



Our Deepest Wish

Gestalt Process Writing to C...

Creative Gestalt

Writing Program



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Content



Dear reader
Creating Contact & Change

Part One

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Creative Gestalt Writing Program



Introduction

Life is a gift. Unwrap it.

Dear Reader,

How are you? Where are you? How do you feel?
What are you longing for? Are you happy?
Do you think I am asking difficult questions?
You do not know what to answer?

Of course you are right.

The questions I ask are not easy to answer.

It is why we invite you to join this program .

I realized that we can only find answers
if we live life and feel what it is about.

It means entering risky and exciting adventures,
if you are curious and not easy to please.

I have been wondering about life since I was three
and the Nazi's occupied my country.

After the invasion my father came back from the front with wrecked nerves.

What is your story? What are you wondering about?

What_happened? How was it for him? Why_did it happen?

Why do people hurt each other in such a cruel way?

I became angry because no one could answer me.

But as a child I did have my direct line with God.
He did speak with me and told me I should go on living and find out for myself.

My life has been and still is quite an adventure. Writing gives us the possibility to share what can be important for others too. In this program we will follow your own thoughts, ideas, feelings, fears and your quest for love. You will be invited to explore your own dreams, feelings, fears and longings by writing and connecting with your own wisdom. No one else can do it for you. Please do not think you have to accomplish a heavy task. Look at life as a gift. Being alive means having the right to be happy, the right to love and be loved, specially when life is painful. If you can connect with your pain, sorrow and anger you can also connect with your joy and love. Feeling that life hurts is a way to healing and being able to feel that life is also gentle and generous
if you are willing to receive IT.

My guide in this creative process is
Gestalt therapist Joseph Zinker* who states:
*'The person who dares to create, to break boundaries,
not only partakes of a miracle, but also comes to realize that in his/her
process of being s/he is a miracle.'*



The C Factor

This program is about creating a high C factor by using C words like:



Creation, Contact,
Change, Communication,
Commitment, Chance,
Community, Connection,
Curiosity, Compassion,
Continuity, Consciousness
qualities we cannot develop without
Conflict, Confrontation,
Control, Courage and Crisis.

Hot Fire of Groups



To create the C factor we need the Hot Fires of groups.
To become porcelain a pot made of clay needs the hot fire of the oven.
Just to stand in the sun is not enough.
It is the same for people.
To stoke the fires we organize groups
like conferences, workshops, love affairs, families,
businesses, power struggles, parties, classes,
theatre plays, concerts, demonstrations, sport matches, teams.
Staying in the heat of the group allows us to grow
and become a better human being.

What? How? Why?

A group is a learning community where we can experiment with becoming aware, making contact and change.

We can explore the triangle 'Content-Process-Meaning' by using the words What? How? Why?

Content: WHAT are the facts?

Process: HOW is it to experience this?

Meaning: WHY do we need to experience it?



Higher levels

The steps we will follow in this program are based on the idea that groups are learning communities, where people gather to solve personal and interpersonal problems. We will focus on how it is to be part of a group coming where we come from in relation to the roles we 'play' in life. How is it to be in the role of a reader, teacher, therapist, trainer, student, presenter, client, writer, artist, mother, father, daughter, son?

What do we need, what is our aim?

How is it to realize that learning implies changing behaviour, not only for the sake of adaptation, of adjustment, but for a movement toward higher levels of awareness and self-actualization.

Why a group?

Without a group people cannot function. We are born in a group, we live in groups, no matter how. A group is a unique system, a conglomeration of energies exuded by individual members and interrelated in a systematic pattern. We need it to let the growth take place. As a facilitator I will guide you from adventure to adventure, from hot fire to hot fire. Longing to communicate, create contact, change, commitment and to connect with our inner wisdom in relation to the Other we will explore by talking, writing or/and drawing What, How and Why. This kind of talking and writing connects us with our undercurrent: our feelings, intuition, dreams, wisdom, longings, fears, crazy ideas that are not easy to express in a rational way.

Logos and Gnosis



The Greeks have two words for Knowledge: Logos and Gnosis.

Logos is what can be learned through education and scientific inquiry. Gnosis is what can be known through intuitive feeling and spiritual or mystical experiences. Logos is rational, objective, logical, expressible in words or numbers.

Gnosis is subjective, non-rational, nonverbal, expressible through images, poetry, metaphor, music and is often un-provable.

Every sacred experience is subjective: the sense of oneness with the universe, or with the sacred, a timeless moment filled with beauty, spiritual insight and grace is gnosis. The words in this book mostly emerged the gnosis way. They are meant to stimulate you to find your own gnosis path and experience the transformative power of giving your soul a voice.

What can you expect?

By participating you will learn more about your own creative power, your longing to make contact, to connect, to change, to express your commitment, to satisfy your curiosity and you will learn about the magic, the mysteries, the dark sides and the chances groups offer you.

How is it for you?

It is not about achieving, yet in the back of our heads we long to create a work of art like a book, a painting, a stage play, a poem, a song, a film, a photo or whatever work of art we dream of. In the program you will find numerous guidelines and questions to bring you into motion.

To understand what your life is about you can dance, write, paint, sing or sculpt. Only reading about adventures is not enough, you have to **DO** something yourself.

Why should you?



To really know why we have to function in a group, we have to sit together to listen, to talk, to breath, to feel, to look and see, we have to learn to trust our intuition and experience the moment we can say 'AHA, now I know why', now I feel contact, now I am touched, now I feel commitment, compassion and now I know why we need conflict, confrontation, control and courage.

Now I know why we had to come together and do IT. Now we can enjoy being in the moment together. By communicating we will make contact, express our commitment, take chances, connect with our inner wisdom and each other, satisfy our curiosity, grow and change, create our own communities, become more happy and a better human being, who will be able to make people around us more happy and more aware of how they can do the same. It will be like a snowball that keeps rolling and rolling and will become bigger and more important as long as it is in the movement and as long as there is snow. Once you decide to become part of this ball you will know why we need each other, why we need communities and why we need a high C factor.

**The Foundation of the
Creative Gestalt Writing Program
Basic Needs connected to Basic Fears
and Demands Life poses**



Basic Fears

- The Fear of Existing
- The Fear of being Abandoned
- The Fear of Guilt and Punishment
- The fear of not being Good Enough

Basic Needs

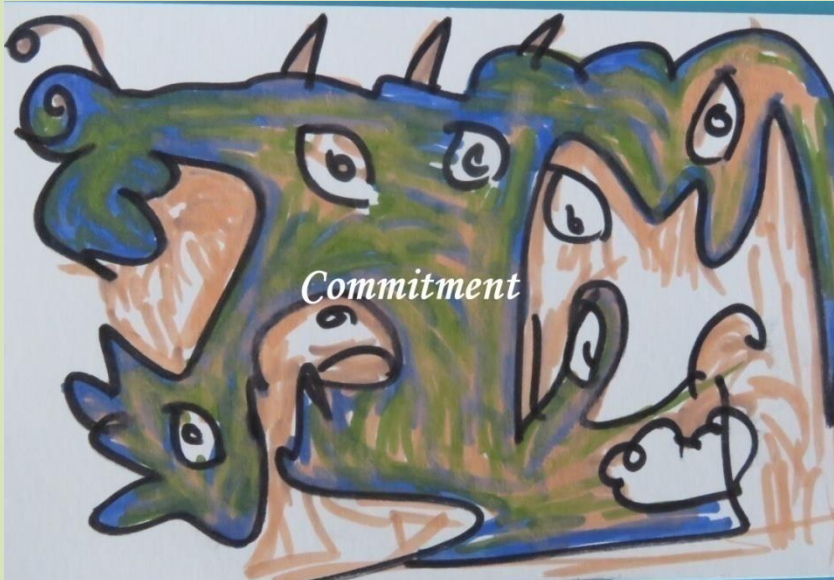
- To have a Place and Belong
- Nourishment, Warmth, Loving Attention, Care
- Support, Stimulants, Encouragement, Trust, Safety
- To be seen and accepted for who we are

Demands

- say Yes to life
- stand on our own feet
- become autonomous
- become who we are instead of the wo/man we thought we should be

1. Life is a relational adventure

Writing is a perfect way to communicate and make contact.



