of assimilation is trying to take place and the environment (family, social, cultural) does not support the needs of self and does not accept its characteristics and its desires, then, shame appears. When the expectations are not meet, then, there is a tear in the contact. The antidote to shame is love and the bond that is created between



two people; the bridge that they built that becomes the means and space of exchange, understanding, development, change through the process of emotional coordination and frustration.

A healthy sense of shame protects us and informs us about our restrictions; it keeps us abreast with our needs. On the other hand a toxic sense of shame is related to any kind of disability and abuse; it bears feelings of fear, disgust, and a sense/desire for nothingness. When a child feels ashamed he hides, stays silent, looks down or at his parents, he blushes, stays alone. A lot introjections (verbal or not) can enhance their feeling of shame: «You should be ashamed of yourself! What do you think you are doing?». “Talk to the lady, don’t be shy!”, “Haven’t we said that there is no need to be shy? Look at the other kids!” Shame can take the form of withdrawal or overexposure, it can manifest with aggression towards the self or the environment. The child develops anxiety, nervousness, tension, interest and these emerge at a time were changes are taking place in the Field.

As therapists we also come in contact with our own shame and children can very easily ignite that sense with their spontaneity and immediacy. The set of skills we employ to help us is our faith in communication, the immediacy of contact, the authenticity of presence, the respect of the pace of each contact, empathy, humor. Besides, “there is no shame in...”!

### **Paraskevi Tramba**

#### **Who’s figure?**

On 15, 16 and 17 of April 2016 the fourth and last workshop of the Continuing Education Program, “Working with Children”, took place in Athens, led by Nurith Levi.

The entirety of this training was an excellent experience within a wonderful group. How different would the world be, if the spirit of this group, and others like this could be transferred to the various aspects of our social life? Congratulations to the people of Gestalt Foundation for the organization of this training, the choice of the trainers and the corresponding topics!



The last three days came as a culmination of the whole process. What can I say about Nurith? She is a Teacher, obviously not only for me. I have realized that every time I meet her, since our first meeting in 2004, I learn something clear, substantial and solid which is recorded within me in a way that supports me and nourishes me. Every time I participate in trainings led by Nurith I come in touch with the tragic aspect of being human, the possibilities and the wealth with which this aspect is interwoven. I also come in touch with the healing power of human contact and community, and the foundational values of the great Humanistic Tradition.

I hesitate to get into details on the theory suggested by Nurith, because of the fear of making it too simplistic. However, at some points, I found myself being differentiated and this was respected and welcomed by Nurith, which constitutes one more sign of her value as a teacher. I felt that the other members of the group had a similar experience.

Something more that attracted my attention concerns Nurith’s way of working. In the past, I was impressed by the theoretical precision with which she led her way of working and her interventions.

This time I felt that she exceeded the “theoretical correctness”- obviously making use of her experience and intuition- in order to respond to the needs of the other person, with great success!



What can I say about Nurith? She is a Teacher. I hope to meet her many more times in the future.

**Konstantinos Kostas**, *Psychologist & social worker, Gestalt psychotherapist*

#### **“Children’s sexuality” and “Shame” in Thessalonica...**

When we started, our purpose was to explore in depth the theory, supervision and personal development on these specific subjects. Our guides were our coordinators. Through an authentic communication of senses and emotions, interaction, experiential exercises, sometimes using simple materials (pen and paper), sometimes not, individual or in groups, we made it. Using drawings, like when we were children, we traveled to “back when” and we show how it travels and how it encounters the “now”. We remembered... we smelled... we tasted all those things we left behind but still connects us to what we use to be, as people and as therapists.

And yes...: “I was a child and I became an adult... I wanted to play and explore... Maybe I still want to... Everything is new and mysterious... Still I like people although we are different in size... I always liked dreams, why do I forget that?”. These expressions are building blocks in creating interpersonal relations, they function as an alarm clock to mutual understanding and they bridge our relationship with children.

I would like to describe on paper my experience of these workshops I attended. I realize that the ink is not enough! The skills I gained can’t be put to words. The magic of the group, the care and knowledge of our coordinators shed a light on the therapist in their approach with children.

What I can say in all certainty is that when we face children we have to be authentic. We have to allow ourselves to see the new in the child. And we must never forget that each relationship, regardless of age can teach us something!

