

VOICE DIALOGUE AS AN ENTRYWAY TO THE TRANSPERSONAL

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When California psychologists Hal and Sidra Stone developed Voice Dialogue in the 1970's, it was their aim to set up a method which might establish a link between Jungian concepts on the one hand (Hal Stone was also trained as a psychoanalyst), and the transition from Humanistic to Transpersonal Psychology on the other.

Voice Dialogue thus became an offshoot of the so-called Transformational Psychology which had its origins in California at that time.

'Transformation' was to be an important principle of Voice Dialogue, as it had become clear that no direct transition was possible from the individually oriented Humanistic Psychology to Transpersonal Psychology. Indeed, Maslow held that there existed no effective technique in Transpersonal Psychology, and so it was 'up to yourself' to make any progress, mainly in the form of meditation and visualization, with psychedelics offering a shortcut to changing states of consciousness and preferably Enlightenment.

A DEFINITION OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Hal and Sidra Stone found out that it was actually possible to transform—in a practical manner—rigid, personal complexes (which they called 'subpersonalities') into a balanced, flowing energy system, often erasing the borders between the personal and the transpersonal. After all, these borders are not fixed. They are gradually being shifted, both in science (after the discovery of quantum physics) and in psychology, progressively offering a new paradigm in which science, religion and the so-called 'spiritual' may be unified.

The Stones developed their own model of consciousness and a method based upon it, called Voice Dialogue. Dream work, visualization and working with energy fields of the body is practiced from the perspective of this consciousness model.

In the model, consciousness is considered as 'awareness' combined with the experiencing of energy patterns. The process of consciousness takes place at three very distinct levels. On one level different parts of the psyche, also called subpersonalities or energy patterns are experienced. The next level is the awareness of these parts. The third level is the level of the Ego.

The first level of consciousness is the Experiencing of energy patterns. From this point of view everything in life is seen as an energy pattern of one kind or another. The term 'energy pattern' refers to parts that are individually determined (subpersonalities) and to parts of a universal nature (archetypes).

The second level, Awareness, is defined as 'the ability to perceive life and all its aspects without expressing an opinion or a judgment and without feeling the need to influence what is happening.'

The third level of the consciousness process is the Ego, the executive power of our psyche, the part of us that makes choices.

Often, the Ego has let control slip away into the hands of a combination of different subpersonalities. In this respect that which manifests itself as the Ego may well be a combination of the so-called 'Protector/Controller', 'Pusher', 'Pleaser', 'Perfectionist' and 'Inner Critic'. The Ego identifies itself with these types of patterns.

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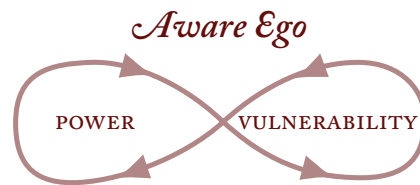
At these three levels the subconscious plays an important role. As soon as there is a small crack in the identification with certain energy patterns, an individual appears to be much more susceptible to messages from the subconscious. The 'dream weaver', the intelligence within the subconscious that gives us our dreams, becomes an active ally. However, we must learn how to interpret these messages.

We see it as a crucial matter for individuals to 'become aware' of the energy patterns with which their Ego's have identified themselves. This leads to a process of fine-tuning of the Ego. The idea of the 'Aware Ego', as introduced by Stone and Stone, is a welcome addition to the formulation of theories within consciousness work.

THE MODEL OF CONSCIOUSNESS

The best way to imagine the model is to regard consciousness as a continuous flow of psychical energy. We will use the ancient image of the Lemniscate to illustrate this flow of energies.

AWARENESS



The energy flows between the two poles, which we can call 'positive' and 'negative'. Yin and Yang, vulnerability and power. This is an archetypal process, and as such it is inherent to being human. On the Yin-side we find subpersonalities as the 'Vulnerable Child', the 'Rebellious Son' or 'Rebellious Daughter', whereas the Yang-side contains such powerful subpersonalities as the 'Father', the 'Mother' and the 'Controller'.