Making contact

Relationships are vital in our lives, that is why I became a therapist. I sincerely believe that life for human beings is about relating to each other. In general women will agree with me. For men it can be different, because – again in general – men are more focused on goals. This is an interesting and frustrating difference. A lot of misunderstandings between women and men can be understood better if we knew. And if we do not, eternal battles for power can be the result. I chose to become a Gestalt therapist because Gestalt taught me the importance of communicating and making contact.

Not a simple thing to do. Commitment is needed.

Willingness to invest time, lots of time. To do this work we have to learn to be in the here and now, otherwise there is no chance of meeting the other.

We have to be willing to communicate and make contact again and again and again. To think or say: I did it yesterday already, why should I do it today, is of no use. Nobody else can do it for us.

Of course we are free not to make contact, but the question is if we have the choice to do it or not. If not we can become isolated and lonely.

Games people play

By working for more than twenty years with ongoing groups I learned about games people play to avoid contact. Talking without listening, keeping silent by not talking, complaining about no matter what, crying when we are angry, bullying when we are scared, being nice when we do not feel it and thinking we do not belong to a group because we are different. The moment a group comes together the games start. Looks go to and fro, thoughts and feelings present themselves, vibes will fill the room. Even when no words are spoken, all kinds of things happen. In each head suppositions are formed, in each body fears are raised, irritations and longings are born. The question is what will be expressed? What we think, what we feel, what we long for, what we are afraid of, what we find irritating?

Time is limited



For a long time I was convinced I would only be noticed when I talked. This is a misunderstanding. The silent ones often have more influence on the group than the talkers, because they are more mysterious and therefore more intriguing. My first aim as a facilitator in a group is always to hear every participant speak. I long to know what people come for. Not that this is possible but nevertheless I like to have an idea, because I am afraid if aggression and fear are held back they can break free at any moment and cannot be dealt with adequately. The problem is that time is often limited, but what I learned as a facilitator is that behind all the games there is the big need for attention. Genuine attention for who we are, that is to say. We don't want to be patronized, dominated, advised, but we do want to be seen and truly heard.

Attention

The text that follows was written in a group where we not only communicated by talking but also by writing. After sharing what kept us busy in our day to day lives, we took time to meditate and

found that we all were longing for attention. As a facilitator I always participate in the writing:

'Attention is the big thing I am deeply longing for and at the same time I am afraid of it. Attention was scarce in my life. That is to say attention for my soul was not an every day nourishment.

Attention in the form of food, care, clothes, cleanliness was always there. I cherish that, I could not do without. But this big longing for soul attention made me vulnerable and a bit strange in the eyes of grownups, like my mother who was always laughing so no one would see how unhappy she was.

Attention for my soul I hoped to get from my father, because I knew he could give it if he wanted to. But usually he was busier with his own need for attention and just let me be without bothering. While writing I worry if I am not in the victim role. I don't want to accuse my parents. I want to be responsible for my own life and my own need for attention without waiting for it from whoever has the goodwill to see me. I realize that taking care of getting the attention I need is almost a fulltime job.

Giving what you need



To give attention is my profession. I am an example of someone who is good at giving what she has missed most herself. Getting attention for me is a matter of honour as I am too proud to just ask for attention, I want to have something to show, to offer. Attention being the reward that I deserve. I think it is not easy for me to realize that I can be blackmailed into giving attention to little boys disguised as men who suffered and are longing for a mother, so I can relate to them. Longing for a mother I have long thought of as being childish. Who needs a mother who patronises you and always knows better anyway. Attracting attention by doing something like singing a song or doing a little dance was not rewarded in my family. Once in a while on a special occasion yes, but in day to day life you better have acted normally. High marks were praised though. Is that why I decided I better work my ass off to have a place in society, rather than take things more easily and make room for the good mother in me who cuddles, takes care, asks how you are, makes tea and has time to listen.

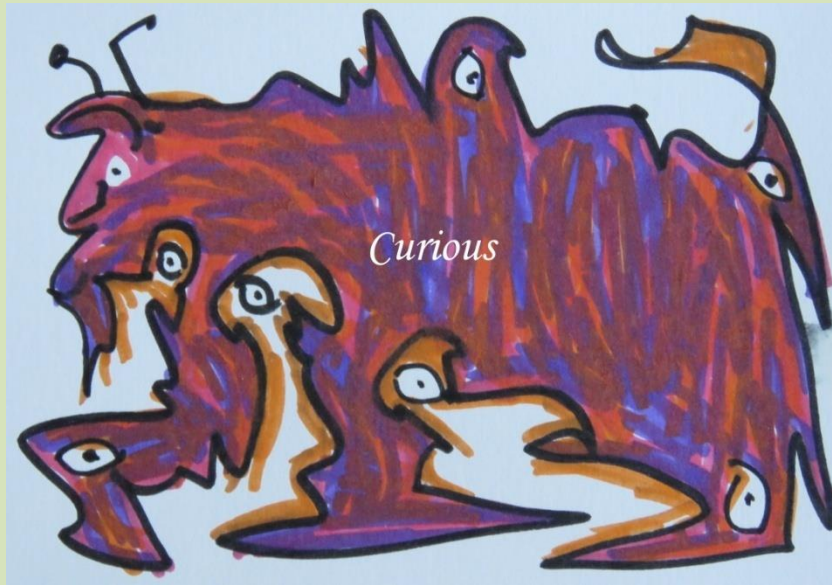
Even now – now I have become my own mother –

I have to urge this mother in me to take time, sit down and listen to me while we are having tea and eating sweets. But I am learning. By listening to you and to myself here in this group I know this is the main reason for coming together. We can not do it all by ourselves. To give and receive attention we DO need each other, whether we want it or not!

Experiments

If you want to learn more about your own need for attention, take some time just for you, find a safe place, bring paper and a pen, sit down, close your eyes, straighten your back, direct your attention to your breathing and become aware of being in the here and now. Then wonder about the question 'Am I afraid of attention, of love, of intimacy?' and feel how your body reacts. After about seven minutes you open your eyes, take your pen and write whatever wants to be written. Don't worry about mistakes, logic, just keep your hand moving for at least ten minutes. If you want to write more, you can write more. You are the boss. If- for a moment – you don't have words, just play or draw or doodle to keep your hand in action. If you feel you are ready, read what you have written out loud. Even if you are by yourself. You will notice that hearing your own voice speaking the words you put on paper will touch you somehow.

Writing is a perfect way to communicate



We can take the time to find the words to express our thoughts,
feelings, ideas, expectations, hopes.

You and I can both write and read
and find out if we can communicate and connect.
It is why I long to write and publish those words.

I want to express what touches me
and hope that you will feel touched too.

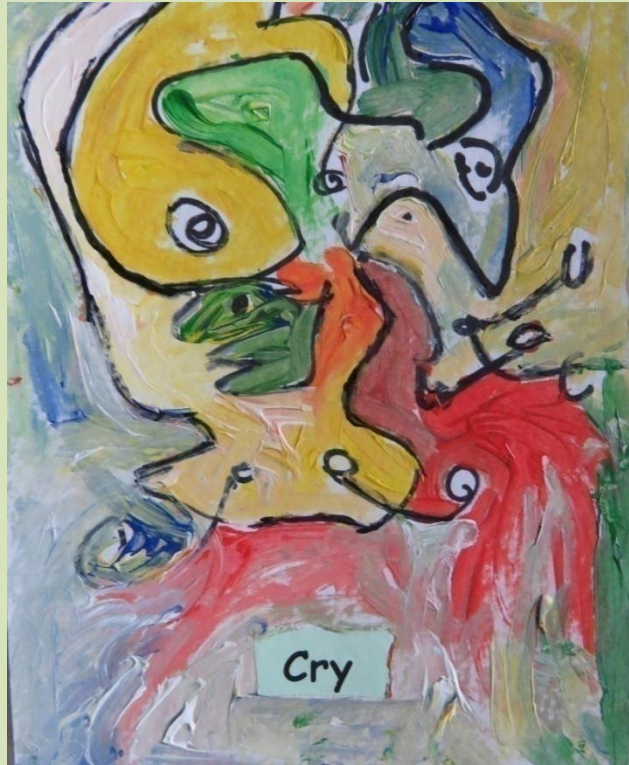
It is about feeling or not feeling.

About being moved or not.

Like this you will be invited
to connect to your own process
and write your own small and big life stories.

