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Communication and Planning

Healthy Communication

Script of the conference of 5 November 2003

(if it is going to be published, do you need my drawings as picture?)

We are speaking in an international conference about participation, because in everyday life people do not feel like participating and being seriously heard from the ones on the top of society, the ones who decide: society is becoming abstract and almost virtual, and this is not healthy for the identity of people.

That is the reason why we have to work about healthy environment and healthy communication.

But what's that, healthy communication? We are going to discover this together.

Everyone needs to feel comfortable, everyone prefers to feel good, and if everyone does, we can therefore say that everyone has this right, the right to feel good, and you have the right to protect yourself with healthy communication and to have a positive selfconcept.

A positive selfconcept is one of the answer to the question „how can I avoid illness?“

But we build our selfconcept, and our world, with communication. We have to learn healthy communication in order to become this right, feeling good, for us and for everyone.

I am not going to do a lecture, I am going to do two lectures in one, a sort of double-lecture in half a time and to work with you and your concentration.

Some of you are going to be teachers, the other ones are going to be planners.

The one lecture is about healthy communication, in order not to burn out in your job as teachers,

the other one is about healthy communication and planning, in order not to burn out in your job as planners.

But you are all concerned with both, as you will see.

Both are concerning our future.

Future-people grows up in the schools, and future-rooms in your plans.

Both is concerning how to influence one another and our future.

Our future is going to be sustainable, or it is not going to be at all.

Communication and planning concern therefore sustainable approach for the future and for the present.

Please interrupt me and ask questions If I am not clear enough. I am going to make two little exercises with your cooperation and a little break between them.

1. Communication is always either healthy or unhealthy, if it is not the one neither the other, it is just boring.

Everyone communicates all the time –nothing is easier than that, is it?

The first principle of Paul Watzlawick on communication is: „you cannot not communicate“: not only words, every action perceived by another human being, is a form of communication. Communication is every action people take in order to change other people, to have an effect, an influence on other people: I want you to do something, for example just now, I want you to listen to me, to share with you what I learned, and I am communicating with you in order to achieve this goal.

And I want to catch your interest with my drawings, and to influence you in your idea of communication: and if I try to change someone else, I try to have a sort of power about him or her.

Communication has also something to do with power and inpowering you and me. Or taking away the power, if I communicate dysfunctionally.

You can learn to communicate healthily, with yourself and with others: healthy communication is any communication that makes you feel empowered, strong, good. It means feeling accepted from others and accepting others.

2. Why do you feel bad or good by communication?

Because everyone has many needs, and very important ones are appreciation, recognition, acknowledgement. Any communication has two levels (and that is the second principle of Paul Watzlawick), what you say and how you say it. With the how you constantly show the other person, if you appreciate and recognize his/her opinions, knowledge, if you confirm him or her, or simply not. Everyone identifies himself with their own opinions and knowledge. And we fall in love with people who confirm us the best way. Later we get disillusioned if they don't confirm us any longer and just are the way they are, or want to be confirmed by us. From this point of view every communication is an hidden negotiation: „do you like me? Do you confirm me? Am I allowed to relax? Or are you a danger for me and my selfconcept? Shall I fight or try to escape?“

Communication is also already a risk. The risk of the NO.

Because with every communication your mind is going to move: and your mind is going to move automatically in one of two directions: (**illustration.**)

You can answer: „NO, I don't understand what you say“, „NO, I don't agree with what you say“, „NO, I am not interested in what you say“.

Or elsewhere you can react by answering „YES, that's it“, „YES, I know what you mean“, „YES, tell me more“, and so on.

Any NO is a STOP, any YES opens place for more.

And how do you feel by any NOs and any YESes inside yourself?

A little exercise: **just try now** together: stand up and think about something you really dislike, that you really don't want, and just feel a big NO inside. OK.