We can conclude that there is a continuous flow between opposite energies. However, Awareness is exempt from this pattern: it may be aware of what is happening, but other than that it is of a totally different nature. The Aware Ego has access to both the experiencing of energy patterns and the level of Awareness itself.

THE OBJECTIVES OF TRANSFORMATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

It will be clear that Transformational Psychology aims at a transformation—a change in the structure and nature—of consciousness. The conscious objective of transformation may take place at the three levels of consciousness: Experiencing energy patterns, Awareness and the Ego.

EXPERIENCING ENERGY PATTERNS

At this level several changes may take place. We call the energies with which we have become totally identified—and which have consequently become so big and strong as to have taken over our lives completely—the primary selves. They may perhaps be persuaded to slacken the reins a little bit, to lose some of their dictatorial features and be content with a more constructive role. For example,

a Critic who is bothering us most of the time, forever running down everything we do and not do, may change because of the transformation work and become part of the analytical mind.

The basis for another important transformation is the fact that subpersonalities have evolved from our psychical instincts, the archetypes. When working with subpersonalities, with the client experiencing their energies, we will, in the course of a few sessions, witness a shift, whereby they are transformed in the direction of their universal archetypical core, as if a subpersonality is really coming home to its own essence, the archetype. This essence has not been individually determined by family and environment, but is quite mythical and transpersonal.

In this way, a so-called Pusher can be transformed into a Warrior; a Pleaser into a Goddess of Love; a Controller into the principle of structure and order as attributed to the god Saturn; and a Frightened Child into a pure Vulnerable Child expressing sensitivity and wisdom, like the timeless fetus in Kubrick's film 2001.

Energies which have been pushed away for a long time, forced into the subconscious, are called disowned selves. A disowned self is an energy pattern that has been banned from somebody's life partly or completely. It is an energy pattern that has been severely punished in the past, every time it manifested itself. Such a punishment may have been very subtle or very rough, like a psychological or physical beating. For the individual to survive, the primary selves have been forced to ban such energy patterns from his or her life. They were considered totally unacceptable and therefore were suppressed, though not destroyed completely.

This type of energy remains alive in our subconscious. From a Jungian point of view the disowned selves are part of our shadow. When we meet other people in daily life who carry these kinds of disowned energies, our own corresponding energies start to vibrate. But they make us feel uncomfortable, as they are attached to painful memories from our past. Usually, in such situations, the way to stop the emergence of the disowned energies is to criticize and judge the other person.

By means of Voice Dialogue, disowned selves may be integrated into the psyche, which makes it possible for the individual to use them to his advantage. As a result more energy will become available.

AWARENESS

At the level of Awareness one becomes an objective witness, at it were, of more aspects of oneself and one's surroundings than before consciousness work was started. One becomes conscious of the energies with which the Ego had become identified, and of energies that had been suppressed. It is possible to develop a larger Awareness of the physical body and the energy body.

Awareness may exceed the personal boundaries and lead to transpersonal experiences.

THE AWARE EGO

Everybody who has seriously worked with Voice Dialogue and has become conscious of the identification with the primary system, is truly capable of making choices. For he has let go of the identification with the primary system

which kept almost all available psychical energy in check. Because of this, a better distribution of energy in the psyche has been achieved, which leads to awareness of a different condition of the Ego, which we call the Aware Ego.

This state of consciousness is characterized by inner harmony, a feeling of liberation and really being present, and an optimistic expectation of new possibilities. And these possibilities exist, in the quantum energy field in which we live, but we were not yet aware of them, just as fish do not realize that water is the world in which they live. This so-called Zero point energy field is described by contemporary physics, and in it there exist all possible energies and fields that for us are still transpersonal.

