

# Exploring Encounters

*How the Group Leader Can Facilitate  
Moments of Meeting*

MGFAM08

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the transcendence = change = freedom = the moment = contact = the window =

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# Exploring Encounters

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# Abstract

This study was based on videotaped material from sessions in a self-development group. The purpose was to examine how the group leader can use words, body language, positioning and touch to create and handle encounters with the group members in ways that are optimal for achieving desirable changes. The main theoretical framework is Stern's work on the present moment. The study also draws heavily on family theoretical work like that of Michael White and Salvador Minuchin. Encounters from the videotaped material were analyzed in detail, then the findings were related to five key aspects of facilitating change in a group setting: authenticity, trust, extracting information and moving the process ahead, challenging while maintaining sufficient security and finally the stage of integration/closure. The study clearly shows the importance of mastering these tools – individually and in combination. They are intrinsic components of communication and will necessarily affect any relation or process. Moving from an intuitive grasp to a higher level of awareness is an important step towards mastering the role of a group leader.

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# Table of contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1	The Encounter.....	1
1.2	Field of research .....	3
1.3	Research question .....	6
1.4	Structure of the thesis.....	8
<b>2</b>	<b>Theory .....</b>	<b>9</b>
2.1	Introduction.....	9
2.2	The essence of Stern’s theoretical contribution.....	9
2.3	Historical perspective.....	12
2.3.1	Introduction .....	12
2.3.2	Existentialism .....	13
2.3.3	Phenomenology .....	14
2.3.4	Field Theory – Kurt Lewin .....	15
2.3.5	Moreno and psychodrama.....	17
2.4	The field of family therapy .....	19
2.4.1	Minuchin - the therapist as a part of the system.....	19
2.4.2	Social constructionism – Co-creating our reality .....	21
2.4.3	White.....	22
2.5	Conclusion/Final remarks.....	24
<b>3</b>	<b>Method .....</b>	<b>26</b>
3.1	Introduction.....	26
3.2	Phenomenology and heuristics .....	27
3.3	Observation .....	30
3.3.1	Types of observation.....	30
3.4	Data collection.....	32
3.4.1	The group .....	32
3.4.2	Video material.....	33
3.4.3	Notes of self-reflection .....	33
3.5	Data analysis.....	34
3.6	Research ethical dilemmas.....	36
3.6.1	General issues .....	36
3.6.2	The researcher as informant.....	37
3.7	Validity, reliability and generalization of my methodological approach.....	39
<b>4</b>	<b>Analysis .....</b>	<b>41</b>
4.1	Notation and presentation conventions .....	41
4.1.1	The table rows and columns .....	41
4.2	Encounter 1- Indelicate parts of me .....	44
4.3	Encounter 2- The beauty of the bulimic woman .....	51
4.4	Encounter 3 – Reconnecting with the heart.....	60
<b>5</b>	<b>Observations .....</b>	<b>72</b>

<b>5.1</b>	<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>72</b>
5.1.1	Authenticity.....	72
5.1.2	Trust .....	73
5.1.3	Move the process ahead and extract information .....	74
5.1.4	Challenging while providing sufficient security .....	74
5.1.5	Change/healing, integration and closure.....	76
<b>5.2</b>	<b>Being authentic.....</b>	<b>76</b>
<b>5.3</b>	<b>Building trust .....</b>	<b>79</b>
<b>5.4</b>	<b>Move the process ahead and extract information .....</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>5.5</b>	<b>Challenging while providing sufficient security.....</b>	<b>82</b>
<b>5.6</b>	<b>Change/healing, integration and closure.....</b>	<b>84</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Concluding Remarks .....</b>	<b>86</b>
6.1	Essential observations .....	86
6.2	Improvements and possibilities for future research .....	88
	<b>Bibliography .....</b>	<b>90</b>
	<b>Appendix A.....</b>	<b>93</b>
	<b>Appendix B .....</b>	<b>94</b>
	<b>Appendix C .....</b>	<b>96</b>
	<b>Appendix D.....</b>	<b>99</b>
	Encounter 1 - Indelicate parts of me .....	99
	Encounter 2 - The beauty of the bulimic woman .....	101
	Encounter 3 - Reconnecting with the heart.....	104

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 The Encounter

To enter deeply into the present moment is to plunge into eternity, to step through the looking glass and into the world of the unborn and the undying.  
(Ken Wilber)

Ken Wilber's quotation describes what might take place in a therapeutic encounter. In my opinion, we find in this quotation a whole formula for how therapy might work - through entering the moment and courageously plunging into it with your client with an authentic, sincere and truthful intention. Several others before him have described this in many different ways over the years.

For me, to enter the moment is does not mean to walk into a new dimension, but to expand the one that we are in, by increasing the level of perception in the meeting. This means seeing what is not necessarily obvious to us, highlighting it and considering what it means in terms of options that are available and choices/decisions that need to be made. I can let it create a movement in me, which again will be perceptible in the relation. Everything exists in the moment, the possibilities exists in the moment.

It is not only among philosophers and theoreticians that we find the idea about the power of the moment and the encounter. In Harry Potter, the children have to walk through an invisible door that takes them to the train station and the train that will bring them to the school of magicians. Alice in Wonderland jumps down into the rabbit hole where time stops and new dimensions appear. As a metaphor for the therapist /client work, this tells us something about what can open up in the therapeutic encounter ... a rabbit hole that can show us quite new things, a moment where I can get my life mirrored. In this moment chronos (the chronological time that structures everyday life) seems to halt and we are able to enter kairos, the time in between, the propitious moment, the moment of something coming into being. How far down into the rabbit hole we can go, depends on how far I, as a therapist, dare to go with the client. As long as I, as the therapist, am solidly tethered to the

roots of the tree where the rabbit hole is, I can walk quite far down into this world without being afraid of not finding my way back to chronos. I believe that what the old Greeks described as kairos, is what happens when we are able to catch the moment and enter the therapeutic encounter, the room of change, or the infinity, where lies the unborn, and consequently possible changes. It is the time full of mercy.

In Prince Caspian, one of the books in the chronicles of Narnia series by C.S. Lewis, King Aslan builds a door in the air, where the people can walk through and go back to their origin, their true self or their original world. To me this is a good illustration of what people commonly search for when they are in therapy. If man walks back to his origin, he can never come back as the same. Maybe he has entered the room where change can take place, like Wilber describes, and changed the dimension where he is. Maybe he has achieved an expanded consciousness regarding his life and his relations?

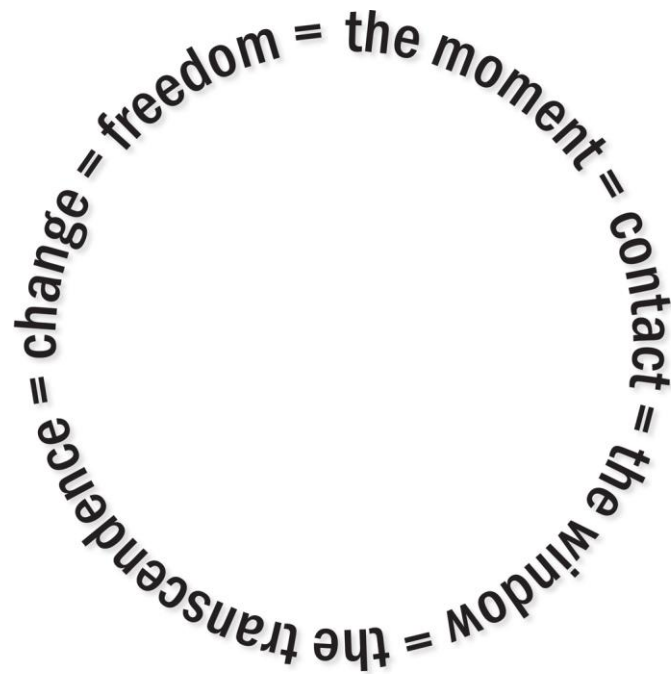
But what really happens when a therapeutic encounter or a healing encounter takes place? Through the years that I have worked in the therapeutic room, both clients and I have often experienced that a shift or a change has taken place, but we have rarely been able to explain what happened, and how it happened on a concrete level. Some therapists have an intuitive grasp of this - a natural talent or experience-based knowledge in their bone marrow. Normally they do know what has happened in the sense of what the result is, but often they do not really know or have an awareness about what led up to the change. Without a conscious understanding, the results are still to a high degree a matter of chance. It is also difficult to develop and improve your approach merely on the basis of trial and error. The same thing also applies to students who experience therapeutic meetings - in their attempts to analyze they become unable to find the words, and I as a teacher am unable to provide answers. We experience the phenomenon, but the current level of understanding of the phenomenon is moderate and the existing research is limited.

My relentless search and persistent curiosity led me to write this thesis about how to create the room of change in the therapeutic encounters and how to try to give meaning to what might not have a language. There might not be a definitive answer, but I can at least cast some light on the process and uncover some mechanisms that might be valuable for me and for others who are concerned with the therapeutic encounter between the therapist and



the client. I hope this thesis will give the reader a circular approach to the therapeutic meeting, where each circle create new circles and will continue to create new circles even after the reader has finished reading the thesis for pleasure, reflection, frustration and or whatever will arise.

In my view, the essence of a therapeutic encounter can be described like this:



If we are able to catch the moment and stop the chronological time in order to jump into Kairos, we will - just as Wilber describes it - enter the room of change where all the opportunities exist. The thought is not new. Many philosophers have tried to describe this in the way Wilber does, and several theories include ideas about the therapeutic progress in a client therapist relation where it all hinges on the relation and the moment where the time ceases (Shotter, 2004; Stern, 2007; Moreno, 1914)

## 1.2 Field of research

Research within the field of family therapy spans a wide range of subjects and several methodological approaches including feedback systems and development of new ideas and the dialogue as a tool for inquiry. The current study belongs to the subset of this research concerned with what actually happens in the course of a session. Some of the observational

studies of what happens in psychotherapy sessions, focusing on the therapist's actions and reactions in the therapeutic relation, reveal an interesting fact: There is significant incongruence between the therapist's behavior and the theory underlying the therapy (Dallos/Vetere, 2005).

*Early studies indicated, for example, that therapists were often engaging in a wide range of behavior, of which they were not only unaware but which, in some cases, was quite inconsistent with the theory underlying the therapy.*

*(Dallos/Vetere, 2005:116-117)*

There are also significant differences between therapists. In a study on the therapist's effectiveness in treating depression, conducted by Blatt, Sanislow III, Zroff and Pilkonins, it became evident that: *"Effectiveness was not related to the types of therapy employed nor to the level of general clinical experience or experience of treating depression."* (Dallos/Vetere, 2005) Michael Lambert conducted a study in 1992 that identified four common factors that are present in all forms of psychotherapy. Regardless of psychotherapeutic orientation he concluded that only 15% of the therapeutic effect could be ascribed to the therapeutic techniques, while 30% was ascribed to the therapeutic relation. 15% was ascribed to the placebo effect and 40% to the extra therapeutic change (factors are understood to include elements the clients bring with them in therapy) (Jensen, 2008:26-27).

In 1966, Truax conducted research that focused on what happens in action in Rogerian therapy (Dallos/Vetere, 2005). The results revealed the importance of the use of language in Rogerian Psychotherapy. Exploration of the conversational narratives in family therapy is another example, there is for instance a study conducted in 1988 by Coulehan, Friedlander and Heatherington. The focus of this study was on the process of change through transformation of negative stories. Patterson and Forgatch studied the therapist's behavior as a determinant for client non-compliance. This study gave indications about the importance of the therapist's behavior.

*"Research does not tell us much, for example, about how we can train good psychotherapists. Høglend claims that there is nothing that indicates that a psychologist or a psychiatrist with many years of education, who has undergone therapy, and who has long experience, achieves better results than a social worker or a psychiatric nurse with less training and experience."*

*(Høglend, 1999 in Jensen, 2008:29)*

Still, by comparing approaches, and also by conducting in depth studies of individual therapists or group leaders, we can arrive at a significantly improved understanding of the processes that take place. Not only will this reveal aspects of the process that the current theories do not cover. It will also show where there is unexploited potential for applying the theory, or maybe what prevents the therapist/leader from using it. Based on the information resulting from such studies, the theories can be developed. Anne Hedvig Vedeler talks in her thesis about the requirement of the therapists being willing to touch and be touched by clients and about becoming your own case study as therapist (Vedeler, 2011). She argues that the therapist needs to invite herself into the research and conduct it as a co-creator, not only as an intellectual but also as a human being with five senses.

*“The living body is the possibility for experiences, both those we share and those we feel inside our own body. The sharing and the intensifying or boosting of a “feeling” creates an assurance that is more of a bodily nature than a form of intellectual knowledge. The next question is how reliable is this kind of bodily assurance, compared with what we often term intellectual knowledge. “*

*(Vedeler, 2011:83)*

With this Vedeler places the researcher and the informants in a holistic frame and at the same time raises the question of how to make the living body a reliable source in research.

As mentioned above, my study belongs to this part of the research field. But it has a more precise focus. It is concerned with one of the central topics in current family therapy research: the idea of an intersubjective field, which has received considerable attention over several years. Even when the term intersubjective field is not used, the idea of a shared interpretation of reality that is constructed through communication between two parties is part of the discussion. Whenever there is focus on dialogical dynamics in relation to living moments (Shotter, 2004), this is very close to what is described as an intersubjective field by Stern and in this study. In addition, in the field of family therapy, the question of how change occurs is necessarily important, along with the question of the role of the therapist and what can be done to ensure that the conditions are favorable for change to take place. Among the contributors to the discussion about these topics from the field of family therapy we find e.g. Harlene Anderson and Harold Goolishian, who focus on the not knowing position as a tool for the creative power of dialogue (Anderson & Goolishian 1992). Another

important contributor is Salvador Minuchin, who was skeptical to the idea that the client is able to create his own reality based on possible lack of economical and material conditions (Minuchin, 1998). My study is inspired by this research, and continues the exploration of these essential issues. Existing studies of the therapist/client relation are based on observation of the therapist, but not with the invaluable access to videotaped material that this study is based on, where the therapist is the researcher. I hope that this new approach makes it possible to contribute to an increased understanding.

### 1.3 Research question

Based on my experience and the state of the current research, I want to investigate the way in which the intersubjective field can be influenced so that a positive/desirable change takes place. This is a broad topic; for the purpose of this study I have narrowed down my focus to the role of the therapist or group leader<sup>1</sup>, and more precisely to a set of tools that can be employed.

**“How can the group leader use words, body language, positioning and touch to create or handle now moments and turn them into moments of meeting?”**

Moments of meeting are encounters or living moments where the *witness (dialogic)-thinking* that is a form of reflective interaction is present (Shotter, 2004). What I refer to as tools, are aspects of communication: words, body language (including facial expressions), positioning and touch. Unlike methods that you can choose to use or not use, these aspects of communication are generally present and to a significant degree unconscious. The lack of choice relates to the fact that words and silence both communicate a message, body language never goes un-interpreted by those who are in a room with you, there is no way to avoid choosing a position, even if it is a maximally neutral one with respect to the situation and touching or not-touching both sends a message. By unconscious I mean that we use these tools intuitively, with a low level of awareness about how we choose and

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<sup>1</sup> My initial proposition included the terms “therapist” and “client”. However, the use of the title therapist in this study was not acknowledged by the Norwegian Regional Committees for Medical and Health Research Ethics (REC). Consequently I decided to employ the terms “group leader” and “group member” and refer to the group not as a therapy group, but a self development group. This was acknowledged by REC.

exactly what we respond to in a given situation. This applies in particular to the non-verbal tools.

To investigate how the group leader can create or handle now moments and turn them into moments of meeting, I focus on two components that characterize the relation to the group members and three stages in the process. This results in the following breakdown of my overall research question into sub-questions:

- **How can the group leader use words, body language, positioning and touch to communicate authenticity?**
- **How can the group leader use words, body language, positioning and touch to create trust?**
- **How can the group leader use words, body language, positioning and touch to move the process ahead and extract information?**
- **How can the group leader use words, body language, positioning and touch to challenge while providing sufficient security?**
- **How can the group leader use words, body language, positioning and touch to facilitate change/healing, integration and closure?**

Authenticity is linked to trust, but it is a necessary requirement, not a sufficient one. Trust also depends on factors like the group members' perception of the group leader's competence and agenda, to name just a few. Without these important characteristics, the relation between the leader and the group members will not be favorable for moments of meeting to take place. Even with a favorable relation, there are critical stages in the process. To be able to contribute in an adequate way, the group leader needs relevant information and the ability to move the process ahead, including ways to circumvent resistance. A turning point can arise naturally from what is going on in the group, but will often depend on input from the group leader. Unless the situation is handled appropriately, the possibilities associated with this turning point will be missed or the result could be a setback instead of a positive, lasting change. The sub-questions above not only serve to concretize the main topic of creating or handling now moments and turn them into moments of

meeting, they also center around some key relational and functional aspects of the role of the group leader in this process.

## **1.4 Structure of the thesis**

This thesis is divided into 6 chapters. The current chapter presents the overall topic, my motivation for choosing it and its place within the field of research. The research question with sub-questions is also introduced. Chapter 2 covers theories and philosophical directions that are relevant for my analysis. Chapter 3 goes on to present the methodology that is applied in this study. Chapter 4 and 5 are dedicated to my analysis, where chapter 4 is a detailed presentation of selected encounters from my data material, while chapter 5 focuses on the observations. This is followed by concluding remarks in chapter 6.

# 2 Theory

## 2.1 Introduction

In this chapter I present theory and research that is relevant to my research question and clarify my own position. Daniel Stern's work on the present moment is a central part of my theoretical basis. He offers important insight into how a situation develops from moment to moment; I build on his work and extend it by looking at individual aspects of what the group leader brings into the intersubjective field. After presenting the essence of Stern's theoretical contribution I place some central ideas in a historical perspective. Stern's work and my own analysis are part of a tradition where generations of philosophers and scientists have contributed. Family therapy theories could have been part of the historic section, but I present it separately. Family therapy is this study's main field, and my focus in this section is less on the historical development and more on some central topics that intersect with my research. I look at them from the point of view of agreement/controversy to provide a context for what my work. The role of the therapist - central in my research question - is commented on throughout the chapter.

## 2.2 The essence of Stern's theoretical contribution

Stern (2004) "The Present Moment in Psychotherapy and Everyday Life" presents his key ideas relating to present moments in the sense of subjectively experienced momentary events. His main focus is on the experiences that lead to change, and he refers to the Greek word 'kairos', which captures not only a moment but also a propitious moment, the moment of something coming into being.

Stern describes how a therapeutic session consists of a series of present moments. As the present moments are chained together, a subtle change can occur at any point along the way, adding up to a slow, incremental and silent process of change that only partially enters the consciousness of the participants. But certain moments arise and stand out; certain relational moves result in challenges or threats to the status quo in the sense of the state of

the mutually accepted intersubjective field. Intersubjectivity is the shared field where common knowledge, thoughts and feelings are recognized, understood, shared and acknowledged in the relation between two or more. Through the common understanding and experience that is shared, an intersubjective consciousness is created, the contents of one person's mind becomes conscious as it is reflected back from the mind of another. This goes beyond mere exchange of information.

