

The Three Perspectives

Introduction

In this article I would like to present an exposé of the three basic approaches by which the Being dimension, is actualized in 'Being-orientation approach' (hereafter referred to as B.O.A). The three approaches work within their own distinct perspective. That is why I call them: the three perspectives. I will first shortly present them to you and then elaborate on them later.

The first perspective:

In this perspective we give attention to the conditioned way in which the client experiences himself¹ and the world. After having become conscious of conditioned patterns, we assist in a process of letting go of the coordinates of the past. The qualities of the Being-dimension manifest in this perspective as an open and accepting attitude towards the psychological contents. Also the practice of mindfulness, letting go, entering the empty spaces in the psyche and connecting with wisdom symbols belong to the practices. In this perspective, because all these practices use the conventional conditioned psyche as a starting point.

The second Perspective

The assumption in this perspective is that besides the conditioned reality, an unconditioned free reality is always present in us. We can learn to contact this free, radiant and benign reality through various evocative methods. Once evoked, the method of the second perspective consists of staying within this free, unconditioned reality and so gradually incarnate the 'Being qualities', which inhere in this free state.

The third Perspective

The realization in this perspective is that everything, whether it is a conditioned or radiant reality, is in essence **Being**.

There is here no longer any linear, process-oriented activity; the only thing that matters here is the constant remembrance and re-minding of this true nature: 'resting in Being'.

The classification of my work in three perspectives has proven to be very helpful. It offers a good framework to understand and classify the wide variety of exercises, practices and styles of guidance. Each perspective has its own way of working based on different assumptions of who you really are. Each perspective addresses a different level of consciousness.

Directions, which are wholly adequate in one perspective, might be counterproductive in another. So it is good to know in which perspective you are working

The first Perspective

Working in this perspective, the guide² initially touches base with the existential worldview of the client. The client is invited to let the dynamic of his or her own conditioned psyche come to surface. I use of the term: 'psyche' here to designate the conditioned manner of perceiving, feeling and acting, which interprets the now on basis of the past. In Being-oriented language this is referred to as: the client lives psychologically in 'the house of parents'. With the term

¹ I will use the male form 'he', instead of she, he or she, or (s)he, for aesthetic reasons

² There has been an evolution in B.O.P of the naming of the one who gives guidance to the client. At first we called our self: psychotherapist. That felt too narrow after a couple of years, so we started to call ourselves; 'guides'. Even the word 'guiding' has an element of helping in it, which felt unsuitable after a while, so now many of us call ourselves 'teachers' and call the clients now 'students'. This, we feel is a naming which is better suited for the role we wish to play: we want to guide people on a path of self remembrance and actualisation and function there as a 'teacher'. In this article I will use the words ;guide' and 'client'.

'house of parents', I mean the total set of assumptions which are subconsciously the basic matrix of our feelings, thoughts, actions, etc. These stem from our experiences with our early environment.

It is within the frame of reference of 'the house of parents' that neurotic disturbances develop. Or, to put it even more boldly: from a Being oriented point of view: neurosis is identical with living in 'the house of parents'. Each time the client projects himself in 'the house of the parents', he creates the painful situations of youth and attempts anew. And he will be, once again, involved in overcoming the shortages and trauma's, always replaying the past and trying to improve on that. The client is not realizing that the problem is self-created and thus illusory, and that the only thing (s)he has to do is: *stop creating the problem*.

Stated in this manner it sounds rather stupid, but we have to realize that we all do this all the time, if we are unaware. It is an automated process, our psyche is designed to function in that way.

In B.O.A the guide avoids coming under the magic spell of the client, who sets forth a compelling worldview, in which the guide easily tends to believe. Specifically, the guide avoids falling into the trap of trying to solve the problem as it is perceived and presented by the client. Helping to solve an illusory problem only serves to solidify the illusion.

A fine example of this was presented to me by my daughter: she has always been afraid of spooks and ghosts, but recently this fear increased. Evidently at school the teacher had suggested that one could fight off ghosts by burning an incense stick.

When my wife had explained for the umpteenth time that spooks and ghosts alike did not exist, my daughter replied: "yes, but incense does exist, so then do spooks and ghosts!".

In the same way, remedies within 'the house of parents' strengthen the conditioned perspective and serve only to deepen the identification of the client with his conditioned psyche.

When the guide works within the first perspective in B.O.A, (s)he invites the client to unfold the problem and the accompanying perspective, but shall then refrain from offering remedies and solutions within that belief system.

Likewise, the guide shall not ask for new behaviour while being identified with the 'inner child' such as: "tell your mother or father, speak up for yourself", etc.. This technique is often used in regression-oriented therapies where one is in search of the historical starting point of a certain neurotic behavior, in order to elucidate the basic script of that behavior after which therapist and client try to create a new script in 'the house of parents'. The assumption in such a form of therapy is that it is possible to 're-wire' the conditioned patterns.