When in the Aware Ego-condition, we do not have to wait anymore for possible peak experiences as described by Maslow, but we are able to resonate, as it were, with higher energy frequencies from the field, which will express itself through flashes of insight, intuition or inspiration, feelings of love and compassion, and a sharpening of the senses. This may lead to extrasensory perception, powers of healing, and finally to a link with the Omnipresence of That which we will not give a name.

If the Aware Ego in us feels this Presence, it will be present itself and others will be able to resonate with it, too.

METHODOLOGY AND INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE BEGINNER

(The main elements of Voice Dialogue)

1. EXPLORING THE SUBPERSONALITIES AND THE ENERGY SYSTEMS

The instructor (facilitator) will enter into a dialogue with the different subpersonalities or archetypes. Each of them will be assigned its own position in space in order to be identified separately, without other subpersonalities or the Ego interfering.

2. CLARIFYING THE EGO

In the next step Voice Dialogue will detach the Ego from the Primary Selves and other subpersonalities that are collaborating. The Ego is assigned its own position in the middle of the space.

3. INCREASING AWARENESS

Finally Voice Dialogue will introduce Awareness in the system. There is a place for each of the subpersonalities that are experienced, there is a place for the Ego which coordinates and acts, and there is a place for Awareness, detached from all the others. The facilitator gives a short and objective summary of the session. The individual remains silent and is aware of everything that is happening from this silent spot, without judging, without having to decide anything. This is the moment of integration.

THE ATTITUDE OF THE FACILITATOR

'The path is the goal'

The main point of departure when facilitating the Voice Dialogue process, is being attentive and staying aware in the here and now. The facilitator is working from his Aware Ego and has learned to be energetically centered and

unburdened. He is not attached to the result of a session, his attitude is one of joint investigation, rather than trying to solve a problem. Furthermore, the facilitator himself serves as an instrument, in that he has learned to attune his own energy system to that of the client. He then receives information about the subpersonalities and archetypes that are active in the client, through this principle of resonance. Subsequently applying the principle of induction is a further step, by which the facilitator consciously intensifies his corresponding energy in order to create a field which enables the client to clearly experience his own energy pattern and become aware of it.

BUILT-IN PROTECTION

The fact that the primary selves are recognized and respected to the full guarantees that there is a built-in protection in the work. There is no attempt at forcing people to experience new and different things behind the back of the Protector/Controller. In fact, the name 'Protector' is an acknowledgment of the protective function of this energy and has a much more positive ring to it than the usual term of 'resistance'.

It is exactly because the protective task of the primary selves is taken seriously that Voice Dialogue work is so safe. Their function originates in their attempt to protect our vulnerability, and this must remain as it is. Only when they allow the investigation of 'new' energy patterns, the changes which occur in our energy system may become permanent. This will lead to a harmonic and balanced development of our different parts or selves.

Though the developing Aware Ego has now disidentified itself from the primary selves, their protective function remains of value, and the Ego will appreciate their assessment of choices in life that have to be made.

EXAMPLE OF A VOICE DIALOGUE SESSION

*This session has been described before in *The Energetics of Voice Dialogue* by Robert Stamboliev.*

ALEX (FICTITIOUS NAME)

The following case illustrates, step by step, the subtle movements in the energetics of the facilitation process. The case exemplifies an average Voice Dialogue session and will be described in detail to demonstrate the energetic principles in process.

In one of my ongoing training groups I had the following session with Alex, 45, the coordinator of a residential treatment center for adolescents. His work included the coordination of the treatment program and the financial organization of the center.

After experiencing a loss of energy in his work and private life, he had joined my group because he felt a need to do some personal transformational work. Before this session, one of my assistants had introduced him to the work and familiarized him with its concepts.

In the session, I first spent some time finding the right working place, and we then sat facing each other. Since Alex had a relatively strong energy field, I asked some of the observers to move back a little to allow enough working space.

