

EMPATHY AND SELF MANAGEMENT

using Psychophonetics¹

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Evolution is in our human hands these days. It happens if we choose to do it. Awakening to our inner life is the forward progress. Everything positive in our life depends on such an awakening, and yet, it can only take place in complete freedom of choice. Such an awakening, to be sustainable and beneficial for our lives – requires the right conditions.

In my previous article in Vitalita³ I gave a broad introduction to the 7 conditions for sustainable personal and spiritual development on which all our work is based. These conditions are also the foundation of the organization developmental process that we call ‘Humanizing the Workplace’: transforming work into an opportunity for personal and spiritual development. In the last article I also described in some details the first condition - the commitment for taking personal responsibility for one’s own well being on the basis of one’s own intuition.

In this article I will recapture the context and the meaning of the 7 conditions and I will describe in more details the second and the third conditions: the commitment to empathy and the commitment to regard one’s inner life as real. I will complete the description of the 7 in my third and fourth article on this topic.

Every living being requires specific conditions for its growth and development. On the outer level it is obvious what basic conditions are needed for the life of plants, animals, human beings. But when it comes to the conditions for the inner dimension of personal development – another level of observation is required.

Specific conditions are needed for the inner development of adults or they just do not grow. It is completely possible for people to stay on the same level of personal development reached at the age of 21 for the rest of one’s life. There is no outer imperative for personal development. The necessary conditions for the development of the inner life must be provided by conscious upgrading of the way one lives one’s ordinary life – in light of the principals that make inner development possible.

The concepts about the 7 conditions are simple enough to understand intellectually. Only when practical attempts are made in that direction – the testing thresholds appear. They can be overcome only through objective observation of one’s habits, patterns, defenses, avoidances and self ignorance, as well as one’s higher potential. You can only change something when you see it, and the soul has to be seen in order to be changed. There can be many ways to do so. As described in previous Vitalita articles⁴ – Psychophonetics provides that perspective by activating the ‘Deep Intelligence’ of body awareness, gesture, visualization and the universal sounds of human speech. These activate the capacity for Perceptive Imagination, Inspiration and Intuition which are required for the seeing, hearing and knowing of a human soul. Combined with these tools – the 7 conditions of sustainable personal development become a practical process of sustainable inner change. Here is a short list of the seven:

- 1) Commitment to take personal responsibility for one’s own Well Being on the basis of your own intuition.
- 2) Commitment to cultivate of Empathy methodically.
- 3) Commitment to conscious Self-management – regarding one’s inner life as if it is real.
- 4) Commitment to cultivate tolerance and respect for differing realities.

¹ A modality of personal and professional development and therapy based on Rudolf Steiner’s Psychosophy.

² Founder of Psychosophy, director of Psychophonetics Institute International, PACE – Psychosophy Academy of Central Europe, Ascola Empatia, Psychophonetics College UK and Persephone College South Africa.

³ Vitalita August 2014

⁴ See Vitalita February /March 2014

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- 5) Commitment to making conscious decision and to Act on these decisions.
- 6) Commitment to the conscious cultivation of Gratitude.
- 7) Commitment to consistency.

The First Condition: Commitment to take personal responsibility for one's own wellbeing on the basis of your own intuition

This means on the physical, environmental, mental, emotional and spiritual levels. It was described in details in the previous article. Its aim and outcome include more than just being healthy: it is practical training in developing courage to face yourself; honesty with yourself; empathy to your own being (which is the foundation for empathy with others); responsibility, authenticity, autonomy; listening to your own intuition; inner leadership (which is the basis for any true leadership) clarity of observation, and strengthening of the will.

The Second Condition: commitment to cultivate Empathy methodically

This means an ongoing upgrade of one's ability to listening, observing and perceiving others' experience and meaning from their own point of view.

I spoke here before on the evolutionary significance of the development Empathy for our time⁵. On the personal level – the conscious transition from observing people from the outside to listening to them from the inside of their own experience – is a turning point in one's spiritual development. It can change lives, relationships, families, organizations. But first it has to change you.

Empathy is not sympathy or compassion. It is a new organ of soul perception. It is not a technical skill but a new capacity for the perception of the inner life of another being. In order to develop it - a deeper level of self awareness is required. To *See, Hear* and *Know* another human being requires doing the same for oneself. It is an initiative requiring personal development.

Logically there can be no good reason *not* to try to understand a person from their own point of view. But there are many emotional reasons why we normally do not do it. These present the very raw material for true personal development.

At the heart of the Second Condition is the actual human heart. The mind can hide the reality of what one really does with intellectual reasoning – but a direct observation of the state of heart will reveal it straight away. In the middle of cutting yourself off from the inner life of a significant other human being – your heart shrinks and contracts. You can sense it directly if you pay attention to it. It tells the truth every time. Such a sensation of one's heart can be a turning point in an interaction, a relationship and in yourself.

Any moment you stop in the middle of an argument or in the middle of a negative thought about someone – and decide to try and see that person from their inside – forms a stepping stone in the development of the second condition for spiritual development: Empathy.

The Third condition: the commitment to regard one's inner life as if it is real - sounds very simple in words, until you try it practically. It is a turning point in human evolution: the realization that inner life is as real as outer life is.

This is the commitment to taking responsibility for the Self-management of one's inner life. But you can only manage what you can see in front of you, and your inner life is not in front of you. To see the inner life requires practical skills for self observation and perspective regarding one's own emotions, desires, motivations, reactions, projections, feelings, memories, habits, pains, pleasures, creative and destructive dynamics, strengths and weaknesses: your actual human reality.

This condition marks the end of the unconscious materialism which controlled human thinking over the past 300 years. It had to be so. We had to make the shift from blind faith in the soul and the spiritual dimensions of reality – into a complete denial of it. It was necessary to arrive to that isolation in order to develop the requisite independence of thought which is capable of realizing freely the spiritual dimension of human and natural reality.

⁵ See Vitalita articles in the April, May and June 2014 issues.

In the present condition waking to the spiritual dimension of reality must start by acknowledging oneself as a soul, an experience, an inner being. As long as we are bound with our core identity to our bodily life – we are flooded by the continuous stream of impressions from the outer world. The constant dynamics of sense impressions, sensations, feelings and reactions to the outer world and the constant intellectual attention and reflecting on these impressions – fills the soul space completely with its constant noise.

The only way out of this constant noise is to acknowledge it as reality! Only if we regard the dynamics of our inner life as realities, in the same sense that tables and chairs, trees and cars are realities – can we take responsibility to them, stop projecting them on others, transform them, and wake up to ourselves as observers. And the observer of the soul world is a conscious spirit. As long as we only observe the outer world – our spirit is limited to the narrowness of the intellect. In starting to observe one's own soul dynamics as reality – the individual 'I' starts to wake up to itself as an independent being. Only independent spiritual beings, aware of themselves as independent spiritual beings – can observe the world and relate to it as a living spirit.

The Third Condition of spiritual development was given for that purpose – awakening to ourselves as independent spirits. But in the process of cultivating it and making it into an essential component of our personal, social and professional life – we evolve as human beings on all of these levels.

Try it out and you will see it for yourself: every time you will stop and acknowledge in direct perception an element of your soul life as reality – something will change immediately in the strength of your conscious presence in time and space. And, immediately, whatever you are observing at the time – will reveal to you a deeper dimension of its inner reality. That is spiritual development in action.