**Liana Daktila**,

*Psychologist (A.U.Th.), specialized in Specialized Education Trainee Gestalt psychotherapist*

## GESTALT IN ORGANIZATIONS

Humanities have, by now, penetrated both society and market place and have been accepted in all sectors. These skills prove useful with contact, communication, conflict management, motivation, collaboration, creativity and innovation in all levels of hierarchy (managers, professionals, employees and workers). There are a lot of methods and approaches that have contributed in this phenomenon.

Recently the Gestalt approach has developed in a fast pace in the world of organizations and businesses and its application in the business environment is considered exceptionally effective in issues that have to do with communication, creativity, collaboration, team spirit, leadership, changes, conflicts, negotiations, work stress, time management, crises management, self confidence etc.

Services that can be provided based on the Gestalt approach are Consulting, Coaching, Mentoring, Training, and Supervision, both on an individual and team level.

The program was conducted by **Frans Meulmeester, Giorgos Stamatis, Rizou Ioanna and Demi Moraitou.**

It is September 2015 and I check my e-mail for the 2015-2016 schedules from the Gestalt office in Thessalonica. Just as a change I decide to read everything, even the lectures and workshops that don't take place in Thessalonica. As I approach the end of the document I read "Gestalt In Organizations" and it takes place in Athens. I have heard about this program and my interest was picked when I read about the people to whom it was addressed. I didn't recognize myself in them but still I wanted to see the programs' outline. "Leadership" that was the subject of the first workshop. I have a lot of unresolved issues with leadership, both my own and others as well as with the coexistence of many leaders, and...and...Even now I can't pinpoint what this word motivated in me but I decided to participate in the seminar. What followed was a series of miscommunications and finally I managed to contact Giorgos Stamatis the lecturer of the first 2day workshop and he agreed to my participation after reviewing my CV (studies and work in Science).

So I'm on the airplane to Athens and I realize that my logic is wandering about what I am about to do, if there is a reason why I choose this, if it is something that actually "fits" me, if I fit with all the other

participants that are more familiar with the subject while I'm not... So me and my logic we disembark, we take the bus and regardless Giorgos Stamatis warm welcoming smile, restlessly, we wait for the seminar to begin.



We begin and the restricting part of my logic is forced to retreat in the face of that relentless and creative flow of knowledge and emotion and change and interaction with the people around me that are strangers but still open to change, awareness and something new. I let myself free and I find something that fascinates me that challenges my viewpoint and gives me the opportunity to interact with the field.

It gives me a new perspective suggesting that my role at any time in an organization is to first be in contact with my process, myself and taking into account the interaction with those around me, I should readjust my role, the field and the new process. I should employ the tools I have to support the team effort and manage the conflicts and changes, always in touch with myself and others and constantly aware. It is this connection between management theories and the Gestalt theory that is so forcefully revealed that makes the everyday conflicts in the work place viewed under a new light and demand another type of personal responsibility to be resolved.

Sometimes I feel that the lecturers pace with his exercises and his words surpass me but I begin to get acclimated to what Giorgos, in perfect Greek constantly reminds us... TRUST THE PROCESS... and the first day ended and I didn't realize it. I leave full of knowledge, responsibility and REAL JOY for this beginning. The second day and the sense that my brain is rushing is more intense as the barrage of information overwhelms me. In the mean-



**Frans Meulmeester**, Staff member and guest trainer of several Gestalt institutes around the world. Registered Gestalt therapist and Gestalt Practitioner in Organizations (GPO) in the EAGT and a registered psychotherapist (ECP) in the European Association for Psychotherapy (EAP). Member of the Executive Committee of the EAGT.

**George Stamatis** B.A., H.S.D. Marketing ,M.Ed. Business consultant , coach and trainer. Gestalt Practitioner in Organizations (GPO). Graduated the 4 years Gestalt in Organizations program at Gestalt Foundation (Advanced Level Program Diploma). Teaches at the Universities U.N.Y. Prague and U.N.Y. Tirana. Author of ten books. Co-

author of «The Art of Change. Gestalt a different approach for Business Organizations". **Rizou Ioanna**, Psychologist with Master in Business Administration. Career counselor. Trained in Gestalt Therapy. Works in private practice supporting individuals and organizations in dealing with their challenges.

**Demi Moraitou**, B.A. CAM ( communication-Advertising and Marketing B.A. C.A.M.) Gestalt in Organizations Consultant, G.I.O. is a graduate in Greek Civilization. Attends the Post graduate EPA. Career counselor with great experience in organizations, adult trainer.

time the interaction with the field fills me, gives me support and in a creative way gives me the tools to manage human resources, meaning and including myself and the groups that I have to organize in my line of work. Words find new meaning and dimension like compromise which, when I utter, it carries within it the negativity of retreat but from now on it opens up the opportunity to manage more creatively the differences and exchange allowances in order to have in the here and now a way through, rather than a dead end and a conflict.

