



Gestalt NEWS Foundation

INFORMATIVE AND COMMUNICATIVE SIX-MONTH ISSUE OF GESTALT FOUNDATION
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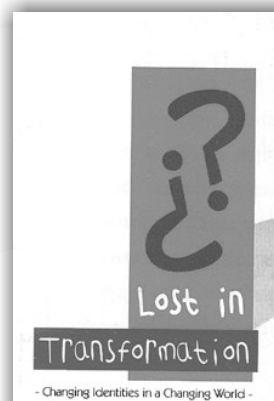
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10th EUROPEAN CONFERENCE

9-12 September 2010 - Berlin

Of the EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION for GESTALT THERAPY (EAGT)

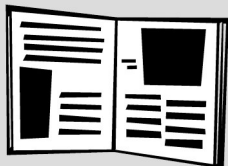
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09. - 12. September
2010 in Berlin/Germany

10th Conference of the
European Association
for Gestalt Therapy -
EAGT

Organisation/Host:
Deutsche Vereinigung für
Gestalttherapie e.V. -
DVG



Those of you who wish to
contribute to future issues are
most welcomed! Please contact
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Express your interest in
participating or simply share with
us your opinion or ideas!

**We are always interested in
hearing from you!**



EAGT

Editorial

The 13th Gestalt Foundation newsletter is now in your hands, with old

and new stories; most likely this is the last time it reaches you in this "format".

This issue contains articles informing you about our participation in the 10th EAGT European Conference in Berlin, our new collaboration schemes in Thessaly, as well as our regular columns of book reviews and correspondence from our trainees and graduates.

Furthermore, faithful to our tradition of not remaining static and always trying for the best, this issue celebrates a new collaboration with the "Ianos" culture franchise. This collaboration came to fruition through reciprocal recognition and appreciation both parties have for one another and our common values: the want for constant development, creativity and making a contribution to our fellow citizens.

In the spirit of this collaboration, GFNews is published with the support of "Ianos" culture franchise, and will include a list of the 12 best-selling books in the "Essays-Studies-Literature" category (which includes psychology and psychotherapy books) in every issue.

Apart from working together for GFNews, we have also planned to host two open lectures at "Ianos" events hall, at Aristotelous 7, in Thessaloniki (18th of March 2011 / 19:00 "Let's talk about Gestalt therapy" by Katia Chatzilakou and 8th of April 2011/ 19:00 "From Distraction To Concentration... from Figure to Ground" by Antonia Kostantinidou).



I hope you enjoy this issue and don't forget to keep sending us your texts on the theory of Gestalt therapy or personal messages from your participation in events organised by the Gestalt Foundation.

May we have a good autumn till we meet again in the spring!

With friendly regards,

Antonia Kostantinidou

Antonia Konstantinidou is a Social and Clinical Psychologist (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki), Gestalt psychotherapist, trainer and supervisor, Member of EAGT, ECP Holder.

She is one of the co-founders of Gestalt Foundation and one of the resident members of the training program. She lives and works in Thessaloniki and Athens where she practices her profession since 1994.

"RELATIONAL APPROACHES IN GESTALT THERAPY"

[Jacobs L. & Hycner R, (eds) (2009). Relational Approaches in Gestalt Therapy, New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.]

By Konstantinos Kostas

Social Worker

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The question "What is that healing element effective on humans both in their everyday lives and during the process of psychotherapy?" has not ceased to engage therapists who want to reflect on their work. Each School of thought approaches the question in the light of its own views, which change with the times and the prevailing circumstances. In recent decades there has been a shift of interest as regards this critical therapeutic element from insight or awareness or consciousness, etc., to the manner of relating and encountering one another, leading to a big debate on relationality.

The term "relational psychoanalysis" was coined in the context of psychoanalysis in the '80s (Mitchell, 1988). There have also been discussions on relational psychotherapy (UKCP, 2010), without, however, any specific reference to a particular approach used by therapists who recognise that the way in which their clients relate to others is the fundamental factor affecting the way the clients perceive themselves. At the same time, the need for interpersonal merge, to borrow one of Erich Fromm's terms, is a primary human motive; indeed this is the need that makes people seek therapy.