In B.O.A the psychological exploration may be applied up to and including the exploration of the old script, but at that point regression-oriented psychotherapy and B.O.A part ways: in B.O.A there is no ambition to 're-wire' the system. Rather, the client is encouraged to disregard the conditioned worldview as a reference point, and to remember the unconfined openness of the present and explore who one is if the old reference points are discarded. I consider it to be an axiom within my work that it is **not possible** to correct 'the conditioned patterns'. I do not try to improve the old, but rather extend an invitation to 'creative' new behavior. For such 'creative' behavior is not based upon coordinates of the 'house of parents', and in this sense is no longer 're-active'.

Theory and methods of B.O.A also differentiate themselves from psychodynamic therapy axioms which hold the premise that repressed, subconscious 'material', such as insights, feelings, impulses, emotions, must be brought to the surface and acted-out or analytically interpreted.

Freudian therapy is based upon this notion, bringing the unconscious to the conscious, as well as that of Reich, who describes 'Character Analysis' as the goal of therapy. Many dynamic deep therapies are based upon this notion.

Apart from the many positive effects which such an approach holds, it has, in my opinion, a large disadvantage: namely, that little or no work is done *beyond* the coordinates of the old system. The catharsis and insight are held as having a spontaneous, healing or liberating effect. I find this to be only partially the case. Quite often the coordinates of 'the house of

parents' are strengthened instead of left behind. One learns indeed more about 'the house of parents', but this does not automatically lead to a liberated *departure* from 'the house of parents'. One indeed learns to feel more of what the repressed feelings are and have been. I call this the "withdrawn self", but it is often assumed that these feelings are representative of the real, authentic self.

This I find to be a capital mistake.

For it goes unnoticed that the feelings involved are only valid in the conditioned sphere of the 'house of parents', but will dissolve in the unconditioned space of the 'house of Being'. The repressed feelings are the feelings of an abandoned child. They represent a dependent powerless position. They do not represent the mature, creative, responsible reaction to a situation.

In my view, the client has certainly discovered something important that was lost, but not 'himself'. When the client considers the repressed child to be himself, he is acting out his childhood. The old coordinates are then reconfirmed instead of left behind.

It can be very helpful to uncover repressed feelings: they contain sensitivity, clarity and libido. But they have to be transformed from a reactive to a creative form. The form of the emotions and feelings will undergo a profound and radical change in that transformation process. So after connecting with child feelings, the client has to be prepared also to let go of those feelings in their original, childlike form. This is not so easy because that also means accepting the loss that the past will never be improved upon.

Very often psychodynamic therapists believe that they have to honor the repressed feelings to such an extent that they feel it would be very un-empathic and even a repetition of old denial, to ask the client to dis-identify from the child position and bring the uncovered libido and sensitivity to the adult position. I have had many heated arguments with therapist over this. Personally I do not think that the theoretic point is so difficult, it is much more an issue of giving up parentification: caring for the client as if he is unable to stand on his own two feet and needs you as his emotional ground. Most therapists suffer from parentification. That brought them to their profession. Therapists have become addicted to the helper role. It covers their empty spots in their psyche, gives them status, satisfaction and the gratitude of the clients.

If the therapist and the client create a bond on the caring for the inner child, there will be a tremendous regressive pull. The client starts to identify more and more with his childish feelings, his needs, his past, and the therapist thinks that he is helping the client when he helps him or her to uncover more and more of these repressed feelings, impulses and insights and offers satisfaction of the child needs by assuming the role of the nurturing, understanding 'good mother' to the client.

We have the 'incense stick' situation here: the remedy only serves to reinforce the problem. I hope this discussion makes the point of view of B.O.A. clear: we avoid appropriating a remedy within the problem-view of the client. Instead, when the conditioned patterns have become conscious, the guide stimulates the client to leave 'the house of the parents' and , develop new choices and potentials in the open, unconditioned sphere of *nowness*.

In order to be able to do this, the client must be willing to let go of all compulsions to 'have to finish unfinished business': to regain rights, to be seen, to get now what (s)he missed, to undo what was done before, to make right what was wrong.

This is a big step for many, especially since the urge to achieve victory over the past constitutes the main drive behind the neurotic structures. One has to be willing to 'accept the loss'. He has to accept defeat: there is no victory to be had over the past. The past is a lost cause. You cannot undo it, make it better, change your parents or cure your child-feelings. It is time to stop waiting for your mother, face the emptiness in you and above involve yourself fully in your life here and now.

However harsh this may sound, it is a truly liberating attitude. Life can start flowing again.

The withdrawn and strategic self

At this juncture, I feel that it is important to pause and reflect a bit further upon the neurotic structure that binds us to our past.