2. The Five Gestalt Layers

'Therapy is also an art. It's more of an art than it is a science. It takes a lot of intuition and sensitivity and an overall view means something very different from a piecemeal association approach. Being an artist is functioning holistically. And being a good therapist also means that.' Laura Perls*



Inner truth

When I read this statement by one of the founders of Gestalt therapy I almost cried, it touched me so deeply. It confirms my inner truth that dawned on me when I became a therapist, but I did not dare to say it out loud to colleagues who appear to believe that therapy is a science.

Your own voice

Before I became a therapist I was an editor of illustrated magazines. I loved my job as it was about people and I became dissatisfied when I realized that I was never allowed to speak my own voice. The commercial side of publishing directed us as journalists to write what our bosses thought the readers wanted to read. And that was not the same as what I longed to share. Becoming more and more frustrated I went on a spiritual journey and found Eastern philosophies such as Hinduism and Zen Buddhism before I found Gestalt. Becoming my own boss by learning to become a Gestalt therapist was my turning point.

War child



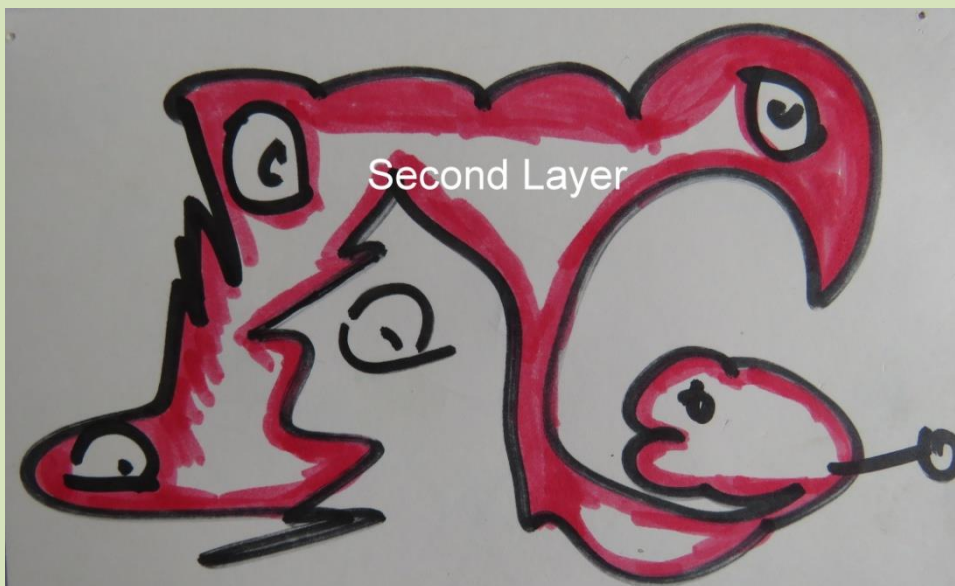
My interest in life and human relations started by being the daughter of a veteran of WWII, who disappeared in a psychiatric institute when I was fourteen. If I knew one thing for certain it was that my beautiful, sensitive, intelligent father - although he could behave rather outrageously – was NOT crazy, but the society we lived in was. Having experienced war as a child from age three to eight I know that life is serious and death is a reality. I know how cruel people can be, how blind and insensitive. Like my father I am passionately committed to exploring the drive behind the behaviour of people who have the power. My longing is to communicate and connect also with them. I want to understand why people can frustrate and even kill each other, rather than be considered crazy myself. According to Fritz Perls in Gestalt Therapy Verbatim* the theory of the five layers gives insight into what our undercurrent looks like and is hiding.

The first layer is the cliché layer.



If we meet somebody, we exchange clichés like 'How are you?' with cliché answers like 'Good' or 'I am not allowed to complain'. The main aim is to be polite and behave.

In the second layer we play games and roles



We are the son, the daughter, the husband, the eldest, the youngest, the beautiful girl, the strong man, the intelligent professor. In the roles we play 'as if' we are better, weaker, tougher, nicer than we really feel. The good thing about this layer is that we cannot do without it, we need it to function. Here we discover if we rather say Yes or No. If we make ourselves small or big. If we answer the expectations or not. It is a layer we can stay in till the day comes, that we discover that our once successful answers do not work anymore. We lose our job or our loved one or become ill and have to face the confusion of the impasse.

The third layer which is the impasse.



In this layer we feel stuck, lost, confused. We have a phobic attitude and try to avoid suffering. We do not want to be frustrated, we stay immature, we go on manipulating the world, rather than to suffer the pain of growing up. We prefer being looked after and do not realize our blindness and the possibility of getting our eyes back again. This is the difficulty in self therapy; when we come to the difficult parts, we are not willing to go through the pain of the impasse and think alcohol or drugs or food or money or sex can help.

The fourth layer is the implosive or the fear of death layer.



It appears as death because of the paralysis of opposing forces: Yes contra No. We pull ourselves together, we contract and compress ourselves and implode. Once we really get in contact with this deadness, something interesting happens: the implosion becomes explosion. The death layer comes to life, and this explosion is the link up with the authentic person who is capable of experiencing and expressing his/her emotions.

In the fifth or the explosive layer



we can experience four basic kinds of explosions: we can explode into genuine grief if we work through a loss that has not been assimilated, into an orgasm if we were sexually blocked, into anger and into joy, laughter, *joie de vivre*. These explosions connect with the authentic personality, with the true self.

Do not be frightened by the word explosion. It means more setting into motion than explode to pieces. Exploring by writing the undercurrent is a way to experience it.

An example

An example when I worked with a man and a woman, who were busy with their love relations, not with each other though. We all three meditated on the theme: How do I get what I need? Then we spontaneously wrote the words that wanted to be written by letting our hands do the work. I wrote:

'How do I get what I need?

In my family? In a group? In a Community? In Society? In the first place I need safety and safety comes with being open. Safety for me is about honesty. When I am honest here and now I have to admit that what I long for most is being loved, being seen in my struggle for a better world. Being open about my longing for love is not easy. Love in my life is not free. I know that this is not true, but it is the voice of my Fear that I only have a right to love or be loved if... I create harmony around me. The reality is that I cannot make harmony without facing the difficulties, without confronting what I do not like and what I do criticise. I don't like to do this, but if I don't I cannot love the other and I cannot love me.

In the same boat



Fact is when I feel threatened and rejected I close off and cannot give my students the feeling that they are safe and welcome. Maybe I never can, but usually I do not experience it this way. At this moment I can only say: Life hurts, life is painful. Please be aware. I cannot protect you, as I am hurt and feel pain myself. I wish I could but all I can do is to share that I am with you in the same boat.

We all three read our words out loud and when I read mine I could breathe again and relax because I could express my fear and pain and show my authentic self.

Questions to chew on:



- *How do those words affect you as a reader?*
- *Do you recognize feeling uneasy when you are with more than one person, all of whom want your attention?*
- *Can you imagine feeling threatened when someone insinuates that it is because of you that somebody else left?*
- *Or is there another part that touches you more?*

If you want to know more about yourself in relation to the five Gestalt layers, find a safe place and prepare by straightening your back, be in the here and now by following your breathing and sit for seven minutes with your own questions, while becoming aware of the signals of your body.

When the moment has come you take your pen and write, letting your hand do the work. Of course you can use a computer if you prefer, but you will find it is not the same as writing by hand. The best thing to do is to find out what works better for you.

3. Basic Needs and Fears

*A human being suffers most of the suffering he fears and never was or will be his share.
(Dutch expression)*



In my search for wisdom and truth I often go to foreign countries, literally and also symbolically by reading. In the very beginning of my career as a therapist, I became fascinated by the Jungian psychologist Fritz Riemann*. He wrote a book titled in German 'Die Fähigkeit zu Lieben', in Dutch – translated into English – 'To love is to live'. I felt touched by his theory of four basic fears and four demands life poses us to overcome them. Time and time again, when I need structure in my own life or guidance for a client, I wonder where I am or where we are in the light of the wisdom of Riemann. It has helped me to ground and not get lost in the vastness of possibilities in therapy land. I do not think it is about absolute truth, but do believe it can show us a way of becoming lighter, more free, independent, to feel better and to get an idea of what there is to explore in the undercurrent.