The way in which gestalt therapy approaches this question is the main topic of the book *Relational Approaches in Gestalt Therapy*, which we are recommending in this article. It is a collection of texts, edited by Lynne Jacobs and Richard Hycner. It is worth noting that the editors have co-authored one of the most important books of modern Gestalt therapy, *The Healing Relationship in Gestalt Therapy: A Dialogic/ Self Psychology Approach* (1995). Hycner has also penned *Between Person and Person* (1991), a very interesting analysis and assimilation of Martin Buber's phi-

book recommended

losophy on relationality from the point of gestalt therapy, which, is a favourite reference book of mine.

Relational Approaches includes 12 essays divided into three sections. Section I is called "Overview and Explorations" and comprises three articles. Section II is "The Crucible of the Consulting Room" and contains four texts written about the challenges, risks, openings and opportunities of the therapeutic relationship. Section III is titled "A Wider Embrace: Groups and Organisations" and contains five articles on relational gestalt in complex systems.

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GESTALT FOUNDATION ACTION IN THESSALY

“Central Greece calling!” ... “Thessaly calling!”... It sounds like a title from a local newspaper, from a radio show, like a call that gets lost deep in local radio waves, a low but steady voice... it's true, then; the heart of Gestalt beats in Thessaly, too, in Larissa, to be exact.

We took our first steps last winter. We contacted social and educational institutions and associations; we planned meetings, made proposals, discussed. Our first collaboration scheme was with the Technical Educational Institution and, more precisely, with the Centre for Counselling Psychology which caters for students from the Institution. The Gestalt Foundation, for its part, was in charge of staffing the department with psychologists the centre's trainee psychotherapists. That way, trainees who live in Larissa and Volos now have the opportunity to do their practical placement in Thessaly, providing T.E.I. students with psychological support and counselling.

This is how the supervisory team was born...a team of diverse people; a palette of warm spring colours in the middle of winter!!!

This year, after a restful summer (I hope), the team “strikes again” with new collaboration schemes, such as that with the Larissa YMCA, as well as the Panthessalic Association of people who suffer from Multiple Sclerosis (MS). Concerning the YMCA, women trainees will provide counselling and psychological support to the women who approach the centre. As for the association of people who suffer from MS, the team is going to organise and create a series of educational seminars and a supervisory team of volunteers who will be paying home visits

to patients. They will also continue providing counselling and psychological support to T.E.I. students.

While writing about the actions of the Gestalt Foundation and my own supervisory team, past moments and feelings come to mind from the years I, too, used to be a trainee and was a member of similar teams.... *I pause for a bit and smile in front of the computer screen... My eyes can no longer see what's written in front of me, they' got lost behind the words... “sat in the teams' space in the office in Thessaloniki, we discuss, sat in a circle, we organise, we disagree and then agree, we supply one another with energy and ideas; we meet our “I”s through the “us”; we're moved; we cry and we laugh, together...until later!!!” “Together” - what a magical word, well and truly.*

“-Come

-Why?

-So we can chase a cloud together

-and if we catch it?

-We'll sink deep inside it and nobody will ever see us again

-Come blow the world's biggest balloon with me, together

-and if I run out of breath?

-I'll give you mine...”

Eugenios Trivizas, (“Together”)

I'd like to thank Gestalt Foundation with all my heart for their trust and support and the girls from the supervisory team in Larissa for the moments we have lived through and will live through together. May we have a good journey!!!

Yanna Kalota, MSc Counseling Psychology,
Gestalt Psychotherapist , graduate of Gestalt Foundation



While reading the book I paused at many points that attracted my interest. I will, however, only refer to those I find outstanding:

A. Relationality.

1. “What do we mean by the term relational and in what ways is gestalt relational?” asks Stuart Stawman (pp.11-35). His answer is that gestalt therapy is primarily relational and, indeed, pioneering in the field. He analyses how the theoretical system of gestalt assimilated the accumulating knowledge about humans being born to be in a relationship; in other words, humans are relational by nature. This development follows four stages, according to Stawman, who calls the stages waves:

Stage 1: Relationality is expressed in the concept of contact between an organism and the environment. The central notion is that of the Self. The core of the Self is this fundamental fact, i.e. that the Self determines and is determined by the contact between an organism and the environment. The Self is a system of contacts. It is perceived as 'being' and 'becoming', as 'structure' and 'function'.

