

Love Passion and Intimacy

in Group Analysis and in Training

27th | 28th April 2012
Júlio de Matos Hospital
Lisbon

Crisis, rating, economics, money, globalization, euro, austerity, unemployment, insecurity, mistrust, rich countries, poor countries, Europe, violence, market, politics, politicians... these are words and issues that invade our lives and minds every present day. These are some of the main determinants and restraints of our present life, our way of living and our way of thinking about life.

The global village, the large European group, is apparently full of deception, with loss of social rights, loss of economic power, loss of trust and loss of hope. In this social theatre people have to adapt their lifestyles and expectations.

If rage, aggression, sadness, mistrust, scapegoating, deception, frustration, fear, insecurity, destruction, abuse, envy, etc., are common inevitable individual and group issues, present in the interrelation dynamics; so there are love, intimacy, passion, happiness, hope, desire, creativity, solidarity, empathy, pleasure, sexuality... And we know that all of these, positive and negative issues could come together. Eros is always playing with Thanathos.

Many times, and probably more in specific fragile and significant personal and social moments, the language of hope, of love, of trust and pleasure, can be a manipulative one; very seductive and promoting submission, loss of power and loss of the ability to think. This is true for individuals, for groups and for organizations. But it is also true that it is usually easier to speak and underline the destructive and negative, rather than to explore the risks of creativity. We all need to be loved and recognised. We all, as social animals, are dependent on others in one way or another. We all need to communicate. We all have prejudices. We all have fears to be taken advantage of, to be abused or destroyed. We all have a need to desire and to be desired.

How can we all develop and maintain the capacity for love, passion and intimacy? How can we remain desirable persons, not denying the fear and risk of deception and betrayal? We are all different and we are all similar at the same time. How can we adapt to the changes that the present political, economical and social pressures impose on us? How can we develop and preserve our sense of identity and wellbeing? How can Group Analysis, as a science, a method and a practice, contribute to these processes?

Group Analysis and group analysts both need a sense of identity and at the same time need to develop the capacity to adapt to different cultures and their economical, political and social demands and realities. In most countries people feel, it seems, that group analytic practice and training are in crisis. What kind of role can Group Analysis and group analytic psychotherapy offer and develop? What kind of importance has a European organization and forum, like EGATIN and its Study-Days? Are we solely preoccupied with our own survival, or does Group Analysis have something important to offer, to people and organizations, at the present and for future times?

EGATIN, the European Group Analytic Training Institutes Network has its own Essential Training Standards in group analytic psychotherapy. These include:

- Essential general aims for training organisations
- Essential basic assumptions and underlying philosophy of GA training
- Essential theory and core concepts in GA
- Core skills essential to the practice of GA
- Training structures and requirements
- Essential structures and procedures for delivery of training and maintenance of standards

EGATIN essential basic assumptions in regard to training are:

- Emphasis on communication and the social nature of man and the defining features of the socio-cultural environment (Social origins)
- The assumption of the primacy of the relational matrix (the individual acquires definition in relation to the group) (Gestalt origins).
- The assumption of a personal and collective (social) unconscious (Psycho-Analytic origins).
- The assumption of open systems (persons, groups, organizations) in dynamic equilibrium, constantly adapting (Systemic origins).

We can say that EGATIN intends to contribute to the construction of a group analytic matrix, facilitating and promoting the building of a GA training culture, maintaining a sense of identity and respecting inevitable and desirable specificities from each country and from each organization. A matrix is a living, dynamic structure, more or less creative and more or less destructive.

To acquire and build a matrix - in the group analytic sense - we need people and relationships. If we want to learn, question, discuss, grow and discover, we need to be together in group. In a group we share opinions and knowledge, but also combine emotions, feelings, desires, fears, curiosity, spontaneity, doubts and errors – sharing our humanity. It is an attempt to contain instead of controlling; to be instead of pretending; to learn and to think instead of colonizing.

So we invite you all to come to Lisbon, to the EGATIN Study Days, and be in a group.

This year our theme is “Love, Passion and Intimacy. In Group Analysis and in Training”. How do we deal with these kinds of issues, in our personal group analytic process, in the groups we run, in supervision, in our training institutes and in our training programs? What kind of conscious and unconscious prejudices, defences and taboos do we hold? What can we learn with and from each others, from our differences, in culture, gender and generation?

We are looking forward to meet with you in the 27th and 28th of April, 2012, Lisbon, Portugal.

PAULA CARVALHO

Chair of the Local Organizing Committee