According to my observations, the child splits into a so-called strategic and withdrawn self at

the point where there was a lack of love and a lack of contact.

The withdrawn self is that sensitive, libidinous part of the person that has felt hurt, sad, fearful and disillusioned through the lack of contact, and which then withdraws its sensitivity, libido and awareness out of the field of contact. It loses touch with the world: the withdrawn self goes underground and freezes.

The strategic self is the dynamic, striving part of the person which does not give up, but rather attempts to bridge the contact gap by reaching out to the parents. It does this by bypassing what is actually here (the lack) and through striving for what perhaps could happen if it would only try hard enough. This self goes out of its way to do its best, caring for the parents (parentification!), becoming annoying, seeking the center of attention, becoming meek and invisible etc.

The fall

Both the strategic self as well as the withdrawn self have blocked the experience of lack of contact.

During psychological explorations, one learns to see through the strategic maneuvers and is encouraged to let go of these. Moreover, one also learns to make contact with the withdrawn self-feelings. One learns to accept these exactly as they are by letting go of any hope of changing or remedying the situation: *the acceptance of loss*. When one succeeds in this the abyss of contactlessness opens.

This has the archetypal form of falling: in a pit, in an abyss, sometimes it has the form of being swallowed by a marsh, drowning etc.

This is how I understand the fall: the withdrawn self is rooted in one's biological basis: the abdominal and pelvic region. The strategic self occupies predominately the upper body where all those functions are located which have to do with reaching out over the immediate given to the possible: the functions of thinking and use of far reaching senses such as the eyes and ears.

The contact-gap between child and environment gets incorporated in the child as a split between upper and lower body. This happens because the diaphragm involuntarily contracts to ward off unwanted feelings. The falling experience occurs when the resistance against the experience of the contactlessness is given up.

One can therefore easily induce the fall experience physically by stimulating the relaxation of the diaphragm. The strategic self, which was at first tightly closed off from the reality of the withdrawn self by the armoring of the diaphragm 'falls' into the base of the abdomen and pelvic region, where the experience of contactlessness is seated. .

I have noticed that therapist who have no experience with relaxing in open, unconditioned space, are getting panicky when a client starts to fall. They usually try to 'save' the client, get him out of the pit, avoid letting him drown etc.

Only when the guide is at ease in 'resting in Being', has he gained trust that you can exist and even come to beautiful radiant presence by entering a space which is beyond the reference points of the conditioned psyche. Only then will the guide be able to assist the client in the falling experience.

The falling experience is very frightening for the psyche. In a child perspective, loss of contact with the social world equals death. The falling experience is exactly that: one enters voluntarily in a world where no social mirroring was present. It is the abyss of emptiness, of absence of contact. It feels therefore that one would die if one enters that abyss. And in a way that is true: one dies of his old self-definition, one dies of his social self-image.

In B.O.A, we offer clear guidance at the moment of falling. We realize that the client has weakened ego functions, because he is entering primitive, undeveloped areas of his psyche. Nevertheless the direction of the guidance always goes in the direction of boldly facing the emptiness, the horror, the loneliness. And then to relax into that state, to give up any hope that it will ever change. While settling in the state of no-contact, we encourage the client to *feel* the qualities of the abyss, the pit, etc. Sooner or later the client starts to feel the benign, deep, peaceful qualities of this empty, lonely space. This can unfold more and more and start to shine as joyful and deeply nourished being.

As far as I can see, the experience of contactlessness plays a large role in the 'getting stuck' in the neurosis. Wherever the mother or the caring environment was emotionally absent, no successful symbiosis (nurturing bond) could take place and, consequently, also no differentiation of the 'I' from the mother. The person has thus not been able to individuate. The person got stuck in that place where he is still waiting for the good mother, while in the meantime unable to differentiate from the bad mother. Even if he wants it, he cannot get out of 'the house of the parents', because the I that would have that potential has not been psychologically born. Only through exploring the 'stuckness' can the client contact the undifferentiated psychological parts of himself. These parts are central to him. They constitute his deepest wishes and sensitivity. Exploration of the contactlessness in 'the house of parents', the permission of the experience of emptiness, which is the same as the fall-experience, offers the possibility to be released from the attachment to the parents, and thus to be liberated from the hold of the past. A new open sense of self can unfold here. Succinctly put: the abyss in the 'house of the parents' is the ground of the 'house of Being'.

We can now see why it is so inadequate when the therapist tries to give the client what he has missed in his youth. He goes into collusion with the client in avoiding the threatening reality of emptiness.

The therapist takes the strategic role of reaching beyond the abyss to the withdrawn self of the client. Thereby he re-enacts both his own neurosis and that of the client. By playing the role of the strategic self, he encourages the client to identify with his withdrawn self. This sinking in the identification with the withdrawn self is crucially different from falling into emptiness. It solely means a change in identification within the *conditioned* psyche. It does not mean a confrontation with the central existential threat, which keeps the defenses in place. He prevents the client to be reborn in the openness of being. He turns the client away from the greatest source of healing, joy, and goodness.