Stage 2: Relationality is expressed through the assimilation of 'Buberian' Philosophy, which perceives a human being as a primarily relational being (In the beginning is the relation): the I-Thou relation.

Stage 3: Relationality is included in the debated about the I-Thou relation, against the ground of the development of the Inter-subjective Psychology of the Self (Kohut).

Stage 4: The ground of Relationality. Human experience is determined by culture, language and biological substratum/matrix, the three elements that comprise the relational ground. According to Stawman, these parameters predetermine or determine the manner in which we connect/bond and interact with others. The question that arises from the concept of relational ground is the degree of freedom there is or might be created.

What is particularly highlighted by Stawman is that gestalt therapy expresses in a timeless manner something that is at the very foundation of its theory, i.e. that to be is to be with, a phrase attributed to Martin Heidegger and Gabriel Marcel.

2. Yontef, in his text (pp.37-50) underlines that gestalt therapy is systematically/consistently relational in its theory and methodology. Relationality emerges from three areas/regions:

a. Existential Phenomenology: reality and perception are interactive co-constructs; they comprise a relation between the person perceiving and that which is being perceived.

b. The Field Theory: All events are considered a function of the relation between numerous interactive forces: no

event takes place in a void.

c. Dialectic Existentialism... For Yontef, relational gestalt therapy has partially been developed due to the increasing awareness and reflection on shame; this, in turn, has raised awareness concerning the relational aspects of the therapeutic process.

3. The verse by Holderlin «But where there is danger, there salvation grows, too» (1996:145) is in perfect unison with the article by Lynne Jacobs (pp.131-169). Based on the article, «salvation grows» in one's readiness to encounter the other; in the sense of transcendence and response, on the part of the therapist, to the need of the patient/in-valid for Presence - a truly tough task ... In the Crucible of the Consulting Room, there are moments when the therapist 'sweats'. In any case, the essay in question is read in one breath.

B. Interpretation in Gestalt Therapy

Do gestalt therapists need to interpret, despite Perls' explicit «no-no», i.e. «Never-never interpret»; the answer given by Frank M. Staemmler is affirmative (pp. 65-110) starting from the hermeneutic and phenomenological philosophy. According to Staemmler what is particularly important is the readiness/willingness of the therapist to tolerate/endure uncertainty so that it might be feasible to comprehend the truth of the other; this is a concept echoing Winnicott.

9-12 September 2010 - Berlin

10th EUROPEAN CONFERENCE

of the European Association for Gestalt Therapy (EAGT)

Dimitra Hantziara

BSc(Hons)Psychology, trained in Gestalt psychotherapy and in EMDR trauma therapy

At the end of the previous, 9th European EAGT conference that took place in Athens in 2007, it was decided to hold the next meeting in Berlin 3 years later. The title of the 10th conference would be: «Lost in transformation: Changing Identities in a Changing World».

How can we deal with the obvious changes we witness every day and how do they affect our way of life and work?

What reasons and what skills allow us to shape our identities and act in an environment that keeps changing - In an environment of constant flow and acceleration, always complex and unpredictable?

These are some of the questions the conference organisers raised. Now, nearly a month since the conference ended, I don't know whether I have any answers (I don't even know if that was the point of the conference). I do know, however, that, in Berlin, most of us started debating these questions. Personally, I'm in a process of trying to place myself and find my place in the current scheme of things. When



speaking with people who were there, we often refer to topics that revolve around these questions and our experience of the conference.

Now that I've started to write down my experience of the conference, I want to mention that I enjoy participating in and attending conferences, so this piece of work reflects my own point of view. Conferences offer me a distinct opportunity to see and hear new things. To see the way "gestalt" has evolved, since I believe that "gestalt" is a living organism that develops, not something fixed or dogmatic, even when I hear things I already know, yet seen from different points of view. It's a remarkable opportunity to experience this in the midst of different backgrounds and cultures.