I'm happy for the knowledge that Giorgos shared with me in this 2day workshop in so many different ways with such a good mood and humor. I'm glad for the unobstructed interaction with the rest of the group and for the mutual honesty and trust that proved so creative. I'm glad that I'm redefining my personal responsibility when I take the role of a leader in my work place. I'm glad I learned to use tools that I knew so well but now the instructions on how to use them became clarified!

With joy and the sense of completion I take the airplane back to Thessalonica and together with my logic we start reading the material Giorgos has given us because we start to work on Monday!!!

**Evgenia Makridou**, *agriculturist, 1st 2day workshop Gestalt In Organizations, Athens, December 12th, 2015*

### «Something is happening here»... Or, 7 Gestalt steps in Organizations with Frans Meulmeester

Second meeting with the Gestalt in Organizations (GIO) group. The subject, the Gestalt Holistic approach in organizations and I, once again, feel happy that I would see the people of the group and as always, I enjoy my time with the Gestalt group. This 3day workshop



seemed exceptionally promising, not only because the first lecture with G. Stamatis on the connection of leadership and Gestalt was extremely interesting but also because I had a sense that Frans Meulmeester would be a revelation.

It is a Friday afternoon and due to work issues I found myself stressed entering the beloved "house of Gestalt". I looked at Frans who, with a simple warm smile, welcomed me. And yes, according to the 7 GIO steps, "something was already happening. STEP1.

something is happening. Everything is information and the first ones were very optimistic. And I started to become "in tune" with Frans. STEP2. Resonate especially when he started talking about himself and ask us questions genuinely interested in us. That was when I started to recognize that something was happening to me in connection to the field, I started to give meaning to what was happening and I trust it and let myself follow the process. Because, as Frans mentioned, the wisdom lies in the field that we create together.

And the hours passed and we became a team and we gained common experiences, and I had the sense that I was becoming more "aware". STEP3. Awareness. It is this sense that comes from experiencing a contact, this sense of discovery and creativity or, according to Frans, the sense that each time you do something unexpected. And as the hours and the days passed we, as a team together with Frans, George, Demi and Ioanna, "shared our awareness". STEP4. Share the awareness with the team. And we did that not always

using words and always without any criticism of what the other felt or believed, but we opened the space for everyone to express themselves with the freedom to follow their "heart's desire" (in Greek the etymology of the word freedom Eleftheria derives from the verb "elefsomai" meaning moving towards and the word "era" coming from Eros, it literary means "to do according to what your heart desires").

We painted drawings individually and yes, we realized that the creation was a teamwork, although we could see each other separately, within the whole. And, in our "here and now", we show emerging "parallel processes". And, even though we spoke of things that happen in the organizations that each of us worked, at the same time, in the group, we experienced emotions that proved similar to what we were trying to describe. And that is what I call the magic of Gestalt!

And speaking of magic, every now and again, Frans would come up with the "magical" question: How is that for you? Do you recognize what I'm saying as a sense/emotion? STEP5. Magical questions: How is that for you? Do you recognize it...? And sometimes we weren't ready to be asked, because, as it happens with any client or patient, the answer could easily hide a shocking truth. I show how Frans trusted the process and allowed himself not to be completely revealing and also not to reveal a truth that we weren't ready to accept at the moment. He simply continued to "explore". STEP6. Explore discretely and inclusively asking more questions "How did that happen?" "Can you elaborate on that?" And I felt that he was willing to protect us and make us feel safe like a good swimmer who knows when to dive in the deep waters of our souls and when to come up to avoid getting lost.

And while I was feeling all that, once again Frans, with the creative mood of a child, suggested we "experiment". STEP7. Propose an experiment a bit more on the things we discussed and somewhere between the experimentation and the truth that was unexpectedly revealed, the same sense that I had in the beginning emerged... something is happening here again. STEP1. Something is happening. And again this constant search for truth, this "strange process of change" starts again and accepting the here and now, and remaining steadfast to the decision to recognize what I really am, eventually I change...

