

A reflection

PSYCHOLOGY OF TRANSFORMATION FROM COMPETITION TO COOPERATION

Why do we human beings become almost paralyzed by such large income gaps and the destruction of nature? Why does a woman married with a man who harasses and humiliates her has so much difficulty to free herself of him? Why can not a girl or boy who have been abused by an adult for years, not free themselves? Why does humanity sleep when competition and greed destroys the planet?

People are led to feel uncertainty, fear and chronic inferiority, and are misguided to deny their feelings and to commit themselves to a victim behavior. This is a psychological trap rigged of the power system.

In this text, we try to decipher certain aspects of the **psychology of power**, which introduce a trap of **self-repression** in all of us to enable submission and exploitation of people and nature. We will map out a path or a vision to freedom, by applying a humanistic view of humanity.

In recent decades the society of competition has succeeded in increasing dramatically power over humanity and nature. The economic system rewards greed, selfishness and denial of emotions, and punishes lack of success - a completely reversed logic. And we are misled to reproduce and practice competition and repression within us and between ourselves.

COMPARISON OF EDUCATION, MOTIVATION AND LEADERSHIP

COMPETITIVITY – ITS CONSEQUENCES	COOPERATION – ITS CONSEQUENCES
Competition, classification, criticism, punishment: submission, alienation	Eliminate competition and classification: equality, appreciation, awareness
Praise, reward or criticism, punishment – conditional behavior, demands, revolt, alienation	Reinforce health (consciousness of human wealth) at all - unconditional valorization, consciousness
Everyone is waiting for the boss/teacher to solve the problem - passivity, frustration, alienation	Organize joint responsibility by direct participation - everyone feels free to trade, courage, valorized, conscious
Demands to solve the problem - powerlessness, paralysis and/or outbreaks	Disconnect demand to solve the problem - prevent, resolve the causes of the problem
In case of trouble you feel anxiety, anger, guilt, powerlessness ... and reacts by pushing down these feelings - chronic self-repression, victimization, paralysis or burnout	In case of trouble you feel anxiety, anger, guilt, powerlessness ... and react by accepting these feelings - sense of freedom, responsibility, internal balance, consciousness
THIS CAUSES AND MAKES PROBLEMS CHRONICS	THIS PREVENTS PROBLEMS AND ELIMINATES THE CAUSE OF THEM

Competition can be inspiring to challenge us to develop our abilities and knowledge. But when it's a foundation stone in society, it takes power over everything. The economic competitiveness has infected all other areas of society: education, workplace, care, social services, culture...It creates uncertainty, conflicts between people, increasing egoism and recklessness, economic and social inequality and social polarization. Competition is like fire. It is a good tool but it becomes dangerous when it takes over power.

In the table above, there is a comparison between the human relations according to the competition perception and the cooperative perception, as well as the consequences of them to human formation. Cooperation in this context is equality and togetherness. It seems as if relationships based on competition are causing our problems with relationships and cooperation, as well as making the problems chronic. But cooperation's principles of equality and solidarity prevent and eliminate the causes of the problems.

**The world's problems cannot be solved
with the same reasoning
that gave rise to them.
Albert Einstein**

In order to promote a transformation from competition to cooperation, we need a new paradigm about human beings and their relationships, based on the **value of humans, relationships and nature**.

The path to transforming relationships for equality and solidarity presupposes that we leave normality and train new forms of relationships, as well as developing organizational structures which promotes maximum participation on equal terms - that is, **direct participation or direct democracy**, which means that important and structural decisions are taken directly by the people, and not by an elite. Representative democracy should subordinate direct democracy. In this way, equality is established and promotes the feeling of freedom in the exercise of power, which in return raises common responsibility (solidarity).

The verb power means having the ability to influence on anything. This power can be beneficial or evil, for example, in capitalism, it is good to organize people to compete with each other when in cooperation it is good to organize and promote equality and equal rights. In this text, the first variant is called repressive power.

The road to transformation to true equality and solidarity shows the direction of a just society. The aim is not to reach the "goal" in itself, because **a utopia** advances when we go forward. The intention is to try to stay in the course of the road. Demands and urgency are just obstacles on the road.

As people say, "The situation makes the thief and power corrupts." The competition system transforms our personality without us noticing it. Each organization or society with power concentration possesses a risk of growing madness; megalomania, greed, selfishness, callousness, alienation and paranoia. The power of repression creates a false experience of existence (the need for this may arise from the lack of love that the person has suffered from his early childhood).

