



**“Gestalt Ecology®: 5 lifebelts for a safe navigation on the stormy sea of relationships.**

**A handbook to get oriented in the complex society”**

**CIFORMAPER - Italian Centre for  
Psycho-Eco-Relational Training**

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*"A falling tree makes more noise than a growing forest"*

**Lao Tse**

# Skills and Change



What are today's  
necessary **skills** to  
be able to sustain  
and work out  
continuous **change**  
in society and  
human  
relationships?



# Normality or Pathology?



We may talk about  
**“pathology of  
normality”**  
regarding relational  
troubles inside  
different contexts:  
family, job, training

# Relationship as market



**The model of relationships typical of today's "profit economy" greatly influence social relationships, in such a pervasive way that we are no more aware of our status**



# Incongruity between theory and practice



**Living in the age of civil rights acts and declarations of principles, we have to remark a fracture between what is declared and what is put into practice**

# False awareness!



**This contradiction  
decreases people's  
analysis and  
critic abilities  
reducing them**



# New problems and changing pathologies



**Practitioners in social environment and psychologists often have difficulties facing new forms of maladjustment, or new sides of ancient problems**



# To know or to be?



**The request of safety and effectiveness can flow into a multiplication of knowledges that often is redundant and useless, to the detriment of relation and experience**





# An ecological point of view to read problems and face them



**Kurt Lewin used to say: “If you want to know something, try to modify it”: experience of relationship can be realized through an ecological point of view which gives meaning, attention and care to all of the issues of the context**



# An ecological point of view means...



...going out from one vision of self-sufficient man.

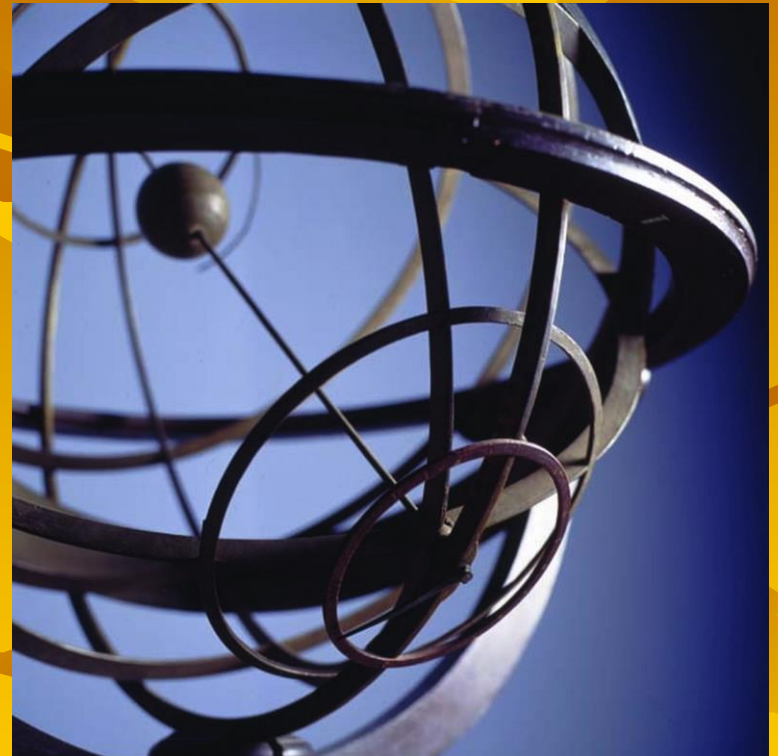
**A psycho-ecological vision collocates men into a person-environment relationship where ideas of control and domain is nothing but an illusion that consummates life...**



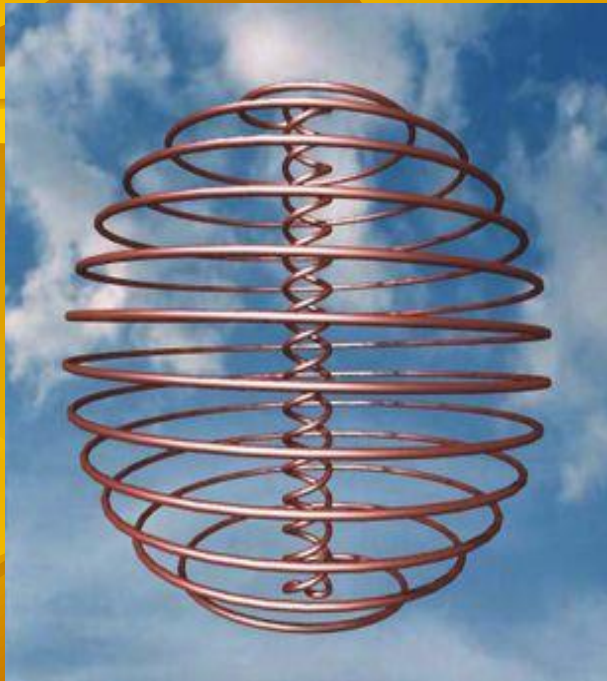
# Start again from a psycho-ecological approach



