

Family Constellations – Failure, Evil, and Guilt as Sources for Loving Dedication and Compassionate Strength

This excerpt is taken from a talk given by **Dr. Albrecht Mahr** at the International Transpersonal Association Conference June 13 – 18, 2004 Palm Springs, CA, USA.

I have called constellations “knowing fields” not the least because of our “knowing bodies” and their capacity to express a denied or forgotten truth, which may unlock surprising new perspectives. **Now, let me explain more in detail: What is a family constellation?**

Often without providing any prior information a questioner sets up a person from the seminar group as mother or father, as a colleague, as his or her own heart, as the Japanese soldier who saved his father’s life, as his native country, his faith or as the strangely dressed old woman in his dream of the last night. Virtually any element, any being or any process with an impact on the person and his family or group can be represented by a person. The representative “knows” in his or her bodily experience, in her emotions and in her emerging images and thoughts the inner condition of the represented person or element – very often in a surprisingly accurate and meaningful way.

This process is simple and – however dramatic it may be occasionally – it is as natural as breathing. We call this process “representative perception”. Representative perception does not require any professional knowledge, no special training nor a specially evolved intellectual, psychological or spiritual state. There are no experts for representative perception, but we do have the possibility to familiarize ourselves with this mode of perception so that it can appear with a certain ease and suppleness offering itself, as it were, with a gentle smile.

Constellations do remind us of the fact that without any effort we may become for each other a medium of experiences we do not know of through conventional information. We become receptive of a special sense organ, which mediates representative perception, just like the eye mediates seeing. This sense organ disposes of a rich variety of functions in order to provide our participative knowledge of the condition and of the experience of other human beings and of virtually every thing. In the

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first place it uses our “knowing body” in its rich perceptual capacities; furthermore it uses our feelings and emotions and our capacity to imagination and fantasy; and finally it uses our mental processes particularly our thinking.

Representative perception is non-local i.e., its action is not limited to spatial closeness of the persons involved: it is independent of the distance of those perceived. And representative perception is trans-temporal i.e., it includes events reaching far back in time and into future potentialities. And it includes the deceased persons i.e., relatives we know of or people who we never met or never heard of, who were deeply influential for the survival and well-being of our family and who’s life and fate, even way back over several generations, was crucial for us to be here today. Representative perception thus reminds us that in addition to our linear experience of time we also live in a timeless space or in an all-times space – frequently unfolding in a family constellation as a quality of undoubted immediacy, simple now-ness and pure such-ness.