

## Ludovica Scarpa: Communication and Planning

Everyone communicates all the time and nothing is easier than that, isn't it?

The first principle of *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 (Wirkung), an influence on other people. It has also something to do with power and inpowering you and me.

**But communication is also a risk.**

Because with every act of communication I am going to move your mind: and your mind is going to move automatically in one of two directions:

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“.

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 communication. Ask yourself, how you feel by „Nos“ and „YESes“? By „Nos“ you feel closed, distant, by „Yes“ you feel good, curious, open, you want to go on with communication.

Maybe you are asking yourself: what does this have to do with „planning“? Please let me surprise you and follow me until the end of my intervention. I will answer your question.

And: please suspend your „Nos“ and „Yes'es“ for a little while.

**Why communication makes you feel bad or good ?**

The answer is: Because everyone has many needs; very important ones are: appreciation, recognition, acknowledgement. The second principle of Watzlawick is, that any communication has two levels. „*What* you say and *how* you say it“. With the *how* you constantly show the other person, if you appreciate and recognize his/her opinion, knowledge or not - if you confirm him or her - or not. This process in communication exists, because everyone identifies himself with his own opinions and knowledge. For example: we fall easier in love with a person, who confirm us in the best way. Later we get very disillusioned, if this person doesn't confirm us any longer.

From this point of view, every communication is an hidden negotiation: „Do you like me? Do you confirm me? Or are you a danger for me?“ This are the are the main questions in this communicationprocess.

Planning is a powerful instrument. Planning results changes the environment of people and therefore their present situation, lifestyle and future. But „planning“ is also a metaforic action: as an action it is - following the principle of Watzlawick - a communication act, and a magic communication, because of its power: It has the power to make people feel bad, angry and depressive (too many Nos), or feel good (many Yes'es).

And that is the reason why we feel happy when we see Beauty and why we like BEAUTY. Beauty gets us to say Yes inside, and to feel Yes inside.

So planning has to do with beauty, with our power to let other people feel good 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, of feeling YES.