Participating in a conference is quite different from attending a seminar. The goal is not to try and resolve an issue, but to raise awareness and discuss various viewpoints about it. There is food for thought and opportunities to engage in dialogue with people who may share your experiences or who may have had completely different ones. Attending the lectures is equally interesting, as is mingling with people during discussion sessions or at coffee breaks and social events.

One thing that stood out at this conference was the aspect of social concern in most lectures and workshops. While wandering through conference halls and attending lectures, I always spotted people discussing the "universal crisis", (everyone keeping an eye on affairs in Greece); people were talking about new phenomena, cultural differences and similarities, social responsibilities and the need to find new ways to manage these new circumstances.

I listened to and attended lectures, discussions and meetings, where I felt inspired, happy or interested; there were others where I got bored, I disagreed, I felt angry. This was my luggage when I came back feeling fulfilled. I soon let go of any expectations, demands and illusions I might have had about the occasion or the people around me and I enjoyed what was going on. What I gained from the conference is the human scale of everything.

The prevailing issues during the conference revolved around the shaping of one's identity, both at a personal and a social level, in relation to changes occurring due to the modern way of life. There were also discussions on the course and place of "gestalt" during these changes and the supervision and training of therapists. Many lectures were concerned with trauma at a personal level, and how this may affect the shaping of one's social identity. Furthermore, a very interesting part of this conference concerned the lectures and workshops that presented creative ways of approaching certain issues, through dancing, the body, and elements from other methods.

The Greek participation was quite large at this conference. The presentations and workshops had a high number of participants and received positive feedback. I remember that during the conference and the gala dinner, there were comments that those attending were Greeks, Norwegians and numerous Germans. In total, out of the 124 workshops and lectures, 15 were conducted by Greeks. It is very pleasant to see that we have our own place in this community. I believe that a big part of this involvement was due to the fact that the previous conference had taken place in Athens. It was quite common when meeting new people to start a conversation with





describing experiences "from Athens". They would relate their positive thoughts on how well the meeting had been organised, their amazement at the fact that most of the preparation and management had been undertaken by volunteers and, of course, everybody mentioned the 'Dionysian' atmosphere of the gala dinner.

Another topic that certainly came up every time we mentioned we were Greek was that of the financial crisis. Most were interested in finding out what the situation in our country is like at the moment, both at a social and at a professional level. It surprised me that many thought we woke up one morning and couldn't afford food. Others were suspicious and even aggressive at the thought that "the whole of Europe is working for our benefit" now. Many, however, were eager to find out more about our experiences and gain information.

What characterised the Berlin conference was that music was a way of getting to know other cultures. It was songs from different countries and the audience participating with vocal and rhythmical experimentations that both commenced and, very similarly, ended the conference. During the gala dinner, too, there was music from various places. What took place for those who stayed up until late and saw the end of the event, was a spontaneous process where people from each country would go to the centre of the stage and sing and dance to one of their traditional songs while the rest took part by keeping and supporting the rhythm!

The last day of the conference was a time to say goodbye and decide where the next conference would be held. In 2007, the Athens conference organisers had offered an olive plant to the delegates from Berlin who organised this year's conference. They took care of the plant and will pass it on to the next organisers (true, here in "gestalt" we don't pass on a *scytale* (a baton) but an olive plant). The two candidate cities were Oslo and Krakow. First came the two countries' presentations of their proposals and then came comments concerning their candidacies (proposing topics for the conference, accessibility, capacity concerning the conference's organisation and a reasonable price for the majority of participants). After this engaging process came the participants' vote.

See you all in Krakow, then, in 2013!

The experience in Berlin

10th EAGT Conference (9-12 September 2010)

"If half my heart is here, doctor, the other half's in China..."