*The present moment as a lived story can also be shared. When that happens intersubjectivity starts to take on flesh. The moment when someone can participate in another's lived story, or can create a mutually lived story with them, a different kind of human contact is created. More than just an exchange of information has occurred. That is the secret of the here and now. (Stern, 2004:49)*

This consciousness is constantly investigated by the parties involved in order to see if the mutual understanding of the relation is still there and valid or if it has changed. When a discrepancy occurs, one enters the field of intersubjective anxiety. Stern describes this as a kind of existential anxiety.

Another important term that Stern uses is "now moment". It describes a moment that stands out, a challenge to the status quo. A now moment can be looked at as a crisis needing some kind of resolution. The moment of resolution is described by Stern as a special kind of present moment: a 'moment of meeting'. The following sums up his view of the experiences that can lead to change in a therapeutic setting (underlining not part of the original text).

*When successful, the moment of meeting is an authentic and well-fitted response to the crisis created by the now moment. It is a moment that implicitly reorganizes the intersubjective field so that it becomes more coherent, and the two people sense and opening up of the relationship, which permits them to explore new areas together implicitly or explicitly. The moment of meeting need not be verbalized to effectuate change. A now moment followed by a moment of meeting is the nodal event that can dramatically change a relationship or the course of a therapy.  
Stern (2004: 220)*

Capturing the moments of change also requires an understanding of the idea of cocreativity. Stern defines cocreativity as "Two minds working together at a local level (with short-term and long-term therapeutic goals in mind), to get somewhere." (Stern, 2000: 153). It implies a movement and a direction in cooperation, it is a dyadic process that constantly generates



something new in the intersubjective field: Each relational move becomes the context of what happens next. It can, according to Stern, result in five possible different situations

(1) It results in sudden, dramatic therapeutic changes; (2) it results in failed opportunities for change with negative therapeutic consequences; (3) it results in progressive implicit changes in the therapeutic relationship that favor desired changes; (4) it prepares the way for new explorations of explicit material; and (5) it prepares the way for interpretations.

(Stern, 2000:153)

This is highly relevant to my research question; the analysis chapters show how this plays out in detail. I will therefore elaborate a little on the five possible situations:

### 1. **Dramatic therapeutic change**

This is the situation where a crisis, i.e. a challenge to the status quo, turns into a moment of meeting. Moments of dramatic therapeutic change means that the perception of the relation is suddenly questioned and needs to be reorganized. The outcome can be a situation that is better or worse.

### 2. **Failed opportunities**

Moments of meeting follow now moments, but it could easily happen that the therapist misses the now moment, or that his own anxiety prevents him from handling the now moment in a way that leads to a moment of meeting. Mostly another moment will emerge, but sometimes the missed opportunity has a strong negative effect, for instance because it leaves the client with a feeling that the therapist is incapable of understanding.

### 3. **Progression towards desired changes**

Now moments and moments of meeting can be few and far between, but that doesn't mean nothing happens. The quieter relational steps that are part of the co-creation of the intersubjective field are not only a warm-up for a more spectacular or emotionally charged event; they are part of a gradual process of change. Stern talks about micro-corrective emotional experiences – new experiences that can be carried forward and built upon, allowing something new to emerge.

### 4. **Preparation for exploration**

A shift in the intersubjective field can have the effect of creating a new context so that material can emerge. The new context is one that is favorable, for instance in the sense of building necessary trust. Once that has happened, the material can be explored.

## 5. Preparation for interpretation

A set of relational steps that moves a situation along and gradually shapes the intersubjective field can prepare the way for interpretation. Sometimes the therapist can see it as appropriate to deal with a now moment with interpretation, i.e. explicitly.

My research question explicitly focuses on the ways in which the therapist can influence the situation and create opportunities for change. I'm specifically concerned with now moments, and turning them into moments of meeting. Stern describes how these moments are associated with risks. Basically he says two very important things about the role of the therapist: The therapist must be sufficiently aware to be able to catch the moments, and brave enough to use them for something adequate.

## 2.3 Historical perspective

### 2.3.1 Introduction

Stern is not the only one who has described the importance of the moment in psychotherapy. Some of the others include Martin Buber, Ken Wilber and J.L. Moreno (psychiatrist and one of the founders of group psychotherapy). We could go further back and see how they build on earlier philosophical ideas, tracing the origin of their questions and the roots of their ideas back to the time of Platon and Aristotle. The same is the case for ideas about the other core aspect of my approach: the importance of relations and connection between people for development and ultimately for healing. From the point of view of this study, a famous quotation from Aristotle is interesting: "A true friend is one soul in two bodies", an idea that is echoed in the thoughts of both Buber and Moreno.

Similar concepts can be found in completely different geographical locations and cultural traditions. This is a topic well outside the scope of this thesis, but a Xhosa proverb can be used as a small illustration. In the original language it reads: "Ubuntu ngumntu ngabanye abantu". Directly translated this means: "People are people through other people", or, in the words of the medical anthropologist Cecil Helman: "Each person's humanity is expressed through a relationship with others, and their humanity in turn comes through a

recognition of his or hers. To be uninvolved with other people, and in life of the community, is to be an incomplete person (Helman, 2006:164).

The ideas that lie at the core of my approach in this study have been expressed in various ways over time and in a range of contexts. Below we will look at some of the philosophical work that my theoretical framework is most clearly built upon.

### 2.3.2 Existentialism

The existentialist philosophers who belong to the early years, were clearly concerned with the importance of the moment. Two of the most important existentialists were Søren Kierkegaard, who is looked upon as the father of existentialism, and Martin Heidegger. Heidegger based his ideas on Kierkegaard and is looked at as the most important existentialist in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He studied Edmund Husserl's work and used Husserl's methodology in his work *"Being and Time"*. This philosophical direction is also part of the background for Buber and Moreno, as we will see below – not only the ideas about the moment, but also the central ideas of existentialism concerning the free will of human beings. We explore and find the self and the meaning of life through free will. The individual's responsibility for his/her own choices is also central to existentialism. We make choices many times a day and need the awareness of them so that we can take responsibility for them. The existentialists, whether they took a religious approach like Kierkegaard or a humanistic one like Sartre and Camus, all have these ideas in common.

In Thomte and Anderson (1981) Kierkegaard's moment is described as the ambiguous "where time always intercept eternity and eternity always intercept time." Time and eternity belong to each other within the moment and engage in a dialectic relationship.

*"The moment (Øjeblikket) is that ambiguity in which time (tiden) and eternity (evigheden) touch one another, and by this posit the temporal (timelighed), where time constantly intersects eternity and eternity constantly penetrates time" (Thomte and Anderson, 1981)*

Ken Wilber, American author and philosopher, follows Kierkegaard by saying that to enter the present moment is to dive into eternity where we can find the known and the unknown. In a therapeutic context this is the field many therapists want to enter in order to create the room of change where choices can be made.

*"To enter deeply into the present moment is to plunge into eternity, to step through the looking glass and into the world of the unborn and the undying."  
(Wilber, 1979:433)*

Below we will see how Moreno looked at the concept of time and how he dissolved this concept in order to enter kairós or the surplus reality - which we can connect to Lewin's field theory, Kierkegaard's idea of the moment and Wilber's idea of the present moment.

The philosopher Martin Buber is quite central to the development of ideas about the encounter. Buber presented these theories as early as 1923 in his classical philosophical work "I and Thou". He was preoccupied with the added value that arises in a genuine, existential encounter, beyond what each participant brings into the encounter - the encounter, where you and I become the "WE". *"Through the Thou a person become I."* (Buber, 2003) According to Buber, this has consequences with respect to responsibility, or co-responsibility: If we co-create one another through the relation, it means that I am also responsible for my actions towards the other. My action will, in time, create an "action response" in the other subject, which will provide me with a notion of who I am in the other's perception.

Moreno, Buber, Wilber, Kierkegaard, and Heidegger described this in their own genuine way and from their own viewpoint, but there is a common core to the descriptions, on that clearly relates to Stern's intersubjective field.

### **2.3.3 Phenomenology**

Phenomenology clearly states the need for observing what is "as is" and nothing else. This is especially important for the kind of study that I engage in, where the risk of premature interpretation must be taken very seriously. Phenomenology is a central philosophical direction for Stern:

*“The temporal aspect of the present moment (as a world of grain of sand) had to be addresses. What would the temporal architecture of such moment tell us? And how could the phenomenal experience of presentness be discussed? After all, the presentness of lived experience is central. This question sent me on an extended learning journey into the realm of phenomenological philosophy, which was a new and strange land for me at first. It was there that the hidden but obvious fact that we are psychologically and consciously alive only now became apparent.”*

*(Stern, 2000: introduction)*

Phenomenology, according to Husserl, is basically a systematic analysis of the experience. It is essentially a description of what is, without judgment. What is seen, what is the action and not the intention of the action and what is the feeling, not as a result of the action.

*“The body is, on the first place, the medium of all perception; it is the organ of perception and is necessarily involved in all perception. In seeing, the eyes are directed upon the seen and run over it edges, surfaces etc. When it touches objects, the hand slides over them. Moving myself, I bring my ear closer in order to hear.(...) Perceptual apprehension presupposes sensation-contents, which play their necessary role for the constitution of the schemata and, so, for the constitution of the appearances of the real things themselves.”*

*(Welton, 1999:163)*

Husserl’s phenomenology was a result of his reflections on insolvable philosophical questions. He wanted to investigate the conscious objects by accepting their existence and not assume that there is more to the objects than what we see (Magee, 2001).

Merleau-Ponty continued to develop phenomenology. One of the most important steps he took, was to move from Husserl’s account of the lived body (that is the body as it is experienced and experiences) to the concept of body-mind. Merleau-Ponty looked at the body-mind as our connection to life and the world, a connection adjusting all the time our experiences and existence to the world. This has some similarities to Stern’s intersubjective field (Macann, 1993).

### **2.3.4 Field Theory – Kurt Lewin**

The central ideas of field theory are consistent with Stern’s theories of the present moment. Field theory is a term coined by Kurt Lewin<sup>2</sup> (1890-1947). Lewin looked at society as a dynamic field that has an impact on human consciousness. A question he was preoccupied with was: “What are the forces that bring change or resistance into a relation or relations?”

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<sup>2</sup> Kurt Lewin: 1890-1947, German/American psychologist, professor at the University of Berlin from 1926.

The field we create together can be seen as an area where possibilities of change or transformation can emerge.

Lewin introduced gestalt psychological research results (perception research) as a source of information for the theory of personality development. He used the analogy of physical power – and field – as a base for his concepts and made the point that humans and their behavior can never be understood when considered as separate from the surroundings. A *field* is a whole, where everything influences everything. Client/therapist or group participant/group leader constitute a field, which undergoes a process of creation, development and change (Hostrup, 1999). By introducing a change in the field, we can trigger a movement in the individual, something that can contribute to a difference that makes a difference (Bateson, 1972). These thoughts, even if relatively new in the psychodynamic discussion, have been part of the therapeutic practice for a long time. This is illustrated by the following quotation from Minuchin:

*“These three assumptions -that context affects inner processes, that changes in context produce changes in the individual, and that the therapist’s behavior is significant in change – have always been part of the common sense basis for therapy. They have occupied the background in the literature of psychotherapy, while internal processes have come to the fore. However, they have not become central to psychotherapeutic practice, where an artificial dichotomy between the individual and the social context still exists.”*  
(Minuchin, 1974:9)

They have also been part of the basic assumptions of some therapeutic directions from their beginning. Psychodrama is one example. The philosopher and psychiatrist Jacob Levy Moreno stated this as a basic idea already in his first writings in 1914 (Moreno, 1914). Fritz Pearls incorporates the Gestalt psychology, and thereby the field theory from 1935, in his gestalt therapeutic practice from the beginning (Pearls, 1951).

Lewin distinguished between three perspectives on encounters. First there is your experience as first perspective on the encounter, then there is my experience as the second perspective on the encounter and finally the common experience and understanding of the encounter as the third perspective. Daniels (2012) presents his description of behavior (and the intersubjective field) as follows:

1. Behavior must be derived from a totality of coexisting facts
2. These coexisting facts make up a "dynamic field," which means that the state of any part of the field depends on every other part of it
3. Behavior depends on the present field rather than on the past or the future. "This is in contrast both to the belief of teleology that the future is the cause of behavior, and that of associationism that the past is the cause of behavior.

(Daniels, 2012)

(Read March, 19<sup>th</sup>. 2012)

### 2.3.5 Moreno and psychodrama

Jacob Levy Moreno was a psychiatrist and a philosopher. As mentioned above, he was the creator of psychodrama and sociometry, as well as one of the fathers of group psychotherapy. Psychodrama was developed in parallel with and building on some of the ideas coined by Lewin. In the early years of the development of the method (around 1915) Moreno lived in Vienna. He worked together with Buber for some years, and many of their ideas were presented in a magazine that they edited together, called "Daemon". Moreno is interesting for this study mainly because of his ideas relating to the encounter, the concept of tele and to the closely linked concepts of spontaneity and creativity. Like Buber, Moreno believed in the significant encounter as the essence of the healing process in psychotherapy. Moreno's significant encounter is very similar, if not equal to Stern's sequence of a now moment and a moment of meeting. Moreno's theory also includes ideas that are important for understanding the conditions that need to apply in order for a now moment (the crisis) to be followed by a moment of meeting. (Sometimes the opportunity of the moment is lost, sometimes the result is a more serious crisis.)

*Now moments carry a double danger. If not responded to and redirected towards another purpose, they can quickly lead to greater and more disruptive acting in. Additionally, they may provoke anxiety in the therapist, who responds by hiding behind technique which prevents the now moment from bearing much fruit. The acceptance of the now moment as not only a normal event in therapy, but also as a rare creative opportunity, changes the therapist's threshold for this kind of anxiety. This permits him or her to tolerate the situation with enough ease to be more authentic and find a response that is both well fitted to the specific situation and carries the therapist's personal signature.*

(Stern 2004:226)

Stern is aware of this double danger, but Moreno explicitly describes the characteristics of a meeting that are necessary or favorable for the now moment to turn into a moment of meeting, and change to be possible. The encounter in a Morenian sense, involves the

meeting of two or more, the ability to at least mentally reverse roles and the concept of tele. Tele is sometimes described as a meeting with two-way empathy.

The encounter is what Moreno calls a true or authentic meeting, a meeting where we see each other as we are, without projections. We both know where we stand ourselves, and we both know what is the perspective of the other. When we have the same view of what the encounter looks like from the different perspectives, we have what Moreno call "tele". Moreno's concept of "tele", Sterns reflections about the "intersubjective field" and Shotters concept of witness-thinking all concern the processes that take place when people respond and interact in the dialogical moment. The challenge with "tele" is that is hard to understand its content and can easily be misunderstood. As with most therapeutic theories that is not correctly understood, it can fail to help the process move forward and can increase the crisis in the therapeutic relation or even make the therapist blind for what really moves in the *within (dialogic)- thinking* (Shotter, 2004) or action.

Moreno believed that in a meeting of two a separate energy arises, a third component in the encounter or a surplus value beyond what each of the individuals represent by themselves. This is connected to his ideas about creativity, one of the propelling forces in human progress and part of the basis for the encounter. The other central – and related - concept is spontaneity. Moreno uses spontaneity in the original meaning of the word *sue sponte* (from Latin) meaning "out of free will". To link to Sterns concept of co-creativity we could say that co-creativity needs the free will and a direction driven by the desire or necessity to move on. In my understanding a limited spontaneity will lead to a stranded creativity and result in what Stern refers to as intersubjective anxiety.

As Stern, Moreno is also preoccupied with time and *kairos*. Moreno has developed methods for exploring the past or the future in the here and now, so that actual time becomes irrelevant and it is possible to enter *kairos*, the moment of something coming into being. Moreno made a major contribution to the humanistic relational field and his influence and on many different therapeutic directions is clear, including family therapy, gestalt therapy and other action therapies.



## 2.4 The field of family therapy

As mentioned above, the purpose of this section is to provide a context for my thesis, by looking at some of the main contributors and main ideas as they relate to my research question, outlining some of the controversies that are found. I will start by commenting on the work of Minuchin. Quite early he understood the idea of co-creation in the sense that we create each other. This is clear from his view of the therapist as a part of the system. By stating this he supports Watzlawick's ideas on communication and relation: "One cannot not communicate" (Watzlawick et.al., 1967). Every one of us will, at any time, affect the system we are a part of. Following the section about Minuchin is a brief subsection on social constructionism, before I go on to present some of the ideas of Michael White.

### 2.4.1 Minuchin - the therapist as a part of the system

There are links between the central ideas of this study and some of the important theoretical contributions that are generally recognized in the field of family therapy. One example is the way Lewin's thoughts are reflected in the work of Salvador Minuchin, one of the most influential therapists of our time.

*The third axiom is that when a therapist works with a patient or a patient family, his behavior becomes a part of the context. Therapist and family join to form a new, therapeutic system, and that system then governs the behavior of its members.*

*(Minuchin, 1974:9)*

Minuchin developed structural family therapy in the 70's. Briefly we can explain this direction as a method where the therapist joins or enters the family in order to understand invisible structures and rules that govern the systems (Minuchin, 1974). Minuchin based his work on the idea of the group in the sense that pathology is not in the individual but in the (family) system. He saw the value of the groups and understood how challenges within the system lie in the field created by everyone who is part of it. The approach in family therapy is different from that of the psychodynamic tradition, and was described by Minuchin in the following way:

*"The family therapist regards himself as an acting and reacting member of the therapeutic system. In order to join the family, he emphasizes the aspects of his personality and experience that are syntonic with the family's. But he also retains the freedom to be spontaneous in his experimental probes (...) Change is seen as occurring through the process of the therapist's*

*affiliation with the family and his restructuring of the family in a carefully planned way, so as to transform dysfunctional transactional patterns. If he has been able to affiliate with a family and feels the pressures of the family system, he does not need to guard against spontaneous responses, for those responses will probably be syntonic with that system. If they are not, they can be valuable as experimental probes.*  
(Minuchin, 1974:90-91)

From this perspective, with the therapist/leader as part of the system, Minuchin approach is consistent with Stern's, i.e. with the basic theoretical framework of my study. Like Stern, he focuses on creating change as a result of a critical moment. The intersubjective field is moved to another state by trying to bring solution to the crisis – together. This is also part of our common ground.

Minuchin strongly believed that the therapist always has the responsibility in a therapeutic relation. My view differs slightly from Minuchin's with respect to this. I believe that a therapist – or a group leader - should take the idea about being a part of the system a little further, take a different kind of responsibility by acknowledging the extent of the power related to being in the system and the possible effects. If I work with a family or other group, I am aware that I affect them and I want to make clear how I do it. The theoretical framework of this study is in accordance with Minuchin's ideas in several respects. Our views differ, however, when it comes to responsibility in a therapeutic relation.

