

fluid

transformation

from

within

## Organizational Constellations

People are able to accomplish astonishing results through collaboration. In the best of times we surprise ourselves and the people around us by what is possible when we work together. And we also know how difficult it can be. We may all agree that a situation is unacceptable and would like to create a different way of collaborating, yet are helpless and stuck in finding a solution that produces a different result.

Here are a few examples where difficult group dynamics often present themselves:

- Building teams, defining processes and roles/functions
- Developing strategic plans for projects and businesses
- Succession planning
- Performance and competence evaluations
- Decision making in family businesses
- Merging organizations and businesses

What if there were ways to explore and preview group dynamics? What if we could experience how to approach and address key individuals and groups of people so that they are heard and move out of an impasse? What needs to be seen and acknowledged to shift the situation so that new organizational behavior can emerge?

Organizational Constellations surface hidden contracts and silent agreements in group dynamics in a neutral and non-judgmental context. We can preview and step into a new space within an organization and experience first-hand what it would be like to interact with the organization and key individuals from a different inner stance. There are hundreds of examples where this way of exploring and understanding underlying group dynamics has offered business owners, executives, organizational consultants, managers and employees new choices that lead to surprising results.

We are able to tell from observation that every social system, formal and informal, creates an informational field that keeps track of the relationships within it. This field is invisible much like a magnetic field that only becomes visible when we spread iron filings and watch the filings aligning themselves to expose its forces. The social field becomes similarly visible when we use other people to share their experience of what it is like to stand in a particular place within the field. We can learn about and observe three areas that are central to all group dynamics:

1. Organizational structure in terms of responsibility, authority, competence and seniority
2. The dynamics of giving and taking within teams, departments and business partners
3. The boundaries of who is part of the system and who is not

Experience has taught us that disregarding any of these key dynamics creates an imbalance in the group that prompts people to try and restore the balance. If necessary we are willing to do it subversively. Any group demands that its order be respected, that there be a balance in giving

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and taking, and all its members be included. If setting things right cannot be done in an overt and explicit way we encounter hidden contracts and silent agreements that are an attempt at doing it anyway. However, because these attempts are not directed at the root cause, they create a host of unintended consequences that lead to seemingly intractable situations. And because they are misplaced responses, they cannot be resolved directly but require us to return to the root cause. Most of us are unaware of any of these dynamics and their consequences, which makes it virtually impossible to use our everyday awareness to find solutions.

The information in this social field becomes accessible through our felt sense: emotions and physical body sensations. That is how we become aware of it in Constellations and it is also how we access it in our everyday interactions. We have a sense of what feels right and what feels wrong in our everyday actions and choices. In addition to all the considerations we are aware of, we are also influenced in our choices through the felt sense from the social field. Sometimes this felt sense is so strong that we do things we know are "wrong" and yet we feel so compelled to do them anyway.

It appears that aligning ourselves with the social field creates a critically important sense of belonging that speaks to a deep tribal part in us. When behavior increases our sense of belonging we feel really good and when it creates separation, we feel bad and guilty. When we are aligning ourselves with a hidden contract that subversively tries to set something right, we feel good no matter how obviously "dysfunctional" it may appear to an outside observer. It just feels like the right thing to do.

In Organizational Constellations we are able to identify the root causes that lead to dysfunction. We can access a reference experience of what it feels like to disrupt the hidden contracts and silent agreements and how doing the right thing may feel bad at first. We get a preview of how the experience will change when the system re-adapts to a balanced social dynamic. In this state of balance the group dynamic naturally supports the ability to self-organize and self-regulate. In other words the organization is able to adapt to external and internal events with flexibility creating the collaboration towards a shared vision that we all know as wonderful teamwork.