Thus, in summation: the guide may assist the client in exploring where he is 'stuck' in the perspective of 'the house of parents'. The bottom line of that is that he is still waiting for the missing parent. What was not received is still sought in order to complete 'unfinished business'. The client hopes that this will bring about growth in the places where growth has stagnated. If the client is able to let go of the search for contact and connectedness, and is able to accept the contactlessness as an actual experience, he may discover the open space of Being.

Stepping into openness

An other typically B.O.A method in this first perspective is to invite the client to step directly into nowness after the defensiveness of the conditioned patterns are clear to him. The client has seen how he avoids what is present now by patterns of waiting, striving, blocking, armoring etc. He is dancing around the immediacy of what is present. The defensive patterns were designed to ward off the emptiness of no-contact in the past. But now in his mature life situation these same defensive patterns ward off the richness of life now.

The falling experience -which we spoke of- emerges when one directs the attention to the emptiness experience in the conditioned psyche. But rather than entering the experience of no-contact, one can also invite the client to fully engage the experience of contact-in-the-here-and-now. It is in a way similar as 'the fall' because there is also the experience of having no reference points. One enters the unknown. It is beyond the map of the psyche. The eyes of attention are not turned inwards now (like in 'the fall'), The eyes are also not turned outward in the familiar strategic way, by excluding contact with ones own needs and sensitivity. It is much more a matter of engaging in a adventurous exploration of what takes place now *in contact* with the other. One enters the space between oneself and the other and starts to inhabit that open, sensitive space. That space does not belong to oneself exclusively, it is also formed by the other. It is a space of contact, a inter-psyche space. It is exactly this contact-full space, which was abandoned in the youth.

This direct method offers great advantages: one avoids obsession with 'the house of parents'.

The guide also makes an appeal to the person that is the equivalent of the appeal which life itself makes: let go of the past, come and live in Now. There is no excuse, there is no reason not to take the step now.

If the guide makes that appeal it often becomes apparent that the client uses therapy as a camouflage for the refusal to be completely present in now: "I first have to work some things out before I can really live". Such an attitude is regarded as resistance in B.O.A..

This imagery elucidates this point clearly:

Let an image come up of yourself, living in the house of your parents and imagine that outside that house there is unlimited freedom and bright light. Now imagine that you are standing on the threshold of the door of the house; what comes to mind as you imagine that you have the choice to stay indoors or to go out.

Almost everyone reports a fear of space at such a moment. Although initially almost everyone feels choked. In the house of parents, when presented with the possibility of space and freedom, they experience a fear of the unknown.

Many clients are more interested to explore the 'house of the past' than to step into the open space: "*first this room must be opened, I don't know yet what is in this cella*", etc. Still, at the same time, everyone realizes that the open space is in fact what one most deeply wants and which is more 'true' in an existential sense.

The neurotic postpones his life until he is done with 'working on himself'. He is preparing for life instead of living life. It will be obvious to the reader that I do not opt for such an endless exploration of the 'house of parents'. Many clients are shocked when I invite them so quickly to come into the open space, and sincerely believe that they will neglect something important by doing so. I take a unconventional standpoint here: I believe, that if you dare to invest yourself in the new and dare to allow the excitement and the intensity to happen, that this is sufficient therapy, and that old cramps and pains thereby will dissolve without first having to bring the past to light first. I think that every aspect and dimension of us has the desire to live fully and participate intensely in life, so unfulfilled child aspects will happily join the rich way of life of the adult when he fully engages whatever is at hand.

Every exploration of the past should be done with this urgent goal in mind. The past is only important to look at when it hinders our full participation at this moment. The appeal to the client to answer the call of life right now to give and invest himself fully, without holding back, reminds him of his deepest wish and spirit.

It may of course happen that if one becomes more fully alive, old experiences of contactlessness arise. But, interesting enough this does not necessarily happen. And if it might happen, these feelings can be treated as a sign that the client is successful on the path of opening. These old feelings do not have to be resolved; they are flowers on the path.

The Second Perspective.

In the method of this perspective we do not take the conditioned experience (psyche) as a starting point, but instead we induce contact with the free and sacred dimensions. The fundamental axiom in this second perspective is that, however compelling the conditioning, there is always a dimension that remains free from it. This dimension can be awakened and called forth in different ways.

In B.O.A I have developed a method to awaken this free dimension through visualization of spiritual symbols and presences. Though this is an easy and very rich way of working, it is by no means the only way to touch the unconditioned. It has become evident to me that at every level of functioning (bodily, energetically, emotionally, mentally) a conditioned as well as an unconditioned form is present. I have a choice to work with either the conditioned or the unconditioned free form, it depends on how I direct the attention of the client.