Minuchin clearly stated that the responsibility belongs to the therapist. This is a contrast to the view of some of the social constructionists. The controversy would be less strong if the concept of responsibility was used in a more precise fashion. We need to distinguish between responsibility for different areas or tasks. The responsibility for changing, for going through the actual steps, belongs to the client. But the therapist has the main responsibility for creating favorable conditions. The therapist also has responsibility based on his knowledge his professional role – he is not the person seeking help. It is important to use the knowledge and also share relevant parts of it with the client. It is an essential part of the therapist's responsibility not to abuse the power of the in some ways necessarily asymmetrical relation. The concepts of symmetry and asymmetry must also be nuanced and linked to various parts of the situation/relationship. There will be an asymmetry in the relation with respect to the level of knowledge, professional insight and usually also the level of therapeutic experience. There will be an asymmetric relation if we consider level of

stress triggered by the topics that are in focus. But there should always be symmetry in the relation when it comes to respect and freedom of choice. These nuances are extremely important to be aware of when we discuss the role of the therapist.

We co-create together and are co-responsible for the field we are building together. By creating a symmetric relation with the other it does not mean I do not take responsibility for the therapeutic relation.

### **2.4.2 Social constructionism – Co-creating our reality**

The term "social constructionism" was created by the philosopher Gergen. There is no universally agreed upon definition, but the different definitions all rest on the basic idea of that man creates his reality in encounter with others. We do not all see the world as the same and our understanding of it depends our perspective and our interpretations, and knowledge is created in the encounter between two or more. This is in opposition to the mainstream thinking of objective observation. It also requires us to abandon the assumption that there is one truth. This is clearly in accordance with the theories of Stern, Buber and the others that this study builds upon. According to (Gergen 1985) we need to understand all human behavior through relations. Understanding an individual and being able to meet this person where he/she is (not where we think he/she should be) is not possible with an object–object relation, it requires a subject–subject relation. Considering knowledge as something that is created in the encounter between two or more and this is a way of creating symmetry in the relation of a therapist and a client or a group leader and a group member. With the idea that no one can describe the world objectively, we make sure that no one has the full power of definition in relation to reality. This will prevent the therapist/group leader from becoming the expert (Syrstad, 2008). From this point of view, phenomena that we tend to understand as something belonging to the individual are actually constructed socially and therefore need to be understood socially (Burr, 2003). Challenging situations occur in relations and that is the context in which they can be understood. From a social constructionist view a problem is not within a person, but between persons.

The interpretation of social constructionism that is sometimes found in the literature, with respect to responsibility and symmetry/asymmetry was mentioned above. As I see it, this view of (a)symmetry does not follow from the ideas related to creation of reality (each individual's internal representation of reality). If reality is something that is created in the relation with others, it gives one person the possibility to contribute to the others reality and consequently also to bring about a desired change. If we both construct reality, it gives me the chance to help you to construct your reality if you want me to. This also contributes to building what Moreno calls "tele" and the trust needed to create the context for "now moments" to transform to "moments of meeting".

I believe in the golden mean as I see there are dangers with both perspectives. A therapist/group leader can easily make the other irresponsible by taking over all responsibility in the relation; on the other hand a therapist /group leader needs to be aware of not harming the other by being irresponsible in the relation justified by the idea that the responsibility belongs to the other. Further on it is an ethical obligation for the therapist to use his knowledge when people in despair turns to him or her for help. Sometimes a not knowing position can be a curse; the content of the concept has to be properly understood. I strongly believe in having shared responsibility for what we create together.

### **2.4.3 White**

Michael White is a well-known theorist with a strong influence in the current field of family therapy. He was one of the creators of narrative therapy. Briefly narrative therapy holds that identity is created and shaped through narratives. Narrative therapy gives important insights about recovering and exploring a person's history and re-writing it in order to create positive changes in the client's life. However I believe it is of the utmost importance to interpret and use the ideas and the method properly in order to not get a schematic and distanced method. A famous quote from White states: "The person is not the problem, the problem is the problem" (White, 2000). It is important to separate the person and the problem to avoid the impression that there are no opportunities, that the problems are inextricably linked to the person with no hope for change. At the same time it is important to avoid too much distance, in the sense that the therapist and client explore the problem only from the sidelines, with no attention to the relational field between them. This also

poses the risk of the therapist becoming a non-person, infected by robotism and unaware of his own influence on the relation. By not being too distant we also secure that what is new can be integrated.

Over several years White created maps in order to give therapists a tool for investigation when entering the unknown. The maps do not have to be used, but they can be used. These maps are very valuable and show that it is possible to create tools that can be used for helping people re-write their stories or their life. It can be contradictory to have a map to enter a terrain that is in a very real sense unknown to everyone. We cannot possibly know if the map will be fit the terrain. Basically the map is based on assumptions built on basic ideas of the human psyche. This might mean that these tools do not necessarily work all the time and are highly dependent on the therapist. Also there is a risk of missing parts of the creative process if you rely too much on the map telling you what is there. Making sure the relation is the base for the therapeutic journey can counteract these risks.

"For me taking a journey into the unknown with a map in a hand always fills me with anticipation" (White, 2007:7) -This is interesting but there is a high risk of over-interpreting or of being left without any tools when the map and terrain do not fit together. Better than bringing a map into the terrain, is to bring knowledge about how to make maps, and then make maps together with the client. A detailed exploration of what is happening, like the one I present in this thesis, contributes to extending this important knowledge. With a thorough understanding of the process of change and the therapist's contribution, you can enter the field and make conscious choices, you can manage and customize your contribution and act adequately in the moment.

Like White I see the value of tools that the therapist can use when entering the unknown, but rather than providing a map I would like to provide tools for mapping the territory together with the client. Also, I focus on the effect of the therapist or group leader on the relation. This is not contradictory to Whites' thoughts about the importance of "maintaining a reflective perspective on what I do as a therapist"(White, 2007:6). It also fits well with White's ideas about creating maps that can be helpful in the therapeutic conversations (2007). This emphasizes the importance of the therapist's involvement in the relation and the creation of the field of change. White approached this field by sometimes bringing in

“outside witnesses” and using them in his eminent therapeutic technique “Shifting between the three stages of telling and retelling”. Briefly explained, the client first tells his story while an outside witness listens. The witness retells the story with his own words while the client listens. Then the client does a retelling of what the outsider witness has told. (There might even be a fourth stage where there is a process reflection). In a short time this tool can result in major changes for the client, who can very quickly experience acknowledgment, authentication and being mirrored in the eyes of the community (here the witness) (White, 2007).

It is interesting to observe that Minuchin seems to support my skepticism towards narrative therapy and the possible pitfalls associated with it, if the therapist is not being aware enough. Minuchin is reluctant to accept White’s ideas and raises the questions of how narrative therapy growing out of social constructionism can deal with the family and how the social constructionists can explain how the therapist can avoid bringing his own ideas into the narrative and thereby affecting the therapy (Minuchin, 1998). This is a risk we can avoid by joining in and creating maps together.

## **2.5 Conclusion/Final remarks**

This review of the theoretical landscape provides a context for my study and also shows the adequacy of using Stern, especially when combined with other theories drawn into the thesis. I have presented philosophic tradition that lie behind some of the central concepts of my research and also some of the relevant topics from family therapeutic theories.

In the sections above, the role of the therapist has been mentioned. The theories that constitute the framework for this study clearly acknowledge the therapist as a part of the system. Stern’s approach requires the therapist to be highly aware of his role and to use the relation to the client as part of the material for exploration. His role is not a neutral role, but a role that affects the field that is created in the relation. Minuchin recognizes this within the tradition of family therapy amongst others. He clearly meant that the therapist was a part of the system and also that the therapist had to be both honest in his intentions and share from his own experiences. To share from one’s own experiences is a recognized therapeutic step within some of the humanistic and phenomenological therapeutic

directions, e.g. gestalt, psychodrama, art and expression therapy. It adds to the intersubjective field not only in the sense of taking part in what goes on at a particular moment, but in the sense of entering the field with a higher degree of involvement. Often, sharing is not only considered as a therapeutic action but as a more respectful action that might obtain therapeutic results. The client or the family has given or offered something, and to share is the therapist's way of giving something back. The therapeutic aspect might be that client does not feel alone, does feel understood or feels he can rest in the therapist's recognition.

As we have seen, my approach includes many of the ideas from the systemic family therapy field. My study is an attempt to give the ideas about the role of the therapist/group leader a stronger foundation based on analysis of real situations. This is a general issue in the wider field of therapy. Marit Råbu describes the current situation as follows:

*A large amount of clinical literature and most case studies are based on the reflections from the therapist and how the same therapist interprets the conduct of the patient. Therefore the normative value of reflections may come to overshadow what is really going on, how it is handled through the interactional patterns, and how these two aspects combine.*  
(Råbu, 2011)

As an example of how the importance of studying psychotherapy as it actually unfolds is widely recognized, she mentions that is emphasized in the Task Force on Evidence-Based Practice (2006) of the American Psychological Association (APA). Her own thesis is based on material combining reflexive data from participants in psychotherapy with observational data from the therapeutic interaction. (Audio-recorded session)

More detailed knowledge, more concrete and detailed knowledge about possibilities and the power of our role, will make it possible to act in that role to the best interest of our clients or group members.

# 3 Method

## 3.1 Introduction

As presented in section 1.3 Research question, the focus of my investigation is as follows:

**“How can the group leader use words, body language, positioning and touch to create or handle now moments and turn them into moments of meeting?”**

The terms ‘now moment’ and ‘moment of meeting’ are part of Stern’s terminology, which is presented in chapter 2 Theory. Handling now moments well and turning them into moments of meeting provides optimal conditions for change to take place. In this study my focus is on concrete, observable aspects of the group leader’s contribution – language, physical position and the way closeness/distance is used, body language including glances and facial and also the powerful but potentially risky use of touch. I focus on two key relational aspects and three stages of the process. As a result, my overall research question translates into the following sub-questions:

- **How can the group leader use words, body language, positioning and touch to communicate authenticity?**
- **How can the group leader use words, body language, positioning and touch to create trust?**
- **How can the group leader use words, body language, positioning and touch to move the process ahead and extract information?**
- **How can the group leader use words, body language, positioning and touch to challenge while providing sufficient security?**
- **How can the group leader use words, body language, positioning and touch to facilitate change/healing, integration and closure?**

The current chapter starts with an overview of the methods I employ and a summary of the motivation for considering them to be adequate and appropriate for investigating these questions. I briefly present phenomenology and heuristics, then the process of collecting



and analyzing the data is described, before I go on to discuss some research ethical dilemmas. Finally I comment on the validity, reliability and generalization of my methodological approach.

## 3.2 Phenomenology and heuristics

The philosophical aspects of phenomenology were presented in chapter 2, Theory. In order to try to capture the moment in the healing encounter it is necessary to use both a transcendental and an existential phenomenology approach. A main question of phenomenology is: *What is the meaning, structure and essence of the lived experience of this phenomenon for this person or group of people (Patton, 2000: 106)*. One of the challenges in phenomenology is have sufficient insight into how human beings experience and understand the world. But this is not the only challenge:

*There are two implications of this perspective that are often confused in discussing qualitative methods. The first implication is what is important to know is what people experience and how they interpret the world. This is the subject matter, the focus, of phenomenological inquiry. The second implication is methodological. The only way for us to really understand what another person experiences it to experience the phenomenon as directly as possible for ourselves. (Patton 2002:106)*

The topic of experiencing the phenomenon as directly as possible for ourselves relates to the types of observation discussed in section 3.3, Observation.

Phenomenology as a theoretical framework supports a range of research approaches, varying with respect to the details of the investigation and the main focus of attention. What is common for these approaches is the focus on exploration of the experience and on transforming it into consciousness. Consciousness is the only access human beings have to the world (Patton, 2000:104). By expanding our perception we are able to increase the consciousness and gain new perspectives.

From a methodological point of view transforming experience into consciousness involves several steps, starting with preparation, going on to data collection, then transcription of material, coding data into themes based on the research question, and drawing conclusions regarding the phenomena based on these themes. My approach will be presented in detail with below, but briefly the steps for this project involved:

- establishing a group
- acquiring data in the form of vide videotaped material from the sessions along with notes of self-reflection written by both the participants and myself
- selecting situations to analyze in detail
- transcribing the selected situations
- analyzing the selected situations based on the sub-questions of my main research question

Chapter 2, Theory mentions Lewin's distinctions between the following three perspectives: Yours, the one and mine we co-experience. Consequently, the research method must be designed to capture information of these three types. The notes of self reflection that are part of my research material are important in this respect, along with the criteria for selecting encounters – ones that are mutually agreed to be significant. Chapter 2, Theory also mentions Lewin's understanding of the dynamic present field and the view of the therapist as part of the system, a view held also by Minuchin and others. In my in depth analysis of a set of encounters I show how the intersubjective field is shaped, moment by moment, based on observable contributions from the group members and the group leader.

Often, phenomenological research is concerned with how a set of people that does not include the researcher. This is the case even with researchers who are participating observers - they are not the focus of the research but choose to be participating observers in order to get a more immediate access to information about the experience that they study. Generally, observation is both an intervention into the lives of the observed and an intervention into the life of the observer, in a mutual process of influence and change (Dallos/Vetere, 2005:171). In my case, however, I am not only a participating observer, the research focuses on my actions and how they contribute to shaping the intersubjective field. Consequently my research cannot be purely phenomenological, but necessarily also to a certain extent heuristic.

The heuristic research method was developed by the psychologist Clark Moustakas. Directly translated from Greek this word means to find or to discover, and Moustakas chose this word to capture the processes he considered essential in his research on human

experiences (Moustakas 1990:9). Heuristic research can be looked at as a continuation of phenomenology – it adds an introspective component (Patton, 2002). As a heuristic researcher I am not only interested in the other ones experience of the phenomenon; I am also interested in my own experience and my influence of the other ones through my own experience. The introspection involves cognition as well as emotions.

Since I investigate what the group leader can do in order to create moments of meeting, it is natural to include information about how the group leader’s experiences the situation. Heuristic research on another group leader than myself would mean that I could only look at “the encounter” from a third position. Through a heuristic research and introspective analysis of the material, I can move deeper into the core of the encounter. The heuristic perspective entails an assumption about a clear connection between what is happening ‘out there’ as appearance and reality, and what goes on inside the researcher and the informants – in the form of reflection, emotions, consciousness and sensing experiences. Patton comments on the additional data made available through introspection in the following way:

*By making their own perceptions part of the data – a matter of training, discipline, and self-awareness – observers can arrive at a more comprehensive view of the setting being studied than if forced to rely entirely on secondhand reports through interviews. Finally, getting close to the people in a setting through firsthand experience permits the enquirer to draw on personal knowledge during the formal interpretation stage of analysis. Reflection and introspection are important parts of field research. The impressions and feelings of the observer become part of the data to be used in attempting to understand a setting and the people who inhabit it. The observer takes in information and forms impressions that go beyond what can be fully recorded in even the most detailed field notes.*  
(Patton, 2002:264)

According to Patton, the main question of the heuristic method is: “What is my experience of this phenomenon and the essential experience of the other one who also is experiencing this phenomenon intensively. “ (Patton, 2002:107) This is a contrast to phenomenology, where the process of descriptive analysis might mean that you lose the individual. With the heuristic method the individuals will be distinct through the analysis of data. Patton describes it elegantly in *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods: “Phenomenology ends with the essence of experience; heuristic retains the essence of the person in experience”* (Patton, 2002:109)

Heuristic analysis is also directed towards similarities in the experiences of the one who conducts the study and those on whom the study is carried out on. It localizes similarities, agreements and conformities. In addition it emphasizes introspection as a critical approach to the analytical process (Patton, 2002:110).

## **3.3 Observation**

### **3.3.1 Types of observation**

Through observation as a method, the researcher tries to achieve a holistic understanding of what is being observed. The essential idea is that the researcher goes “into the field” to observe the phenomenon in its natural state or in situ (Trochim 2006). It involves looking and listening very carefully in order to discover particular information about someone’s behavior (Langley, P. 1987). Observation gives the researcher the possibility to direct himself more towards relations, social interaction between people than towards individual experiences reports in interviews. Observation can be described as a process-oriented method. Not least the observation as a method gives the researcher the possibility to become conscious about his own role in the observation (Dalland 2007:181).

There are different participative roles the participant observer can use (Dallos/Vetere, 2005:166):

1. The complete participant
2. The participant as observer
3. The observer as participant
4. The complete observer

To be a complete observer (4 in the list above) is also described in the literature as practically impossible, unless all observation happens through recorded material, and unless the observer has not been in any kind of contact with the informants. The three other types are variations of direct observation. Patton highlights four advantages of direct observation (Patton, 2002:262): By participating in the situation yourself it is easier to understand the context. You get a firsthand experience and are not dependent on data colored by someone else’s choices and interpretations. Thirdly it is possible to see details that are so much part

of the culture (the understanding of the group) that they are hidden from those who normally participate in the situation. In addition, the observer experiences what the ones being observed normally would not be willing to share.

Type 3 in the list is an observing participant, i.e. mainly an observer who does not participate in the activities of the group; in this role the observer is detached from the group.

Type 2, the role as a participating observer is a demanding role, but one of the most common roles in a qualitative data collection. The role is characterized by relative involvement in the group and the conditions for having the role and its involvement will be clarified with the group (Dallos/Vetere, 2005).

*Observational activity is not wholly concealed, but observers often find the group members evaluate them on the basis of their group participation rather than on their status as an observer. The advantages include familiarity with a particular role within the group, with increased understanding of group processes from this more subjective and sympathetic position. (...) Disadvantages include limited time access to some private information, with more time and energy spent participating than observing (Dallos/Vetere, 2005:168)*

Patton writes that the only way to really understand the other ones experience of a phenomenon is to be as near the phenomenon as possible. Based on this he argues in favor of the type 2 role of participating observer.

*The only way for us to really know what another person experiences is to experience the phenomenon as directly as possible for ourselves. This leads to the importance of participant observation and in-depth interviewing. (Patton, 2002:106)*

Type 4, the complete participant is a demanding and, according to Liv Vedeler, a totally impossible role to take in a research situation, because the researcher will be so involved with the structure among the informants that it would complicate an appropriate observation.

*To be a complete participant in a research context may be a totally impossible role. Hammersley et.al (1983:94-95) describe well the problems that are involved in taking such a role. The most important is that the role implies huge limitations because the observer, as a full participant, will be so involved in existing social routines and expectations that it will be impossible to find productive ways to investigate the relations. Choosing to be a participating observer is a way of avoiding this conflict. (Vedeler, 2000:17) (My translation)*

While collecting data for the current project I was a participating observer (type 2) with a strong degree of participation related to the role of group leader, but also with a clear observational component both as an ongoing focus and as the sole focus while writing the notes of self reflection. Being a participating observer can have the disadvantage that more time is spent participating than observing. This is similar to the problem that Vedeler mentions as a possible total obstacle to the role of complete participant. In my case the risk of participation at the expense of observation is lowered significantly by the use of a video camera to capture the interaction between researcher and informants.

Apart from the methodological challenges, the role of participating observer raises questions related to the validity of the research. An approach like mine, where I am part of a major percentage of the interaction that is analyzed raises particular challenges. This is addressed in section 3.6.2, The researcher as informant.

## **3.4 Data collection**

### **3.4.1 The group**

The fieldwork was carried out in a self-development group with six participants and me as a group leader. The participants met for two afternoon sessions of 3 hours each and for one weekend of total of 17 ½ hours. As the group was to be recorded videotaped, the project (including the letter of invitation) had to be approved by the Norwegian Regional Committees for Medical and Health Research Ethics (REC).