Looking for Satisfaction



If our basic needs were not answered during our youth,
they will keep asking for attention when we are grownups.
We will go on searching for
what we did not get then
when we needed it badly.
Our longing will direct our lives
in the undercurrent and
it will leave painful traces in the body.

First Basic Fear: The Fear of Existing



Fear starts the moment we are born. When we come out of the womb, completely helpless and vulnerable, we are demanded to trust the world enough to say Yes to life and start breathing independently. A matter of life and death. The question is how welcome we are. Are our parents so happy with their new baby that they are fully prepared for us? Is the whole family waiting with excitement and love for the newly born? Or is it the wrong moment because we are not wanted? The first fear that is an existential fear starts doing its work. What we need is a mother figure who comes regularly to feed us, gives us warmth and attention, a mother who changes our diapers, cleans and cuddles us, a mother who takes time to give us the feeling that we belong on earth and came home.

First Basic Need

is to have a place on earth and know that we belong.



Every human being has a right to have his or her own place and space. It starts early. A child that is being born needs its own place. The first and most literally own place of a child is the womb. By carrying the child in her body the mother gives implicitly the message: 'You have a place in me and I will take care of you.' Children love to play with having a place: they built huts, they hide away, they creep into holes and play changing trees... Later the own place will become more a spiritual one by creating a world of books, stories, music, hobby's, clubs, sport. If a child has the feeling it belongs, is depending except on its family on its social surroundings. A child belongs to this family, this neighbourhood, this school, this social class. When a family is moving a lot and a child often loses its school and friends it can become unbalanced because it does not have enough time to root and feel the ground.

Personal questions to explore your own birth and the beginning of your life:

Did I feel safe when still in the womb?

Did I have a difficult or an easy birth?

Was I on time? Was I welcome?

Second Basic Fear and Needs: The fear of being abandoned



The second fear that can dominate our lives is the fear of being abandoned. When we discover that our mother or another mother figure is the source that provides in all our needs, we get afraid of losing her. Without her we have no chance of survival. Without her our life is empty. Without her we are out of food, out of warmth, out of being held and cuddled. Even if we get a clean diaper and milk but no loving attention, we will feel unwelcome. The question of how the mother can be forced to be present in our life can become dominant. The strange thing is that a mother who spoils us by always being available can make us even more anxious than a mother who neglects us. If we are spoiled we don't learn to trust our own power step by step and become completely dependent. In the period when we are most vulnerable, we are already confronted with the inevitable existential loneliness of life.

Basic needs: nourishment, warmth, loving attention and safety.

Questions to chew on:

- *Am I afraid to be left alone?*
- *Did I have a mother who was there for me?*
- *Do I feel spoiled or neglected?*

Third Basic Fear and Needs: The fear of guilt and punishment



As we grow older and have to become more free from the close bondage with our mother, the fear of guilt and punishment are born. We learn how to walk and talk and discover we have our own will that can be diametrically opposed to that of our father or/and mother. Our parents can become angry and will make it clear to us that there are orders, commands and prohibitions. In this way a new fear enters, a fear of not doing the right thing. We are lucky when we have parents who give us boundaries that can be talked about. Parents who make it clear that we even as a child need discipline and rules to live our lives. But if we are raised by parents who behave rigidly and dominantly, who punish us without adding a kiss, we are liable to become so afraid of being guilty that we hardly dare to take the risk of making our own choices and making mistakes. The result is that we as adults will have big problems in becoming autonomous. Does this mean that we are lucky when we have parents who were anti-authoritarian? The advantage is that we miss this fear for guilt and punishment, but it does not bring a real solution. Being raised in relative freedom means not being educated about borders and possibilities. It means not having a clue about what we can achieve and what we cannot. The result is that we do get anxious and uncertain after all, not knowing our norms and values.

Basic needs: support, stimulants, encouragement, faith.

Questions to connect with the undercurrent by writing:

- *Am I a perfectionist?*
- *Do I dare to make mistakes?*
- *Am I duty oriented?*

Fourth Basic Fear and Need: The fear of not being good enough



What does it mean to be a girl or a boy? Who is our example ?

When we get older we discover that there are boys and girls, big and small children, ugly and beautiful people, rich and poor ones, strong and weak men and women. We are confronted with the questions: who is better, who is the best? The fear that appears now is the fear that we are not good enough as we are. Would it not be better if I were a boy instead of a girl, big if I am small, have curly hair when it is straight. Shouldn't I be strong when I appear sensitive and weak, beautiful when I seem to be ugly, fast if I am slow, coloured when I am white? Does our family, does the world love me now it seems I do not answer the perfect image?

What we need are role models we can identify with. That is why we have idols and look up to our parents, but often our heroes and parents tend to fall from their pedestals, leaving us with the longing to be at least better than they are. But how can we?

**Basic need: to be seen and accepted
for who we are.**

Questions:

- *Am I good enough as a boy, as a girl?*
- *Who is my hero, my model, my example?*

Demands to overcome our fears



Often we live with those fears from our childhood without realizing it. Precisely because we were not allowed to be afraid, we suppressed and denied our fears. In that way we could survive but did not see reality, which possibly made our surroundings threatening without us knowing why. Only by becoming aware of the undercurrent can we step out of our childhood fears and into a life that leads to freedom. It is true that in accepting fear, healing is hidden. Learning how to live with fear is not enough because time and time again there will be new fears that will revive the old ones. We can free ourselves step by step by realizing that we have to identify with the innocent, lonely, anxious child in us and with the adult who has to go out into the world to study and make a living. We will discover that we have to look fear in the eyes to become a complete human being. What helps is the knowledge that life does not only provide fears but also means to overcome them.

To overcome our fears

Every fear is connected to a special demand:

1. The fear of existing demands that we say Yes to life
2. The fear of being abandoned demands that we become independent and stand on our own feet
3. The fear of guilt and punishment demands that we become autonomous
4. The fear of not being good enough demands that we become who we are instead of who we thought we should be

4. The Boomerang Effect*

Demand one: Saying Yes and No to life

Some Dutch expressions:

You are what you say

The pot reproaches the kettle that it is black

Biscuits of your own dough

The joke is that we project unto others what we don't like or what we miss in ourselves and don't wish to acknowledge which, nevertheless remains a part of our personalities.



Knowing about projection can change your look on life. When I wrote my scripture about this subject more than twenty years ago I was in awe. Oh, if that is true, if the game of life is like that, I understand why it is so difficult and so funny and so seducing. I found out that one of the misunderstandings of life is that we think we are innocent and beyond reproach. That's why we play hide and seek and throw at others what we think they throw at us.

But it's not a matter of either/or, guilty or not guilty, it's an open and - and. The joke is that we project unto others what we don't like in ourselves and don't wish to acknowledge which, nevertheless remains a part of our personalities. The joke is that we project what we do not acknowledge or see in ourselves and therefore deny. To become aware of this phenomenon we need mirrors represented by our environment.

Unto our direct world we project all those hidden parts of our personality. Projecting is always done unconsciously, because we can only project what we do not know or wish to know. In practice this means that if we do not say "no" to others, they say "no" to us and we feel rejected. If we cannot say "yes" we feel unrightfully claimed or abducted by people who do say "yes" to us. If we are not allowed to be angry, we project our anger and will find ourselves confronted with anger in others. If we don't know that we are afraid, we project our fear and others start fearing us. If we deny our sexual potency, we project our sexual longings and it seems like the whole world is filled with horny people. If we do not know we are jealous, we will be haunted by jealous colleagues, lovers, siblings, friends.

If we believe we have no power, we will project our power onto others and feel like victims.

Becoming Conscious

And if we do not know we have the talent to draw, sing, dance, write, act, we will remain stuck admiring artists who do express themselves instead of becoming a painter, a singer, a dancer, a writer or an actor ourselves. When we realize that we cannot be operated on our characteristics, traits or instincts, because there are no surgeons who can cut out our jealousy or sexual drive or anger, we will know deeply how important it is to express ourselves. Instincts and conditioned behavior like natural urges cannot be amputated. What is or has become remains a part of us. We can only suppress these undesirable qualities, deciding not to express them. And if it is forbidden to say what we have to say, and do what we have to do, we force ourselves to pretend, preach, accuse, manipulate and project.