Thank you Frans for the wonderful journey through your eyes that hide so much wisdom and such a childlike simplicity that recognizes the world as it is and make the obscure visible. Like the child in the "Emperor's new Clothes" who shouts "Look mama! The Emperor is naked", everybody sees it but only a child has the clarity to say it!

**Natasa Kiriakaki**, *1st year Gestalt Foundation trainee*

### The viewpoint of a participant

3d Workshop training program Gestalt in Organizations.

Without really noticing, the 3rd lecture of this circle has arrived and once again I found myself sitting in my familiar chair in my familiar room but this time with a new coordinator, Ioanna Rizou and a new unfamiliar sense of "belonging" to the GIO group. That was something that made me feel strange because it was only the third time I ever show most of the other 12 participants.

But of course this is not a simple coaching lecture, this is a lecture, driven by the Gestalt spirit. Here, in the hours that spent together, we had already shared thoughts, emotions, concerns, views...

So when Ioanna asked us, and right at the beginning, to turn to the person next to us and pay him a compliment, it wasn't that difficult.

What proved to be difficult (at least for some of us) was to accept a compliment! So, starting with the building block of self confidence, we started to explore our subjects "time management", "stress management", "ethics".

Certainly, some of the most crucial issues in my every day working life, issues that are troubling and may even reach the point of doubting my own abilities, and raise even existential questions, are concerns like: "Is this the right work for me? How close are my personal values and beliefs with my line of work? Is it possible that I don't see something that is so obvious for others?"

So it was really astonishing that during this seminar I started no-



ting that these and even more of my questions were answered with the help of some seemingly simple exercise. I will never forget the exercise with the escutcheon. We were all asked to draw the escutcheon that represents our work and the escutcheon that represents the organization we work for. The similarities but most of all the differences were revealing! Suddenly I realized that the elements of my personality that I thought they were oppressed in my working environment were there, were apparent and defined the way I work. I realize that what I thought as challenges were really the motivation I needed to bring forward the change I always wished. And I realize that my attitude towards everyday problems is the only thing that defines my effectiveness as well as the joy I feel when achieving in my work.

You might say that this is self evident: But not so much! In the relentless pace of everyday life, the massive volume of information, activities, thoughts, demands and challenges that constantly arise, finding the time to stop and evaluate what is important and what is urgent proves to be a valuable knowledge. To enrich my everyday working practice with elements of my own personality is an inspiration and a motive to find enjoyment in my work, the way I do it, in my own unique way and it helps me to set my goals according to the values I always believed in. This is my way of finding joy and inspiration in my everyday work!

Valuable knowledge, valuable moments that, with the help of the people who participated together with our coordinator, provided a warm and humane dimension to the subject and left us, in the end of the workshop, bearing a warm smile and anticipating the next one...

**Kiriakos Oikonomidis**, Dermatologist - Afrodesiologist

## The Dynamics of a Group and Conflict management

When I was a child I remember that my mother was always baking sweets. I still remember this smells, playing with my senses. What I also remember is that I really didn't like them and I tried to taste their motherly warmth only after they had finished... That was the way I felt that the Gestalt in Organizations workshops had finished for me. I was left with a sweet aftertaste, a warmth sense and solved in a unique way the conflict I felt between my trust issues and the process and warmth of the experience in the here and now. Starting the last 2day workshop I was feeling tired and I anticipated the end of the circle of seminars. In this last group meeting our moderator was Demi Moraitou, who had undertaken what seemed to me a difficult task, which was to speak about the dynamics of the group and the conflict management within it. How can someone cover such a wide subject in just 2 days? What a strange subject to finish the work of the group? Conflict...

It is Saturday morning and the whole group meets in the familiar favorite space on Gestalt. I pay attention to each and every member of the group and I'm filled with a sense of warmth. The dynamic of the group is present and apparent. All the members are willing to share their thoughts and emotions and ready to co-create new experiences in the context of a dynamic and transformative process. And that seemed to involve not only the members of the group but our moderator as well. Demi decides to put aside her familiar way of working and suggests that we plan the structure and the ranking of the module and she will follow the process of the group. And suddenly the whole dynamic of the group- any group-unfolds in front of my eyes without a word spoken in a theory level. The experience is intense...Leaders emerge, certain members take on executive roles, process of making decisions come forth as well as disagreements that enrich our viewpoint of the field and bring to life new innovative ideas.

On the second day one of the members suggested to through away the plan and follow the flow as it emerged focusing on the here and now. Everybody agreed! Demi creatively adjusted to what the group suggested and managed to present us, in a concise way, how a group operates and how to effectively manage conflict in it.