The participants were selected from students and former students at the Norsk Psykodrama Institutt (Norwegian Psychodrama Institute). This means that all the potential participants were trained in or in the process of receiving training in psychodrama and group psychotherapy. The students come to the institute from a background of health studies, pedagogy or organizations- and management development. The invitation was distributed using the institute's mailing list; no one was contacted in any other way until they expressed their interest by registration. The participants were selected on a first come, first served basis from those who responded to the invitation. When the informants had signed up for the group, they received a form of agreement in two copies together with an accompanying

letter (Appendix C). At every stage of the process it was made clear that participation in the study was voluntary and it was possible to withdraw from the study at any time.

In advance the participants were informed that they could choose their own themes to explore and that I wanted to let the encounters be created from what we all brought with us to each session. With this starting point we left the field to organize itself according to what the group wanted to work on. The participants were informed that we would use a systemic theoretical, family therapeutic, psychodramatic and sociometric approach.

### **3.4.2 Video material**

The group was filmed with two cameras. One filmed the group as a whole and the other focused on me and was placed much closer. The camera that focused on me, was removable, and at one point I discovered that one of the group members had taken it in order for the camera to be close to an encounter that was taking place on the floor. I did not interrupt this action and let the participant continue. Apart from this incident the cameras were all my responsibility – setup and other technicalities, recharging, changing of tapes etc. The video material was handled according to the guidelines of Norwegian Regional Committees for Medical and Health Research Ethics (REC) and guidelines from Norwegian Social Science Data Services.

### **3.4.3 Notes of self-reflection**

Both the group participants and I wrote notes of self-reflection at several times during and after the sessions. As far as possible, periods of note writing during the sessions were inserted just before a break or after a natural conclusion to some work that had been carried out, in order to capture essential information but not interrupt the process.

The notes describe moments that stand out in some way, moments that affected us, encounters that felt significant in the sense of creating a possible room of change, encounters where the participants experienced an expansion of consciousness or where they got an insight, etc. Some of these moments involve the whole group, some involve the group leader and a member and some take place between participants. Through the notes I get access to each participant's perspective on what I can observe in the video material.

Even if the participants received some guidelines about what they could reflect upon it was emphasized that they were free to make their own choices. They were encouraged to pay attention to any moments, encounters or incidents that inspired them or created a sense of 'waking up'. A moment with high intensity that makes them feel different in the here and now.

Notice if you during the study perceive

Moments

Encounters

Incidents

Which inspire you or where you experience that you awake

1. Is there a situation or encounter in relation to the group, group participants or group leader, which becomes particularly clear to you? Describe the situation generally and try if you also can describe how you experience the essence of the situation (the heart).
2. Reflect in free float modus – diary style. This part will be an ongoing document for you until we are finished. This can also be opened again after we are finished and be supplemented with new thoughts or feelings on what you/we have experienced together.

The informants were also informed that they were free to go back to and even edit their notes of self-reflection in order to reflect further or expand the notes.

### **3.5 Data analysis**

To answer my research question, it is necessary to identify the significant moments of encounter and look at them in detail. I focus mainly on encounters registered by both one or more participants and me, a choice based on considerations described in chapter 2, Theory. The encounters are selected based on the notes of self-reflection and identified in the video material, then each encounter is described in detail. In the detailed presentation there are parallel descriptions corresponding to the videotaping of the encounters with two cameras: One focuses on the group, one focuses on the group leader. Along with each description is a set of comments that represent a preliminary interpretation. Language, body language, physical distance will all be taken into account in the analysis, as well as my own experience of the phenomenological.



Based on analysis of several encounters and moments, of the type that creates the sense of the encounter, I want to see if it is possible to identify any basic moments with shared characteristics or patterns. Discovering such shared characteristics will serve to increase our understanding of what a therapist or a group/team leader can do in order to create these rooms of change.

As mentioned above, the encounters that I study in detail were selected by finding the encounters that were reported in the notes of self-reflection and assigning them scores on the basis of numbers of reports. In the process of counting the majority I have not taken into account my own perception of important encounter. I chose this in order to strengthen my objectivity. It was a step that offset the problems of examining myself. There were many encounters with high score. The criteria that was followed as well was the wish of the encounters being on different sessions and days with three different informants and three different topics.

My format for the detailed transcription of an encounter is a table with the following rows and columns:

	<b>Description/ observation of the encounter</b>	<b>Interpretation/ Analysis of the group member(s)</b>	<b>Description/ observation of the group leader</b>	<b>Interpretation/ Analysis of the group leader</b>
<b>Micro events introducing the encounter</b>				
<b>"Now moment" or small crisis/challenge</b>				
<b>"Moment of meeting"</b>				
<b>Acknowledgement of healing/change</b>				

More comments on the content of each row or column can be found at the beginning of chapter 4, Analysis. I introduce each table with a brief running text summary of the situation. A more detailed running text commentary/interpretation is found in Appendix D.

the tables the descriptions/observations of the group leader are all numbered for ease of reference. In the second phase of the analysis I go through the transcriptions of the encounters from the point of view of each of my research sub-question. This is the topic of chapter 5, Observations. The generalizations and of observations relating to each sub-question form the basis of a summary relating to my overall research question regarding the contribution of the group leader to creating or handling now moments and turning them into moments of meeting.

## **3.6 Research ethical dilemmas**

### **3.6.1 General issues**

The project was presented The Norwegian Regional Committees for Medical and Health Research Ethics (REC), and Norwegian Social Science Data Services and approved. The research ethical guidelines recommended are thus followed. The informants received information about the nature of the study before they accepted to join the group. I therefore can confirm that the requirement about voluntariness on studies like this was fulfilled. One challenge was however that it was not possible to join the group and not participate in the study. This was because the group was videotaped and it is not possible to exclude individuals from the film. However, each participant was informed that it was possible to withdraw from the group during the study. The video material with the person would not be deleted, but neither would it be emphasized in the study. The data were made anonymous in the transcribing process, and would not be able to trace back to the persons in the group when the data was published. In that way the privacy protection was taken care of. The video material was stored locked up and deleted on the given date. No one wanted to withdraw neither before nor after start from the group.

To be videotaped might be stressful, especially in the beginning, but experience has shown that the stress will diminish and usually the consciousness around being filmed will not be particularly high during the study. None of the informants have later wanted to withdraw from the study and nobody has mentioned the camera as something they experienced as an obstacle. It was informed that there was no benefits by participating in the study and those

preliminary results would be presented to them if they wanted. All invitations and descriptions included information about anonymity. All participants are anonymous in the analysis chapters and can only be identified by themselves and the other group member. The names have been changed and no encounters have been presented that specifically can identify a person.

### 3.6.2 The researcher as informant

To carry out research on oneself is basically quite untraditional, and there are many objections against it. The objections are often about lack of objectivity distorting the research results. The extent to which one can rely on the results and conclusions of the research depends both how competent and trained the observer is in collecting data and how aware the observer is regarding his own behavior and weakness. These factors determine the degree to which the observer bias can be neutralized (Vedeler, 2000:16)

Dallos and Vetere mention methodological challenges as well as questions about ethical perspectives:

*When clinicians choose to conduct research with their own clients, or within their own organization, they may face more externally expressed doubts about the validity of their research of their credibility as researchers...Thus researching from the 'insider' perspective raises ethical and methodological issues. Anonymity in reporting the study findings needs special attention (Dallos/Vetere, 2005:173)*

Due to the controversial nature of this study, I brought this topic up with REC, along with questions related to the video taping etc. They expressed some initial skepticism, but after being provided with a description of my research approach and my and strategy concerning the potential risks, they accepted my project proposal.

Dallos and Vetere also mention ethical problems with regard to anonymity and the participants' voluntariness in such studies. Ethical problems in my study are taken care of by adhering to guidelines from the Norwegian Regional Committees for Medical and Health Research Ethics (REC) and guidelines from Norwegian Social Science Data Services. I have also been careful not to include any descriptions in my presentation of the material that could serve to identify the group members to anyone outside the group.

I am well aware of the challenge of being both a researcher and an informant, the dual role means two agendas: Being a group leader and looking at how I function as a group leader in relation to the encounter.

The double role could also potentially confuse the group members. After the last group session, it was important for me to find out whether the informants considered me as a student or a group leader. I sent out a request to the informants with the following questions:

1. During the group, did you think about me as a student or as a group leader/therapist?
2. How did this influence on you in the group? What or where was your focus?

The feedback was that the focus was on the group and on me as a therapist/group leader. One person was at one moment concerned with my methodological tools, but otherwise preoccupied with the group processes and she also considered me as a therapist/group leader. Nobody considered me as student, but several mentioned that while reviewing the formalities, they looked at me as a researcher.

An objection regarding this study was that I as a group would get lost in my own material and among other things define when a healing encounter had taken place and thus the informants own experience would not be given the same importance as mine. Two ways of reducing the risk of this are the inclusion of notes of self-reflection from the participants, as well as the exclusion of my own notes from the choice of encounters to analyze in detail.

The use of videotaped material is also an important insurance – any interpretations that I make have been carefully checked against the videos, and in the transcription of the material I have been careful to separate observation from introspection and interpretation. The way my research question has been formulated is also important. The focus is on easily observable aspects of the communication - words, body language, position and touch – all of which can be verified by checking the video material. With regard to the video material, the following quote from Wadel is interesting:

*(...)Such gradual discoveries while being your own informant, often have to do with interaction that is governed by "rules" that are unwritten, implicit and unspoken. Informants who know the rules, therefore find it difficult to explain them and to teach them to others. (Gullestad 1958:16 referred by Wadel, C: p.64) The rule becomes invisible. (Wadel, C p64) (Own translation)*

The types of interaction that he refers to, and indeed many aspects of interaction that we have little consciousness about, become significantly easier to observe and identify with the degree of distance that the video material introduces. When researching oneself, this is a significant advantage and also an important way of reducing the problems related to objectivity.

### **3.7 Validity, reliability and generalization of my methodological approach**

The question of validity is more complex with respect to qualitative research than to quantitative, and associated with some controversy. Nevertheless, it is important to consider the validity of the research. Quite often qualitative research is based on interviews, and validity has to be considered in light of the fact that the data is presented via retrospective recall and susceptible to recall bias and distortion associated with reconstruction of experiences by retelling. With the current study, which is mainly based on videotaped material, this is considerably less problematic. Triangulation of sources through inclusion of notes of self-reflection as part of the data also contributes to increasing the validity. The notes of self-reflection were written either shortly after or during the sessions, to minimize the distortion associated with a time lapse.

The use of a video camera could have resulted in self-consciousness among the participants that affected the data. As mentioned above, this was checked with the participants and they reported that it was not an obstacle. Generally any effect is also reported to diminish rapidly, and the choice of encounters from various points during the sequence of sessions also helps to minimize potential effects of the cameras.

Selection of encounters from different days and involving different participants is another aspect of ensuring valid data. Excluding the notes of self-reflection of the group leader from the process of selecting encounters is another. Finally the topic that were explored in the sessions were not decided in advance, the participants received explicit instructions that they could bring up their own topics. Alternatively the focus of the work would be topics arising in the course of the sessions.

The transcriptions/descriptions of the encounters are rich in details of the observations, including quotes or paraphrases of what was said. This means that the reader, to a considerable degree, can make his own assessments of any interpretations that are offered.

Demonstrating reliability in qualitative research can be a challenge. But critical reflection on the question of whether using a particular method or a type of data source for investigating the research topic is important in any type of research, qualitative or quantitative. With respect to repeatability, the current study cannot be replicated in a strict sense of repeatable observation. But replication of the interpretation is possible. Reliability is also increased by applying the method to different encounters and by designing the methods to isolate description from interpretation and to separate focus on the group from focus on the group leader, in order to ensure an ongoing consciousness with respect to data vs. researcher subjectivity.

Generalizability concerns whether a study increases understanding beyond the particular and idiosyncratic. In quantitative research, statistics is usually the basis of generalizability. The researcher carefully selects a sample that is representative for a population. Based on this, the findings are assumed to apply to the population as a whole. In a qualitative study like mine, statistics is not applicable; the aim was to select participants for their ability to provide information about the area under investigation. By doing this, generalizability increases and the study has potential for contributing to theory development. It is reasonable to assume that observations from the current research - especially since it involves aspects of communication that is not necessarily limited to a particular type of situation - represents knowledge that applies to other cases as well. I.e. we have generalizability to understanding of a similar class of phenomena, which is what generalization is normally about in qualitative research.

# 4 Analysis

## 4.1 Notation and presentation conventions

In this chapter I present three encounters that led to some increased awareness of the participants and where a change took place. Group members are identified by their initials to preserve space. GL refers to the group leader, where necessary, i.e. outside the columns explicitly dedicated to observations or interpretations of him.

What people say is represented in two different ways:

X: statement            the essence of the statement

X: "statement"        the literal statement

Numbering of the statements made by the group leader are used for referring back to the tables from sections in chapter 5, Observations. E1:1 will refer to Encounter 1 and statement 1.

### 4.1.1 The table rows and columns

#### **Micro events introducing the encounter**

For the GL who wants to create a possibility for change together with a group member, it is important to be able to recognize that something is about to happen. He needs signs and use them. A central question is if it is possible to actually know in advance. Describing the events leading up to an encounter, is a prerequisite for answering this question.

#### **"Now moment" or small crisis/challenge**

The "now moments" can arise in the relation between GL and participants or between participants. They are characterized by increased anxiety in the people involved. This is a tension that arises when the fixed frames and the individual's border are challenged. This moment that feels like a small crisis in the relation between the GL and the participant is fatal in the process of creating the room of change where increased awareness or healing can take place. These are critical moments that need to be addressed and looked into by all parties in order to create change and to keep and build trust in the relation. In many ways we can say that by addressing these moments we acknowledge and accept the tension that

has arisen in the relation or relations in the group and the trust it can create in the encounter is necessary in order to investigate this present moment.

From my perspective, having the focus on the role of the GL, it is very important to observe these moments and see if and how the GL handled them. If he handled them, what did he actually do? What did he do when it worked but also when it did not work?

### **“Moment of meeting”**

The “moment of meeting” is basically the moment where change can take place. Wilber describes this metaphorically as the moment we dive into eternity, into the world of the unborn and the unknown. This means also the moment we can get out of our rigid behaviour and take different perspectives in order to get a broader role repertoire. It is an adequate response to the crisis that arises. This is the moment of resolution.

### **Acknowledgement of healing/change**

Here is where I will describe the healing or change that has taken place. This will be described not only from the perspective of the group participants involved but also out of observation and statement from the participants. Here the actions taken or not taken by the GL will be proven or not.

### **Description/observation of the encounter**

This column simply describes phenomenological what happens just before the encounter. This is pure observation and though and I am fully aware that though I am trying to tell what happens objectively, there is a chance that interpretation takes place.

### **Description/analysis of the group member(s)**

Here I present my understanding and interpretations of the group member(s) involved in the encounter.

### **Description/observation of the group leader**

Here I will describe what I as the group leader say, do or don't do in order to make clear and concretize the actions taken.

### **Interpretation/Analysis of the group leader**

Here I will interpret and analyze the actions I as the GL make. Introspection allows me to



include in the analysis my motivation for acting - or not acting. Thoughts, feelings and choices based on my interpretations can be included, everything that contributes to a better understanding of who I am as a GL.

## 4.2 Encounter 1- Indelicate parts of me

This encounter is about Anne coming in contact with her need of showing that she is more than a “perfect” woman. She is so tired of doing and saying everything so correctly and being so proper. The group leader recognizes her body language and asks her to express in words what is going on. This invitation leads her to her exploration of some ugly sides of her. A transformation of the shame she felt at one point was crucial in the increasing of her awareness and the acceptance of being a woman with many sides. By accepting the “ugly” side instead of fighting it, the ugliness was reduced to something she could cope with and handle. (For a more exhaustive description/interpretation see Appendix D.)

	Description/observation of the encounter	Interpretation/Analysis of the group member(s)	Description/observation of the group-leader	Interpretation/Analysis of the group-leader
<b>Micro events introducing the encounter</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• M: In groups of three girls I normally feel like I am on the outside.</li> <li>• M: It is important to know about this danger related to groups of three girls. This is a little shameful to admit.</li> <li>• A: I have never had girlfriends.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• She looks “alone”</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sits restlessly, moving his body all the time.</li> <li>2. Crosses arms and legs</li> <li>3. Leans his head on hand.</li> <li>4. Bites his fingers</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is bored/uninterested in the discussion between the group members</li> <li>• Is uncertain about how to handle the situation</li> <li>• Tries to hide his lack of interest and his uncertainty by looking interested and keeping his body alive</li> <li>• Reveals lack of involvement by crossing his arms and legs; he has closed off for a moment</li> </ul>
<b>“Now moment” or</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• H: Hard to understand the theme.</li> </ul>			