After I sensed that we were sitting at the right place and at the right distance, I asked Alex to take a moment to bring his attention inward to

focus on the issue he wanted to work with. While he did so, I took the time to center and empty myself of thoughts. From this centered position I opened myself energetically for higher energies and visually connected with the center of the earth. With my position centered and aligned, I was aware of my own energy fields and chakras, and felt them begin to resonate with those of Alex.

Since the circulation of vital energy through the energy fields and physical body is strongly connected to the breathing function, our breathing patterns were also aligned when our energy fields resonated in unison. With this alignment, I perceived that we were part of a larger energy field that resonated in unison. As a facilitator I was receptive and followed the movements in his energy system in order to scan the state of his energies. What was evident to me in this phase was the strong activity in Alex's head area and sixth chakra. I also noticed that his lower chakras were relatively closed in comparison to the higher ones.

When we started talking, I asked Alex whether there was an area in his life that he wanted to explore. He talked about his work and said that he often felt tired and drained. After we discussed his work situation briefly, it seemed evident to me that the prevailing energy in Alex, the energy that he was most identified with, was a very Rational Controller. I therefore suggested that he separate this energy pattern out, in order to dialogue it.

Agreeing to my suggestion, Alex moved his chair a few feet to his right side and found a place that seemed to fit the energy pattern. I now opened myself energetically to the energy of his Rational Controller. Its main center was indeed the head and the sixth chakra. As I tuned more into it, I allowed the corresponding part of myself to come forward, and I dropped into it. I let the rest of my energy patterns fade to the background, but I did not lose my awareness of them, for I knew they might give me information about possible energy shifts. The process of bringing my corresponding energy pattern forward encompassed a slight shift in my posture, so that I sat more straight and with increased tension in my upper body, especially the upper chest, neck and shoulder. I also experienced a concentration of energy in my forehead and noticed increased activity in my sixth chakra. I felt that my corresponding energy pattern had to do with structure and keeping an overview of my activities. This entire maneuver, tuning in and dropping, took no more than one second.

As I now talked with Alex's Rational Controller, I let my corresponding energy pattern be present in the conversation. I asked the Rational Controller what it did in Alex's life. Since the energy pattern felt invited by my induction, it manifested easily. It described itself as a controller. Its job was to take care of Alex's business and to provide structure in his life. It said that it was present most of the time. It had a crisp and clear energetic quality and seemed to do a lot of work for Alex. By asking many specific questions about its modus operandi, I elicited valuable information for the Awareness level that could later be processed by the Aware Ego, and I also went on to explore and "stretch" energy pattern.

First I explored how the Rational Controller operated for Alex in his personal life. It apparently made daily schedules for Alex, ranging from the letters it wanted him to write to making shopping lists. It also did long-term planning for Alex's career and development.

When I went on to explore how it was present in Alex's working situation, we reached a deeper level of the energy pattern. Through the principle of resonance I experienced that his sixth chakra was now radiating more strongly and that his energy fields had expanded. The Rational Controller said that it was present in Alex's working situation in order to take care of the overall structure of the organization. As it went on to describe its activities in doing so, it seemed to take on a large archetypal energy. It stated that it kept track of organizational developments as well as the functioning of many staff members—all the various elements and structures that it had to handle and orchestrate. At this point in the conversation, it also said that it had an intuitive or psychic ability to detect any problems in the various levels of the organization.

By now the energy had shifted slightly, but it was still the same energy pattern. It had been stretched, and I had got in touch with its "core," which I recognized as a truly Apollonian archetype. After a few minutes of rather abstract conversation about the nature of reality, the energy began to shift more noticeably.

Through the principle of resonance I experienced a decrease of the energy, and I was also aware of a spot on the other side of Alex that seemed to pull on his energies. I then checked to see whether the Rational-Apollonian energy pattern had any more to say, and I then suggested Alex move to the other side to see who was there.

Alex then moved to a place at the left side of the Ego Space. As soon as he did so, his energies shifted totally. It was as if his weight had dropped and he experienced gravity for the first time. His head, neck and shoulders relaxed, and he started to breathe deeply and slowly.