The 2day workshop and the program end with a conflict. A conflict not amongst the participants but rather within each member of the group. The conflict we all experience when a circle successfully closes and it is time to say goodbye. The joy we experienced, shared, learned, lived through and the sorrow that exists in every ending, every farewell, every goodbye... A false sense of conflict... because joy and sorrow don't fight each other, they can coexist and usually they do coexist, paving the ground for something new, different, unexpected to emerge. And that is what conflict means in a group, a valuable opportunity for many different ideas to coexist, paving the way for evolution, to innovation, to change.

And like that we said goodbye. We recognized and respected each other's diversity. We are grateful for that diversity because it gave us the opportunity to individually grow and evolve.

**Evaggellia Kiriakou**, Psychologist, Vocational Guidance Consultant

FREE  
EXPRESSION**Anxiety, peeling that onion**

"Pain means to become beauty and if the pain persists, it is because it sculpts the shape"  
Paul Koutroufinis

Most of all, I wish we could talk now, but what separates us, maybe, is the screen, the "pen" and "paper". Check again if it unites us. But most of all it is the pain, the pain brings us together, the pain that we share not the one that we don't talk about.

Pain means to become beauty and if the pain persists, it is because it sculpts the shape. This shape of your beauty; and when you see it in your eyes, you praise every moment you hurt and only then you will know! While you avoid it with postponements, shame and fear, although it is human, you are filled with the anxiety of avoiding the pain. You fill the glass of your fear and you drink again and again.

I know you are afraid that something bad is going to happen to you, that your kids might get sick, that your partner might leave you, that you might lose your job, that you might get sick and then what will happen to your people that this might, and might, and might will happen till you reach your limits.

The unspoken pain, the one that remains mute, becomes and it is the fear of pain, and that fear becomes anxiety for the fear and that anxiety becomes a headache, a tense stomach, raised pulse, cold and salty sweat, numb hands, tense shoulders and then it becomes isolation, sleeplessness and sadness.

This ugliness, that sometimes becomes bad mood and sometimes anger towards those you believe don't hurt as much as you, is a form of ugliness of the form of denial. Your heart is the only one who knows it, as you feel obligated to hide it in the shadows of an artificial beauty, sometimes in the gym, sometimes at the bar, sometimes at the workplace.

The ugly duckling will become a swan when he grows up, when he'll mature. Maturing not by the years of constant repetition of the same patterns but with the sense that any effort to escape comes about, without him being aware, without me being aware of that, that I try to avoid. But can I learn how?

Can I stand for just one moment when I realize that I'm confused? Can I stop and wonder what am I doing and not what is happening to me? Who is chasing me and not why I can't make it? To ask myself genuinely without excuses why I hold my breath, why my breathing is shallow and weak, what makes me chew my words, who forces me to speak so quickly, who does not understand me, who am I trying to convince? Why do I clench my stomach for, who tightens it up, who forces me to stand with my shoulders bent, who tightens my neck, who is hurting who?

And the answer is that I chase myself, I force myself, and I hurt me. Then the first mask will fall. Then you start peeling the onion, because the "other" or the situation is not to blame.

You have already learned from your experience and not because some psychologists or a great author on the 10 steps towards happiness told

you.

You learned from experience that, if you stop for a minute aware of yourself, you will not avoid that first contact with yourself. Because your body is the irrefutable witness of your existence and because it is not thinking it tells you only the truth. Usually what thinks, often can lie. It can lie without being aware of it lying, since what we think of things, even when we describe them, it refers to our perception of them. Now how can I recognize, with simple thinking, the reality, the solution to my problem or how can I approach the truth. Is that possible, when the pattern I have created lead to the tense stomach? Can I use the same way to solve it?

I have unknowingly created a series of perceptions, believes that I obey in my way of life; I clench my stomach, filled with anxiety.

This is why I return to the body, the substance of true interaction between what I am and what I project.

Slowly as the story of your life unfolds, step by step, awareness by awareness you will discover. You will learn what, I don't know why, I'm not you.

This road is not a lonely one, as a lot of gurus might suggest, it is a companionate road. The lonely road, most of the times

it is the road of fantasy, as, in introspection, you are the one that looks onto you, it is the same process as before, the one when you are the one who hurts yourself. It is healthier and true to view yourself in me, and me, to answer you that I am me and not you or who you project on me that you think that I am. In this way we both have the chance that someday you will become you and I will become me, and then we will truly be together.

