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**Establishing ties:**  
***You are responsible for your rose***

I have been living my life in the service of people, studying their stratum of meanings and forms of conduct or trying to teach the expert knowledge of psychology to my students. I've learned, over and over again, that nothing in our relationships should be taken for granted, in particular, at this moment in history.

I've learned more from reading the classics and famous writers on the substance of human life than from hundreds of reports or scientific articles. I've learned about the limits of some illusions the futility of total accuracy, of absolute quantification, of complete knowledge. I believe that human experience is always more rich than any interpretation.

Now, in this globalized world with, apparently, no political or ethical control; that "deprives" us from permanent and equivocal foundations of our existence and puts on our shoulders uncertainty, risk, lack of prospects and stability; and when actions to eliminate those same risks miss the real sources of danger, it is easier to point out what is most at hand as being the reasons of uncertainties and risks that we live.

Therefore, some of us need "interpreters" who understand the utility of enlarging the small, accommodated or non-existent horizons, through the potential of the infinite dialogue with each one's existential condition – the dialogue that takes place e.g. in the counselling relationship. Due to that dialogue, being useful to an individual, developing one's ability for entertaining different perceptions of the world, and incorporating the others' perspectives on specific challenges may be viewed as an invitation to expand one's perception of self. The main goal of counseling dialogue is, thus, to achieve coherence considering the individual identity, one's self-concept and agency, but also to integrate events from the past and the present and to place them within the perspective of the future.

I would like to present to you a different approach that can be applied for continuous development of one's identity, which will probably never be complete. I wish to demonstrate a possibility of a dialogue where counselor and counselee

form a partnership, where the counselor must be aware of an obligation to support and participate in another individual's process of transformation, or in other words, accompany them in the process of co-creation.

For that, I refer to one of the most widely read books in the history of Western culture (Harari, 2017): *The Little Prince* by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry (1943). And in it, I will highlight the dialogue between the Little Prince and the Fox (chapter XXI), which begins with an impossibility of a partnership between two unrelated creatures, one that is in their own environment (the Fox), and another that comes from another world (the Little Prince):

*"Come and play with me," proposed the little prince. "I am so unhappy."  
"I cannot play with you," the fox said. "I am not tamed."*

This impossibility to establish a partnership is based on two main arguments: one is the non-existence of an affective tie, or a close connection between them, and the other is simple: they do not belong to the same world (to the same planet)

*"Ah! Please excuse me," said the little prince.  
But, after some thought, he added:  
"What does that mean 'tame'?" "You do not live here," said the fox.*

This also means that dialogue is not possible if those who try to engage in dialogue do not share the same cultural tropes while the Little Prince, in a strange world, was in search of people detecting in this way some identity ties, or something or someone to play with him (as usual in a human child), the fox fled from these same people because they used guns to hunt chickens (and, by inference, foxes), the fox, consequently, and in a sort of primary syllogism, wondered if that child, being human, would not also be, it is implicit, in search of chickens, and of foxes to hunt:

*"What is it that you are looking for?"  
"I am looking for men," said the little prince. "What does that mean – 'tame'?"  
"Men," said the fox. "They have guns, and they hunt. It is very disturbing. They also raise chickens. These are their only interests. Are you looking for chickens?"*

But in his childish innocence, which contrasted with the knowledge and the world held by the fox characterized by the use of cunning, acquired by the experience of life, as a survival technique, the Little Prince guaranteed that what he was looking for was friends, thus not making a distinction between people and animals.

It was only then, after the Little Prince used the word "friends", the Fox decided to answer the question insistently asked by the Prince: What does it mean – "tame"? For those who did not know the concept of "tame", and, in this case, of its absence, the argument invoked by the fox in order not to play with the Little Prince is as follows: the act of playing, here assumed as the playful act, but also the act of two persons or two objects to articulate each other to obtain a harmonious result, it is only

possible between people who are bound by some common ties and these ties, in a large comprehensive way are also affective something that people tend to neglect:

*"No," said the little prince. "I am looking for friends. What does that mean 'tame'?"*

*"It is an act too often neglected," said the fox. "It means 'to establish ties'."*

And the fox continues, these ties allow two individuals to become unique to each other, while maintaining their own identity the Fox will always be a fox, and the Little Prince will always be a human because it is the only way can they be happy :

*"To establish ties'?"*

*"Just that," said the fox. "To me, you are still nothing more than a little boy who is just like a hundred thousand other little boys. And I have no need of you. And you, on your part, have no need of me. To you, I am nothing more than a fox like a hundred thousand other foxes. But if you tame me, then we shall need each other. To me, you will be unique in all the world. To you, I shall be unique in all the world..."*

And the fox further specifies what it means by referring to the distinctive "species-specific" features that allow the members of a group to both identified with the group and communicate with each other, but in opposition to another group whose elements are also united by distinctive traits but different distinctive appearances:

*"I hunt chickens; men hunt me. All the chickens are just alike, and all the men are just alike. [...] But if you tame me, it will be as if the sun came to shine on my life. [...] And then look: you see the grain-fields down yonder? I do not eat bread. Wheat is of no use to me. The wheat fields have nothing to say to me. And that is sad. But you have hair that is the color of gold. Think how wonderful that will be when you have tamed me! The grain, which is also golden, will bring me back the thought of you. And I shall love to listen to the wind in the wheat..."*

The fox also stresses that establishing ties engenders in individuals a sense of responsibility for other individuals, especially those with whom they have established connections and who allow them to consider them as unique, after all, as we do since the very beginning of a counseling process...