Now just move and jump around and change places, now think about something you really love, something beautiful, something you only need to think about and you just have to smile, and feel like Yes, that is, inside – (now reflections: how does it feel like to feel No or Yes inside?)

By No you feel closed, distant, by Yes you feel good, curious, open, you want some more.

Maybe you are asking yourself: what does this have to do with planning? Please let me surprise you and follow me until the end and the answer to your question. And please just try to suspend your Nos and Yeses for a little while.

As teachers and planners you are going to be team-leaders, and you are going to have the power, to give energy and enthusiasm to your team, to get your team to feel like yes inside, if you simply think about training yourself to do it.

How are you going to be training yourself?

You certainly know the experiment about the so-called Pygmalion-Effect: at the very beginning of the school year, psychologists told teachers, that some of their pupils were very intelligent, very very ingenious. The teachers didn't know, that the psychologists only pretended, they in fact never ever saw the pupils, and that they simply pickt out some names per coincidence from the children list. Some months after, the psychologists really examined

all the pupils with an intelligence-test, and, big surprise: – the ones they had pickt out from the list some months ago were really the most intelligent.

What happened? How could the theachers have such an influence on the kids, that they were able to be better, because the theachers thought they were already better?

Is it magic?

Yes it is, it is the magic of the human mind and communication.

Our perception selects, and as human beings we see everything through our filter of previous knowledge and interpretations of the world: our filter from the past.

We have also the tendency things to interpretate in such a way that we minimize the work we would have to do, in order to make sense, with things that don't really match with believes that we already have.

The theachers believed what the experts, the psychologists said, and saw the „very much more intelligent“ children with other eyes. They did not notice it, but they communicated with theirs behaviour much more respect, much more interest for these children than they did für other ones. If the pupils did not understand something, they thought it was an exception and were of course helpful, and so on. Pupils unconsciously felt like they were worth it, they felt the theachers had really attention and interest and respect for them. They were empowered by the comunication of the teachers.

This experiment shows you: we always see what we believe, and therefore we have to work on our believes, and have good ones, in order to have good experiences with other people, with school-children and with partecipation.

If you are going to train yurself in seeing the best in the young people you are working with, you are going to influence the athmosphare and really help the young people becoming self-faithful and socially competent.

(drawing: self-fulfilling-profecy: I think A, I feel like A, I behave like A, I look like A, I have results A, that confirms my expectations: I think A, and so on...)

The same goal - train yurself in seeing the best in the people you are dealing with - can planners do with any people they have to do with: as expert and specialists you have a very special problem: you must re-learn to speak like normal people and at the same time to see the intelligence and creativity in the people you are dealing with, and - therefore - you are going to have to do with creative, cooperative, social competent people.

If we see the people as the experts of their own needs, we see their needs as the information we need in order to find the best solution together.

As a specialist, as a planner, you have to intermediate between

-the needs people have, as information of experts and

-the stand of knowledge in your planning-culture

-and esthetic, cultural needs and values, such as beauty,

but why don't we simply re-build an ancient beautiful building ? Because we also need

-authenticity, every generation needs to see their idea of beauty built.

As an expert and as a mediator you have to understand the people you deal with and to express in their environment the values of their culture with satisfaction for all.

Train this experiment in your everyday life: If you are going to speak to anyone,

-1. just stop and

-2. smile to yourself and

-3. think just one minute about three positiv things about this person that you are going to deal with,

and your communication is going to be more empowering and healthy.

Planning is such a powerful instrument like communication. Planning changes the environment of the people and therefore their future. But Planning is also a metaforic action: and as an action it is a communication, and a magic communication, because of its power: It has the power to bring people to feel like NO, and angry and depressive, or feel like YES.

And that is the reason why we feel happy when we see Beauty and that is the reason why we like BEAUTY.

Beauty gets us to say Yes inside, and to feel Yes inside. And we all prefer to feel like YES. To feel good.

So planning has to do with beauty, with our power to let other people feel well in our and their environment.