The pain you share is cut in half and the joy you share becomes double. Try to speak not about things or facts, I don't want to listen about other people, talk to me about you, because I care about you as much as I want you to care about me.

I know that it is difficult and sometimes you hesitate. I understand that you feel stressed every time you feel your throat clench, every time you hesitate. It is human to feel ashamed, it is human to be guarded, and it is a way to protect yourself from the frustration you will feel when you think that I might not understand you or that I might judge you. But measure me again and again and you will see that I might feel ashamed for possibly the same reasons.

So let's talk about our reservation. The reservation that separates us is the one that brings us together. Stand across of me and see how I hesitate, see how awkward I am, how nervously I move my hand as I play with my keys, see how my smile is frozen and how disruptively I will ask you something about the kids or the weather. Stand across of me and see how I try to hide my anxiety every time I don't know what to say, stand across of me and listen how much I say without saying anything about me, listen to the rhythm of my abrupt breathing, and my voice that constantly changes tone, stand across of me and feel my awkwardness as I avoid your glance every time you ask me as how I am doing. Stand across of me and tell me do you see yourself? If the answer is yes, think, do you feel more ashamed than I do? If the answer is no then think of the times you felt ashamed and then you will be able to feel me.

Now we are a step closer to each other and turned the anxiety of our revelation to a vital energy that flows between our eyes.

I think that my shoulders relaxed and my breathing is in an easier, less tiring





process. We, condescendingly, smile to each other, more understanding since we don't care to hide from each other. I am ready and you are ready to share our stories, we are interested to listen and be heard, and what we share are human stories, our own. You are not scared because now you know that I am scared too. I am not scared anymore because I know that you are scared too. See how together we made fear a companion. Our interest warms our belly and expands to our breathing space; we let the weight become emotion. Your face looks alive, full and whatever rolls

down your cheeks, it cleans up your eyes and I'm your witness here and you are my witness. We warm the space with our presence and this warmth is beauty.

Look at me with your clear eyes do I look as beautiful as you look to me? It's not you, it's not me, it is the beauty!

**Pavlos Koutroufinis**, *Psychotherapist, Trained in Gestalt therapy, lives and works in Nafplion.*

## Gestalt Foundation channel on YouTube

Did you find interesting some of the Gestalt Foundation lectures in IANOS but you couldn't, for whatever reason attend them?

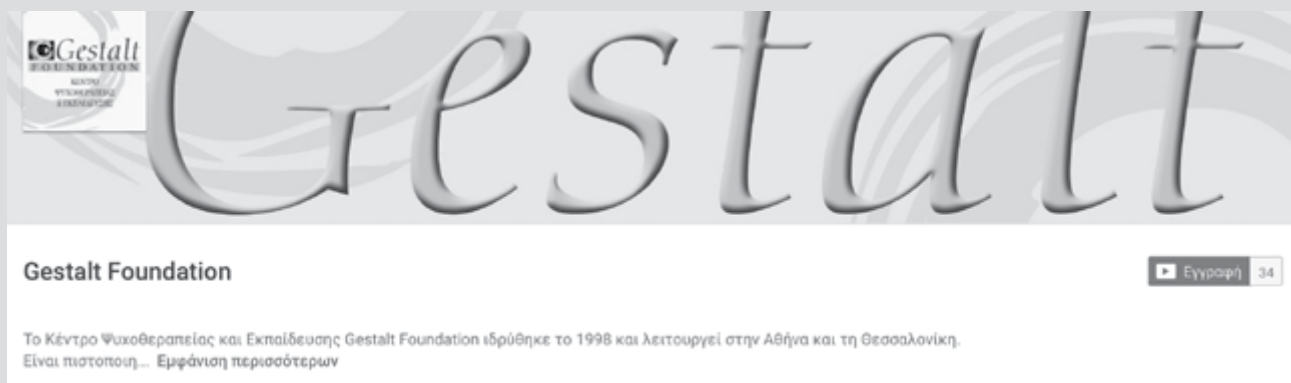
Now you can enjoy the video of these lectures. Gestalt Foundation welcomes you to its own channel!

Type Gestalt Foundation on YouTube and you can enter our channel where you can find all the lectures given in the last 3 years at the IANOS cultural center both in Thessalonica and Athens. Utilize this new source of information, knowledge, experience...

This of course doesn't mean that your presence in our venue is not necessary... on the contrary...

Still we will update our channel with our new activities!!!

Stay tuned!



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