*"Men have forgotten this truth," said the fox. "But you must not forget it. You become responsible, forever, for what you have tamed. You are responsible for your rose..."*

*"I am responsible for my rose," the little prince repeated, so that he would be sure to remember.*

Brief, Saint-Exupéry emphasizes, through the voice of the fox, the importance of rituals in people's lives, insofar as they allow them to organize their lives so that each day may be different from the others, just as people should be in order to keep their identity:

*"Those also are actions too often neglected," said the fox. "They are what make one day different from other days, one hour from other hours. There is a rite, for example, among my hunters. Every Thursday they dance with the village girls. So Thursday is a wonderful day for me! I can take a walk as far as the vineyards. But if the hunters danced at just any time, every day would be like every other day, and I should never have any vacation at all."*

Let us recall and consider some of the basic ideas that are key for establishing ties and initiating a dialogue that emerge from these passages. All of them arise from the fact that the two creatures that enter into a relationship live in a dual reality: on the one hand, both are involved in a dialogue and interact with the same objective entities external to them (e.g. "man", "flower", "harvest"); but, on the other hand, these objective entities arouse in each of them completely different subjective associations and reactions resulting from their own experiences.

The first of these ideas points to the impossibility of communication between "individuals" who do not belong to the same "world" – by which I mean the same territory (*You do not live here*), and there is a lack of a previous connection between them (*I cannot play with you. I am not tamed*). The second idea emphasizes that the impossibility to enter into a closer relationship stems from the fact that the two "individuals" have different cultural references and values: for the Little Prince, men are potential friends, while for the fox, men are fox hunters.

The third idea to be retained is the importance of necessary knowledge, here held by the fox, and the need to reach it, embodied in the Little Prince who asks questions.

The fourth idea-message is very clear: only the establishment of ties between individuals makes it possible to overcome problems and to construct, or better, to co-construct partnership, which is represented here by reference to "rituals" and by the agreement on and acceptance of the meanings of symbols: the yellow fields, which produce the bread that the Fox does not need, will remind him, however, in a situation of absence, the blond hair of the Prince.

Finally, the fifth idea-message: the responsibility of the individual for the overall state of the 'collective' that emerged as a result of the establishment of ties: *"You become responsible, forever, for what you have tamed. You are responsible for your rose..."*

Using a technical language: to create something together, where common meanings of such 'something' are constructed and agreed upon during the conversation, where new dialogues gradually take shape, carrying a deeper meaning for participants, based on a value-based conviction, creating, in that way, a degree of sustainability. It is an attempt at connecting the main premises of phenomenology and social constructionism, by placing the concept of meaning at the "core business" of conversation, or dialogues.

We all read *The Little Prince* after all, it is the fourth most well-read book in the history of mankind, excluding religious and doctrinal texts, after *Don Quixote of La Mancha* (1605) by Miguel de Cervantes, *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859) by Charles Dickens, and *The Lord of the Rings* (1954-1955) by J.R.R. Tolkien -, and read it when we study children's and young people's literature, an age group to which tradition almost exclusively attributes the right to imagination and fantasy. Indeed, a child that travels freely from planet to planet, each inhabited by a single being endowed with consciousness and language ability, among them plants and animals that speak and think in the manner of humans (though maintaining the idiosyncrasies of their own species), cannot be anything else than a fairytale. And yet...

From the point of view of objectivity, the "worlds" through which the Little Prince travels, as well as the "characters" with which he interacts in each of these worlds (the narrator, the flower, the king, the conceited man, the tippler, the businessman, the lamplighter, the old geographer, the snake, the echo, the roses, the fox, the railway switchman, the merchant, and of course the lost aviator) belong to the universe of fable and fantasy – that, by definition, absurd manifestations are treated and understood as examples of normal behavior.

However, in this journey through the little isolated worlds, each of the characters (which, in the case of humans, are defined by their occupations) contributes to the Little Prince creating a "truth" from which he can see the world. And this truth does not reflect the world that exists, the real world, but is the way in which each character (both the Little Prince and the interlocutors) understands and assimilates it.

Given this duality, the reader "forgets" the unlikelyhood of the successive scenes (not even wondering how the Prince can travel between asteroids, or if there are life and characters identical to the human ones of the Earth), and concentrates on the essential, which is the experience of each one of the characters (inanimate, animated, non-human or human, but always referred to the real world the railway switchman, the sheep that eat little bushes, the fox that does not like hunters) voiced by themselves, helping the child to grow by transmitting the truths that really matters. We could find here echoes of Husserl's phenomenology (1907) and his ideas about communication.