**Ecological  
knowledge,  
awareness of being  
interconnected and  
that every single  
element of the  
ecosystem depends  
on all other  
elements**



# Ecology as a link between the part and the whole



**There is no organism which is independent from the environment where it lives and every organism lives within and for the recursive movement between self- and other- organization**

# Relationships as people's psychic nourishment



**The entire  
construction of our  
life is supported and  
nourished by  
relationship nets:  
emotional and social  
relationships,  
proximity bonds,  
mutual exchanges  
we share**

# The sense of isolation of 3rd Millennium



**Depersonalization and break of social nets leave human beings alone in front of a world getting more and more dominated from logics passing by fundamental needs**



# Shipwrecked!



**We often feel like  
castaways on an  
island which is not  
“home” and, as  
nowadays Ullisse,  
we need something  
that can help us  
continuing our  
travel throughout  
the sea...**



# External interferences: From environment to relationship



Inside psychotherapy room many persons show problems connecting to what comes from the environment they live in, and we may currently recognize 4 important points:



- Search for Confluence (*I exist if I melt into you*)
- Colonization of the other (*you exist for me if you are as I expect you to be*)
- Hideaway (*I recognize myself only in my own territory*)
- Simulation / Dissimulation (*my role defines myself*)



# The “between zone”



A valid third way would be to meet the Other in the mysterious “between zone”, being contemporaneously contact and differentiation...

*I am because you exist in my horizon, and therefore I am able to perceive myself as a subject*



# Through the storm with 5 lifebelts



**In order to translate the psycho-ecological vision into attitudes and behaviours able to promote the passage from consumption – based human relationships to care for the relation itself, we need to sharpen 5 cross skills**

# 1 - GLOBALITY OF RELATIONSHIP



**Every relationship, and most of all every action and way to be in a relationship is a bit of a larger system: consumer choices, education styles, habits and life models, attention to the future, all the behaviours we effect meanwhile we are trying to satisfy our immediate needs**



# Globality and transformation through relationships



**Globality means that transformation necessarily happens through relationship; within a psychotherapeutic context, change involves both the subject and the object of the treatment.**

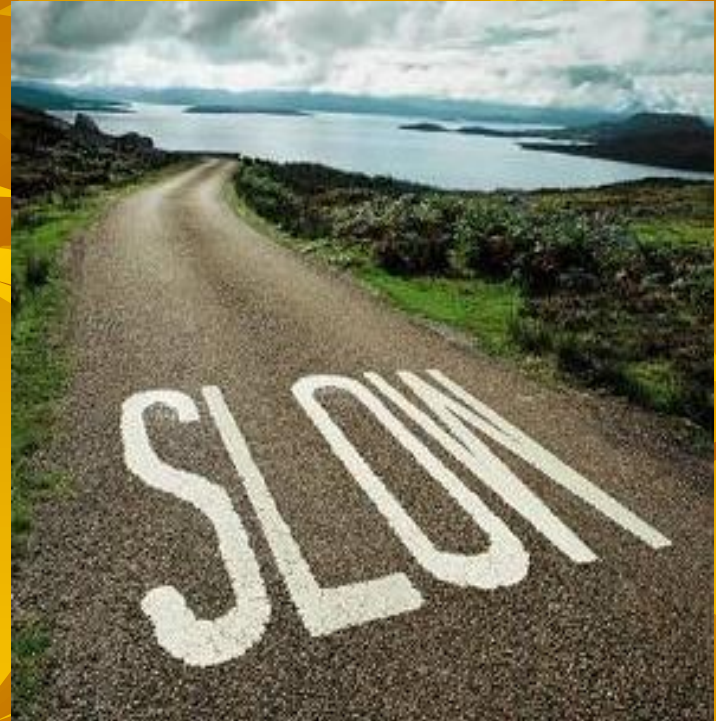
**A lively relationship is a global one, includes everything and cannot be totally kept under control. Instead, it may be encouraged, amplified or reduced, however addressed.**

# 2 - LIMIT OF RELATIONSHIP



Usually, a relationship starts, lasts, finishes and above all changes in time. Limit of relationship regards acceptance of the Other as she/he actually is, with her/his limits too.