I am able to ask, for example, to let an image arise that expresses the heart, such as it looks now as a result of life up until now. In that image we find the condensation of all life experience, the hurt, disappointment and perhaps also the client's heroic attempt to overcome the hurt. I can also ask to let an image emerge from the 'original' heart, without the covering of the conditioning. Here a totally different image arises: much more radiant, open,

and expansive. The crucial assumption within this second perspective is that one actually *is* that original heart. The conditioned image of one's heart is in a way more illusory and has more to do with what one has come to believe about oneself based on *other* peoples response on oneself, than with what one really is.

Working within this perspective, the client is asked to identify him/her self with the original, pure image, and to do that as often as possible so that what is true first at a subtle level, slowly may also become embodied.

The motto is: you are not what you have become, you are who you actually are.

Since it has become clear to me that there is such a thing as the original, pure form, I notice that it is possible to allow this form to appear forth in all kinds of ways and areas. Thus, I can evoke the original, pure form of every part of the body: the original head, arms, heart, abdomen, etc. or of pure form of capacities like sexuality, love, wisdom. I can ask for images of a free sexual man or woman etc.

It is evident to me that there is a kind of blue-print level of our functioning as human persons, a subtle level of knowing who we actually are. I lately call this our radiant form³, because it often comes forth in imagery as a radiant shining form and because the quality of being is radiant, joyful and happy.

Besides via imagery and visualization, the qualities of the free dimension may also be invoked via energetic exercises. I call this way of working: "meditation in movement"⁴.

The 'work' in this perspective has several phases:

At first one makes contact with and encounters these original qualities of him or her self.

The next step is that one embodies these qualities as fully as possible. Movement, repeated assertion, dance may be helpful in this.

Then the next step is to realize how the way of perceiving of oneself and the world has transformed. One no longer lives in 'the house of parents', one finds oneself in the open radiant reality of 'the house of being'.

The discipline in this phase is to try to maintain this open way of perceiving.

The next phase deals with forgetting openness.

When one 'falls out' of this perspective, one can either re-member the open perspective right away, by remembering to identify again with the free state, or one can do some psychological research here: what was able to distract me? What did I believe about myself and the world there?

It often shows that the unfinished business in 'the house of the parents' calls one back to the conditioned perspective. Whatever is not developed or completed does not want to play along in the open reality. It wants its own business taken care of first.

It wants to have the experience of the good mother first. So we find that practicing openness reveals the empty spots in the psyche. That gives the client a chance to confront those places in such a way that it can 'play along' now in the open reality.

The next phase has to do with integration:

When there is some stability in staying open, the client can learn to express that openness in situations of increasing stress. He can practice new ways of being in relationship with other group members, in imagery settings with his partner, children, boss etc. And finally of course in real life situations.

This is a truly beautiful way of working. It brings out the radiant, the sacred, the clarity and the intelligence of the clients really fast. They are no longer victims of their past. They can contact a dimension that is inherently whole, good and dignified. This is a tremendous asset on the path of self-confrontation. Especially for those clients who are traumatized by violence and severe neglect in their youth.

They have a base now from which to confront the onslaughts of selfhate, fear, bitterness and

³ In recent years I call this also Spirit: Spirit dimension, Spirit quality etc.

⁴ I wrote a dutch book: meditatie in beweging' containing numerous exercises to evoke the qualities of the Spirit dimension.

depression.

Although this second perspective approach moves in many ways beyond of the paradigms conventional psychotherapeutic framework, I deeply hope that one day it will be a standard way of healing the emotionally wounded.

The Third Perspective

Our point of departure in this perspective is the non-dual, the One, Being.

This means that the starting point in the second perspective, namely, the distinction between a conditioned reality and an original reality, is no longer valid in this approach.

In the first perspective, the point of departure is the conditioning of the client; in the second perspective, the unconditioned, open reality: the original form. In the third perspective, the point of departure is: Being. Here one speaks of an absolute perspective.

The transition from the former two perspectives to this vision is radical. This is because we address a totally different kind of consciousness. One relaxes into a primordial consciousness which forms the fundamental base of everything and which includes both internal and external world. In this perspective any identification is abandoned. Even identification with a 'spiritual', free or radiant aspect of oneself.

Although the other two perspectives have a spiritual orientation, with their emphasis upon letting go and embodying free qualities respectively, they still are dual forms of consciousness. There is a self, a subject, and a 'other', the object. Even the meditation on a free, radiant or sacred 'object' involves and fosters dual consciousness, which is inherently limited, it never gets beyond the grip of the I-cramp. Therefore I consider the non dual 'third perspective' the ultimate and true spiritual perspective. The first and second perspective can get a meaningful place within this non dual view, but cannot lead to the freedom which is present in the third perspective. .