A dialogue is by definition an act of communication. For Husserl, interpreted by Witold Płotka, University of Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński in Warsaw:

"communication motivates Others to do something. [...] there is no doubt, the communication introduces completely new dimension of human practice. Namely, according to communicative acts I am never alone, and my actions should be grounded on the responsibility for the Other. Sketched relation is two-sided, but the aim is common: a consensus." (Płotka, 2009, p. 90)

Therefore, there can be no rigid or standardized models of dialogue, regardless of the situation in which it occurs: in an interview situation, which presupposes

a dialogue, the interviewer who is an integral part of the process and not an external agent interested in obtaining of the respondent a given answer that can be conditioned is not alone, that is, has to take into account the view that the other has of the world, and respect it.

This is the case with the model of counselling dialogue proposed by Mark Savickas (2015) which can fit into this phenomenological concern of Husserl, in that it is organized around items that aim not to condition the respondent's response but to motivate him or her to act in this case, using dialogue in counselling means telling his life story, which will be one of the possible representations of his own unique way of seeing the world and from which, from then on, he will also become a part. By telling the stories, the individual can connect his or her subjective vision of reality to the challenges of social world. As Jerome Bruner (2002) and Mary M. Gergen and Kenneth J. Gergen (2006) pointed out, subjective perceptions and resulting personal self-constructs need to be replaced or modified in social discourses that are re-lived in the counseling dialogue.

Another selection of the topic for dialogue could be that which can be described as affections. The image of an identity simply does not exist without the language of affection, from which inter-personal relationships and people's relationships with the context in which they find themselves or could find themselves are constructed and developed. The language of affection, which theoretically can be disassociated from other forms of language, for example the language of cognition in the sense of the selection, storage and treatment of information, implying a choice of object or situation (the object of our affections is never an aleatory choice), can be observed through the manifestation of an individual's feelings in relation to an object or situation. Put another way, this is a manifestation of the emotions which, in being the individual's intense affective responses to the stimuli of their surroundings, can also influence the process of choosing new objects and situations which will in turn require new responses.

Such concept of dialogue, in being complemented by interindividuality, is a fundamental aspect when it comes to the positioning of that which forms the heart of counselling (Duarte, 2017). Dialogue thus becomes theoretically central for understanding of the various situations that bring something to that which we refer to as life.

Dialogue means integrating the image of identity into an act of communication: in opposition to the foundationalism view of language, it enables the adoption of the hermeneutic or dialogical positions, as reflected in the works of Hans-Georg Gadamer (1975) and Mikhail Bakhtin (1981) respectively. Hermeneutics is concerned with understanding the meaning that people make of their lives. It takes into consideration the historical and psychological reality of the lived experience of the person whose life is being interpreted, and that of the interpreter herself/himself, because "an interpreter understands by constant reference to her own perspective, preconceptions, biases, and assumptions that rest, fundamentally, on her lifestyle,

life experiences, culture, and tradition” (Tappan, 1997, p. 649). From the hermeneutic perspective, we understand the new in terms of what we already know, and more importantly, in terms of who we are.

Bakhtin (1981), just like Gadamer (1975), emphasized the dialogical nature of all understanding. According to him, understanding pre-supposes (and recognizes) the other, with whom one can agree or disagree. Bakhtin (1981) argues that “The consciousness of other people cannot be perceived, analyzed, as objects or as things one can only relate to them dialogically. To think about them means to talk with them; otherwise they immediately turn to us their objectivized side: they fall silent, close up, and congeal into finished, objectified images” (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 68). Contrary to idealistic philosophy, dialogism argues that a fully voiced consciousness (i.e., with its own ideas and points of view) is to be found at the point of contact with another, equally dialogically-voiced consciousness. This implies that dialogues need to genuinely engage with the context of life of people who engage in them.

In conclusion, we are capable to close the gate and getting out from a technocratic perspective of knowledge, and take new roads, which means, pay attention to the new emerging perspectives other than the traditional way to face individual or collective problems, and, also, highlight the importance of individual differences as opposed to standardization, which led us, during the machine age of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to the mechanization of behaviors as if all individuals were copies of a lost original...?

The reality of globalization and the concurrent worldwide competitiveness impose a shift on intercultural research towards an integrative background to both common and regional competencies to achieve added value and usefulness of research. But also individual evaluation and its meaning of concerns related with conceptual definitions and the context of its operationalization, which means the identification of the relevant contents of culture knowledge, is also crucial.

Nowadays, counselling intervention is not merely a cumulative process of the interpretation of the assessment data: it also tries to integrate different environmental variables and consider the cultural context. Regarding the consequences of globalization, it seems to me that is important to recognize the desirability of a greater proximity to diversified culture in those issues.

Guidance and counselling for solidarity, social justice and dialogue in a diverse world is the motto of the conference. I believe that it is possible to put together UNESCO Chair on Lifelong Guidance and Counselling and its UNITWIN partners a narrative collaborative practice spanning such scope. It is also possible to recognize that such collaboration necessitates “taking part” in the history of the other, supporting the through dialogue in which ties are established, as in the sentence that expressed it so beautifully: “You become responsible, forever, for what you have tamed. You are responsible for your rose”.

*Translated by Katarzyna Byłów-Antkowiak*

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