Only when we become conscious of what we do, can we change our behavior and say “this is me, I am what and who I am, whether I like it or not”. In order to empower ourselves, we must be prepared to let go of our idealized image as the superman or superwoman we thought we should be. Projection is often seen as a negative factor. That is unfortunate, since projecting can show us what earlier remained unnoticed. I for one, found out that the important men in my life were visually talented: my first great love was a film director, then I met an optician and a painter, I married a photographer and after my divorce fell in love with an art director. Now I am more and more aware of my own visual ability by painting, making photo’s and video’s. It is also exciting to take a closer look at who projects what on us. The photographer I married had crushes on people who were writers.

Projections are not incidental or accidental. They can make us aware of the fact that we have more possibilities than the five to fifteen percent we usually are able to develop.

Someone who is able to use twenty-five percent of his or her capacities, is already seen as a genius.

The art of becoming a complete human being by using our talents and qualities can not only be developed by recognizing them, we also have to express them. Projection starts when as a baby we are lying in our cradle, with our full potential waiting to develop while the family comes to look at us and expresses their hopes and expectations of who we will be. There is no alternative, whatever we do, we have to play the deadly serious game of life. And just like in every other game, certain obstacles need to be taken on. One of the rules we must accept is that we cannot play this game all by ourselves. We do need others. As a baby, we do not have much

choice. We do have to put up with our parents, who, however willing they might be, in some way or other, will fall short because they are human beings and not gods. That is also a part of the game. But what do we know, when we are still children. The only thing we do want is that ‘they’ are happy with us and with who we are. And we want to feel and experience it. But even when they are happy with us, they appear to be happy on condition. Even loving moms and dads and other authorities have their ideas and expectations of how or what we should do and will be. We have barely opened our eyes and expectations pop out of every corner. It doesn’t take long to figure out what they do and don’t want from us, since it is evidently connected to being ‘good’ and being ‘bad’. Crying is usually not an okay thing to do; parents don’t like it.

But even so, crying does get jobs done, it does ensure attention, although the question is if this is the kind of attention we so deeply long for. The choices are limited. We adjust to what is expected and behave as good boys or girls or we resist and revolt and are a nuisance. Both with the same aim: how to get attention. Both ways work only partly and the result is that we develop either a compliant or subversive personality.

We become someone who says "yes" more easily than "no" or someone who says "no" rather than "yes".

A ‘yes person’ can all her/his life be busy proving how smart, understanding, reliable, funny, charming, and so on s/he is. But this does not get her/him the kind of love and attention s/he needs, because people become jealous or irritated or feel rejected and neglected. In the meantime a “yes person” can be annoyed by people who ask for her/his attention and nevertheless say “No” to her/him by being angry, because s/he did not get the attention s/he was really longing for. This is how compliant “yes people” become victims of the defiant ones who rather say No. It means that one behavioral option lands in the trap of the other.

As a compliant type you can be willing enough to give out loving attention and help, but we remain who we are and if we give what we would rather receive, we will get irritated and impatient. The question is if our fear for rejection allows us to express those feelings. And as a defiant person we will not get the real loving care and attention we long for, and also get irritated and anxious.

Both types are dealt the wrong cards, since they both need just as much love and care and expect to get it – in different ways - from outside. They will feel better when they start with caring for themselves instead of waiting for the care of the other first.

Irritation, critique, anger, jealousy, we would love to abort these traits, be released of them forever, but life is not meant that way.

Even if we “haven’t got a clue”, the subconscious part of our personalities does the job for us, by projecting on the outside world what we think we are not, often using the people that are closest and dearest to us. It might be an idea to be on the alert when people irritate us. Ten to one, we recognize something we would rather not be confronted with inside ourselves. Be aware when you easily get bored by talkers, for given the chance, you might talk until your ears drop off. And also if we admire people or are jealous of them, it is important to take a closer look. Possibly they have developed talents which we also have, but are afraid to express or are not aware of. The ones who say Yes easily, are irresistibly attracted to the ones who say No first, since they have to learn from them how to say No themselves. And reversely: the no’s are drawn to the yeses, because they long to learn what they have achieved: saying yes. At least, so it appears. But the “yes” and the “no” in question here, are shadows, apparent yeses and no’s. Behind a “yes” lingers a giant “no”, we don’t dare to reveal. If we are on the ‘yes’ track we are afraid to be abandoned if

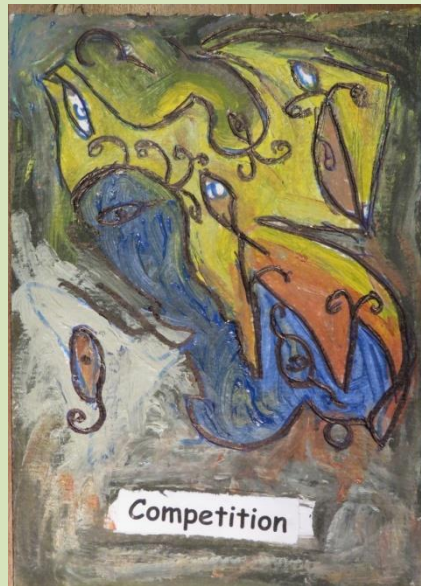
we let the no out of it's cage. And behind the no of the other survivor rises a clear yes, they cannot say, due to a fear that no-one would care for them if they stopped being a victim.



There are only a few people that have learned to straight-forwardly ask for attention when they need it. The joke is on most of us, since we are one another's authorities and so mislead and manipulate each other. The arrogant, dutiful Yes people – for example a therapist - do their best to help the victimized No people. And the No's manipulate the Yeses by being cross and by being the victim. Of course we don't do this on purpose. If we did we would be able to step out of the pattern because we would become aware that our manipulations do not get us what we really need. Withholding is also a great weapon in battling for what we desire. So what do we want then besides the already mentioned attention we do not get? Care, love, sex, money, support, beauty, strength, warmth, food, knowledge, children, understanding, admiration, recognition, status, are (basic) needs. If our basic needs are not fulfilled our – unconscious – longing will continue and will go on projecting.

It is painful when we remain manipulative as long as we do not consciously know and say out loud what we desire and sincerely need.

No longer knowing what we need is a recurring theme. As long as we are passively waiting for a prince or a princess who will fulfill our every need, without knowing what it is exactly we are waiting for, we remain dependent persons who act like children. We only become true adults when we conquer our pride and fear and dare to admit we are needy. And when we do, we will have to face up to the confrontation, since the question then is: who will fulfill whose needs and to what extent? It means we must be prepared to not only look after our own interests, but also to those of the other. We shall have to measure up to one another, bow our heads and admit we need others - which to be certain – is not the same as being completely dependent on them.



In my work I have discovered that I can invite this confrontation by simply asking clients to say “yes” or “no” in regard to me or to the group or to an empty chair that represents a loved one. In the sound of his or her voice I immediately detect his or her true intention. By just saying yes or no out loud, something happens inside a person. If a Yes person hears a “no!” emerge from his depths, or a real “yes” instead of the habitual “yes but”, and if a No person hears a “yes” or a “no” that is genuine, an AHA moment can follow. By participating in the yes/no game, we measure our strength and laughter usually emerges, enabling us to step out of the power struggle. Suddenly it occurs that it’s not about winning or being right, but about two people leveling and meeting one another, whether they agree or not. Then humor comes in and life becomes more playful. The other given is that a yes and no struggle is not only present outside of us but also inside.

Our yes or top dog tells us what - according to social rules - we must abide to. And in our no echoes the voice of our underdog, resisting all those musts.

Top dog and underdog, strong and weak, struggle to be first in line, which disables us from making the next step. Top dog says you must try your best, you aren’t good enough, persist, keep going. Under dog replies: I’m afraid, I cannot, I will not.

Shops are stacked full of books telling us how to change and improve ourselves.

Our pursuit toward self improvement is bound to awaken the ever present yes no, no yes conflict. One voice says you have to keep going, prevail, be strong, the other voice objects it would be best to keep things as they are. Even if we arrive at change and progress this way, we pay the high price of fighting with ourselves, meeting our confusion over who we are and our insecurities, possibly resulting in abject self hatred. Think of the painful and often useless attempts to lose weight or abstain from drinking or smoking. Usually the harder we are on ourselves, the more perfection we opt for, the more unbearable our situation becomes. It is too bad, but doing our best and taking trouble is not exactly rewarded with bouts of abundant happiness. If we try to function better by changing our patterns, we will find ourselves stuck in possibly even worse, alternative patterns. Because it is improbable that by doing our best we will ever be good enough in our own eyes. Still becoming aware of our projections can direct us to a path of self fulfillment by integrating what we project.