The non dual perspective is 'remembered' when one rests in the expanse of Being. One rests so utterly and completely that nothing remains of the former fixations of self and other.

Everything is let go of and released in openness. The openness manifest as clarity and connectedness without a localization, time and conditioning.

The primordial consciousness base *is*. *Is Now*. This primordial consciousness is always present, completely independent from any form of external or internal condition. It consciousness rests in itself, which means that this fundamental base is neither ascertained nor influenced by anything else whatsoever.

Thus, it is always accessible. There need not be a path laid out first, before one is able to get in touch with it. To the contrary, it is precisely the idea of a linear path that presents the greatest obstacle within this perspective.

One is unable to *do* something to get there, because one is already there!

But then one might ask, "where am I?"

The teacher may answer: *you find yourself in the Heart of God. If you look ahead of you, you are able to see Gods creation; if you look to the left, you see a panorama which is his creation just as; to the right you see something else, and yes, that too, is God present in another form. If you look inside yourself, to that which you formerly called yourself, you are able to see a panorama of feelings, thoughts, perceptions, and indeed: also God. You have arrived. In fact, you have never really left home!*

I used here the poetic language, "being in the Heart of God". This is one of the ways to indicate this form of consciousness. The One, the non-dual, the Being-dimension, the Ur-ground, the Being, Richness Consciousness; these are all other nomenclature which I use to refer to the same.

One could rightfully ask, "What is the value of this non-dual consciousness?"

Abiding in this vision releases every cramp on every level. The 'I-cramp', which forms the basis of our neurosis, becomes dissolved at the most fundamental level, given that one is no longer identified with 'I'.

Consequently, the neurotic fears dissolve spontaneously..

The compulsions of the 'I-cramp' with which one is afflicted, such as greediness,

possessiveness, defensiveness, aggression, bitterness, pride, also melt away in a natural, spontaneous, non-sought manner. One rediscovers the natural balance both in the self and in relation to the world. And this all happens, not by exertion but by exactly the opposite, that is, by resting in the already- Being-at-home. One becomes more natural, more relaxed and simpler. An authentic involvement, a heartfelt connection both with one's inner and outer world unfolds effortlessly. There is a feeling of being-in-touch-with, being connected with, not based upon exertion and conquering but as a spontaneous and permanent given. Happiness becomes perceptible, without reason, and this appears to be an inherent quality of the Being-ground. And not only happiness: also pleasure, playfulness, joyfulness, love, peace, generosity, gratitude, and compassion are all spontaneous expressions of the Being-ground. It appears almost too good to be true! Still, that is my experience everyday anew, if I remember this Being-ground, these qualities surface simultaneously.

The mystics of all ages sing of this experience.

Given that this is the natural state of our consciousness, it is not a matter of 'reaching' this state, but rather a matter of 'remembering'.

The vision in this perspective is that our conventional consciousness, our psyche, is a movement of thought, a construction which covers our original non-dualistic consciousness. Our identification point is moved from the natural ground (the non-dualistic, the One) to a part, the 'I'.

The 'I' considers itself as something disconnected from the whole, something which stands apart, as something which holds an independent existence in relation to that whole.

This appears obvious, given that there is, physically speaking, indeed, a fundamental separateness. I am the only one who is able to feel my physical, bodily sensations, who is able to think my own thoughts, and who is able to bring my body into movement. I was born alone and I shall die alone. It is even a sign of mental health when I thoroughly dare to experience this fundamental existential being-alone.

From the perspective of Being-consciousness, there is no question of denial or of removal of this existential aloneness, but rather that one is aware that even these highly individual feelings are manifestations of non dual being that transcends the personal form.

The essential ground of the 'I' extends beyond the 'I'; the essential ground of the 'I' is Being. The 'I' is a manifestation of Being. Being actualizes itself as form, as 'I' and as 'not- I'.

The forms are as the waves of the sea, never separated from the sea, yet recognizable as distinct and separate waves. The reality of a wave is that it rises up and dissipates; the 'deeper' reality is that a wave is the expression of something greater than itself: the sea. The reality of a wave has, as it were, two faces: the distinct, separate and individual form, and, that which forms the essential substance of the wave, the sea.

Imagine for a moment what would happen should the wave forget that it is an expression of the sea, and constructs a separate existence:

"I am a distinct, separate wave, an independent wave. I will try as best as possible to function as such. Oops! This isn't working out! I feel myself swelling from underneath; I am increasingly larger and fuller, I do not recognize myself anymore. What? I am covered with foam and breakers are forming upon me! This is so strange! Help! I'm breaking and crashing against the shore. It feels like a release and a relief, but what is happening to me? My power is fading away, I am emptying out, I am disappearing...help...I am fading away.....ssssssssss.....gone."