We often get lost in the transformation of times. To be exact, we get lost in the translation of that transformation. There were some lovely Chinese in my workshop in Berlin who only smiled and nodded when I asked if they needed some help with the language. Within 2 hours I was certain that 4 out of 5 didn't speak a word of English, despite their smiling. Later, during a break, I wondered what they experienced in the workshop. This was simply a reason for me to remember a poem by Nazim Hikmet put to music by Mikroutsikos; in that song, "back then", the poet hinted at a global ideological unity. That night in my room I felt somewhat bitter. I felt that the very same song, in the transformation of the times, today, could be translated differently. It could express other things. It could mean, for example, that my heart broke. That it split into two. That it was separated from "me" and drifted, taking along with its pieces my very core. I realised that faced with the possibility of such a translation one now needs conscious understanding and vigilance. It is now necessary for me to love it more, and, more importantly, in a different way.



So I can keep it securely and tenderly with "me". That way I'll be able to touch and defend a "different" global unity, one that runs deeper than our racial or ideological differences.

The next day I was different at my workshop; much more "centred" on who I "am" - Much more in tune with my heart. And, of course, much closer to those many different "Others" who honoured me with their presence and confidence.

Petros Theodorou, Gestalt Psychotherapist
October 2010



Continues from p.3

Staemmler illustrates his view with a story by Gabriel Garcia Marquez indicating how prejudice or 'pre-conception' might play a catalytic role in relating to others and their truth. The story is titled: «I only wanted to use a phone» and I want to present a summary of the story summary, because it is of particular interest. This is how the story goes:

A woman is stranded because her car breaks down. She wants to get to the nearest phone and ask for help. The woman hitch-hikes, but time goes by and nobody stops. It starts getting dark, when a vehicle stops and the woman gets in. There are more passengers on the vehicle, but it is dark and she cannot see them. The woman is given a cover and she falls asleep. The vehicle stops and the passengers get out; the woman realises that she is in a psychiatric clinic and the other passengers are inmates at this institution. The woman tells her story to the psychiatrist who receives them the following day: she just wanted to use a phone. The doctor does not believe her, makes his diagnosis and recommends her treatment. The woman tries to convince the staff about her story but in vain. A few weeks later she manages to inform her husband who comes to visit her. The doctor receives him and informs him in every detail about his wife's condition. The husband treats his wife with great sympathy and love and promises he will soon come to visit her (The End).

How different would this story have been if the doctor had not rushed so quickly towards certainty, Staemmler wonders.

Based on Heidegger and, mainly, Gadamer, who was Heidegger's student, Staemmler underlines that it is human nature to try and interpret, comprehend and make sense, thus giving cohesion to one's world. This is not a mere human activity, but a fundamental trait of human existence. In the therapeutic relation, two humans encounter each other; each one brings their own perception of things. The client does not only need the therapist's sympathy and support; on the contrary, s/he needs the therapist's interpretation. The client needs the experience of the therapist-as-the-other. However, it should be clear that this is the way the therapist perceives things rather than the objective and absolute truth.

Staemmler makes some fundamental/basic statements concerning the perception and way of understanding the other; we will conclude this note with some of them:

1. It is impossible not to interpret.
2. The understanding of any situation inevitably starts from a prejudiced point of view or, to put it more mildly, from a pre-conception.
3. Understanding is based on authentic questions.
4. Understanding entails assimilating the other's horizon, which leads to a corresponding expansion of our own horizon.
5. Understanding a person «... is not mere reproduction, but comprises a productive activity». Meaning is not only discovered but also created; and, finally, meaning keeps changing.

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Berlin: Lost in transformation or, in other words, bringing down the wall...

*“And if I can't change,
I recoil.
I go from rooftop to rooftop,
I create peaks,
even though I don't see them.*

*I know one's need
to reach a place,
to place a flag.
And rest on my smallest mound.*

*And I create peaks for it,
and snow,
and inaccessible cliffs,
so it can be an accomplishment,
a labour,
and a glorious triumph,
that small step.»*

(From Rooftop to Rooftop)

But destiny does set up games for us, at times... It looks at us coyly and playfully sticks its tongue out at us... The moment when we thought we had smoothed out our lives, we had managed to plan something in detail, that we had dropped our anchor in a heavenly shore... There! It gives us a push and, while we're still unprepared, it sends us off again onto a new journey. There! It was with such a push that I landed in Berlin, almost “out of the sky” (as my dear Antonia put it).