To reflect on this complex subject, we need to explain certain concepts, deepen our understanding of the psychology of feelings and repression.

DESCRIPTION OF TERMS

Freedom means that you are free to act in accordance with your consciousness. Freedom always comes with responsibility. And at the same time, responsibility assumes freedom of action. I can only be responsible for something if I have the same freedom to act. Therefore, **freedom and responsibility are inseparable**, they mean the same thing, two sides of the same coin. Unfortunately, responsibility is misused as referring to demand. Demands are totally contrary to freedom and responsibility.

Everyone wants to feel **happiness** and we are aware that it is intimately **linked to love**, even when looking for happiness in sex, power, material things, fame, drugs, aggression...

The word **consciousness** means that the person has an idea of himself and his environment at all dimensions of existence, whether it is socially or individually, in the metaphysical dimension of feeling or thinking. Without consciousness life has no meaning. *Conscience is the essence of human existence*. It is within us, invisible to others, and therefore impossible to be controlled by them.

Of course, our consciousness is affected by both society and everyone around us. The upbringing is a systematic process of shaping (and distorting) the child's consciousness. Even though we try to, we don't have control over others' conscience. If we force the child to accept "some consciousness," it will always respond with rebellion. Consciousness does not accept repression but requires freedom. **Consciousness and freedom are inseparable.**

Equality implies in equal exercise of power, participation in decision making and planning, and execution of the work. If everyone has the same opportunity to influence, we get an organization with collective responsibility, therefore solidarity. And mutual solidarity means respect and unconditional appreciation of each other, giving a sense of equality. **Equality and solidarity are inseparable.**

We come to the following conclusion of the concepts: (good) power equals freedom, equals responsibility, equals love, equals happiness, equals equality, equals solidarity.

FEELING IS THE BASIS TO THINK AND ACT, AND WE HAVE TOTAL FREEDOM TO FEEL

Feelings are a deeper and stronger dimension in us than the intellect. We feel something and then we think and act accordingly. We can act in the opposite way as well, I feel anger, I accept the consciousness of my anger, and use self-discipline to not attack you.

Did you choose your partner according to feelings or of reason? When you have a conflict with them, what is the hardest aspect to handle, the rational factor or his anger? When you lose something important, you get sad, melancholy, your face shows your grief even if you try to hide it. If you allow yourself to feel sad, it passes naturally.

When you are in **danger**, you react in fear. If someone tries to attack you, you get scared and angry. With these feelings you communicate the danger to your neurological system, then it communicates and coordinates the hormonal and other physiological activities in the body. Your face and body become tense, your senses are sharpened, you begin to produce stress hormones to be physically stronger. The blood goes to the muscles, digestion stops, sometimes you react with diarrhea or complete shutdown of digestion. - When the danger passes, if you allow yourself to feel what you felt then, the fear and the anger will disappear naturally.

We have complete freedom to feel and think and limited freedom to act

Basically, every man has complete freedom of their feelings and thoughts. No one has control over your feelings of joy, love, fear, anger, guilt... You are completely free in your way of feeling. But the freedom of action is limited, it is prohibited to fight, lie, steal, we must go to school, work, etc.

Freedom means you are **responsible** for your feelings and thoughts, although it is not easy to understand this, because you have "feeling habits". Since childhood you have been influenced and raised to feel and think in a certain way. Perhaps you have felt since your childhood a lot of acceptance and appreciation or insecurity and rejection. These become your normal way to feel. The habit becomes a part of the personality. But this does not exclude your freedom to feel and think.

All people appreciate feeling freedom (= responsibility and love). Being free is to be yourself, without requiring to be something that you feel you are not. **A free person reacts by consciousness spontaneously**, without having to understand or control themselves. Freedom is taking responsibility, which means love, and therefore happiness and equality. People who feel free in their soul does not accept disrespect or injustice

It appears that the deepest and most powerful sense of freedom lies in the expression of feelings (or in the metaphysical dimension). When someone feels free in the moment, she feels a deep happiness. They are free from the "burden" of parenting, schools and especially the society that has been installed in us. You become yourself.

When we respect the other in their feelings, they'll feel a deep valorization, beyond all other forms of recognition.

One can feel freedom even with all external oppression, even in prison (Socrates, Mahatma Gandhi, Viktor Frankl, Nelson Mandela...). It is of these people that the power is afraid. They are the most persecuted. The education should focus on promoting children's and young people's feelings of freedom to not prevent them from developing in courage, creativity, ethics, joy and love.