We have to go together but nevertheless be free in our spaces, tracing a boundary line that defines us and our relationship





# Intelligence of limit...

**...shapes persons  
capable to confront  
themselves with  
solitude breaks, free  
from the duty to  
stay always  
connected, capable  
to filter and take the  
distance from  
stimuli.**

**Subjects able to say  
YES and to say NO**



# How far...?



**The lifebelt of limit points  
how far it's necessary,  
opportune and ethic to **push**  
**on contact with the**  
**other.****

**Limits indicates the distance  
to keep in respect to the  
other: from approach,  
without being encapsulated  
by the problem, to pull back  
without refusing the person**

# 3 - DIVERSITY OF THE OTHER AND INTO MYSELF



**Diversity's point of view concerns emotions above all, those emotions that we often want to manage, even if it would be safer feel them and turn them into words.**

**It's the opportunity of going beyond what we know and tracing new maps of the self**





# If I accept developing intelligence of diversity...



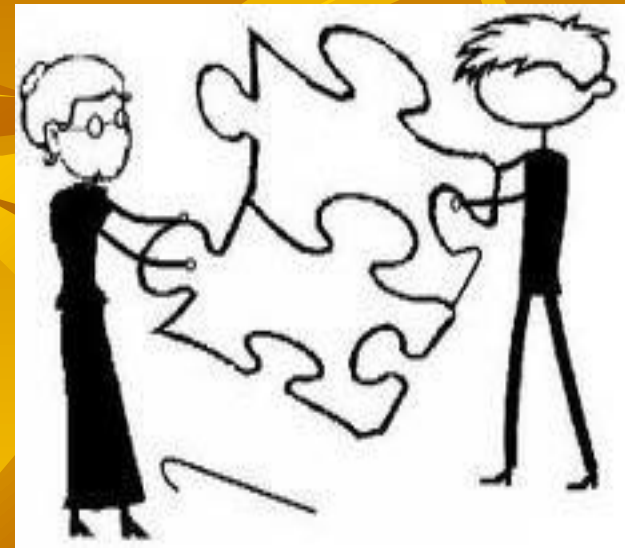
**... I could find less obvious solutions, give myself the space and opportunity to widen.**

**And if I safeguard diversity in my relationship I will accept non-homogeneous areas inside myself: that makes me even a less defensive person**

# A different look



**The lifebelt of diversity suggests to look at our interlocutors in a other-centric way. Keeping in mind diversity helps psychotherapists and social workers staying with whom is currently in front of them, processing emotions and building an authentic relationship**

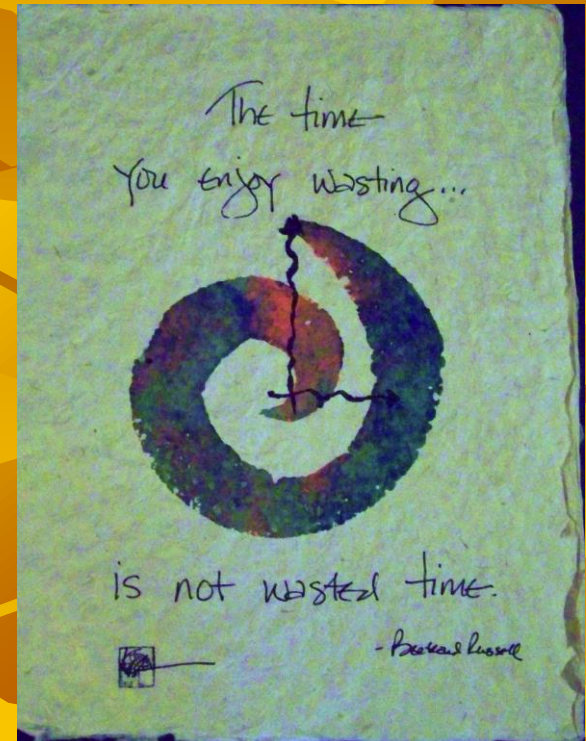


# 4 - AESTHETICS OF RELATIONSHIP



**Aesthetics of relationship is even the skill of “wasting time”**

**with a person, watching one another carefully, giving space to non-verbal, to what does create interest at the moment with no utilitarian return.**



# Having care of relationships in an aesthetic sense...



**...can re-humanize relationships, as we need “gestalt”, good form, not to leave outstanding matters, avoiding double talks or overbearing.**

**To keep relationship’s space in a conceived and aware order, bringing nice things into it, means care and respect for the relationship itself**