Do you recognize something familiar here? The basic tone of this wave is fear (angst), fear of change, fear of surrender, fear of loss of identity, fear of death.

It is evident that this wave is unhappy, it cannot flow, it does not know how to *be* gracefully.

The wave suffers from I-cramp. We can see that there is something fundamentally wrong with a one-sided identification of the wave with its separateness.

As soon as the wave identifies with a separate "I", fear is born.

Living within the perspective of the one-sided identification with separation is an exhaustive existence, life lived in this way is 'suffering' as the Buddha pointed out.

How are we able to help the cramped wave to find its natural form? From within the first perspective we could say: let go of your clinging; dare to fall. From the standpoint of the

second perspective, we could say: find in yourself the image or intuition of a free wave and become that. And in the third perspective we could say: remember that every wave is the sea, experience all the waves *while being the sea*. The art in this perspective is to see the form as an expression of Being.

It is not the intention here to seek a new identity from the reference point of the 'I -cramp': *'I am not 'I', but 'I am 'Being'*. It is a letting-go of the identification with the separate 'I', without attempting to replace it with a new identity. It is the recognition that there is no separate I to start with. So nothing needs to be given up or released, every wave is always already the sea.

One of the greatest difficulties in 'working' with this perspective is the tendency of our mind to approach everything from the perspective of the I-cramp. The point is that the 'I' is incapable of containing Being. One cannot expand from I to Being. One is not able to evolve in a linear way from a dualistic perspective to a non-dualistic perspective.

Then how does one contact on dual consciousness?

A Zen-parable about this goes like this:

Some farmers visit a master with a goose which is inside a bottle. They ask the master: how may we get the goose out without breaking the bottle?

The master answers: see, the goose is already out of the bottle!

I understand this parable to mean the following: we strive to liberate our souls; to free our spirits (the goose) from the constriction of our I-cramp (the bottle), without wanting to break the bottle, that means without giving-up our I -identification. The Zen-master makes it clear to the farmers that the spirit is *originally* free from any kind of I-cramp!: *Look, the goose is already out of the bottle.*

Our real spirit, the Being-consciousness, is never held captive in the I-cramp constructions, and never damaged by whatever type of malformation and misconception one is able to imagine. When we come directly in touch with the original free spirit, we are spontaneously free from every I-cramp (we are already out of the bottle).

Another beautiful Zen parable goes like this:

A master walks past a student whom is sitting in meditation. The master asks the student: "what are you doing there?" The student answers: "through meditation I hope to purify my mind and to polish it so that it becomes as radiant and clear as that of the Buddha". "So, so", says the master. The following day, the student sees the master furiously polishing a stone. "What are you doing?" asks the student. "Oh", says the master, "I am trying to polish this stone so that it is as clear as a mirror". "Yes, but that's impossible!", exclaims the student.

"Indeed", says the master, "no matter how much I polish the stone in order to make it a mirror, I will never succeed. In the same way, will you never succeed in purifying your spirit through meditation so that it becomes like the Buddha-mind".

As I understand this parable, the master indicates that it is not through the exertion of energy, which stems forth from the I-cramp, ---"I will purify my spirit, I will liberate myself," etc. that one comes to the original free state, the Buddha nature.

The Buddha-mind, our non dual awareness is already present and completely developed within us. However, we identify ourselves repeatedly with the I-cramp activities, whereby we lose touch with our Buddha-nature. We camouflage this, as it were, with our I-cramp constructions. A traditional Buddhistic image in this regard is: our Buddha- nature is like the sun; our I-cramp activities are like the clouds. The clouds hinder our sight of the sun, but even if that's the case, the sun remains shining in all its glory.

The strategies of the first two perspectives are directed toward the creating of a break in the cloud-cover, so that the sun may become visible. In the third perspective, there is no more energy invested in the clouds, but rather one remembers the sun immediately. As soon as one realizes that, it becomes simultaneously evident that *everything* is made up of sun-rays, of light. Nothing remains cloudlike in your mind; all the conditioning, all the I-cramp activities

are effortlessly recognized as rays of sunshine. From this vantage point of non dual awareness, nothing needs to be done to purify, complete, or liberate the apparent forms. But again, how does one realize the original consciousness? How does the transition from the dualistic, I-cramp based consciousness, toward the non-dualistic Being consciousness occur?

The traditional dzog chen Buddhist answer to this question is that this happens by 'introduction'. The master gives a direct, verbal or non-verbal introduction in this state of consciousness to the student. When the student has enough devotion and trust towards the master, he will at that moment participate directly in the state of consciousness of the master: and so come to know non dual consciousness by *being* non dual.

Consequently, the student realizes that this is what it is all about, and nothing else.

Then the recollection of this state of consciousness is his or her 'way to enlightenment'.

