



**Nordic Congress in Family Therapy  
Workshop, Wisby, Gotland  
19. august 2011  
Anette & Allan Holmgren**

*"A word, a tune, a story, a line  
Keys in the wind t'unlock my mind."  
Bob Dylan*

**Program:**

1. Why we have left the systems-metaphor (Anette)
2. Narrativity, discourse and modern power (Allan)
3. Resonance, sensing and affectivity (Anette)
4. Affirmation, intensity and creativity (Allan)

**From systems to stories  
(Narrative) Therapy as a response to modern power**

**Allan:**

**Ad 2 Narrativity, discourse and modern power**

1. You never meet "a system"; you only meet persons telling you something, or showing you something, performing something.
2. Your concepts, words and stories are your tools. And your charm, face and smile are tools as well; your performance is also your tool.
3. Language and words do not represent the world, they are not the world - they produce and create the world we live in.
4. When we cannot trust language, we cannot trust the concept of dialogue; we cannot speak of more than the exchange of stories, exchange of perspectives. We all speak from different places
5. The atmosphere you create together *is* the reality
6. You become the thoughts you think.
7. We are not speaking about who you are, but who you become; it is a question about becoming, not about being
8. No culture without stories, myths, narratives - to make sense of an otherwise chaotic world
9. These stories create meaning. Meaning (sense making) is the central concept.
10. A story is created by putting events together guided by a theme, a plot, a sensemaking, an evaluation.

11. A story is like a loom (en væv) on which you make a carpet, a cloth, a blanket). The story is a telling of actions. Any story is weaved on the loom consisting of two landscapes: A landscape of actions and a landscape of consciousness, of meaning, of identity.
12. The narratives we live by are always cultural, not just contextual.
13. That language is cultural, means that language is filled with powerful definitions and evaluations. Language is not useful, it is powerful: The power of concepts and metaphors.
14. A discourse is a way to talk that allows you to say and see something, but forbids you to say other things.
15. The "discourse of collaboration" has certain keywords, norms and standards through which you can monitor yourself and others.
16. It is through discourses that the world is produced: inclusion and exclusion takes place.
17. The metaphor of narratives focuses on meaning.
18. The metaphor of discourses focuses on the power.
19. Power is neither positive nor negative, it is productive.



20. We have an ethical responsibility to be aware of which cultural ways of living we are contributing to produce.

**Anette:**

There is no development of the practice. Just new descriptions.

Lots of risk-taking.

Critique: If we don't dare to bring in critique it will be the death of academia.

Resonance. Outsider witness team. Identity is always created in relationships. Cowriters of our own story.

All the time we witness each other.

To talk about what you see.

You resonate on what you are seeing. Always resonate with our own stories, our own inner life.

I talk more and more from the position of resonance.

I don't look for how I can contribute.

I resonate.

We bring ourselves in the shoes of the other person.

Being able to bring my own senses back.

**The sense of myself** in the conversation.

A difference between reflection and resonance (mærkning).

**Allan:**

**Ad 4 Affirmation, intensity and creativity**

1. It is not a question about collaboration, but about creation Rolf warned us about loyalty - should you be loyal to this idea? (He creates a paradox, it doesn't make sense, it is inconsistent.)
2. Nietzsche announced the death of God.
3. Foucault declared the death of man.
4. There is no subject, only processes of subjectification.
5. There exists only reciprocal relationships and the perpetual gaps between intentions.
6. Life is basically a question of, a process of affirmation. Not a question about acknowledgement.
7. In the encounter you affirm the other, when you see the other, when you feel the other. We feel with our eyes, our face, our tone of voice.  
"Person" might mean "per sona -through sound"
8. The task of therapy is to produce arenas and possibilities of visibility, where we can become visible to ourselves and to others
9. If there is no intensity, there is no work, no loosening up, no possibility for movement through lines of flight.

10. This conference has "roots" as one of its metaphors. Which "roots"? Roots of a tree? Of weed?
11. We think of roots like rhizom; no tree-trunk, no center; everything is exploding and growing from a middle.
12. Roots might be stories; not any story, but related to events.
13. The event is therefore a central concept; the concept of context has no intensity, no intentionality.
14. It is not a question about reflexivity. Reflectivity is reuse. As William James said: "Many people say they think, but they only rearrange their prejudices."
15. The reflective team is dead. It is misuse of power.
16. It is not a question about reflexivity, but about creativity.
17. When you create you make the virtual actual.
18. The task is to produce multiplicities. To create possibilities. To create possibilities, lines of flight, new identity-machines, to re-member old voices etc.
19. Identity is about recognizing; that *I* can recognize *my-self* through affirmation from others, from my friends, the witnesses of my life - and from myself.



20. There are never just one self, there are always perpetual gaps between intentions: *Should I stay or should I go?* As Nietzsche said: There are only interpretations.