

Synopsis ICCT2018 - April 18, 2018

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Jaap and Ilse who organized this conference thought it would be a good idea to present a synopsis at the end of each day and they said this would be a due task for the chairman.

So here we are, trying to summarize six presentations by emphasizing some highlights and promising vantage points.

First I would like to say that the main goal of this conference is exchange of ideas and practices, how to work effectively with the contextual approach. The legacy of Ivan Boszormenyi-Nagy is that he left us an approach that is build on integrating different optics (dimensions), each with their own body of knowledge and ways of performing. You should say: it is proper to the contextual approach to keep on moving, integrating, even absorbing other methods in helping people. This is what I have experienced today in the presentations and what I heard from you in the walkways of this university.

A few striking points:

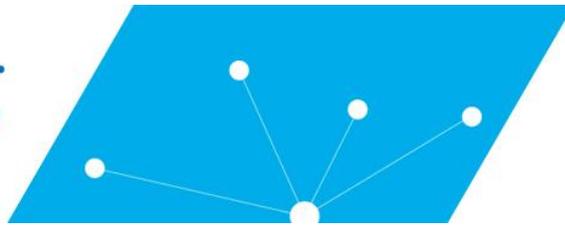
I was touched by the enthusiasm in the presentations I attended. The school of thought of Ivan Boszormenyi-Nagy gives us some sort of gold in our hands. Students who get acquainted with the contextual approach often say that they find a new look on their families and on themselves. It is the power of acknowledgement, that responds to our deepest motivations, the longing to trust and to be trusted.

But after the first enthusiasm, questions arise. Is it really so special? People often like to tell their personal stories, so what? Is it really safe to tell the whole story? Or would they tactically keep silent to prevent becoming disloyal to their family of origin? We got a good advice as a precaution to tell students when we introduce them to the contextual approach: *tell as much as you can sleep over it* (Catharine Ducommun-Nagy). It is a very sensitive thing to become aware of crossing the borders of loyalty. Remember that this force of family bond is often hidden.

Next question: how to deal methodical with the contextual approach? Are concepts as parentification and relational ethics measurable? Questionnaires and scales are developed. How do we use these instruments to research therapeutical practices? When our leading idea is the Buberian sentence 'Healing through meeting', how can we measure *meeting*? It is a great effort that some of us do this patient research to demonstrate with quantitative evidence that the contextual approach works. This is an important subject nowadays, that we cannot suffice with the claim that our approach is mainly qualitative. If it makes a difference, that difference must be visible. Remember that professor Nagy was a medical doctor. And the first dimension is about facts.

And yet, what makes therapy work, is in the end not completely objectifiable. Relational ethics is about 'The justice of the human order', as Nagy borrowed from Buber, and this justice is not available as the result of a method. 'Relational ethic' is something like 'human rights'. We all know such rights exist, even if we cannot prove their existence. But we trust (it is evidently some kind of

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belief) that people will experience healing in their relationships when they are able to look after each other's interest, fairly and mutually.