It is at such times that I think of how certain situations planned in advance may find us unprepared and how, truly, we've been “ready for a while” in circumstances we had hardly ever imagined.

It was like that, then, “almost unprepared yet somewhat ready”, with a foot still lingering over Greece, that I found myself in the city of big contrasts, the city of majestic architecture, museums, cyclists and culture; the city of division, of social decorum, of absolutism; the city of the wall.

How many times, really, have I found myself torn between two or more options, trapped by dilemmas of “black or white”, of “this or that”, by the logic of “nearby or far far away”? How many times have I built my own wall because I couldn't face my other side? How many times have I walked next to my wall, full of hope or fear that it

would fall? And how many times have I resisted a friendly truce or a mere reconciliation?

.....
The Germans were beating the drums at the beginning of the conference, singing... They were beating at my thoughts indefatigably, as if they were persistently trying to make something break...

If you don't shout, I think to myself, no mind will awaken; if you don't beat hard, if you don't use both arms and legs, no wall will come down on its own.

And I kept beating for a while, in an effort to believe it was indeed so.

It was then that their song started softening my psyche, and I wept, hearing "With what spirit, what heart, what desire and passion we lived our life: a mistake! So we changed our life."

.....
"The compass of our lives", was the title of the experiential workshop. I had always had problems with orientation. It almost felt like I had been walking as if dragged behind the needs of others for years. At times I feel I don't know the colour of limitless freedom.

Carmen looked deep into my eyes. Not for long but long enough for her to see through me; long enough for her to talk to me about the loneliness that's hidden in my taking care of others; until she could explain how relieving it can be to allow myself to trust.

Carmen cracked my monotonous orbit around myself. She called on me to open my doors, so that everybody could look inside and see what I have been seeing for years now, all alone.

.....
I looked at Gestalt students, my study-mates, my friends and colleagues. How scientific the Alzheimer group is, how humane the cancer-patient group is, how clean and simple their words sound. No fake seriousness, no self-centredness, and a lot of hard work. That's what a human being, a client, a patient needs, I thought.

That's what I found in all their eyes.

.....
In this journey I learnt not to think (an odd lesson, indeed, to learn at a conference!)

I learnt to give in to evolution, to the change in others, to my own change of course. I learnt how to dive into deep rivers, to swim with others, to enjoy a walk in a strange country with bosom friends.

Not to be afraid to get lost while journeying, that's what I learnt.

Without a compass. With trust and faith.

Because that's the only way humans really move on.

Ellie Freggidou, M.Sc.

Psychologist

Gestalt Psychotherapy Graduate



Presentations by the Gestalt Foundation in Berlin, 10-09-2010

All the experiences I've had so far at Gestalt conferences have been similarly characterised by surprise and enthusiasm towards everything new and original presented by colleagues and trainers. At this year's conference it was us who were innovative. It was our turn - the two teams of colleagues from the Gestalt Foundation of Thessaloniki - to present our work, for the first time, to the entire community. The first team presented their work with cancer patients and the second team their work with Alzheimer's patients and their caregivers.

Each presentation was unique and had its own personal note. My co-workers and I, working voluntarily with cancer patients, decided to present our own growth, our transformation, according to the conference's title due to our experiences and contact with people who live with or have survived cancer. Each one of us gave her own personal account relating to cancer, what existential issues may have been awakened by such a choice, the feelings generated and the way they were handled and, finally, how this process shaped us both as human beings and as professionals, always with the help of our supervising team. At the end of the presentation we felt we had made a strong impact which, as it turned out, hadn't only been touching us. People's eyes were fixed on us; there was a deadly silence and no apparent response. It wasn't until later that we realised our audience needed time to absorb and let all they had heard settle, as we received all our feedback outside the presentation hall and at various instances. All comments related to similar things: the originality and innovation, the brilliant way the programme was structured and taught and the range of emotions brought up by the work that has

been done up to date. Silence can, after all, be so eloquent, sometimes.