# 5 - ETHIC OF RESPONSIBILITY



**Why when a relationship falls into a crisis or ends it is always other's fault?**

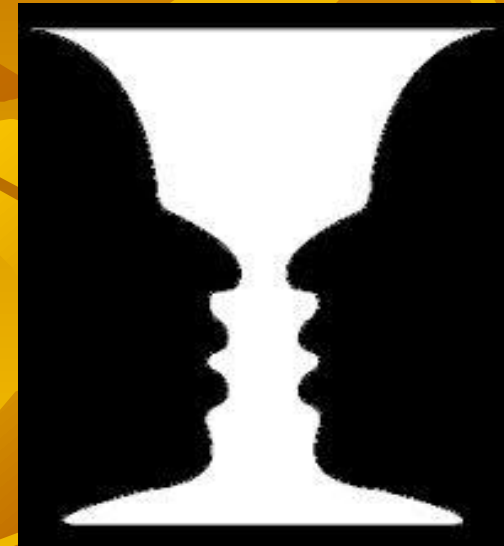
**We have to think about how many times we skipped, we acted as if nothing had happened, how much unsaid, how did that begin, what leads us today to finish a relationship**

# Respons/ability



**Ethic of responsibility means to take our own part without delegating or devaluing the other. It means stay tuned with our feeling and thinking.**

**We are not worth for what we make, but importance comes from the relationship and from how do we stand in front of each other**



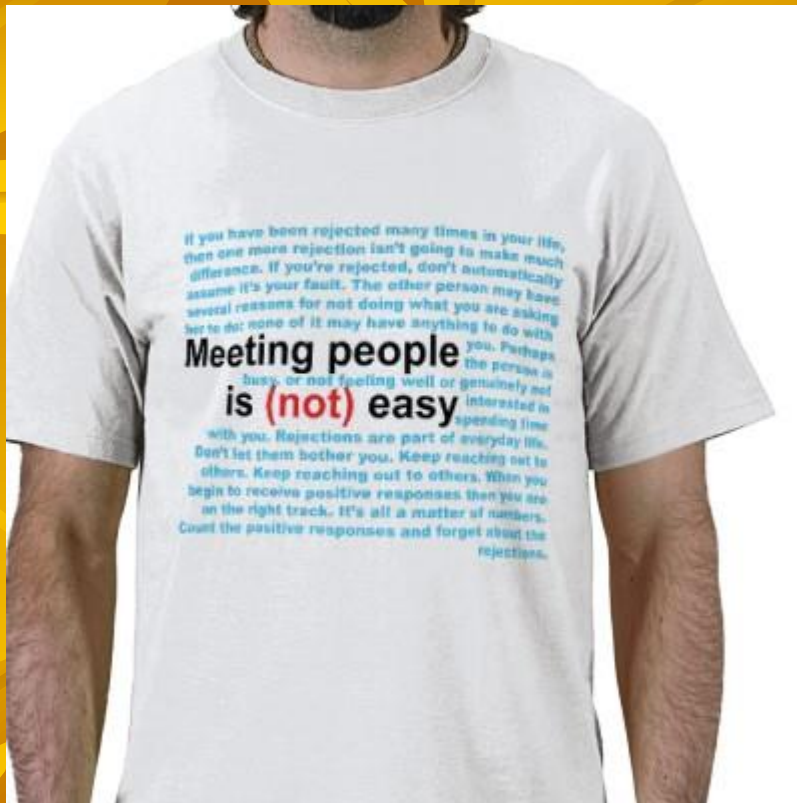
# Advantages of lifebelts



**What are primary and secondary advantages of applying the psycho-ecological approach to relationship?**

**These 5 lifebelts help us to float in rough waters, reduce impact with waves, face our conflicts being a little more equipped, widen opportunities to “stay with” situations and people, feel comfortable and free with relationships**

# Relationship is (not) easy



If we succeed in changing from acting as functions, behaving to achieve an aim, to “tending towards”, we probably will come out from drudgery of playing always the same roles.

We can meet the Other without shame and build together satisfying and gratifying relationships, able to engender a change in all the actors within the context



# Bringing relationship into play



- ✓ **Divide you into pairs, possibly with persons you don't know yet**

## **1° phase- individually:**

- ✓ **Everybody write on her/his page a word or short sentence representing relationship's "lifebelt", here and now**

## **2° phase- as a couple:**

- ✓ **Exchange your sheets: each one reads the "lifebelt" of the other and adds a word or short sentence on the right side of the sheet**
- ✓ **Restitution and reading of respective sheets**
- ✓ **Comment and exchange opinions within the couple.**

# Relationship is (not) easy

Your lifebelt:

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The other says:

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***"Utopia lies at the horizon...  
No matter how far I go, I can never reach it.  
What, then, is the purpose of utopia?  
It is to cause us to advance."***

**Eduardo Hughes Galeano**



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**Thank you!**