

A Soul's Journey: **My Path To The Systemic and Family Constellations Experience**

Annie Block Pearl

I found this work in the way that all my journeying has developed since I started getting out of my own way. My wise and wonderful teacher in Process Acupressure, Aminah Raheem, mentioned her experience of a Systemic Family Constellation group in which she had participated in Europe. Aminah is exquisitely tuned into energy and so I found what she described quite compelling. In the group she described, constellations were set up by a participant ("client") by selecting group members of appropriate sex to represent family members, living or dead, and positioning them in spatial relationship to one another inside the group's circle. No verbal directions were given to these representatives other than to stay open to whatever they were experiencing. Almost immediately, even though they had little information about these people, the representatives experienced feelings and sensations that were not their own, but those of the family members they were representing. The "client" reported that the experiences of the representatives were highly correlated with the dynamics of the "client's" family system. The process, guided by the leader, was interactive. It included querying the representatives about their feelings and sensations, allowing these representatives to move in a slow, centered manner. The leader also moved the representatives, testing their responses. From this process, a clear diagnostic picture emerged, reflecting the inner, hidden dynamics at play in this family. Once the authentic picture was revealed, a resolution constellation was created, again using the representatives to move and use simple declarative sentences which helped to restore the flow of love in the family system. Aminah shared how this workshop experience had informed her sense of the power of unseen energetic forces which influence the behavior and biology of the members of a family system. Her experience stimulated her to further inquiry.

This kernel of information germinated in my psyche, too, until it was ready to ripen.

The ripening flowed out of an oral surgery I subsequently had. After a great deal of dental work I experienced great pain in the palate region of the mouth. From the teachings of Indigenous peoples as well as my work in energy medicine, I knew that the bone holds the resonance of our ancestors but until then, I hadn't experienced such a deep personal validation of this knowledge. When the pain was intolerable, I found comfort in applying deep, firm pressure to the area with my thumbs. As I did so, I had a hallucinogenic experience, which seemed to go on for hours. In this experience, I had a strong sense of my paternal grandmother, a woman with whom I had never felt a strong connection prior to this. I felt her pain, "knew" her life experience, not in an intellectual way, but as if her sensory body and mine were one, as if part of her life experience was also my experience.

It was shortly after that, synchronistically, a one-week workshop with Bert Hellinger, the developer of this work, was held at Omega Institute. This workshop was the beginning of a three-year journey for me of study, training and experience, mostly experience! Being involved with this work has been the deepest learning of my life. By setting up my own constellations and allowing them to move through me, as well as experiencing the constellations of many others who have participated in this work, I have truly been privy to the wisdom of the ages.

This is not psychotherapy. It is Gestalt-like, and is not a mental process. It is a spiritual experience of the energy to which we are always connected, whether we are aware of it or not. Some have likened it to the energy demonstrated in Rupert Sheldrake's concept of the "morphogenic field". It stems from the source of life itself, and it teaches us how we can connect to this source. It demonstrates for us the damage that results when we are not in connection to source. And it helps us to find resolution, a resolution which is beyond good and evil, beyond right

and wrong, which restores the flow of love throughout the family system. This resolution just is, and when we agree to what is, we find peace.

A few very basic precepts are foundational to this work. The first is: *everyone in the family system has a right to belong.* When each family member is given their rightful place, then future generations are free to create their own destinies.

Dysfunction and disturbance occurs when any family member, (or anyone who has sacrificed himself for a family member), has been excluded or left out. This may have happened through anger, guilt, war, natural causes and disasters, death or even murder! Whatever the cause, subsequent generations feel the imbalance in the system and, out of their own desire to restore balance, may *unconsciously* identify with the excluded member(s) of the system. This unconscious identification may take the form of emotional or physical illness, career or relationship difficulties, or even suicidal tendencies, dependent upon the ancestors' fate. *When constellations are created and each member is given their rightful place and deserved respect, then the client's soul can and will release its' entanglements with the past and move into the present.*

Since I have been using this process with my individual clients, as well as facilitating larger constellation group workshops, I have observed, first-hand, how we adopt behavior that doesn't seem appropriate to our current life circumstances. For me personally, this had taken the form of "hiding", of not showing my true self and expressing all that I had to offer. One could call this a psychological problem and chip away at it through the traditional means. I have certainly done this over the years! I have also discovered, however, that this pattern is concurrent with my ancestral history; that of German Jews who attempted to assimilate and not stand out, both in their home country and in this new adopted country! My healing constellation around this issue has helped me to take my place and "be seen" in my life.

I have a client who has been in and out of psychiatric hospitals for most of her life. She is also of German heritage. Part of the issue that emerged from her

depth sessions is that of a felt responsibility to “fix” or to heal her family of origin, before she herself can become well. This beautiful, loving, intention is that of an “Innocent” child who believes that she is responsible for all that happens in the world around her. What a burden for such a tender soul, and how futile!

In setting up a constellation for this family, as well as in many other family constellations, a most poignant fact emerged. *Neither the dead nor the living want their offspring to hold their pain or to mirror their suffering.* The child's illusion is that shared pain is lessened pain. In fact, those who suffered a painful fate rarely want to share this legacy with future generations for, if so, what was the purpose of their suffering? We may already know this in our thinking, but our *energy* body may still hold on to the attachment. We show our loyalty to our family system in numerous creative ways! Perhaps we mirror the illnesses of our ancestors, perhaps it manifests itself in relationship challenges, or issues about success, or other behavioral ways. Often these problems have been resistant to other approaches since they are held in the metaprogram of our very core essence.

The focus in a family constellation is not the evident problem. We are not looking for change or to “fix” a problem. In family constellation work, the therapist simply looks for love. It is a treasure hunt and when the treasure, Love, is found it is acknowledged and cherished in the open. Once Love is acknowledged everything falls into place. Guided by the morphic field of the family, the orders of love in the family system are restored. The participants are no longer entangled with the damage of the past, and are free to move ahead in their own lives and into their own futures.