Questions to chew on by taking time for you and your process.

Can I say Yes?

Can I say No?

When can I say yes/ when can I say no?

Start with finding the right time and the right place and become aware you are in the here and now by directing your attention to your breathing. Sit upright to enable the energy to flow freely through your spine. Bring paper and pen or pencil to write or draw when you are ready for it.

** Translated from the Dutch by Inez Karkabé*

5. Manipulating authorities*

Demand 2: Standing on our own feet

Demand 3: Becoming Autonomous

The secret is that we must stop trying to become who we think we should be and start listening to our true selves.



The Paradoxical Theory of Change

Those demands bring us to the paradoxical theory of change by Dr. Arnold Beisser.* When we stop trying to do our best and are really prepared to acknowledge and accept our survival patterns, we will find change is at hand.

This is not easy, since we need to surrender and have faith, which is hard for any person to opt for. Way too risky. But if we are capable of letting go of our yes/no conflict, our abhorrence, self-critique, and face ourselves instead of running off, if we dare to have faith that what is happening is right, then the energy now being sucked up by the yes/no struggle will subside and we will have room to breathe freely and choose where we go. This approach alone though, will not solve our problems.

The secret is that we must stop trying and start listening to ourselves. Creating solutions without listening to our inner voices will not do the trick.

A wise Indian in *Native Wisdom for White minds* by Anne Wilson Schaef says it this way: *“Every problem the mind resolves, creates ten other problems. What we must do is listen to our heart and our soul.”*

Roots and primal authorities

But can we? How do we listen to our heart and soul?

Practically speaking, it means we literally have to take the risk of opening our hearts instead of navigating on our minds. Another paradox? Do we “have to” again?

Yes, I cannot deny we do, but this time it has nothing to do with answering up to demands from the outside world. This is a matter of a holy quest, coming from within.

Good thing about it is that we can't be wrong, there are no grades to be given. We have a free choice: we either truly listen, observe and feel, or we don't. Time and time again, same story. Listening and observing people who surround us, listening to ourselves, to nature, listening to the invisible world.

Of course there are many ways to go about this, but the road starts with the fact that we are the child of our parents, who were children of their parents, and so on and so on. Whether we like it or not, we cannot deny our roots or primal authorities. No pears grow on an apple tree. We do have a choice though, whether we want to be a child forever, seeing our parents as beings who are or were not living up to our needs.



Or we can look with the eyes of an adult and see them as a man and a woman with their own lives with whom we can either connect or not. As long as we make our happiness or dismay dependent on them, we are not doing them or ourselves right.

If this is our attitude to our parents, then this is our attitude to ourselves and to other authorities as well. If we want to be free individuals, we must cut the umbilical cord again and again, stand on our own two feet and become who we are.

Not so simple, that's for sure, but we can also look at this as an inviting yet sometimes hazardous adventure called life.

The power of authorities

To stand on our own feet and free ourselves from the fear of being betrayed and left alone, we must move out of the power game. And to free ourselves from the fear of guilt and punishment, we must become autonomous. Without authorities we can do neither. Authorities are parents, bosses, lovers, teachers, people made of flesh and blood, who seem to know better or have power over us because they possess what we yearn for. That is why they attract us and at the same time invoke fear. We long for their love, acceptance and recognition, yet there's no guarantee our needs will be answered. What to do? Are we going to pretend we do not need them? Do we submissively wait for some miracle to happen or will we decide to enter the battlefield and step into the power triangle of omnipotence, impotence and the struggle for power?

Omnipotence



When we keep up appearances, despite the longing we have for attentiveness, love, a clean diaper and warm milk, we keep a stiff upper lip, we don't cry out, we don't let on. We do this because we don't want to know the painful truth about our unfulfilled needs.

The consequence is that in time we no longer know what it is we long for or what we need and live by the pretext that we are self-sufficient. This can give us a feeling of power. If we think we need no-one, we are likely to get caught up in feelings of omnipotence.

You can recognize this phenomenon in people who are proud and stubborn, obsessively striving for perfection, unwilling to belong to any group, always wanting to excel and withdrawing in the face of conflict. If you hear others or yourself say "yes" more readily than "no", then you are confronted with this survival pattern of omnipotence. The role we play fitting this pattern is the role of the savior, the helper. Therapists often have this background.

Impotence

A different way of surviving is to raise your voice and let the whole world hear that you're in need of attention, that you want someone now to look after you, someone to be there for you, to love you. At the onset, it might appear that this could be a more profitable strategy. But here too, we can fall into a trap. It remains to be seen whether we really receive the attention we long for, if we are truly being seen, heard, and taken seriously.

The danger is that we become naggers, who never are content. We start to believe we cannot do anything ourselves and are therefore forever in need of another person. If we hear ourselves or others excessively say "I'm frightened", "I cannot", "I could not", "I don't know" then we can be sure to have fallen into the gloomy pit of helplessness. We think we are not good enough, we feel inferior, we nourish our grief and stay dependent. When we are asked to do something, we almost always automatically refuse, and say "no" since we think we cannot do it ourselves. In this pattern we are in the role of the victim. As client we usually are.

Power struggle

The third way to attempt getting what we need, is by going into battle. When we notice we have to fight, time and time again in order to win, if we have to know better and be best and want to be right, if we feel superior, have a strong will and want to be boss, then we are trapped in the

survival pattern known as the power struggle. We neither say yes or no and seem forever to be longing for something we do not get. The role we play can be of the prosecutor or the offender.

Longing to be the best

The upside of those patterns is, that they have enabled us to survive. The downside is, that they do not provide us with the much desired true attentiveness we actually need. Fortunately, we are usually nurtured and loved to some degree, but if we get more condescension than love it is difficult to become happy. Yet we do not easily give up our tactics since, however it may be, we answer to an image we have created of ourselves that appears to become our primary tool in survival. I, for example, always have to be the best. This has served me without a doubt, but it also has made me vulnerable since I cannot do without an authority who confirms my superiority. What I really need is recognition, appreciation, love. And if that is the case, I have failed. By striving to be the best, I was loved and honored to a certain degree, but more likely I was feared. In the process of wanting to be the best, I became rigid and lonely. That was not what I longed for but it took me a long time to realize that I was trapped.



Meeting a master teacher

My struggle with authorities and becoming autonomous dawned on me full force when I started to study Gestalt Therapy. I was much impressed by a Gestalt therapist who was leading a Buddhist retreat. The location in Spain where the retreat took place was like paradise, which certainly helped to bring me into a higher level of consciousness. We were lovingly guided into being silent, into listening and observing. By sitting still for one whole hour in one place, looking at a square meter of earth, I got a peak experience which is impossible to reconstruct on paper but by looking at a tiny plant I knew I was part of a bigger Whole.

I knew I entered a new era in my life and got pretty excited. I expected salvation from this tutor and went back for more enlightenment. The teacher became a role model for me. I wanted only ONE thing: to be noticed and approved of by her. I felt like I was in love. The teacher was constantly on my mind and when I was invited by her to engage in a workshop about leadership and co-operation, I landed in the seventh heaven. The message was that the teacher needed me because she was short of strong women.

Angry woman

It was a Christmas recess at the same location in Spain, to last for two weeks. What I did not realize was that this event was not a Buddhist retreat, but a Gestalt workshop. I did not know

that the idea of the workshop was to confront one another and find out if we were capable to lead and co-operate at the same time. Naturally I felt obliged to act out my role as I thought a strong woman should be. That was confronting. I saw myself on video and cringed. Was I really that angry woman? Frightening.

My spiritual, loving side which had emerged during the retreats, seemed to have completely evaporated. A witch rose up from the depths, and not only that, my good fairy, my divine tutor, appeared also to unfold another aspect of her personality. When my body let go of the pain I for years had suppressed in a drastically acute manner and stumbled around the paradise-like territory, folded up in various contortions of pain, my ideal role model passed by and wanted to know how I was doing. I said I was in pain.

“Of course you are in pain”, the authority snapped, “you have work to do”. Later I heard her say to the co trainer: “She”, with a nod in my direction, “has an authority conflict...” What did she mean? This statement was being made by the authority I looked up to most, so I had to take it seriously. Most painful was to realize that the tutor showed a certain disdain for me, now that this handicap had exposed itself even physically. So as a strong woman I tried very hard to prove that I might have a problem, but that this would by no means keep me from being the best student.