Letting go of the first energy pattern in myself, I made myself empty and receptive and, opening to the new part that manifested, I experienced a complete shift of energy. The physical center of the new part I perceived as being in the abdomen, and the lower chakras began to open. I allowed myself to sink into my own corresponding pattern in order to induce Alex further into it.

For a while we said nothing. The energy pattern seemed very tired and needed time to relax. It was completely opposite from the previous part. When I allowed the corresponding part of myself to come forward, it was totally non-rational and could not care less about structure. From this inner space I greeted the new part and just said "Hi!" It raised its left hand and responded to my greeting with a low grunt. It seemed very weary. Gradually, by just being there and sinking into this space energetically, it started to talk. Its voice was about an octave lower, and the words came out slowly, right from the belly. Although the part was tired, I felt that it was quite powerful. It said something like: "Jesus Christ, this guy is nuts. Gimme a break... I'm fed up, really fed up with this."

As I really took my time to just be with this part and allow it to feel its own energy, it somehow started to gain energy and speak more. It said that it really hated structures and couldn't care less about what happened in Alex's work. It just wanted to be there and "hang out". As I went on to explore it, it told me that it liked being with "the guys" and having a good time. At some point I experienced more sexual energy coming in, through a stronger vibration of the second chakra, and asked how it felt about women. Its grin became a devilish Jack Nicholson-smile, and it now became quite alive. It told me more about what it liked to do, given the chance.

Engaging this part released more and more energy, and created a strong instinctual energy field in the room. We spent some time just being with this energy. The essence of the part, expressed in its own way, was a primordial energetic vibration that refused to be structured in any way. When the energy had manifested fully in Alex's body and energy fields, I again detected a shift. The first thing I noticed was a different vibration in my heart chakra. As I tuned into Alex's heart chakra, I sensed that it had opened more. The instinctual energy now seemed to fade a bit, and I asked Alex to move a bit to his left, where I sensed that the new pattern was. The energy that now began to manifest had a very strong heart quality. When I resonated with it, I experienced a warm and "deep" feeling in my heart area. The energy with which I resonated had a wise feminine quality. I let my own corresponding energy come forward to induce the part of Alex that now manifested.

Alex's posture had changed; he sat very relaxed, one leg over the other, and looked at me. When we spoke, the part described itself as an elegant woman. It said that it liked to sit on a terrace drinking a glass of wine and just watching people. It carried the feeling side of Alex and was very refined. The voice was soft and deep. It said that it could really connect with people's essence. It did not have high ambitions in terms of achieving things in life. It enjoyed being there and would like to be there more. It also had some advice for Alex about his work and said that it could help him if he would allow space for it. This part had a very soothing and healing energy, and the pattern itself felt very integrated and harmonious, qualities I experienced not only in my heart chakra but also in my whole energy field and body. After talking about it about its areas of interest, I suggested going back to the Ego Space, and it agreed.

We had worked for about an hour. Back in the Ego Space, Alex and I both sensed energetically that it was time to end the session. When he moved to the place of Awareness, I reviewed the session, paying special attention to the energetic shifts that had taken place so that he could witness and re-experience the energy patterns from this vantage point. In the Ego Space again, we discussed the session, and, after I had made sure that he felt balanced, we ended the session.

In summary, the session clearly demonstrated the natural process that takes place as a result of fully exploring the energy patterns. When one pattern has been fully "stretched" with the help of an energetically attuned facilitator, the energy will shift to the other side of the polarity. After Alex's

Rational Controller was stretched, the instinctual energies manifested. After them came yet another opposite polarity, of a nature different from the first one. By following and stimulating this natural flow through the energetics of the work, Alex restored his balance and gained vitality. The session proved to be an important breakthrough for Alex, and helped him to find a new balance in his life. He began to disidentify from the Rational Controller and to embrace the instinctual, devilish side as well as the wise, feminine side.

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