<p><b>small crisis/challenge</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• H: It is probably me who has not understood this.</li> <li>• A stretches her arms up in the air asking: Can we do something soon?</li> <li>• D: We have done a lot already</li> <li>• A: Only lots of words</li> <li>• A: "I would like to enter something"</li> <li>• A describes a feeling of unrest, but no specific needs. "I want someone to explore something about him or her."</li> <li>• A shows her unrest with her body. She moves her upper chest and arms from side to side.</li> <li>• A: "I am longing for some</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• H: Blames herself</li> <li>• A brings focus back to herself</li> <li>• D protest? Defence?</li> <li>• A: insists/argues</li> <li>• Laughs a little nervous.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. GL Confirms H.</li> <li>6. GL: There are many possible ways of relating to groups of girls.</li> <li>7. GL: D, you look more present now.</li> <li>8. GL: asks A what she would like to do.</li> <li>9. GL: What would you like to enter?</li> <li>10. For the first time in long time he sits up and slightly leans</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seems like he wakes up when Anna expresses her needs.</li> <li>• Pulls his hair.</li> <li>• Group-leader might feel slightly criticized here.</li> </ul>
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	<p>creativity in my life".</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A: "I did not think about entering the topic".</li> <li>• A: "I feel a lot when I tell D".</li> <li>• A: She thinks: Oh so you are the one that wants to do something but doesn't dare to take the space.</li> <li>• A: "I was not aware of this. A lot of strange things happens inside of me"</li> <li>• A: "Suddenly I am taking a lot of space again".</li> <li>• A: "I get provoked when you say that. I don't know what is needed to be done, but I can do something".</li> <li>• A accepts the challenge and wants to explore what needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gets silent</li> <li>• A: Sighs and seems a little ashamed.</li> </ul>	<p>towards Anna and mirrors her body language.</p> <p>11. GL: But you do not want to explore?</p> <p>12. GL: Tell D that about your longing. How do you feel when telling D?</p> <p>13. GL: What do you see in her face (D) when you say this? What do you think she thinks about you?</p> <p>14. GL: How does it feel to say this?</p> <p>15. GL: What happens?</p> <p>16. GL: I hear you say that you want something to happen but you are not willing to</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sees a chance to get the group moving. Has not been aware that everything that has happened so far was a necessary step towards this point that gives him the chance to break out of the locked intersubjective field. Mirroring A 'breaks' his feeling of being blocked.</li> <li>• He is exploring Anne's comments about wanting to do something. Follow her in her unpacking of the longing by taking what she is saying and asking questions to make the story thicker.</li> <li>• Exploring if there is a possibility to grasp this moment and pass it over to a "moment of meeting".</li> <li>• He connects A to D so that she can get a response of what she is playing out, and thereby exploring his hunch that she has a need to explore her longing but do not dare to stand up for herself.</li> </ul>
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	<p>to be done. Explore the space she takes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A: "I am really angry and tired of everything these days".</li> <li>• A starts laughing</li> <li>• A holds her own thumbs.</li> <li>• A: "This is my way of holding myself. It has a little anxiety in it as well".</li> <li>• A: "I civilise myself by holding my thumb"s.</li> <li>• A: "I don't feel like saying that".</li> <li>• A's hands spread out.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Her voice gets harder and she talks faster. She feels provoked and gets lots of energy.</li> </ul>	<p>contribute. It sounds like you want to be entertained?</p> <p>17. GL: Is this a creativity you would like to explore?  18. GL: Can you show us all the feelings inside of you? As a statue or a movement?  19. Raises his arms partly, open his hands and starts sliding towards her while talking with a soft voice.</p> <p>20. Challenges her to explore the space she takes and see what is in there.  21. GL: How angry are you?  22. Making her aware of her thumbs.  23. He mirrors her again.</p> <p>24. GL: Can we do an</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By sliding he challenges her on taking space and not wanting to have it and by using the soft voice and showing his hands that he has "no arms" he invites her to move over to the "moment of meeting"</li> <li>• He makes her aware of the body language and what the body says.</li> <li>• Provokes her by saying: "I</li> </ul>
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			<p>experiment? Can you say: I am a civilised woman" while you hold your thumbs?</p> <p>25. Makes her aware of her hands spreading and asks her what the hands would say if they had words.</p>	<p>definitely do not want to show you that I am civilised as long as you notice</p>
<p><b>"Moment of meeting"</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A:"I don't only want to be civilised. I have other parts in me".</li> <li>• A turns to M and say:"I don't want to say I am a civilised woman".</li> <li>• M:"But you are".</li> <li>• A: But. I want to be something more. I want to be uncivilized as well.</li> <li>• A walks around as a civilised woman.</li> <li>• A walks around to the group members making ugly noises and body movements to show her uncivilised parts.</li> <li>• A reaches M</li> <li>• A walks back slowly.</li> <li>• A:"Shame, I have shown too much. Crossed a border. I</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A gets silent and stiff</li> </ul>	<p>26. GL: Tell it someone .</p> <p>27. GL: Show us how you are civilised.</p> <p>28. GL: Show us what you want to be as well. Uncivilised.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connects her to the group and let her get a response.</li> </ul>

	<p>showed too much ugliness. Indelicate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A: "I am an indelicate woman".</li> <li>• A: "I have terrible palpitation".</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A meets M's eyes and becomes very shy and embarrassed.</li> </ul>	<p>29. GL: That is ok. Stay with the shame for a moment.</p> <p>30. GL: Indelicate? How does it feel to say it"?</p> <p>31. Walks towards her very slowly and takes her body language without mirroring it. More like doubling.</p> <p>32. GL: Give your heart a voice. What does it say?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wants to calm her down and support her and at the same time let her feel the shame so she can explore what it is all about.</li> </ul>
<b>Acknowledgement of healing/change</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A: "My heart does not have any words".</li> <li>• A embraces herself</li> <li>• A agrees to him coming closer.</li> <li>• A: "I am sad but safe enough".</li> <li>• A: "I am a little bothered and shy".</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• She protects herself</li> </ul>	<p>33. GL: Can you show us?</p> <p>34. Ask her to keep eye contact if possible while she talks and he moves towards her slowly. Ask for permission to come closer to her.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GL makes sure they have contact while she feels the shame and experience the closeness and acceptance. She can whenever break the connection.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A: "I withdraw because I have a feeling that I have done something I should not have done".</li> <li>• A accepts</li> <li>• A: (to GL): "What do you want"?</li> <li>• M: You were a little indelicate but also exciting".</li> <li>• A: "I feel more relaxed. I am surprised people don't leave me here because I am indelicate.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Looks like she gets afraid when he comes very close to her, but she accepts his closeness.</li> <li>• A breathes loudly and sighs like in a release.</li> <li>• A feels acceptance and release.</li> </ul>	<p>35. Does heart palpitation increase or decrease?</p> <p>36. Ask for permission to be close to her indelicacy.</p> <p>37. GL: Nothing. Just be with you when you feel indelicate. Maybe I can understand something about why I don't sense the indelicacy.</p> <p>38. GL: " How do you feel when you hear M say this"?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comes closer to her. She accepts his closeness and is surprised that people do not want her to leave because she is indelicate. She feels accepted.</li> </ul>
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### 4.3 Encounter 2- The beauty of the bulimic woman

This encounter is triggered by some of the group members mentioning the beauty and style of Lisa. Her reaction is instant feelings of stiffness and malaise and the remark awakens a long history of bulimia and anorexia and her journey towards finding her inner beauty. This is a very short encounter that later became the inspiration for a long process for her about the feeling of being raped by life itself. (For a more exhaustive description/interpretation see Appendix D.)

Right before this starts, Diana enters the room with quite extravagant clothing filled with holes, and socks that do not match.

	Description/observation of the encounter	Interpretation/Analysis of the group member(s)	Description/observation of the group-leader	Interpretation/Analysis of the group-leader
<b>Micro events introducing the encounter</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• S asks GL what he is thinking about. She sees him looking at D's clothes.</li> <li>• General discussion on D's clothing.</li> <li>• L: "I wonder how it is to be dressed so you get attention when you walk down the street"?</li> <li>• S: "I am surprised to hear that, because I feel you dress up so you get attention."</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Everybody notice D's outfit but nobody comments until S asks GL and he says something about it. The group is a very accepting group, or wants to be.</li> <li>• Group laughs politely</li> <li>• Looks surprised</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Leans back on chair and smiles.</li> <li>2. Smiles</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Starts some small talk just to let the group members connect and looks relaxed.</li> <li>• Grabs the chance to start to focus the small talk by making the choices we make in our appearance. What do we choose to signal?</li> <li>• Looks like he just observes to see if something will happen and what.</li> </ul>

<p><b>"Now moment" or small crisis/challenge</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• L turns head towards S, mouth open and says: "Oh really"?</li> <li>• S: Yes it looks like you spend a lot of time and think about what you wear and how you dress. Interesting.</li> <li>• L with mouth open: Uhu?</li> <li>• L starts to laugh</li> <li>• S: "You, you always look – she looks up and stops herself- then say: I look like I have just grabbed some clothes in the morning. You always look so beautiful".</li>   <li>• L: Hmm</li>   <li>• L: Yes, I heard.</li> <li>• L: I need colours to... What takes time is to choose colours".</li>   <li>• L bends forward and hides her face at the same time.</li> <li>• L: "I suddenly felt a little shy and embarrassed".</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• S looks afraid of not having made herself clear. She is actually giving a compliment.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. GL to L: How was it to hear this?</li>   <li>4. GL: Did you hear what she said?</li>   <li>5. GL to L: What happened right now?</li> </ol>	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• L: Shakes her head and says: No</li> <li>• L puts her fingers up to her mouth and starts clearing her throat.</li> <li>• L is totally still both in body and language</li> <li>• L: “Thank you. Can I put it that way”?</li> <li>• L: “I take it more as criticism. As if I am very vain”.</li> <li>• S: Looking up to the ceiling: No. I recognize that there is some effort in looking like this, but I see you have a sense of aesthetics. It is not superficial.</li> <li>• L: Hearing this almost paralyzes me.</li> <li>• L: I get stiff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• L looks at S as if S has turned into an alien</li> <li>• L laughs</li> <li>• L laughs again like when she does not know what to say.</li> <li>• She crosses her legs up on the chair and looks like if she has done something wrong.</li> <li>• L is obviously very puzzled.</li> <li>• Long silence</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. GL: Didn’t you know that you are beautiful?</li> <li>7. GL: Some people think you are beautiful.</li> <li>8. He crosses his legs and leans forward.</li> <li>9. Starts laughing</li> <li>10. GL: Yes. Those are your words. And how does it feel to hear this?</li> <li>11. Asks S if this is what she says?</li> <li>12. Leans forward and fold his hands.</li> <li>13. GL: You get paralyzed? Does your body drop or do you get stiff?</li> <li>14. GL: Stiff like when somebody is after you to “take you”?</li> <li>15. GL: Like if you have done something wrong?</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognises the movements in L and catches the moment in order find out if there is something to explore in her movement</li> <li>• GL challenges L on her body language and asks her to give her body a language. To translate the analogue to digital language.</li> <li>• He senses some uncomfortable in L and to explore it. On purpose he repeats with a strong firm almost a little strict voice that some people thinks she is beautiful. He makes a</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• L: Yes</li>   <li>• L: Yes</li>   <li>• L: I am trying to find some intellectual wise thing to say, but I do not find any words.</li>   <li>• L: "Yes".</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Laughs a little nervously and at the same time starts rubbing her knee.</li> </ul>	<p>16. Makes grabbing movement with his hand.</p> <p>17. GL: It feels like you are getting stiffer and stiffer. Are you?</p> <p>18. GL: I can sense it.</p> <p>19. GL: That is good. Can you look at me and feel your stiffness at the same time? What happens then? Don't stop looking at me. Do you get more stiff or less or is it the same?</p> <p>20. GL: You don't find words now?</p> <p>21. Accepts by saying it is ok not to have words.</p> <p>22. GL: Is it possible to describe these feelings?</p> <p>23. GL: Why later?</p>	<p>statement out of it so to make it very overt to everybody in the group and see what L would like to do with it.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involves S here on purpose in order for L to be able to check out if she is right or of there are projections.</li>   <li>• Sees her mimic's stops and her breathing almost stop as well, making her a mummy. He also makes his body stiffer and holds the energy as if he is mirroring</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Silence...</li> <li>• L shakes her head as in no</li> <li>• L: "I have very strange feelings right now. Some are cute, some are ugly, some feelings want me to talk and some wants me to talk and not be here at the same time. Like if I should handle this later. Like: "Thanks, but I will feel it later"".</li> <li>• L: "I will be alone then, so that no one will see the wave in me". (She takes her arm up and down)</li> <li>• L: "You might see all my voices. The ugly, the false,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• She almost curls a little like if she has been bad and makes little noises I interpret as yes.</li> </ul>	<p>24. GL: What would happen if we saw your waves?</p> <p>25. GL: Ok. So the voices are disturbing.</p> <p>26. Ask D: Do you think she is good looking or beautiful?</p> <p>27. GL: Do you think she is gorgeous even when you know she has been bulimic, anorectic, fat and so on?</p>	<p>her. It looks like if his body that normally talks a lot stops for some time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With words he is telling her that he recognises her and see she is struggling with the words. By accepting the "no words" he joins her and creates a common platform with her where they both can be. He starts to build trust by telling her: "I can be with you even if you do not have any words".</li> </ul>
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	<p>the bulimic, and the anorectic – you would see it all. If you had heard all my voices you would not have said what you say”.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• S: “Sad to hear that there is not just one voice that say take the compliment, - just that and noting more. I can recognize some”.</li> <li>• L: “All these voices are the reason I cannot take the compliment”.</li> <li>• D: “Yes, I think she is gorgeous”.</li> <li>• D: “Yes, it does not change anything. The fact she has lived a life makes her more beautiful. Beautiful is not Barbie look alike”.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• S has not moved at all for a very long time. It looks like if she is holding her breath. Like if she recognises what L says.</li> <li>• S moves her body a lot on the chair and gesticulates with her hands. The rest of</li> </ul>	<p>28. Looks at L and repeats D’s comment: “You have lived”.</p> <p>29. GL: “Can we do a little experiment? It will only take a few seconds”.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Looks very concentrated like he is trying to understand.</li> <li>• He brings in the group. There is always a chance that when you ask someone a question you will get the answer you really were not hoping for. In this case, L looks good. She is a fine woman with class and he is sure no one would say she was ugly. The only one thinking she is ugly is she. He takes a chance and connects her to the power of the group.</li> </ul>
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		the group looks like mummies.		
<b>"Moment of meeting"</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• L: "Oh shit. Ok."</li> <li>• L accepts the line and changes it to: "I am a bulimic, anorectic woman who has done a lot of disgusting ugly things to herself, and I, has found the beauty in me".</li> <li>• Looks at GL into the eyes.</li> <li>• D laughs joyfully.</li> <li>• D: (to L) "Breathe".</li> <li>• L: "It was like a dream that came true.</li> <li>• L: "Like if I am Cinderella in two dimensions. Me from the past and me from now. Both are present and both are one.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• She says the line almost without breathing.</li> <li>• L starts breathing like if she has been holding her breath and laughs a little nervous laughter.</li> <li>• Groups is touched and almost spellbound. They sense her experience.</li> <li>• Looks puzzled</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GL to L: Can you say I am a bulimic, anorectic, ugly and beautiful woman? Just to taste how it is to say it.</li> </ul> <p>30. GL: How was it to say it? 31. GL: I was very touched when you said it.</p> <p>32. GL: Ok, so when you say it, is it two realities that take</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GL challenges L by putting her story together in one grim line, but without adding anything that has not been said by L. At one point he can be perceived as a hard, cold and ruthless man. He takes full risk here that he will insult her or sound so brutal that she will close herself up. At the same time he seems to have control. He knows that she knows that he does not want to harm her and that he cares for her in this situation. He shows her respect by letting her create her own way. He also shows her respect with the body language by being silent and tilting his head down while looking at her and he shows her compassion by telling and showing her that she moves him.</li> </ul>

			place and merges?	
<b>Acknowledgement of healing/change</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• L: "It feels like having an electrical current inside."</li> <li>• L: "Like; oh hell. All is possible".</li> <li>• L: "No, I feel very alive".</li> <li>• S tells her again: "I often think you are so beautiful and not the Barbie way".</li> <li>• L smiles and nods her head.</li> <li>• L: " And I see it is true. It feels as if I am allowed to believe her. I appreciate her saying it".</li> <li>• A: "I am deeply touched</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Takes her arm and shows by moving it up and down from her stomach to her head and back.</li> <li>• L raises her arms like she has had a victory.</li> <li>• L looks happy and relaxed</li> <li>• L manages to take the compliment and relaxes. She acknowledges her change of feelings from being very tense and vulnerable to a state of feeling relaxed and safe.</li> </ul>	<p>33. GL: How does it feel to have a dream that comes true?</p> <p>34. You don't look so stiff now. 35. S, can you tell her again what you said to her earlier?</p> <p>36. GL: Did it feel differently?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GL works on making her very specific about her awareness and anchoring it.</li> </ul>



	<p>by what you have showed. I feel so much recognition”.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• M: “I feel you are very honest. It was so nice to see and feel”.</li><li>• L: I long for honesty. It is so hard and I need it so much”.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• L gets very touched by hearing M.</li><li>• She looks very present and calm</li></ul>		
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## 4.4 Encounter 3 – Reconnecting with the heart

This is an encounter between Maria and the group leader. For some time Maria has had a strong feeling of getting less attention than the other participants. She is very silent when the session starts and the group leader comments on it and encourage her to find some words to express what she feels. She feels disconnected, closed off, on the outside and small. By exploring her feelings and her body language in the encounter, she physically gets a strong twitching of the body at the point when her heart is touched both metaphorically and physically. The change is very clear both physically, meaning her presence and breathing calmly and mentally by joining in as a warm and wise woman. (For a more exhaustive description/interpretation see Appendix D.)

	Description/observation of the encounter	Interpretation/Analysis of the group member(s)	Description/observation of the group-leader	Interpretation/Analysis of the group-leader
<b>Micro events introducing the encounter</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• M openly tells about her longing for inner peace.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• M looks sad and very introvert.</li> <li>• Very weak voice. Looking down and sad.</li> <li>• Her voice gets louder, hard and business-like.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. GL: “ M are you tired”?</li> <li>2. GL: I understand what you say. But I do not know what you mean in depth. I hear you, I understand but I have the feeling that you are not present. I am not sure you understand what you say. How is it to hear this?</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• He takes a risk by saying he is not sure she is present and he does not understand what she says beyond the superficial.</li> <li>• Tries to grasp the core of what she is saying. She</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• M: "I don't relate to what you say right now. I know there is a truth in what you say, but I do not relate".</li> <li>• Maria openly tells about her longing for inner peace.</li> <li>• M: "It feels like I come short".</li> <li>• M: "It is a lot happening inside of me now".</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Her body gets stiff and she straightens up in the chair. Her eyes look down.</li> <li>• Her face starts to move like in pain.</li> <li>• A lot of resistance comes up in her and she tries to reject her feelings and me. Her eyes reveal sadness.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Moves forward and lean on his knees. Rests his head on his hand.</li> <li>4. GL: All you say makes sense in my mind.</li> <li>5. GL: I feel a shortcoming in me when I hear you talk. I understand but it is like if I am not present either.</li> <li>6. GL: "I have a sense of a war going on inside of you. Does it give any resonance in you"?</li> </ol>	<p>does not really know at the moment, but he presents her an analysis to see if that helps.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• He clearly shows that he is interested in what is going on with her and tries to connect her to the group. He investigates if the moment is there to help her connecting.</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• M nods her head.</li> <li>• M breathes loudly and leans to the left, tilts her head back:” In one way this has nothing to do with me”:</li> </ul>			
<p><b>"Now moment" or small crisis/challenge</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A to M: I cannot understand you saying that something happens in you and you do not know what and you do not try to find out.</li> <li>• On the question of success M tilts her head up and looks up in the air: I do not really know how one is supposed to feel. Am I right or wrong?</li> <li>• Body starts to sink. Talks softer and softer. Hard to hear her.</li> <li>• She nods her head strongly confirming she is tired and confused.</li> <li>• It is as if I am in a state of dreaming. Not totally present.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A sounds upset and provoked.</li> <li>• She looks very confused and hurt and it feels like she is more inside herself than with the rest of us in the group.</li> </ul>	<p>7. GL asks M: Are you afraid of success?</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• M: “ How do I get the balance”?</li> <li>• Everybody laughs</li> <li>• Laughter is replaced by silence for a long time. People look down and become serious.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• H: I don’t think you know how much effort you spend on just keeping yourself in this intermediate state. Not dreaming not alive.</li> </ul>		<p>8. GL: Are you tired? Tired of not knowing or tired of life or tired of trying to be correct?</p> <p>9. States his need to be in balance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• He makes his voice soft as if not to scare her, as she is very silent ... speechless. He feels like she enters more and more the silent room and needs help to get out. He tries to adapt to that room in order to be able to enter it with respect, and hope to gain trust.</li> <li>• He shares his experience of being him in an encounter with her. Who does he become? What does he experience? They become confluent, he gives her the chance to see herself in mirror.</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• M: I don't know if I dare to be present. I am afraid my world will fall apart. Maybe what's new is worse.</li></ul>		<p>10. Relaxes and observes M. Like if he is waiting for something.</p> <p>11. After a while he says: I want to try and take your question seriously. How do we get there? Maybe we first just need to ask ourselves: Do we want to move? Then we might need to accept what is. Maybe try to not assign it a value, but just accept</p>	<p>Like as if he is mirroring her. This gives her a chance to study herself.</p>
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			<p>what is. Recognize and then start to explore what it does to me. How does it make me feel? To jump to the goal we put up might only give a short pleasure. It is very little appropriate. I cannot be authentic when I jump to the goal.</p> <p>12. GL: Maybe it will. Mine won't fall if you are present.</p> <p>13. GL: Or better? Of course you take a chance if you try to be present now.</p>	
<p><b>"Moment of meeting"</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• H: "Maybe you should give up"?</li> <li>• M: "I am tired".</li> <li>• M: "I felt you looked at me with compassion".</li> <li>• M: "It was good and sad. I have a feeling of not</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• M just glances at her for a moment and looks down again.</li> <li>• She starts to swallow</li> </ul>	<p>14.</p> <p>15. Makes her aware of what she is doing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore what happens with her bodily her senses. She feels humiliated and what happens then. How does she sense it? He</li> </ul>