THE SYSTEM OF POWER CAUSES CHRONIC SELF REPRESSION

The system of power causes chronic feelings of fear and inferiority

In society the conservative forces (bourgeoisie) is trying to keep the situation as it is, without structural changes. And one way to keep people under control is to create a feeling of insecurity and fear. People in fear go into a defensive behavior, they want more guards, police, cameras, guns, tougher penalties and a strong (Authoritative) leader. In other words, misleads people to demand more oppression and repression. The process becomes a vicious circle.

All repressive systems of power involve a minority that has more power than the majority. This leads to a conflict between the powerful (the financial elite) and the oppressed (working class). In this way, the majority depends on the minority decision, which causes feelings of insecurity, fear and inferiority, but also feelings of indignation and revolt. The oppressed tend to feel insecure, inferior, dependent, abused, frightened and rebellious. These are painful feelings. And the oppressor (ruler) feels insecure, scared, inferior, dependent, abused and emotionless. They feel almost the same, they are like each other's emotional mirrors.

We still live in an authoritarian world that leads the parents to act according to the principle that their child must subdue, although we intellectually are of a different opinion. Our form of education is that the **behavior is conditioned** by awards such as praise and good grades, or criticism and punishment. We do not believe in an education based on unconditional valorization and consciousness.

We all learn to live in a certain extent with the feelings of uncertainty and fear of being rejected or punished. **This feeling becomes a habit, and leaves marks in our personality** for the rest of our life.

An anxious person (or humiliated) is easy to manipulate in everyday relationships, in school, at work and in society.

We were raised to deny our feelings - self-repression

We live in a culture characterized by **superficiality** and belief in **rationality**. We are guided systematically to **repress (deny or try to ignore) our feelings** of insecurity, sadness, fear, anger, humiliation, shame, guilt, etc. When I feel insulted I make a giant effort and pretend that all is well so that no one, not even me, notice my humiliation. I react with anger at myself because I feel insulted. I have a painful feeling and I respond with another painful feeling duplicating my suffering. This is an example of a vicious circle of self-repression.

At birth, the child receives signals from the parents to **stop crying, to not be angry, not be afraid; be calm, kind and grateful**. We don't have the habit of listening to a teenager with respect and attention about their discontent or rebellion. At school, there is no room for feelings, the teachers try to deal with students as if they were rational beings, even if they are not. In the workplace, feelings are considered inappropriate, shameful, signs of imbalance and weakness. Feelings are **taboo** in such a way that when a young man falls in love for the first time, he becomes afraid to be ridiculed by his parents, and therefore reveals nothing about his new happy feelings.

Prohibited feelings become a **hidden force** in the individual and in the collective relations. The more we censor anger and dissatisfaction, the more they grow collectively in us and destroys all coexistence dramatically.

When we fight against one of our feelings, we **block the others as well**. As you fight your sorrow, you cannot feel curiosity and love. When you fight your fear, you do not feel indignation and courage. This is one of the psychological traps of the power systems at all levels, regardless of whether they are in a relationship, family, school, workplace or society (capitalism, colonialism, feudalism...).

We were taught to blame someone else for our feelings - self-repression

In families, workplaces and schools, it is easy to see how much people **criticize and accuse** each other. They never do as they should, this colleague always comes late, that sector never cooperates with the others, the management never listen... The power aims for people to fight, criticize, blame and downgrade others and themselves.

Let us reflect upon a degrading situation. When a child (Carlos) calls the other (Mary) stupid, Mary reacts spontaneously: "The one who says is." Mary is aware in the emotional level that Carlos feels insecure and inferior when he is in need to insult others. This awareness that the child still has is confirmed by **Socrates thesis; What I do to others, I do to myself in my own mind**. When I accuse the other I feel guilty within myself, my words come from my feeling. My impulse to disparage the

other arises from a sense of inferiority within me. In this way I am the first victim of my actions. But later in school, which is culture dependent, the child learns to blame others for their feelings.

When you accuse me of insulting you, **you give me your freedom** to feel. When you transfer your responsibility (= freedom) to the "guilty ones", **you make yourself a victim**, feeling angry and powerless, while at the same time suppressing these feelings (it is commonplace). You give away your freedom to the others. Your freedom to feel is now under my responsibility, in my power. You give me power. We are raised in this way, it is considered normal and correct. Normality is violence against our freedom within.