The Alzheimer team presentation filled many eyes with tears. The members presented the results of a study they conducted focusing on husbands who take care of their wives who suffer from dementia. These men's transformation from "Topdogs", businessmen and heads of their families to their wives' caregivers, now responsible for the household, cleaning and all the daily chores a woman would undertake, as well as becoming their spouse's nurses, was extremely shocking, yet captivating. And the fact that these specific circumstances in their lives allowed them to explore new options, feelings and behaviour patterns they would have otherwise considered feminine gave a lot of food for thought.

That was the reason their presentation ended with a classic Greek lullaby sung a *cappella* by our colleague Marina Theofilou and translated into English for the audience. Her soft and tender voice brought tears to people's eyes, but also a need for reflection on "innocent" lullabies mourning songs which relax our children and send them to sleep, yet also distinguish between their masculine and feminine traits. Our colleagues used a simple and sweet technique to bridge the polarity.

We left Berlin with a taste of happiness, pride and satisfaction and returned to Greece to continue our work and efforts. Who knows? Maybe we'll have new and richer material to contribute to the next conference in Krakow.

Until then, good luck to all of us!

Vally Hatzibougia,

Graduate of Gestalt Foundation of Thessaloniki



CORRESPONDENCE...



My dear client,

Today is our first meeting and I'm scared. I'm scared that I'll say or do something wrong and I'll hurt you, but I'm more scared that you'll hurt me because you'll think I'm not good enough for you and you'll reject me. In order for you to accept me (and, thus, for me to accept me, too), I need to have the best solution to anything that's bothering you. I need to help you no matter what and, if you ever refuse my help, you'll have done it because I'm not good enough. I respect you, I care for you, I think of you. But, mostly, I'm scared of you. I blame me for anything you say, I condemn me for anything I say. But do I really see you? Who is it that I see sat across me? How can I believe that a person who is meeting me for the first time, for a mere 5 minutes, is expecting so much from me? How can I be so necessary for their "salvation"? How can I be responsible for the life they want to lead?

I came to this meeting, then, not as an adult, but like I was as a child, and I wronged us both. You, because I didn't really see you, yet I sat across you being certain that you needed me and arrogant enough to claim I knew more about you than you and me, because I

put my life's motif between us and forgot to trust me, to support and defend me and I demanded, yet again, the impossible: to be perfect.

My dear client,

It's been a few months now since our first meeting and my fear has turned into anxiety. I'm discovering a new way to stand across you, one that suits me better. It allows me space for just the two of us, yet I'm still not entirely sure if this, my way, this time, is enough. I try more rather than just be. I try not to doubt me at every moment, I try to trust me, I try to not want to have control, I try to follow you. I try to see you, to hear you, to have empathy with you and to stay with what to my honour - you reveal. At times I manage, at other my arrogance and fear beat me. But it doesn't last long. I come back to us and I try again. I certainly feel more free, more honest, more fair, more authentic and human. There are times when I get angry at you, even tired; times when I don't understand you and I don't want to meet you. There are times when you make my day, when I'm grateful you exist and I long for you feelings of mine that at least no longer scare me. I don't blame me for them, I don't demand of me to change them. I happily accept

them and continue trying to find myself, so we can really, truly meet.

A year later I learnt that what we need isn't my knowledge, but my presence. To be here, for you and you alone, with all my senses tuned in to what we experience. You don't need me to be infallible (it might have been such a demand that brought you here in the first place), but to accept my mistakes and be honest towards you; to trust you and to not hide behind a part that hinders our contact.

Now you lead our dance. I'll help you, if you want me to, I'll console you if you need it and, if not, I will still "exist". I'll irritate you, if I have to, even if I fear your anger about it just a bit.

I still need your development to feel happy (that might never change) and I still feel my chest tighten every time you make a painful realisation. Who knows, maybe I haven't yet accepted that I contribute to the pain that will lead you to accomplishment. I can't answer that yet; maybe you'll have taught me the answer by next year. Because, in the end I don't know who helps who more...

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