	<p>being a good enough human being. I feel humiliated when I say that. I feel my body disappearing. I feel so small”.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• M nods her head and agrees she is at the core of what she experiences difficult.</li> <li>• M nods her head.</li> <li>• M leans forward. Her feet start to move.</li> <li>• M: “It is getting harder. It is so much harder when you understand”.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It seems like she partly agrees. She is very silent for a long time.</li> </ul>	<p>16. GL: Did that hurt or was it good? Or both?</p> <p>17. I feel we are touching the core here. Now that you are at the core while we are here, how can we get you back to us?</p> <p>18. It is strange for me to experience almost the opposite. You are clearer and more present to me right now.</p> <p>19. It seems like I now understand some of my confusion in</p>	<p>tries to connect her body to her head and make her aware of her feelings.</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I do not want to be a speechless child. I want to achieve things.</li> <li>• Confirms that a lot is happening in her.</li> <li>• I feel so small.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• M moves down to sit on the floor.</li> <li>• M: “ I am a jel- clot”.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• M: “Sometimes. When I am present I am nothing”.</li> <li>• M: “I do not have anything that makes sense to say, but it was nice to sit here”.</li> <li>• M: “ I am nothing that enjoys time right now”.</li> <li>• M: “ It felt unreal to say”.</li> <li>• She agrees that I can touch her knee.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Her body is getting more and more forceless</li> </ul>	<p>encountering you. When I experience you present and clear you disappear.</p> <p>20. Accepts her feeling of having a harder time and moves his chair so they are in front of each other.</p> <p>21. GL: I think you achieve a lot but most of the time we need to be present to achieve something. It looks like it is a lot of things going on in you.</p> <p>22. GL: Do you prefer to sit on the floor?</p> <p>23. GL: A jel-cot that is present?</p> <p>24. GL: Can I touch nothing? How is it to ne nothing?</p> <p>25. Agrees it is nice to sit with her.</p> <p>26. GL: Is it possible for you to say: I am nothing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signals he want to be there longer with her and explore</li> <li>• He invites her to enter the difficult space where she feels she is nothing now that she has shown herself and showed us her shame.</li> <li>• Follows her to the floor.</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• M nods her head</li>   <li>• M: "I am nothing that feels that I am being touched".</li>   <li>• M looks at GL</li>   <li>• M nods her head</li>   <li>• M looks down and says nothing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• M smiles</li> </ul>	<p>that enjoys time right now?</p> <p>27. GL: I am very curious to explore how it is to touch nothing. Can I try?</p> <p>28. Puts his hand on her knee?</p> <p>29. GL: I feel on nothing. It means I feel something. Do you notice it?</p> <p>30. GL: How can you be nothing when I feel nothing is something?</p> <p>31. GL: Can you try how it feels to say: "I am nothing that feels that I am being touched"?</p> <p>32. GL: Can you look at me?</p> <p>33. GL: Is it hard to sit here right now?</p> <p>34. GL: What is your first impulse?</p> <p>35. GL: Do you want to lie down on the floor?</p> <p>36. GL: Please do, if you</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explores her feeling of being nothing.</li> <li>• Makes her aware that "nothing" can be touched and in the relation be made to something.</li> <li>• Makes a point that when she is nothing she feels something.</li>   <li>• Has a very soft voice. He invites her to share her feelings in the sense of being mirrored.</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• M feels laying down will be very humiliating.</li> <li>• M: “What if just stay there”?</li> <li>• M: “I have never done this before. I like it “.</li> <li>• M rests, breathes and smiles.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• M keeps eye contact and looks relaxed.</li> <li>• It feels like if she is challenging me a little.</li> <li>• Suddenly she lies down and he follows.</li> </ul>	<p>want. If you want me to, I can ask the group to turn their chairs so they don't see you.</p> <p>37. GL: I will stay there with you.</p> <p>38. Lies down by her side simultaneously.</p> <p>39. If you notice I like it and can see you like it, then we have created a shared reality that is true for us both.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keeps contact with her all the time.</li> </ul>
<b>Acknowledgement of healing/change</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• He touches her arm</li> <li>• Her body gets a strong twitch, like if she has got electric shock.</li> <li>• M lets him take her hand and starts to cry.</li> <li>• Comes back from crying and just looks him in the eyes for a long time. Breathing and smiling softly for some minutes.</li> <li>• M: I have a lot of fizzing waves through my body.</li> <li>• M nods her head.</li> <li>• M: “I feel my heart and a</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It looks very painful. M looks a little shocked before it seems like she experiences catharsis.</li> </ul>	<p>40. Asks for permission to touch her.</p> <p>41. After a little time he takes her hand</p> <p>42. Asks her to let go of the pain and cry as much as she needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• He just stay there with her and do nothing. Just hold the space with her, and show her acceptance by being there and comforting her.</li> </ul>

	<p>lot of warmth in my heart. Strange feeling. I feel a lot of love". She laughs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• M asks for permission to touch him.</li> <li>• M caresses his face and says: I have a lot of love to give.</li> <li>• M Stands up and tells the group she has a lot of love to give.</li> <li>• Group acknowledges her.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• She looks soft and her eyes are smiling.</li> <li>• Looks like she gets an urge to tell the group and thereby connect to the group.</li> </ul>	<p>43. GL: So from being nothing, you feel you have a body and lots of feeling now?</p> <p>44. Accepts her touching him.</p>	
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• She looks happy and like she is being nurtured by the group's response to her and her work here in the group.</li></ul>	45. GL: I can feel your touch.	
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# 5 Observations

## 5.1 Introduction

Based on the descriptions and interpretations presented in the Analysis chapter, we can make some observations/generalizations that constitute a partial answer to my research question. The material contains an enormous amount of information and would allow for several areas of investigation, but I will focus on the following aspects:

- Authenticity
- Trust
- Move the process ahead and extract information
- Challenging while providing sufficient security
- Change/healing, integration and closure

All of these are necessary in order to achieve a genuine encounter with the potential for healing.

### 5.1.1 Authenticity

Authenticity does not always explicitly mentioned in discussions about various methods or approaches. But it is important and closely related to various central ideas presented in chapter 2, Theory. First of all, it is linked to the distinction between symmetrical and asymmetrical relations. The Theory chapter, discusses how symmetry must be looked at in relation to specific aspect of the relation. There is an obvious asymmetry due to the professional role and experience of the therapist or GL. This is matched by an opposite asymmetry in the access to the experience of the client. But symmetry can be achieved in other aspects of the relation. This requires, however, that the therapist/group leader enter the relation as an authentic person. Linking back to Minuchin's idea of the therapist being a part of the system, authenticity is necessarily very important. Family therapists know a lot about how the systems are affected if its members are not honest. There is no reason to believe that the mechanisms are different if it is the therapist who affects the system with

lack of authenticity. The effect on the system is very unclear and consequently shapes the context in ways that can be difficult to understand for the members of the system.

Authenticity is closely linked to trust, the topic of the next section.

Lack of authenticity is not always detected consciously, in many cases it is just experienced as a general sense of unease or tension, or a feeling that something is missing. Not presenting or sharing anything personal is problematic with respect to authenticity. If we accept Watzlawick's claim that it is not possible not to communicate, attempting to be in a purely professional role and refrain from entering the intersubjective field as a person is potentially problematic. The mechanisms that apply in human interaction are still at work. Attempting to control what you communicate by not communicating leaves you with less control over the impression that you make - the field is wide open for speculations and projections. Authenticity is partly a question of attitude. Being authentic can sometimes be challenging, especially if there is a contrast between the true self and the image you want to present to the world, or if being authentic could trigger reactions of disappointment, ridicule, contempt or anger in others.

### **5.1.2 Trust**

Trust is generally agreed upon to be important. Entering into an encounter, especially with the purpose of achieving some kind of change, mostly requires courage, sometimes a lot of courage. For a client or group member to activate this courage, it is first necessary to establish a level of trust in the therapist or leader.

Most people have a degree of skepticism towards their surroundings. This is a healthy response that holds us back from a situation until we regard it as safe. Moreover, we have all relied on people and been disappointed when they turned out to be unworthy of our trust. Such situations teach us to be more alert before we 'surrender'. Some people who come to therapy or self-development have a lack of trust has become a barrier in contact with others and weakened their ability to build close relations.

As a GL I need to let the participants in my groups experience that I am safe, that I will receive them and that I will not disappear if they trust me. I have to make myself worthy of their trust to receive it.

### **5.1.3 Move the process ahead and extract information**

Moving the process ahead and extracting information about the situation is important all through an encounter, especially initially until the wheels are in motion. The GL constantly needs to understand what is happening in the encounter to be able to act in an adequate way. Otherwise good results will be based on luck and bad ones will be coming out of the blue. The group leader does not always have an outstanding awareness, and at times he has to admit to himself and the group that he does not have a clue about what is going on. This makes the encounter as transparent as possible, it becomes part of the co-awareness and gives the group members the chance to act differently.

Extracting information refers to the group leader's information about what is going on, and also to the level of awareness of each group member, including awareness about physical reactions. The GL needs to know how to increase a person's awareness as preparation for a new perspective or a new way to act, or maybe a decision not to make an inappropriate choice. This is what structural family therapy refers to as joining and enactment (Minuchin 1978, Hårtveit and Jensen, 1999). You need to be able to act this out in a smooth way so that there is joining. Awareness is also necessary in order to distinguish between your intentions versus your effect. If the GL does not know how to move the process ahead and how his moves affect the encounter, he cannot ensure appropriate pace and progress. It is also important to know when to wait, when to abstain from actively moving things ahead – let something emerge spontaneously, let others assume responsibility or allow frustration to increase until something happens. Challenging is a way of moving the process ahead, this is discussed in section 5.1.4 below.

### **5.1.4 Challenging while providing sufficient security**

All human beings stand in an existential challenge of balancing the need for safety and seeking growth and development through challenges. For most people, safety is maintained



by means of the approach “I do what I normally do and I stay where I am”. In order to develop and to be able to break non-productive patterns, we need to seek new challenges. The GL needs to facilitate in order to establish enough safety so that the participants can take just the right challenge and experience succeeding.

That something is stable means that it is firm, steady, has duration, and that it re-balances after a disturbance. Traditionally western thinking has been occupied with the idea of stability as the natural, while the opposite aspect is a spontaneous condition (Watzlawick et al. 1996, p.21). The idea of stability as a natural condition for human beings is hard to hold on to, everything is in a constant process of change (Hårtveit and Jensen, 1999). Research shows that controllability and predictability are the two most important components to keep the human organism's stress level low (i.e. no initiation of defense against danger – fight/flight) reflecting our inherent need for stability (Atkinson et al. 1996, p. 476). The group leader, the group and the context normally provides enough stability for the individual to risk exploring other perspectives, trying something new and act differently. But the group leader needs to communicate that he will be there whether the individual succeeds or not.

Challenging without a sufficiently secure framework can set the process back and in a therapeutic situation be anti therapeutic and even re-traumatizing. It is very important to take each group member's concerns, fears and bad experiences seriously. This means to see the “other”, confirm his reality and respond adequately and supportively.

When you know what is and have the information from joining and enactment, it is possible to initiate some level of unbalancing (Minuchin, 1978, Hårtveit and Jensen 1999). One way of doing this is taking a clear standpoint that supports or confronts, in order to disturb the sub-systems in the relation. This challenges the therapeutic neutrality, but on the other hand can show authenticity. This needs to be done with a very clear intention, and awareness about the potential pitfalls. A group leader, who knows the art of full risk with full control, will be able to move the group members very far and create/co-create a new perspective. Challenging is used here in a sense that includes challenging someone to stay in a situation or stay with an emotion and not run away or switch focus.

### **5.1.5 Change/healing, integration and closure**

The work in the group is experience-based and experiential in the sense that the participants can try out new ways of acting and experience the impact of their change. This can be looked at as what Minuchin calls restructuring (Minuchin 1978). It is important to not leave the individual alone with his new acts or behavior that is not integrated into his self. To support integration, and close the individual's process, the group leader needs to make sure that the individual feels seen, accepted and understood in his new way of relating and acting. He also needs to relate the individual to the group in order to strengthen the experience of being accepted and maybe confident about being accepted in his life outside the group. By doing this we try to avoid an experience that is just an experience and does not lead to change. Closure and integration facilitates change. Experience that is not integrated can in worst-case lead to traumatization.

Integration and closure is also achieved through sharing of the experiences and (in the case of students) process analysis. In this chapter, however, I will only discuss integration and closure in relation to the encounters that were presented in detail in the previous chapter.

## **5.2 Being authentic**

When analyzing the data material it is interesting to note the extent to which the group leader presents or shares something related to himself as a person. The main issue here is how authenticity is conveyed – how is authenticity encoded in words, body language, position and touch? In addition, an investigation involving authenticity would be severely lacking without attention to the concept of “congruence”. The focus of the present study is on the way a GL can influence the intersubjective field with words, body language and facial expressions, position and touch, and the timing is also taken into consideration. Congruence in this context refers to the degree of consistency between what is expressed or conveyed through each of these tools or ways of communicating. An interesting divide is the one between words and some very conscious instances of body language on the one hand, and the remaining tools on the other hand. Lack of congruence often consists in a mismatch between what is said, and what is communicated through the other channels.

Words are easily accessible, the GL can say something about himself and how he feels like in E2:32, E3:4. He can also express opinions, as long as it is all done from a position of curiosity and exploration, not a judging or omniscient position. With respect to facial expressions, smiling is partially under conscious control, but the eyes tend to reveal actual emotions.

It is important to be aware of how much information facial expression and body language conveys, not in order to try to conceal it, but in order to examine what the emotions, attitude or other state of mind and try to adjust that, if necessary and if possible.

It was striking for GL to observe himself in the first encounter. GL has always known that he has a very expressive body language, but he had no idea that it was so easy to see how bored he looked, even if he was trying to pretend to be interested in what was going on. This illustrates lack of congruence and authenticity. It seems like if GL was trying to be active on the chair in order not give people the chance to observe him long enough in one position so that they would see what he really felt, as in E1:1-4. This boredom could also be recognized as anxiety. He was able to support Hanna in her lack of understanding in E1:5-6, but this is still what Stern calls a failed opportunity. In this encounter the dramatic change comes when GL confronts her with her lack of responsibility in the situation where she wants something to happen but does not want to contribute to the action. However, this confrontation does not destroy the trust. By challenging her, GL is not “proper” and thereby showing her a part of him that she longs for. This creates the shift to a preparation for exploration.

Another aspect of the importance of authenticity is when the GL uses himself and the relation in trying to understand more about the situation. One example is in E1:37 where GL says: “Nothing. Just be with you when you feel indelicate. Maybe I can understand something about why I don’t sense the indelicacy”. This way of examining could have destroyed all trust within seconds without authenticity and credibility. Here the authenticity influences both the “move forward and extract information” phase as well as the challenging and healing phase. The message is: “I don’t see what you experience, I don’t sense it and I still want to be with you even if you feel this way. I take you seriously and don’t mind being with you in your experience of being indelicate”.

Another way of using the relation (which requires authenticity) is in the example of E2:19, where GL asks Lisa to connect with him by looking him in the eyes and holding on to the feeling of being stiff. The purpose is for her to experience her stiffness and our togetherness at the same time in order for her to explore the *witness (dialogic)-thinking* instead of her normal response of being in the *aboutness (monologic)-thinking* (Shotter, 2004) This creates the possibility of reshaping the field and co-create our reality in the intersubjective field. (Stern, 2004). We need to understand the phenomena in the relation (Burr, 2003) in order to be able to not only create the crisis but also make a change.

Physical position can be looked at from the point of view of personal space in general as well as the trust, emotional closeness etc. of an individual relation. It can be comforting or provoking, and consequently a tool for increasing safety or for intensifying a feeling of crisis. In E3:25 we see an example of physical position being used to create comfort and closeness. It also correlates with attraction/rejection. GL comments on the position by agreeing that it is nice to sit with her. Any incongruence between the words and other communication here would mean loss of authenticity and disturb the process. Awareness is necessary in order to be authentic, and at the same time act in a way that is in accordance with the other's needs and best interest.

Timing relates to authenticity in the sense that lack of flow and timing that reflects a schema instead of the actual situation, reveals a lack of personal involvement.

In summary, the examples from the data illustrate how the GL conveys authenticity by expressing his opinions and sharing his experiences. The authenticity is strengthened by body language etc. being congruent with the words. At one point there's incongruence, but not in a situation where it has major negative consequences - it occurs at the beginning of the session and not at a critical point. There are several examples of GL using the relation to as a tool for exploration. Without authenticity, this would not have been successful. More generally, this means that in order to make active use of what is going on in the intersubjective field, authenticity is vitally important.

## 5.3 Building trust

Trust can be built or encouraged by words in the sense of directly assuring a person. It could be by saying that they are safe, there's time, what they express is fine or possible to relate to. In E1 GL accepts by saying it's OK not to have words." (E2:21) and later says "I was very touched when you said it." (E2:32). In E3 we notice how he says "All you say gives meaning in my mind." (E3:4). A very important factor in order to build trust is the need to be seen. E3:1 is an example where GL starts by asking Maria if she is tired.

More indirect ways of building trust through words could be to repeat or paraphrase what the group member says. This signals that you understand, and that you make an effort to understand. Interpreting something in a positive way, or phrasing an observation positively builds trust too – knowing that what you say or do will be looked at in this way, is a strong incentive to expose what you might otherwise have kept hidden. It is safe to be open.

Yet another example of building trust with words is to remember and repeat something that was said before, especially something positive or important.

With body language the data material shows how the GL takes care not to emphasize the power position that he has. He also makes sure that his body language when mirroring another person is not exaggerated so that it becomes a parody. Both these examples show how body language can be used consciously to build trust. It could also be as simple as respect for the other being reflected in the body language, not necessarily a conscious process.

Several examples show the use of position close to someone in order to be a safety net or an ally, which builds or reinforces trust. We find examples in E1:31, E1:34, and E1:36. The result is immediate and is shown in E1:35. In E3:22 and E3:35 first the suggestion, permission and acceptance is given and acted upon as GL follows her to sit on the floor close to Maria and then to lie down on the floor. These examples clearly shows a mix of what Stern calls dramatic therapeutic change, progression towards desired change and the preparation for exploration. The dramatic changes do not lead to failed opportunities in these cases because there is already a basic trust. The knowledge of that we wish each other well.