Ivory tower to survive

As a student I am not proud of the struggle that followed. I was so eager to be recognized by the authority, that I let myself be humiliated. In other words: I did not give in, just strived to be the best. Rather than admitting my teacher had hurt me and I didn't like it, I stood fast and tried to understand what was going on.

My confirmative yes nodding tactic of someone who needs no-one and won't budge, took me a long time to overcome. Years passed before I could bow my head and admit that I am grateful to my teacher, since she was my principal aid and guide to the path of Gestalt. It was not an easy path to follow. As students, we had to stand our ground if we wanted to confront our teachers. It was part of the stuff we had to learn, I found out later.

Our own boss

The main question was – as always of course - who was which teacher's pet? Could it be me or was it one of the other students? Who would rise up to this favorite position? Who would decide this? That could only be the man or woman having the authority to do it.

To be outspoken or autonomous, we have to become our own boss, our own authority, and in doing this, we need someone to challenge us. We require a role model which we can surpass in

order to grow and become a free individual. Simply put: to become autonomous, we will explicitly have to engage into a battle with what implicitly has been present in ourselves for a long time. But because we feel a need to be seen and heard, we must at first answer to the expectations of authorities in order to get his or her consent. And in doing so, it appears we are forever in the process of becoming someone we think we should be, someone who is more intelligent, younger, richer, funnier.

Painful enough we deny in this process certain traits that do not fit our self image. Still, whatever is, is, and we are who we are.



Objects of desire

A clear example was the constant state of being in love I was in as a future therapist. During the four years of studying Gestalt therapy this was evidently – as I look back - not about sexual or personal love relationships. Objects of desire were therapists and trainers. They were deities, they possessed what I needed to develop, and obtain. When I had grown enough to invite clients into my practice, my state changed. The actuality of life left no room for dreaming of a prince on a white horse. When I became an authority myself, I was absorbed with all the expectations sent in my direction. So the yes or no game continued. As a therapist, I also have a choice to either answer what clients expect of me, or step out of my role and expose what this contact does with me, risking a confrontation since my clients could be disappointed and protest. But only in this way clients become in their turn autonomous and develop their own authority, because only they know what is good for them, discovering that they are no longer in need of me as an authority and therapist.

How about you?

Did you become your own authority already or are you stuck in a battle for power?

The following questions can set you on a trail:

Am I my own boss?

Do I speak my own voice?

Can I step out of the power game?

Am I a savior, a victim or/and a prosecutor?

Am I committed?

**Translated from the Dutch by Inez Karkabé*

6. Our Other Half

Demand 4: To become who we are instead of who we think we should be

‘The most painful lesson is that it is not enough to be willing and prepared.’



The One and Only

The question that has haunted me as a woman is if we indeed need that one man or one woman who can give us the feeling that we are special and more than just okay. If only we meet the One, who will turn out to be our prince on a white horse or our soul mate, we do not have to be afraid our lives are worthless. This expectation meant for me hoping that the man I would become engaged to, would also make my parents proud and happy. Then we would live a successful life, raising beautiful, intelligent and witty children. That is not how it went. And for a long time I thought this was due to the fact that I was a failure as a woman: not pretty or nice or witty or sexually attractive enough.

The day to day relation

Only when I found myself back in therapy during my turbulent marriage, it started to dawn on me that being in a love relation does not mean, that ‘they lived happily ever after’ can be achieved. The most painful lesson for me was the discovery that it is not enough to be willing and prepared. In our day to day relation it becomes clear not only the power of love plays a role, but that also the black and slithery sides of our personalities can no longer be denied. By working as a therapist I know now, I am not the only one for whom a love relation was and is frustrating. At least a thousand times I wondered what this frustration is about. How does it come that partners in love can make life for each other so damn difficult? Is there any sense in this kind of suffering or are we wasting our time? For me the answer is Yes of course, there is a sense but if you ask me what sense, I still do not know exactly. It is a mystery. Can it be that we only get to know who we are in close relation with another human being? Can it be that we need daily to look into the mirror of the other that shows us our real face? To become who we really are we will have to accept that we can only become that man or that woman, that in first instance was

already present in the womb of our mother. This means that our lives are beyond logic and therefore more surprising than *one and one is two plus a house and a child, a tree and a pet.* (Dutch expression)

Human beings are bisexual

According to some myths the original human being is androgyne: masculine and feminine. Or in other words: bisexual. If this is still true, it is not hard to imagine that men who believe they are just men and women who think they are only women will suffer from intensive inner conflicts. Our masculine and our feminine side can be engaged in a struggle that is as passionate as the struggle between lovers. Carl Gustav Jung* named the masculine element in a woman “animus” and the feminine element in a man “anima”. He stated that we cannot directly get in touch with our anima or animus, because they are not part of our conscious personality. Our subconscious found a magic solution: it projects our longing for our anima (our soul) on women and our longing for our animus (our mind) on men of flesh and blood. This means that by projecting, we can get a glimpse of that part of ourselves we don't know. A way of projecting is to fall in love. With men it can work like this: they long so passionately for the beauty and the sensitivity of a woman that their sexual energy can rise sky high. A man in love is able to go to the end of the world for a woman he hardly knows. Maybe her blond curls or her mysterious smile or the warm sound of her voice touched him in the depth of his anima. And the woman who is chosen probably will feel honoured in the first place. She will want to fulfil his expectations, but deep in her heart she knows the day of truth will arrive, the day he will understand and experience that she is not the Goddess he believed her to be.



Verbally talented men

Women often fall intensely in love with verbally talented men: gurus, heroes, writers, actors, therapists, trainers, singers, artists, men who seem to know ‘it’ and are even able to express what ‘it’ means. Women who are hooked this way, can forget who they are themselves and become ‘the servant’ of the master they adore. The ‘lucky’ man will – presumably – at first receive her attention and admiration, but he will have to face the fact, that after all he is not that prince on a white horse she thought he was.

The turning of the tide

Falling in love can be wonderful, we imagine ourselves in heaven on earth. Pity the tide always turns. If it becomes clear that the man we fell in love with is not as wise as we expected. Or the

woman not as desirable, our golden projection can change from one minute to the other to a black one. Especially when it is about love at first sight, we better be prepared. The first period as lovers we have fun, we make love, eat, drink and sleep together. It seems we are in paradise. But then she starts claiming him or he wants to possess her and his or/and her jealousy bring them back to earth. He thinks she became boring because he feels claimed and does not realize that his own anima, his own feminine pole can also be pretty boring and sulking. The problem is that her nagging voice is evident, while his nagging is still unconscious. He has no idea how discontented his own soul is and reproaches his loved one because she disturbs the romance. She in her turn, became without knowing, the prisoner of her jealous animus who projects his/her mistrust on her lover. Constantly she is afraid her lover will meet another woman he will like better than her. The joke is that both can be right. But if he does not know about his own moody anima and she has no idea of her own unfaithful animus, the danger is that they reproach each other what they better could face together. Our mistrust can become so enormous, that we as lovers become too afraid of each other to be in one room. We are transformed into a monster and a witch, who poison each others' lives.



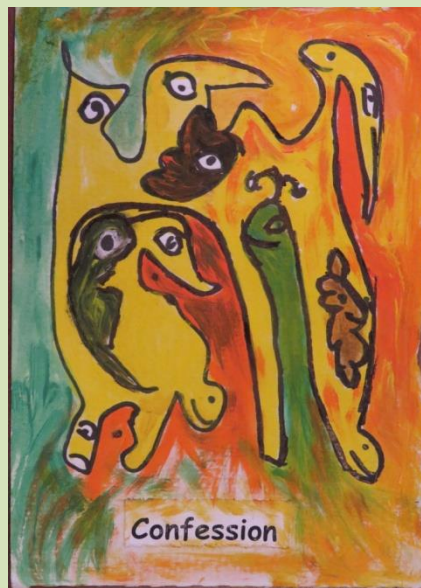
Falling in love on an unconscious level

If the connection is about the attraction between anima and animus, between soul and mind, the relationship will be complicated. We fall in love on an unconscious level. Men with women, women with men and also men with men and women with women, because in the core we are bisexual. Men can be longing to make contact with their animus, their true masculine power and women can long for their anima, for the qualities of their soul. Falling in love brings a lot of advantages. It opens our hearts, it brings us together, it makes us willing to listen to the other, to see the other and it takes us to a different state of consciousness, a state in which we experience the world as a miracle. Nevertheless, a relationship mainly based on projections has no future if we are not prepared to face our expectations and relate them to reality. Developing an adult love relation is hard work because there are snags in it. According to Peter Schellenbaum* love cannot exist without 'No'. And 'they lived happily ever after' is not the end but the beginning of the story. To become a happy couple and live long and happily ever after, we think we have to meet a number of conditions, that in the end will prove to be fatal for a human relationship.