We are educated to lose contact with the freedom to feel and therefore the very feeling of freedom. We ask why are you sad? Instead of helping the other to stop and allow themselves to feel in a deliberate way. The word why is easily interpreted as you should not be sad. **The question why involves the risk of promoting the habit of blaming someone** else for our feelings. This leads to blaming and we are therefore easily manipulated.

Instead, we should ask with interest and total respect for the person to describe their feeling of sadness, **show interest and unconditional respect for their feelings**. Help to disconnect from the so-called causes and possible negative consequences to focus on the feeling. When the child perceives this interest and respect for the feeling itself, they come to learn to respect their sadness with a sense of freedom, and then the feeling goes by naturally without blockages. The same principle applies to all other emotions.

The struggle for freedom, equality and solidarity are developed because we can feel the freedom in and with our feelings.

The three mechanisms in the power systems to direct us all to self-repression

- We are brought up to indulge in **chronic feelings of inferiority, fear and impotence**
- We are brought up to **repress our feelings**
- We are brought up to **blame others** for our feelings and to feel like a victim

In this way we were led to lose contact with the sense of freedom and responsibility. These three mechanisms form an **internal lock**. Therefore, does the aggressive person get power over the others. That is why there is an **emotional manipulation** in human relationships, in the workplace, and in general. That's why we don't talk about conflicts and problems between us. This explains why people from a psychological point of view **submit themselves** to the community's competition atrocities.

THE ROAD TO FREEDOM?

Let's go back to our **initial questions**: Why does a woman, married to a man who deceives her, has such difficulty to free herself? Why doesn't people respond to humiliation? We are so rooted and used to the competition community that question it is classified as madness, capitalism is normality. We are afraid of the deviant.

We are so used to suppress our feelings, and therefore ignore our freedom, that we don't even mischief it. It's like a collective trauma. To remove this blockage in our mind, to create a society based on the principles of freedom (responsibility), equality and solidarity, we have to work in two dimensions, the social and the human.

In the social dimension, we need to develop and apply a maximum horizontal exercise of power through participatory democracy. Which means subordinating the current representative democracy in favor of direct democracy. People vote directly on all important questions without delegating its power to the representatives.

Is the fight focus against evil, or is the fight focus for the good?

If the focus direction is to fight something bad (authoritarianism, greed...) it tends to get power. **If the focus is on something good (freedom, compassion...), the good tends to get power.** The power system has succeeded in implanting a tendency for us to use most of the time to criticize, analyze and accuse. Therefore, we put most of our attention to the negative. We must of course discover and reveal (illuminate) the evil, but have our focus on the good.

When you feel you are in a power struggle with the other, whether it is a partner, colleague or 'enemy', then you are at war with the other, and in war there are no winners! The feeling of being in a power struggle is a sign that you gave power to the other. Avoid going into the "enemies" game, it is their business, it is not in your power. **Instead, you should fight for the good, and include him also in this project.** Then you'll feel free and know how to act with wisdom and balance!

We need to awake the **sense of freedom** (= responsibility) by learning to respect unconditionally everyone's feelings. We need to raise consciousness that every human being has all human aspects; human wealth and hindrances. Therefore, all I see within you is also in me in some way. We are each other's internal mirrors.

We need to realize that when I attack you, the aggression comes first and foremost within myself. I am my first victim. If I have a need to downplay you, it's a sign that I don't have self-respect.

For the last twenty years in different cooperatives and schools for Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra (MST = The Landless Movement in Brazil), has the method called *conscientia*

method, developed and tested, as a possible tool for developing and exercising these new relationships. The results speak for itself, it would not be possible to work so long without any interesting or compelling results.

In working groups trained according to the method, cooperation and production improved, and developed an atmosphere with greater respect and appreciation among members. Each training activity in this sense shakes and dismantles the internal blockages that we have, and opens us up for feelings of trust, value, courage, initiative, joy, connection and freedom. And it opens a consciousness of a higher meaning in dimension of life other than just caring for my own family's well-being

The person or group that learns to respect the feelings of others as well as their own, knows to relish oneself, to value life and nature. People who feel freedom in their mind don't bend for repression, but go to battle for the good.

Freedom, equality and solidarity in both social and human relations is our utopia. This road has no end, but a direction. We do not need to come all the way, but let's follow the trail and continue towards our utopia.

Conscientia Working Group / Pertti Simula 17.09.2018

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