

## REHEARSING FREEDOM- WITH YOUR TEAM

THE HUMAN ELEMENT- a theory on interpersonal relations

May 15<sup>th</sup> 15.00 – 17.30

**Presenter:** Pascale Reinhardt

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*“Openness, humanity and confidence in individuals have as much impact on productivity as health, commercial activities and financial investments” –William C. Schutz*

The world of the performing arts is, by definition, a social and communal one. It takes a team of people working together to make a performance happen, and even the performance itself is arguably void without the presence of the audience. Therefore collaboration is a necessity of our world, and having the skills to be an effective collaborator, either in the rehearsal room, or in the office, can mean the difference between a successful project, and a forgotten one. A minimum of understanding and training in the skill of working together can make a huge difference in the life of a company, project, or organization.

That is why professionals like Pascale Reinhardt exist, to help us find new, better, and more productive ways of understanding and reacting to personal differences, needs, desires and fears. Mrs. Reinhardt is a coach and trainer in multicultural management and negotiation from Paris, France. We were warmly greeted by her easy, confident, and humorous appeal, with a series of slides and quotes introducing us to the subject matter which we would learn and practice over the next two hours; namely, William Schutz and the FIRO.

William C. Schutz (1925 - November 9, 2002) was a psychologist at the Esalen Institute (Big Sur, California) in the 1960s. In 1958 Schutz introduced a theory of interpersonal relations he called Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation (FIRO). FIRO and its resulting tests and exercises have been used widely in the training and development of managers, CEO's and other authorities in business administration.

### CHOICE

When presented with a situation, we have the choice to react from one or several layers moving from the unconscious to the conscious level. Behavior on the outer ring, feeling in the middle, and self esteem in the inner most orb of our subconscious. This often depends on how in touch we are with our more inner motivations.

### THREE BEHAVIORAL DIMENSIONS

According to the theory three dimensions of interpersonal relations were deemed to be necessary and sufficient to explain most human interaction. The dimensions are: *Inclusion, Control and Affection.*

**\*INCLUSION: “Am I IN or am I OUT?”**

This is defined by a preference to be included in, or left out of a given situation. Would I rather be involved in a team effort, or do my part of the work on my own? It is shown in behavior by the number of contacts, collaborators, or friends one prefers to keep. The need to be included stems from the basic need to feel important, and the fear of being ignored.

**\*CONTROL: “Am I DOMINANT or am I NON-DOMINANT?”**

This dimension is defined by a preference to be dominant, or non dominant. Would I rather be driving the whole car, or let someone else take the wheel? It is shown by the level of responsibility one prefers to take in a given situation. This stems from a need to feel competent, and the fear of being humiliated.

**\*AFFECTION/LOVE “Am I OPEN or CLOSED?”**

This is defined by trust, intimacy, and confidence. Do I prefer to confide in others, or keep things to myself? It is shown by a tendency to relate to and rely on others in a more personal way. This dimension stems from the basic need to be sympathetic, or liked by others. It is also the fear of being rejected.

At this point Mrs. Reinhart opened a discussion on the behavioral patterns of various types of people, to help us understand where their choices to behave in a certain way may be coming from. In addition to using the example of French men, she also added the anecdote of the behavior of Bonobo monkeys, who solve conflicts by having sex, and therefore, have sex about every 20 minutes. We all

laughed, but she was able to relate this behavior to all three of the Human Element dimensions. To what extent do we give in to our need to be liked?

After this basic introduction, we were given several questions to consider helping us understand the relation of these dimensions to our everyday life:

- How does the use of authenticity and truth allow us to create real relationships and solve conflicts?
- How do we assess the importance of how and what we feel about others?
- On which grounds do we make our own decisions?
- How do we include –or not- our environment while making choices?
- What is our own self image?
- What are we afraid of? Why do we use specific defense mechanisms?

Mrs. Reinhardt suggested that by investigating our own answers to these questions, and what we perceive to be the answers of others, we can control our own reactions and the reactions of others, in essence triggering the responses we want.

Then it was time for us to get out of our spheres of protection and onto our feet. Mrs. Reinhardt led us through a series of exercises which put into practice what we had learned. We were asked to arrange ourselves in accordance of dominance and non-dominance, that is, the more dominant people at the front with the others lined up behind. Then she had us turn around so that we could feel how it was to be non-dominant in the front, and dominant at the back of the line. I found myself in the middle of the lineup, and admitted in the discussion that followed that in my experience (and perhaps culture) both definitions have a negative connotation. This spurred a discussion on cultural differences, which play a huge part in the use of the 3 Behavioral Dimensions. Some cultures are simply more open than others, more communal than others, and often defining qualities such as sex, age, and race within a culture can play a huge part in determining where we see ourselves on the spectrum of communal or solitary, dominating or following, intimate or distanced.

The next exercise involved us walking around engaging in varying forms of interaction, including making eye contact, holding hands, touching gently on the arm, and touching other places on the body. She had us consider our comfort level for each, whether we had a tendency to instigate or avoid contact, and how it felt to be the giver, or receiver of contact. Once again, a cultural discussion was raised- in some cultures it is simply more accepted or more widely practiced to have physical contact with others, especially strangers.

Having gone through these exercises with my fellow lecture attendees, I later discovered, formed and easy pathway to further establishing relationships for the remainder of the IETM meeting. Because we had grazed each other's arms, or briefly held hands on that first day, a pathway was open to approach one another and begin conversation without fear or anxiety. I was able to make new contacts, and new friends, that I probably would not have without the shared experience of having been in Mrs. Reinhardt's workshop on the very first day.

Now that we had a sense of the theories we were working with, Mrs. Pascale introduced a series of examples to help us recognize which dimension we were dealing with in a given situation. For instance:

- Bosses who have difficulty delegating are reacting out of the dimension of control. They are experiencing a need to feel competent.
- Employees that doubt that their boss is being honest with them, are feeling rejected, and have a need for affection.
- A coworker who is overly outgoing and extroverted is reacting out of a need to feel included, and a fear of being ignored.

By learning to recognize which need or fear is causing a certain behavior, we can determine how to treat it, to make the other person feel secure, thereby solving the conflict.

The following simple resolution method was suggested:

In a difficult situation, consider...

- \*What is my assessment of my or his/her NEED in terms of:
  - Inclusion?
  - Control?
  - Affection?
- \*What is my assessment of my or his/her FEAR in terms of:
  - Being ignored or feeling unimportant?

- Feeling incompetent or being humiliated?
- Being rejected or feeling disliked?

In preparing a strategy to resolve the conflict, ask...

- \*What do I want to obtain?
- \*What advantages would I or he/she find in leaving the situation as it is?
- \*If we both want to change something, what is the easiest trigger to pull, for myself or for him/her?
- \*What will we do differently next time?

In the end, we were reminded that every situation is the result of the participants' contribution to the relationship, and that a team is merely a network of exchanges.

Mrs. Reinhardt left us with warm regards, encouragement, and the image of the following slide, asking the question, "How many dolphins do you see?", to which I (perhaps a little too quickly) replied, "What dolphins?" Indeed few people in the room first saw them. Perhaps the bonobos are not so far away...