The beautiful thing about this method, is that the action comes from the sun (the master) itself. The 'I' of the student does not exert the effort.

Only Being is able to initiate us into Being-consciousness:

I do not believe that this is a one-time happening; at least, for me, personally, this is not the case. I am introduced every day anew to the Being-dimension, thus, not only by a living master, but also via books, via spontaneous breakthroughs during meditation, and sometimes it just spontaneously happens!

It always gives the feeling of 'coming home', remembering who I actually am; it brings up gratitude within me, a rich feeling, and also a feeling of awe and awareness of the holiness of 'what is'.

There are many different methods developed within the spiritual traditions by which one may be 'introduced'. Some of these methods are fairly rough: hitting, throwing stones, insults, screaming. etc.. Through the shock of a certain approach, a temporary opening in the I-system is created, the cloud-cover breaks open and the sun is immediately known.

I find an atmosphere of relaxation, ease, acceptance, unpressuredness, and playfulness to be favorable conditions to make the cloud-cover thinner. In my work I try to allow such conditions to arise and develop. The introduction of the Being-dimension may then be found via the (non-verbal) atmosphere and via the verbal explanation.

It is my experience that the introduction does not so much come from me, but that a fine-tuning toward the Being-dimension arises within me as well as within my students, through which the sun becomes as it were more active;' "we stimulate the sun in each other, we introduce each other.

The discipline in this perspective is the continuous remembrance of this original open-ness. Da Free John⁵ calls this: "the discipline of happiness". In Buddhism it is called: resting in the nature of mind. I call it: resting in Being. From this standpoint one recognizes how the conditioned mind takes its point of departure from a cramp (problem); as if life is a problem to be solved. The discipline revolves precisely around not becoming limited to the problem perspective. By being in such a way, a spontaneous transformation process takes place in the phenomena we observe. The apparent solidity of reality dissolves, and the flowing nature shows itself.

In this Being-attitude the neurotic cramp is released at the deepest level, and life is allowed to take on its own natural course again. This does not mean that the reality becomes more pleasant, but certainly more lively, vivacious, dynamic and open.

Life does not become a rose garden; it becomes authentic.

Conclusion

What is the relationship of these perspectives, one with the other? This is a topic to which another article could be dedicated. That is beyond the scope of this present article. Suffice it

⁵ Da Free John as he called himself in his early days, has inspired me deeply by his radical and vibrant way of exposing the non dual perspective.

to say the following few points:

If we look at it in terms of process there appears to be a spontaneous, natural transition from the one perspective to the other: the abyss in 'the house of parents' is the ground for 'the house of Being'. Thus, a successful fall in the first perspective brings the client in touch with his or her radiant nature, 'the house of Being'. When the client has become in touch with this, he is able to learn to place his existential weight in this radiant nature, and, thus learn to replace the identification with the I-cramp with a identification with radiant Spirit nature . That would be the working-method of the second perspective.

By practicing this regularly and intensively there will come a moment where the gesture of 'identification-with' will feel as redundant and disturbing. One recognizes him/herself as already Being and 'rests' therein. There is nothing more left to do, for there is no problem to begin with!

I work upon the assumption that it is possible to operate directly from within the third perspective; in fact, the Being-oriented approach is founded upon this premise. Working within the first and second perspectives is a way to connect with the self-experience of the client. The client is usually completely identified with the I-cramp. Working within the first perspective serves to clarify the assumption-system and makes it transparent, so that the client is then able to let go of this. The same goes for working within the second perspective. The third perspective offers room to work with the first and the second; the reverse is NOT true: the first perspective has no eye for the inherent radiant quality which is the point of departure for the second perspective. In like manner, there is no realization of the absolute non-dual consciousness in the second perspective.

I practice to remain in the state of non-dual consciousness during my work. It lightens and simplifies my work incredibly. At the same time, i can no longer ground myself in a professional identity of helper or therapist, because in this non dual consciousness there basically are no problems. So I have no work to do. This might sound easy or funny, but is actually quite a discipline to maintain. I have to be able to let go of all my conventional ideas about the client and myself, which is sometimes scary. It is as if I am in no-mans land all the time.

Within the third perspective one is more relaxed in relationship to the methods which are used in the first and second perspectives. They are still useful, but then as instruments appropriated to the needs of the client. The vision from out of which these working-methods are used is radically non-problematic, which gives a special, light touch to the "work".

Working with clients in this way becomes joyful, liberating and playful, not only for the client, but in a similar way, and perhaps even more poignantly so for the guide.

I do not know if this approach is appropriate for every one. I suppose that one must have an affinity for the Being-dimension. For those who have this affinity, it is a wonderful way to do work. For myself, I am happy that I have followed the credo of Joseph Campbell in this regard, "follow your bliss".

Dr. Hans Knibbe
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