That is why I think planners and architects should know more about communications, not only in order to communicate better with other people but in order to communicate better with their plannings and projects as a promise of beauty, as the possibility of feeling YES.

3. BREAK: change chairs, go so far as you can, get comfortable. Take pen and paper because you are going to need it in a few minutes.

Especially the teachers and the planners but, please, everyone else match with us, together in a little **relaxing** experience now:

(suggestiv leded relax-experience)

I want you all to relax now, and just concentrate on your breath, how air is going through your nose, breathing in,...and breathing out and just let everything go, everything you don't need now, we have time, you just have to feel the ground under your feet, and your body really feels comfortable, and ... now you feel very strong or rather lightly, you are sure that you are going to preserve your enthusiasm all your life long – you are sure you are going to remember all your life long why you want to be a teacher (and why you want to be a planner) – and feel deep happiness and just a feeling of somehow gratefulness, because young people need you in order to become an empowering link to the treasure of human culture (and the planners feel somehow grateful, because all the people they are going to work with... need their experience... in order to have a vision for good places to live).

And maybe everyone of you has a special colour you love or a special picture or a special music in your mind, and you can take your time and put your pleasant feeling of gratefulness in this colour, or in this picture or in your music, and know, you are going to preserve it in your hearth like a precious treasure, a precious treasure in a little secret box in your mind...

I want to give you now some visualisations as special instruments to become your own communication-specialist in your job.

Please draw them as your mental instruments, as tools (drawings: **the many parts of your inside-team**)

Now I want you to imagine that you have a lot of little other yous in yourself: your many faces, all your feelings, all things you sometimes tell yourself, all your various characters and qualities.

And I want you to take a big sheet of paper and to draw your portraits with all those parts in you. As an example I am going to draw my own: ...

Also those special parts that you have to have, in order to be a good teacher and a good planner.

Both teachers as Planners need something like special interior parts, to communicate healthily and safely, with the pupils and with the people who participate by planning. In my

communication seminars I work with people and show them how to be fit and prepared for their goals. We don't have much time now, but we can make a beginning and know that it is going to work inside you unconsciously and help you to be fit and ready for reaching your goals.

The most important question: how do you feel? How do I feel?

Am I feeling empowered? Comfortable?

If not I am not fair with myself, I am abusing my rights, because it is a human right, right?

And I am responsible for myself, therefore I have to ask myself: „what do I need to feel good?“

What interior parts can you imagine you may be needing? In your life, in your job, as a teacher, as a planner?

Maybe a very good body-guard, that preserves you, because all people can see, you have it and it is not good to attack you – if you have such a part inside you, you look like assertive and selfsure and everyone can see it and is going to respect you.

If you don't already have that strong inside part, you can simply begin by installing such a part now.

(guided relax experience)

1. Just relax, feel your weight, your feet under your chair...close your eyes...
2. see you in your conference inside, with all your many parts, with your inside team, a very good team: you are here, you are safe, your team is working very good for you all the time...
3. think about a resource that you believe your team really needs
4. think about someone, that already has it, no matter if it is only a fantasy, from a movie, or a book, or your imagination. See that image like a picture, hear the voice, feel the presence...
5. Invite the new part to come in your inside conference, as a new member in your inside team. Introduce it to the others. Feel that improving part inside, see through his eyes, hear through his ears.

In everyday life you can always use this picture (see picture) as a **situation check**, before you are going to communicate, with scholars, with people in participation planning, whoever.
(Explain the picture: history of every situation, aims and goals, subjects, issues)

Teaching, as communication, just like planning, as communication, are a way to influence people feel like No or Yes inside. It is a very big responsibility.

Communication in the school does it immediately, planning through the organisation of future rooms experiences and through the transformation of needs in possibilities.

If we have the habit of respecting needs people have as rights – and the need to feel good as an healthy RIGHT – we can make the change with our planning and our communication.

And what stop us to be able to make a change?

Nothing.