Timing, in the sense of understanding when to interrupt or intervene is illustrated in encounter 2. It is important to be able to judge when someone needs calmness to think, and when he or she need help to formulate a sentence or put words to their emotions. In E2:13-14 there is a long silence, which gives Lisa the chance to focus and try to sort out the chaos she is feeling. Time is also very important in encounter 3. The encounter is very fragile and needs to be moved forward very gently. In E3:17 the GL points out to Maria that he feels they are at the core of what's going on inside of her. She responds by freezing for along time and trying to cope with the fact that she feels it is so much harder when the GL understand.

Touch relates to trust in being a gentle way of letting the other know that you have understood something vulnerable. Touch is a very vulnerable tool in itself. One should never touch the "other" without permission. If this ends up feeling wrong, it can destroy the trust within seconds.

The examples in this section show clearly how the GL is very actively building/maintaining trust, using all channels of communication. The ways of building trust can be divided into two main categories. One is acceptance - GL reassures the group members that what they say or do is OK, and never looks disappointed, shocked or disgusted. The second category has to do with confirming that he hears what the group members say and notices what goes on with them. When he communicates what he hears/sees and his understanding is correct, the level of trust increases, and the process can move ahead.

## **5.4 Move the process ahead and extract information**

Words are the most commonly recognized tool for moving the process ahead or for extracting information. E2:5 "What happened right now?" E2:22 "is it possible to describe these feelings" and E3:1 "Are you tired?" are just a few of a very large number of examples.

Words also provide instructions to the group. Above the importance of holding back and not rushing the process ahead was mentioned. An example is the situation with the impatient group member Anne in encounter 1, who wants something to happen. The GL is actually bored, and it would be tempting to respond ... but smarter not to. Since he waits, the pressure builds and the impatient group member eventually breaks out of the impasse.

Note that even if Anne does this, she is reluctant to take full responsibility – and projects her own need onto the group. This is a situation where the leader could easily feel criticized and go into a projective identification. He avoids this by insisting on a clarification of exactly what she wants. During this process her projection is resolved.

Extracting information also relates to listening, and the various messages or interpretations that a statement could have. In encounter 1, Hanna says “Hard to understand the theme” and “It is probably me who have not understood this”. On one level this could be a way of ensuring that Maria won’t feel uncomfortable about Hanna’s lack of interest or agreement/recognition, i.e. an expression of politeness and social convention. What is not apparent from one isolated example, but shows clearly when several examples are taken into consideration, is that this is part of a pattern for Hanna – she blames herself repeatedly during the group sessions. GL seems to pick this up – he confirms her by saying that there are many possible ways of relating to groups of girls. But the pattern of blaming does not become a topic of exploration.

At the beginning of encounter two, GL understands that Diana’s way of dressing will provoke a reaction. He waits, smiles and leans back, doesn’t even answer a direct question and leaves it to the group members to initiate the process, see E2:1-2 and E2:3.

Some questions about information are asked with the purpose of increasing the understanding of the GL, others have the dual purpose of increasing both his understanding and a group member’s own awareness. This usually also contributes to moving the process ahead. The material contains a range of cases where words are used to direct the attention of a group member towards physical sensations, body language that they display etc., see for instance E1:22, E1:24, E1:25, E2:13, E2:17 and E2:19. An example is in E1:24 where GL ask Anne to do an experiment by holding her thumbs which I make her aware of that she is doing and at the same time say what she has said earlier: “I am a civilized woman”.

GL carefully looks for the analogue language that accompanies the words by freezing the moment and keeping the group member in the awareness of the moment’s action. In encounter number 3 we have an example of GL being very alert towards Marias body

language (E3:15). He reinforces her possibility to give herself over by establishing more surface E3:22, E3:35, E3:36 (here the floor).

Repeating, maximizing or in other ways highlighting a physical or emotional expression, is also a way of moving the process forward. This action confirms that information has been understood (see also the section on challenging below).

From this meeting we can interact and develop further the old patterns the group member is acting out with GL as the “other”.

GL very actively extracts information, mainly through the use of questions. He actively encourages the group members to access information about what is going on in their body, in some cases by freezing a position or expression in order to explore it. He also uses his own body in order to understand, either by immediate recognition or by actively mirroring to investigate. Moving the process ahead is sometimes done using instructions. It is also done in a more subtle way by focusing attention, asking particular questions, expressing opinions, sharing experiences etc. The examples also show the balance between actively moving the process along and waiting to let it develop naturally, or for a group member to initiate the next step.

## **5.5 Challenging while providing sufficient security**

Challenging with words usually means questioning what is said or done. This also includes cases where the group leader shares a contrasting example from his own life, as well as when he expresses feelings and reactions that might differ from those of the group members. By doing so he can show that there are different perspectives and alternatives. The group leader has to be capable of handling and bracket off his own process.

In many situations group members can handle direct confrontations and even wish for it. Such clarity gives them the feeling of being met and taken seriously. One example is E1:13 where GL checks out other projections by asking Anne what she thinks Diana is thinking about her. He follows her and keeping her in her feelings which she necessarily needs in order to own the projection herself. She tries to escape by saying: “I take too much space”. In E1:16 he confronts by telling her what he hears she says. In many ways this is very similar



to Michael Whites stage of retelling, see chapter 2 Theory. The encounters also include E3: 2 and E3: 4 where GL confronts Maria and moderates the confrontation to “carefrontation” when she starts to withdraws. This is successful: She reveals herself to the group.

It is also possible to enhance/strengthen information that has emerged e.g. by ‘insisting’ on focus on a statement etc. “Didn’t you know that you are beautiful?” see E2:6, E2:7. Here there is also an element of provocation. In E2:9 GL leans forward and starts laughing. The laughter is triggered by the confusion of the group member and the absurdity of the situation. It also challenges her perception of reality.

Challenging by using words can also means to instruct or encourage someone to stay in a situation or stay with an emotion, like in encounter 1 where A is torn between wishing to be visible in her indelicacy and the shame that it causes her to feel. The sequence E:29-31 illustrates the balancing of challenge and security. It shows how GL works on the progression towards desired changes and at the same time prepares the field for exploration.

Balancing also includes monitoring the stress level of the group member to see if the challenge becomes too much, e.g. by moving slowly, as in E1:31. Another example is E3:5 where GL establishes an encounter by phenomenological describing what he sees, and what he experiences when she influences him. This is what Sterns call “sense agency” meaning the subjective awareness he is initiating. This establishes safety. I am - because I have been seen. I have value - because I influence others by my being.

A sense of security can be established or maintained by being respectful and asking for permission, so that the group member retains a measure of control, like in the examples E1:34, E1:36. Another way of building safety is by establishing oneself as “the safe other” E3:12, E3:37, E3:38. Here it allows the GL to come very close to Maria and share her experience.

The group leader can withdraw or come closer in order to maximize a feeling or what is happening in the intersubjective field, as in E1:31 and E1:36. Safety is ensured by asking for permission, then position can be used in order to challenge. In E1:37 the challenge is increased by adding touch.

Challenging by using body language includes mirroring a group member to make this person conscious about a response, a posture, an action, etc. The physical mirroring can be accompanied by mirroring verbally, to enhance or in order to bring incongruence into awareness.

Touch is a powerful way of challenging and/or comforting. (As mentioned above, all kinds of physical closeness need permission from the group member). In E3:27-28 the group leader asks for permission to touch “nothing” so he can get a sense of what it feels like to touch “nothing”. When Maria accepts, he touches her knee. This is repeated again in E3:40, and this time it leads to a catharsis for Maria. Her response is that she wants to touch him and he accepts, see E3:44.

Challenging in this context basically means actively creating now moments, actively introducing a small crisis in the intersubjective field. Often this is a crisis that occurs internally in the group member, but since it is made explicit, it is part of the intersubjective field. Making it explicit or visible also increases the internal tension - it becomes impossible to ignore. Challenging can be described with respect to a scale of intensity, from gently sharing a personal experience that contrasts with the view of the group member, to questioning or actively confronting. Security is provided as described in the section on trust, as well as by ensuring that the group member is ensured sufficient control over the situation. The GL constantly monitors the group members to balance challenge and security.

## **5.6 Change/healing, integration and closure**

At some stage in the process it is time for introducing and getting the client to accept a new interpretation, a redefinition, etc. by presenting a personal view that is in contrast to the client’s presentation. An example is found in E1:37 where GL moves forward, is asked by Anne what he wants and says: “Nothing. Just be with you when you feel indelicate. Maybe I can understand something about why I don’t feel the indelicacy”. In addition to suggesting another way of looking at it – the indelicacy is not obvious to everyone – the new interpretation is also conveyed by not rejecting, not being disgusted etc. E2:30 illustrates another option, the more direct approach of encouraging experiments with a new view or possibility. The group leader can also introduce or strengthen a new interpretation via other

group members, e.g. by asking what they see, how they interpreted something, as in E2:26-27.

In some encounters where there has been an intense closeness, part of the integration process consists in re-establishing the differentiation between the parties. In encounter 3 GL does this by taking Marias hand, see E3:40, E3:41. She feels herself and sees him, and that stimulates her to reach for a new moment of meeting, and experience by touching that there is another person there. E3:43, E3:44. She uses the possibility to make herself visible to the “world” by standing up and telling the group who she is.

Encounter 2 ends with the group members giving feedback to Lisa, and also share their feelings. This is an instant feedback to Lisa that tells her something about the effect she has on people and how she touches them. It gives a feeling of acceptance and, something that strengthens her self-esteem.

The observations show how this phase involves possible new interpretations and possible new modes of behavior. An important part of the integration is experiential, trying out a new pattern. Here the GL uses mainly words, but congruence between the GL's words and other expression is vital at this stage too. After an intense closeness, care is taken to re-establish separation. The GL actively uses other group members to confirm interpretations and strengthen messages of acceptance and encouragement with respect to a new pattern.

# 6 Concluding Remarks

## 6.1 Essential observations

My research question was formulated as follows “How can the group leader use words, body language, positioning and touch to create or handle now moments and turn them into moments of meeting?” To investigate this, I chose to focus on two relational characteristics and three stages in the process, resulting in the following sub-questions:

- How can the group leader use words, body language, positioning and touch to communicate authenticity?
- How can the group leader use words, body language, positioning and touch to create trust?
- How can the group leader use words, body language, positioning and touch to move the process ahead and extract information?
- How can the group leader use words, body language, positioning and touch to challenge while providing sufficient security?
- How can the group leader use words, body language, positioning and touch to facilitate change/healing, integration and closure?

With respect to authenticity, an essential observation is how it is crucially dependent on congruence. My interpretation of the data material is also that authenticity is a prerequisite for being able to actively use what is going on in the intersubjective field, i.e. a necessary conditions for creating or handling now moments and turning them into moments of meeting. Trust is partially based on authenticity, and obviously linked to the security that a group member requires in order to accept a challenge. From the data material we see how building and maintaining trust involves not only acceptance (“what you do/say is ok”) but also confirmation of understanding (“I hear you, see you, and verify that I interpret you correctly”). Stern does not explicitly focus on building and maintain trust, but it is an important condition for being able to create a moment of meeting. More detailed studies of

what affects the level of trust could result in important knowledge for therapists or group leaders independent of the methods they use.

When looking at the material from the point of view of stages of the process, several interesting observations can be made. Extracting information and moving the process ahead is often associated with questions and instructions respectively. My observations go some way towards uncovering the much wider range of ways in which these goals are achieved. One main point relates to information about what happens in the body of a group member, as well as the group leader's possibility of using awareness about his own body. Several examples of subtle, non-direct ways of extracting information or moving the process ahead illustrate Stern's ideas about how the intersubjective field develops, how it is constantly renegotiated and how each relational move provides the context for the next one. It is also a concrete illustration of the approach of social constructionism. The complexity of the ways in which the intersubjective field is affected, offers the therapist or group leader a powerful set of tools, but also means that mastering them requires a both awareness and experience.

Creating the now moments by introducing challenges is another demanding aspect of the role of the group leader. As mentioned in chapter 5, the crisis might occur internally in the group member, but since it is made explicit, it is part of the intersubjective field. Again we see that the group leader has a number of tools at his disposal, again the complexity offers possibilities, but means that the role requires awareness and experience. This stage is crucially dependent on the two relational characteristics of authenticity and trust, and also on the preceding stage: The group leader needs enough information to understand the situation and has to time the challenge. The data material show how the group leader constantly monitors and balances challenges and security. In family therapy we talk about homeostasis as the natural intrinsic human need to maintain the system. We do not separate body and mind, they are closely related in the sense of a biological homeostasis being important for the balance in the psychological system and vice versa.

In Stern's terminology, the stage of healing, integration and closure relates to the successful handling of a crisis in the intersubjective field. From a family therapy point of view we are talking about what is necessary in order to achieve a second order change. My observations suggest that words are the main channel of communication in this stage. The other channels

or tools are mainly important in order to ensure congruence. This moves the group member towards conscious reflection, and is also consistent with this stage being a transition from the experience of the process in the session to the group member's life outside the group.

Summarizing it is clear to me that there is great potential to influence the encounters, and that the interaction that creates the intersubjective field is highly complex. My observations in the study of the various tools or communication channels confirm that there is communication on many levels. It is necessary to understand each tool, but also of the utmost importance to be aware of the effect of combining the various tools - in the best case they can reinforce each other, in the worst case there can be mixed messages and confusion or diminished trust.

Complete awareness is impossible, but significant improvement is attainable. Realizing the importance will influence your attitude and the way you approach a situation – it can result in open-mindedness. Consequently you will make more observations that are input for the process of becoming more and more aware of all the aspects of the interaction.

## **6.2 Improvements and possibilities for future research**

The potentially controversial aspects of my approach, basically regarding the researcher as informant, were discussed in chapter 3, Method. Here I will add a few thoughts about drawbacks, and about ways of improving my approach.

A practical area to look into and improve has to do with the filming. If I had not been responsible for the camera and the technicalities, there would be more flow and fewer interruptions to disturb the encounters. Even though none of the group members complained, I found some of those moments stressful. Even though I did not experience it that way, the presence of the camera may have influenced the group members and my behavior.

Now in the aftermath I see that it would be advantageous to have conducted follow-up interviews about their experiences and retrospective reflections concerning the self-development group. These could help me conduct cross-examinations to investigate what

was my perception in the situation and what was the group members perception in the situation. That could have been both exciting and enriching. It could also have been interesting to have an observer who could observe me and provide another view on the encounters between the others and me. It would also be possible to let someone else do a separate analysis of the video material, and then compare the two analyses.

Based on what I have done I see a number of possibilities for further studies, both when it comes to topics and when it comes to variations of the methodology I have used. My material has a big potential that I am not able to use in this thesis, and it could be very intriguing to continue and study it. Definitely there are lots yet to study in the encounter and the challenges of the analogue language. It would also be very intriguing to explore the “not knowing” field in the relation. This is a field that is available for us but not necessarily conscious to us; the “in between” in the dialog where the analogue reveals itself for some moments. Obviously the encounter is a very big topic and like there are many ways that leads to Rome, I believe there are many ways to enter the encounter and many ways to manage its potential. It would be very interesting to investigate this field in cooperation with brain researchers that have the tools to measure how our actions affect us. On a more practical and reachable level it would be of great interest to study the different encounters on a more detailed level. John Shotter’s *“Witness (dialogic)-thinking”* could be a very exiting approach to use in future studies. Having this amount of material on videotape would also give the chance to do a more in depth research in order to base the findings on more encounters. Other possible future research could be to study only one specific tool or one specific phase. A very exciting possible research would be to have more direct and or ongoing feedback from the participants of the study.

There are several comparative studies that show the importance of the relation in the therapeutic/self developmental setting. What works still needs a lot of research. I believe that well designed case studies will be an important way to research this further on.

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# Appendix A



## UNIVERSITETET I OSLO DET MEDISINSKE FAKULTET

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**Dato:** 21.12.07

**Deres ref.:**

**Vår ref.:** 177-07233b 1.2007.2027/2231

### Skapende øyeblikk. En kvalitativ studie av terapeutens rolle i møtet med klienten.

Vi viser til svar på merknader mottatt 06.12.07: Revidert informasjonsskriv; Invitasjonsbrev.

Komiteen behandlet søknaden 21. desember 2007. Prosjektet er vurdert etter lov om behandling av etikk og redelighet i forskning av 30. juni 2006, jfr. Kunnskapsdepartementets forskrift av 8. juni 2007 og retningslinjer av 27. juni 2007 for de regionale komiteer for medisinsk og helsefaglig forskningsetikk.

Komiteen kommenterer de enkelte punkter i samme nummerorden.

1. Komiteen konstaterer at prosjektleder er oppmerksom på hvor vanskelig det er å gjennomføre dette prosjektet. Komiteen har ikke ytterligere kommentarer utover at vi tror prosjektleder undervurderer problemene.
2. Dette punktet er ikke besvart. Hvem velger ut personene som skal delta?

De øvrige punkter er tilfredsstillende besvart.

**Vedtak: Prosjektet godkjennes. En ber om å få opplyst hvordan personene som skal delta i prosjektet blir valgt ut.**

Med vennlig hilsen

Stein A. Evensen (sign.)  
Professor dr.med.  
Leder

  
Ingrid Middelthon  
Komitésekretær

Kopi: Eduardo Verdu, Diakonhjemmets Høgskole, PB 184 Vindern 0389 Oslo

# Appendix B

## Invitasjon til selvutviklingsgruppe

I februar 2008 starter Eduardo Verdú opp en selvutviklingsgruppe som går over en helg og to kvelder.

I denne gruppen kan du ta opp eget tema og møtene skapes ut i fra hva vi alle bringer inn fra gang til gang. Denne gruppen tar utgangspunkt i begrepet "selvutvikling i gruppe" hvor feltet organiseres rundt hva gruppen selv ønsker å behandle. Det vil være en systemteoretisk, familenterapeutisk, psykodramatisk og sosiometrisk tilnærming til arbeidet som finner sted.

Parallelt vil denne gruppen fungere som en forskningsgruppe i forbindelse med mitt masterstudium. Fokus på forskningen vil være på Eduardo Verdus egen rolle som gruppeleder, til hans masterstudium i familierapi ved Diakonhjemmets Høgskole. Gruppedeltagerne vil ikke merke dette på andre måter enn at hver enkelt må skrive et refleksjonsnotat over egen prosess etter hvert møte og sende dette til Gerd Nerdal Moen. Gruppen vil bli filmet. Erfaringsmessig vet vi at man fort venner seg til dette. Materialet behandles konfidensielt etter gjeldende etiske regler for forskning. Mer informasjon og samtykkeerklæring vil bli gitt deltagerne.

Anonymiserte transkripsjoner av video opptak og analyse av dataene kan i forbindelse med arbeidet med masteroppgave bli vist for min veileder Heidi Eng, Dr.,Scient ved Diakonhjemmets Høgskole.

Sted: Norsk Psykodrama institutts kurslokale i Henrik Ibsensgate 60 c. 6.etasje

Datoer:

Helg: 8.-10. februar

Tid:

Fredag: 18.00- 21.00

Lørdag: 10.00- 18.00

Søndag: 10.00- 16.00

Tirsdag 5. februar klokken 17.30-20.30

Torsdag 14. februar klokken 17.30-20.30

Selvrefleksjonsrapportene sendes til administrativ leder ved Norsk Psykodrama Institutt på epost:  
[ger-nm@online.no](mailto:ger-nm@online.no)

Max deltagere: 6

Gruppen er gratis

Leder: Eduardo Verdu, T.E.P. Familieterapeut

Er du interessert så ta kontakt med administrativ leder ved Norsk Psykodrama Institutt på telefon 22 44 01 75 eller epost [ger-nm@online.no](mailto:ger-nm@online.no) Da vil du få mer informasjon og du kan stille spørsmål du måtte ha.