The happy couple

For example: if you love each other and are a happy couple
- you should say 'yes' to each other without restrictions

- you will remain true for ever
- you feel and think the same;
- you do not criticize or betray each other and you do not say 'No';
- you keep your relationship nice and harmonious;
- you are never angry and do not fight;
- you do not nag;
- you succeeded in life and have a respectful status;
- your sex is deeply satisfying; both partners like to make love and like to spoil each other;
- you do not know loneliness; even stronger: if you are single and feel lonely, you better take care that you become the half of a happy couple;
- you are always available for each other;
- you are friends with other happy couples;
- you have happy children who have happy friends who are children of happy parents



The ideal marriage or relationship?

Who does not long for it? But does it exist in reality? Even in the most passionate and loving relation the 'unconditional' Yes can change from one day to the other in No. If after the honeymoon our loved one turns out to be someone who does not fulfill our longings, we can decide without any compassion to stop the relation. Or we become so scared that we are willing to compromise. The result can be that we find ourselves back to playing roles in the wrong play. Leading question may be: who cares for whom? As partners in a love relation we expect that all our unfulfilled basic needs will be answered. Is it possible that this is the reason we fall in love with a copy of the parent who has the sex of our sexual preference? Does the mysterious animus look as two drops of water like our father and the anima like our mother? If the answers are Yes, it would mean that falling in love is not so elusive as we believe. We cannot deny that Pa and Ma are in us. Possibly they are searching for the mirror in which they can recognize their own image outside us.

The image of our parents

How is it to share our lives with a man or a woman who seems to resemble more and more our father or mother? You almost look like your mother or your father, is usually not meant to be a compliment. Personally I believe that we are supposed to continue our life history where we got

stuck with our parents. If our basic needs were not met, we are still waiting for what we need and could not ask for when we were a child and dependent. Now we are grown up and still long for warmth, tenderness, love, support, care and attention we have to learn to take responsibility for what we need by asking for it, maybe even demanding. We will become unhappy if we think we will get what we long for presented on a tray. If we become aware of ourselves sulking all the time, or we realize we are in a constant battle for power with our partner, we've got work to do. First by finding out what it is we are longing for. And second, to learn how to get what we need. Forcing the other does not work. It is what children try who want it their own way. How to do it then? The only way as far as I can see, is to step out of our pride, bow our heads and admit that we long for love, warmth, sex, support, care and attention. If we are afraid that the one we love will reject us and say No to us, asking is more than just difficult. Just imagine, admitting that we truly need sex and the answer is: do you? Well I don't. Pity for you. There we are naked, desire raging through our body. We might even feel ashamed or humiliated, but why? I think it is strange and painful to be ashamed because our deepest needs are not fulfilled. Must be connected to the fear of not being good enough. How can I expect my loved one to give me warmth, love, support, sex if I do not feel desirable or lovable?



Vicious circle

Here we are in a vicious circle. We wonder if we are attractive enough to be desired and want to be confirmed by the one we love. If we feel uncertain and walk on our toes we are trapped, because the other won't feel free. He or she is supposed to convince us of our splendour and that is impossible because we do not believe we are good enough to get what we long for. If we think we only deserve what we need if we go to the beauty shop first or take a course to make a more attractive or intelligent impression, we become our own enemies. The dramatic truth is that we can go to the hairdresser every day and can learn whatever we want, but it will not make us more lovable if we feel uncertain. This does not mean that we should not go to the hairdresser or not go to a course or a training to learn more, but we better realize that love is not for sale this way.

The fear of not being good enough causes our reluctance to say wholeheartedly Yes to each other. We are too afraid of what will happen if we say Yes and the other says No or Yes But. Our fear of not being valuable enough will prove to be true. At least, it does if we stay with the No and do not ask what it is about. If I am certain he says No because he thinks I am not pretty, nice, lovable or intelligent enough, I am the one who says No to me first because I do not dare to ask what his No is about. How can we know why we are rejected if we do not check what we

suppose? Maybe it is not about me but about him, because he is afraid he cannot live up to my sky high expectations? If I do not ask, I will never know. And that is where the challenge is.

If I am too afraid to pose the question, I give away the power to decide myself whether I am okay or not. If I am secretly hoping he will convince me that I am good as I am, I tell myself the wrong tale. Being good enough is about our identity and our being. We are who we are and only I can have a clue who I am and the same goes for you. If I think I know how and who you should be, I am above reality. How can I if I even do not really know how and who I am?

Existential questions

Still we share problems. If we are women who should have been men, we have the same deep existential question. It's the same if we are old and white and should be black and young. Only if we can say out loud Yes to who we are, we can say No to that part of our personality that is not us. If we are stuck in 'Yes but' and 'No but' our frank Yes and our full No will go underground and we will radiate something secretive that will undermine our relations.

Sexual fantasies

Often we do not know what we exactly long for. That is why our sexual, romantic and violent fantasies about our loved ones can guide us. Those images or dreams about a man or a woman have a meaning. Our sexual fantasies are also mirroring our longing for our own anima or own animus, for our longing to connect with our soul or our mind. This can be erotic and romantic but also violent. Our loved one can change into a devil who will rape us. Or into a strict mother who does not love us or into a possessive father who dominates and abuses us. Anything is possible in our dreams and imagination. Scary! Better not talk about it in public. Nevertheless those images represent normal – subconscious - needs. Precisely because our longing to become a complete human being is so intense, the images that go with it are so vehement. Only when we become afraid because we believe we have to bring our imagination into action or because we think what we experience is reality, we can lose ourselves. When we reject and suppress those images out of fear, they will stay with us and can become dangerous for our health and feeling of well being.



Becoming whole

And of course our sexual fantasies are also about the longing to be near another person, the

longing to literally feel another body of flesh and blood. And about wanting to become one with this other person in a way that can only be reached by surrendering and coming into each other. But the continuous tension that dominates our lives is caused by the contradiction within ourselves. Our masculine side challenges our feminine pole, our animus tickles our anima, our mind thinks he is the boss of our soul, Yang and Yin struggle for the biggest space. And this very tension changes into excitement every time we meet a man or a woman who awakens our animus or our anima and sets our bellies on fire. Aha, is he the One or is she? And then the game recommences. After rose buds and moonbeams the conflicts and the fear to lose ourselves or our loved one follow. But in the end it will become clear that becoming whole can only be accomplished within ourselves. Becoming one with another human being is not the same as becoming one with our own 'other half', but the one cannot exist without the other. That is why I plead for granting ourselves our lust and desire. Let's compare it to gold-ore, that is not to be found on the surface. You have to dig for it and if you find it, you will have to purify it to find gold. Throwing it away would be a pity, maybe even a sin.



A complete human being

This text is mainly based on the Jungian heritage, because it gave me the insight I needed, when I struggled severely with a love I lost and could not get over. The only way I could go on was to understand why it happened by writing the undercurrent.

Step by step I could and can accept that I had to grow this way, not because I am inferior but because I am a woman who longs to become who she is: a complete human being.

How about you and your experiences with relations and sex and love and longing for the One. How about your search for who you truly are in relation to your loved ones. If you can, take time now and meditate on questions as: Am I good enough as a woman? Am I good enough as a man? Am I good enough as a lover? Do I long to connect? Do I believe I have a soul mate? Did I meet my soul mate? Do I believe in love?

If you read or scan the text again you can find your own questions that urgently ask for answers. Do not be shy, your questions can bring you to your own answers and wisdom if you allow yourself to let your hand do the work and write.

Time to connect with your deepest wish by creating a painting, a book, a song, a sculpture, a drawing, a composition, day after day after day...

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Creation