Vennlig hilsen,

Eduardo Verdú

# Appendix C

## INFORMERT SAMTYKKESKJEMA

### **Forskningsprosjekt om terapeutens rolle, ved Diakonhjemmets Høgskole i Oslo.**

Du har blitt spurt om å delta i et forskningsprosjekt som beskrives nærmere nedenfor. Forskerne vil forklare hva prosjektet går ut på og du kan gjerne stille spørsmål. Dersom det er noe du lurer på vil Eduardo Verdu, forskningsleder, diskutere det med deg.

#### **Beskrivelse av prosjektet**

Forskningsprosjektet har som hovedfokus å se på effekten av møtet mellom terapeut og klient, terapeutens rolle og roller og dynamikk i grupper. Adferden i gruppen vil bli studert ved hjelp av video-opptak, selvrefleksjonsnotater og SPGR-skjemaer. SPGR er et forskningsinstrument som brukes for å kartlegge roller og dynamikk i grupper, målingene vil baseres på spørreskjemaer og analyse av videomaterialet (se [www.spgr.no](http://www.spgr.no) for å lese mer om forskningsinstrumentet). Videomaterialet vil også bli analysert kvalitativt. Hensikten med studien er både å studere prosesser innad i gruppen men også dynamikken mellom lederne og gruppen.

Eduardo Verdu vil bruke materialet som grunnlag for sin Masteravhandling ved Diakonhjemmet Høgskole. Ingeborg Flagstad vil bruke materialet som del av sin doktorgradsavhandling ved Psykologisk Institutt, Universitetet i Oslo.

#### **Framgangsmåte:**

Alle sesjonene i gruppa vil bli filmet og deltagerne vil bli bedt om å fylle ut tre SPGR-skjemaer. Gruppesesjonene vil foregå i sosialpsykologilabben på Psykologisk Institutt, UiO. Rommet har tre fastmonterte videokameraer som vil brukes til opptakene.

Videomaterialet vil bli analysert kvalitativt og ved hjelp av observasjonsprogrammet SPGR. I analysen vil hovedfokuset ikke være på den enkelte deltager, men på terapeuten, relasjoner og gruppedynamikk.

Dataene vil bli transkribert og analysert av Eduardo Verdu og Ingeborg Flagstad. Eduardo Verdus veileder Heidi Eng, Dr.scient ved Diakonhjemmets Høyskole og Ingeborg Flagstads veileder Endre Sjøvold, førsteamanuensis NTNU, IØT: arbeidspsykologi og jura, vil få innsyn i materialet ved behov. Ut over disse personene er det ingen andre som vil få tilgang på materialet. I transkriberingsprosessen vil dataene bli anonymisert. Når dataene publiseres vil de ikke kunne spores tilbake til personer i gruppen slik at personvernet blir ivaretatt.

Videomaterialet vil brennes til DVD-plater og slettes fra harddisken på pc'en umiddelbart etter opptak. DVD'ene oppbevares innelåst. De kan brukes i forbindelse med forskning av Eduardo Verdu og Ingeborg Flagstad i senere forskningsprosjekter. DVD'ene makuleres senest 31. desember 2008. Preliminære resultater vil bli presentert til deltagerne under debrifingen etter at sesjonene er avsluttet. Video-opptak og selvrefleksjonsnotater vil ikke studeres før gruppen er avsluttet. Video-opptak kan etter endt prosjekt bli vist til Eduardo Verdu og Ingeborg Flagstads veildere ved behov i forbindelse med forskningen. Dette gjelder også for selvrefleksjonsnotater og SPGR-skjema.

### **Fordeler med deltagelse i studien:**

Det er ingen direkte fordeler for deg med å være deltager i studien. Materialet vil kunne bidra til å kaste lys over prosesser som foregår i grupper og hvordan terapi virker, og vil således bidra til faglig utvikling innen disse feltene både teoretisk og metodisk. Resultatene vil presenteres for gruppen under debrifingen. Debrifingen vil gi mulighet for en ekstra læring om prosessene som har foregått i gruppa, ut over det deltagelse i gruppesesjonene vil gi. Deltagelse på debrifingen er frivillig.

### **Konfidensialitet:**

Din deltagelse i denne studien er konfidensiell. Ingen informasjon vil identifisere deg med navn. Vi vil beskrive prosesser på gruppenivå og det vil ikke være mulig å identifisere gruppedeltagere. Dataene fra video-opptakene blir anonymisert i transkriberingsprosessen.

### **Frivillig deltagelse og mulighet for å trekke seg:**

Deltagelse i forskning er frivillig. Dersom du ønsker å være med i studien og ombestemmer deg har du rett til å trekke deg på ethvert tidspunkt. Dersom du underveis bestemmer deg for å trekke kan du gjøre det uten å måtte oppgi noen grunn. Om du allerede har vært med på noen video-opptak vil disse filene ikke slettes, men det vil ikke være noe fokus på deg som person i analysen.

### **Spørsmål:**

Dersom du har spørsmål om forskningsprosjektet, vær vennlig å ta kontakt med Eduardo Verdu på 92890510, e-post [everdu@online.no](mailto:everdu@online.no)

## **Samtykke-erklæring**

Ved å skrive under på denne erklæringen sier du deg villig til å delta i dette forskningsprosjektet ledet av Eduardo Verdu, Diakonhjemmet Høgskole, og Ingeborg Flagstad, Psykologisk Institutt, UiO.

Denne samtykke-erklæringen sier følgende: At du er 18 år eller eldre, at du har lest samtykke-erklæringen og har fått svar på eventuelle spørsmål. Du forstår at du kan trekke deg fra studien på ethvert tidspunkt og at du ikke vil miste noen av fordelene du ellers har krav på ved å trekke deg før studien er ferdig.

Alt materialet vil behandles fortrolig. Du har rett til å se resultatene før de publiseres. Du vil få en kopi av samtykke-erklæringen.

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Deltagerens signatur

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Sted og dato



# Appendix D

## Encounter 1 - Indelicate parts of me

This encounter is about Anne coming in contact with her need of showing that she is more than a “perfect” woman. She is so tired of doing and saying everything so correctly and being so proper. The group leader recognizes her body language and asks her to express in words what is going on. This invitation leads her to her exploration of some ugly sides of her. A transformation of the shame she felt at one point was crucial in the increasing of her awareness and the acceptance of being a woman with many sides. By accepting the “ugly” side instead of fighting it, the ugliness was reduced to something she could cope with and handle.

The encounter is initiated by long discussion on the danger of being in a group of three girls. Anne becomes engaged in the topic and talks almost uninterruptedly for five minutes before she states there has been a “lot of her” now. She is preparing for a kind of exploration, what Sterns calls the preparation for exploration, when the intersubjective field creates a new context so that new material emerges. The GL looks like the discussion on girl groups of three bores him. He tries to hide this, but it is obvious that this makes Anne even more talkative. It looks like she unconsciously notices and tries to “convince” him that this is important. It definitely is important to Anne but the GL has not caught it yet. It seems like he struggles in trying to understand what this really is about. His resistance or “not knowing how to get out of this field” seems to prolong the time that Anne really do not want to have by getting all the attention. We enter the crisis when GL goes to Diana and comments on her looking more relaxed now, after having been very tense for some time.

At this point we could have had a lost encounter or an increased level of tension in the group, but together we managed to enter the moment of meeting where we all wanted to contribute to solve the crisis. We reached a dramatic change (Stern, 2004). The search for a solution was a collective interaction. The crisis revealed the true nature of some mechanisms that in the beginning looked like childish selfishness. The moment the GL finds an opportunity to get out of what he feels is a locked field by commenting on Diana - that is the moment it happens. The anxiety enters the intersubjective field. Anne immediately

stretches her arms up in the air as if being bored and asks: "Can't we do something soon?" The group gets confused. Some of them think we have done a lot. Anne, who thinks she has been in focus too long, is now in focus again. GL asks her what she wants to do, and Anne responds that she wants to enter something. She does not know exactly what, but she needs for someone to do something. We have now entered the now moment. A small crisis is created because she has put herself in the limelight again and does not really want to be there. At the same time she really needs to be there. She realises that maybe she has the need to explore her longing. This seems to shake her a little and she tries to withdraw a couple of times from the "now moment". The GL challenges her by reminding her that she a few minutes ago expressed some needs. Again she declares her feeling of taking a lot of space in the group. The group leader, while sitting in the chair, slides towards her with a very open body language, keeping his arms and hands half up in the air and open so she can see them. They do not threaten her. His voice is soft when he talks while sliding closer to her across the room. He is accepting and at the same time confronting.

*GL: I feel you say that you want some action but you do not want to take responsibility. It feels like you want to be an observer.*

*Anne: I get provoked when you say that- so OK, [name of GL]. I can do it.*

*GL: Do what?*

*Anne: Do what needs to be done.*

GL still does not know what she wants, and ask her. She wants something to happen that no one knows what is. The GL challenges her to continue to take the space and explore it. With a very silent voice, she accepts.

Some focus is given to Anne's body language. GL mirrors hers body language. This can be a very powerful tool to use and he therefore uses it in a way where he almost minimizes her body language in order not to make her feel shame She holds her own thumbs and her answer to the question about why she does this, is that she struggles to pull herself together and is a little anxious. Anne refuses to be a civilised woman. She is challenged by the GL to show the group how she is (or that she is) uncivilised. She accepts the challenge and shows the group with varied success.

*When Anne walks around and encounters the rest of us I experience her as having no contact with me. It is like if she is trying to show me something that is not clear yet. It is a little like: "I don't want everybody to look at me as harmless". But she looks quite harmless.  
(Sandra)*

When encountering Maria she suddenly exposes herself more than intended to and feels shame. She has been indelicate. It is like if she realises her own harmlessness while she tells the group how awful she can be. This way she reveals herself in a way she did not expect. She wanted to show her dangerous sides, but revealed her sadness and desperateness. She is confronted with herself through the encounter she has with Maria that she shows her ugliness to. It is almost as if she finally sees her innocence when encountering Maria. Maria becomes the mirror of what really is her. The ugliness is not necessarily that she walks and makes sounds like a troll, but the shame when she reveals her protection she tries to convince to the world that she has. At the same time her longing for being creative and create her life makes her feel the need for not only being the proper superwoman. Realising this and the fact that she has shown this to the group makes her very vulnerable. In order to balance the feeling of shame and feeling acceptance, the group leader, with her permission, walks closer to her. At the points when he stands close to her she gets a little insecure. The GL continues to stand by her and meet her eyes. He wants to know what she feels having him so close to her and her shame. She moves from being insecure to become shy to become calm. Anne accepts her feelings and the fact that she has shown this to us all. She feels an acceptance of her having ugly sides as well. Now she has not only told us, she has showed herself and us.

*She does not want to be a civilised woman. But in my eyes she is. So she starts showing us she is not civilised. When she comes to me something weird happens. It is a strong moment – an encounter. It feels almost as a magnetic field between us is activated. At that moment I look at her differently – in a new way. It is true. She is not beautiful in the moment. She radiates something desperate, something very old and sad. I understand her when she later says she did not want to show me so much of this. I, on the contrary liked to see her this way. It was exciting and liberating. I felt recognition. She was ashamed. I thought she was brave.*  
(Maria)

## **Encounter 2 - The beauty of the bulimic woman**

This encounter is triggered by some of the group members mentioning the beauty and style of Lisa. Her reaction is instant feelings of stiffness and malaise and the remark awakens a long history of bulimia and anorexia and her journey towards finding her inner beauty. This

is a very short encounter that later became the inspiration for a long process for her about the feeling of being raped by life itself.

Diana enters the room with quite extravagant clothing filled with holes, and socks that do not match. People comment on her clothes. Lisa makes a comment on how liberating it must feel to go dressed however you want and get the attention.

Sandra comment on Lisa's elegance. Lisa becomes stiff and uncomfortable when receiving this compliment.

It seems like Sandra is a little bothered, wondering if she might not have made her point clear to Lisa, as if she is afraid that what was meant to be a compliment might be understood as something else by Lisa. She tries to make it clearer not knowing that the compliment is what is warming Lisa up to her history.

GL catches her body language and explores it with her. Her story of eating disorders, denial of love and feeling of being raped by life itself is revealed.

The GL summarizes her story and asks her to try an experiment where she is given a line put together by the GL. She accepts, looks the GL in the eyes and says the line. Lisa turns to Sandra and Sandra gives her the compliment again. This time Lisa is able to look Sandra in the eyes and accept the compliment. Shame turns into acceptance. The change here opens up a whole chapter that has been untouched: A chapter of shame and spirituality, life and death.

In the beginning of this encounter we are all in a general interaction. This phase is needed in order to understand who the others are and what the group looks like today. This is determined by our experiences before we meet. This is a warm up phase where we try to understand how we will contact and relate to each other. When a focal point emerges, like it did here with Diana's clothes, this gives us a chance to contact each other and be engaged in a common theme.

The interest of the group leader is piqued by Sandra's comment on Lisa and her looking so puzzled. The way he smiles suggests that he understands the situation. This makes her safe enough to choose silence and waiting to see what will come. His silence encourages

Sandra and Lisa to produce more. Sandra repeats how she thinks Lisa looks elegant. We have now entered the now moment. Lisa is gaping and the GL focuses on supporting her in feeling her own feelings in order to “liberate herself” from feeling fear, powerlessness, and the not knowing what is expected from her. Lisa’s response to Sandra’s comment is laughter as if Sandra is out of her mind or trying to offend her. The GL again recognises her feeling of being tilted out of her comfort zone and keeps her focus on her experience. She does not know how to respond when she can’t feel herself or know herself. This helps Lisa to increase her awareness. At one point the GL challenges her by repeating and amplifying Sandra’s comment. “Don’t you know you are beautiful”? This expands Lisa’s consciousness by making her think as well and associate her own experience with the statement from someone outside herself. Immediately after the GL expresses the same thing again, but in a different way: “Don’t you know some people think you are beautiful”? This is done to reinforce the content of the question. At the same time he works physically by leaning forward and thereby being clear about his interest, presence and wish for reinforcing their alliance through support. Her feeling of being very uncomfortable is shown by her nervous laughter and her hand starting to rub her knee. For the GL it is almost like he can feel her pain and struggle and his need to support her is very present. He laughs with her, but his laugh is more a laugh of the weird situation that this beautiful and clever woman can be so astonished by a simple statement and at the same time he communicates to her: “I am here, I see and hear you and I experience this together with you. We are together in the intersubjective field and we have a small crisis but we will manage together”. The GL shows that he accepts her experience of herself when she finally realises that what is supposed to be a compliment from Sandra, sounds like criticism to her.

When Lisa comes in contact with being paralyzed, he clarifies her anxiety in her body. She is paralyzed or we could say she is in a freeze response. They move along by exploring the intersubjective anxiety in order to get a more coherent field together. It is obvious that she is stuck and the GL offers her a way of being present in the moment with him by looking into his eyes, connecting and focusing on the relation in the here and now with the GL as the safe “other” Their relational moves are at all time made clear to Sandra and to the group. This is how the GL hopes they can move on to a moment of meeting. He is all the time telling her that he recognises her in order for her to feel the relatedness and the ‘we’. “I

hear and see how you feel and you are still fine for me". He supports her experience of herself continuously.

When she states that she will feel later when she is alone, the group leader understands that he needs to make a strong relation so her confidence in the relation enables her to transcend the lack of confidence in the outer world that tells her that she needs to wait to feel her feelings until she is alone. Lisa has the idea that we will see or hear all her voices if she feels when we are present. These thoughts of the catastrophe that can arise are fuel for the anxiety she feels, and becomes clear to her when she projects her statement: "If you have heard all my voices you would not have said this". This gives the GL the opportunity to bring in the group and ask Diana if she thinks Lisa is ugly. This kind of questions to the group is always risking taking but the reward can be great. This brings in some more energy and gives the GL a little distance for a few seconds. Here is where the experiment comes in and takes us over to a moment of meeting.

Challenging Lisa to say that she is a bulimic, anorectic, ugly and beautiful woman is not only about confrontation. It is also about recognising and stating the obvious in her world. It is an existential intervention. He acknowledges the full situation, also the split. The ambivalence she experienced by being complimented on, and that got her to close herself is gone and she is able to take in the other and relate to and acknowledge what is being said. She sees and believes the GL and the group when they tell her they are being touched by her struggle. At the end the GL checks that she has assimilated her new experience by asking Sandra to repeat the compliment and see her reaction. This time Sandra is relaxed and smiles. This gives the GL the chance to facilitate for a new encounter between her and the group, that in itself is a healing process for Lisa in her way of being in the relation.

### **Encounter 3 - Reconnecting with the heart**

This is an encounter between Maria and the group leader. For some time Maria has had a strong feeling of getting less attention than the other participants. She is very silent and the group leader comments on it and encourage her to find some words to express what she feels. She feels disconnected, closed off, on the outside and small. By exploring her feelings

and her body language in the encounter, she physically gets a strong twitching of the body at the point when her heart is touched both metaphorically and physically. The change is very clear both physically, meaning her presence and breathing calmly and mentally by joining in as a warm and wise woman. In the beginning the GL tries to connect her to the group. He is aware of her strong feeling of not belonging and feeling of rejection that she has had since the beginning of this group. The feeling has grown stronger and stronger.

Maria talks a little about her psychological pain - a pain that when it lasts long enough you become anesthetized, so you no longer feel the pain. At that point you no longer remember the cause of the pain. You just feel alone. (Maria's description). He decides to investigate if the moment is there to help her connecting. He has the feeling that she is giving up. This could also be her frustration of not feeling included. The group tries to help her by telling her how they recognize her feelings, but she looks more and more tired. At one point Maria is so tired and feel so small that she comments on herself as if she was on the floor. The GL invites her to sit on the floor and after some hesitation she moves down and sit there. The GL slowly moves down on the floor with Maria and meets her on her physical level. She wants to lie down. She feels like nothing. GL acknowledges her and lies down with her on the floor and at the same time telling her that it is ok that she is nothing. She accepts. Their meeting build up acceptance of the situation between them. She is nothing and he honours her with respect for her feelings and experience of her self. She struggles with right or wrong all the time. I can or I cannot or maybe I can or maybe it is wrong...

GL asks for permission to hold the hand of "nothing". Maria starts to cry. He then asks for permission to touch her heart. The heart of "nothing" She accepts and when the hand touches her heart she gets a strong twitching in her body. A strong feeling of trust and love awakened in Maria and some of the group members. Maria literally feels her heart in a sense she never do and she feels re-connected with her heart. She becomes clearer to the group.

*The group leader softly moves down on her physical level and just follow her flow, meaning he meets her on her physical level, her pitch in the voice, her breathing pattern and her state of mind. Even if Maria sometimes tries to use some cynical defence mechanisms, the group leader continues to look at her directly with acceptance. This is something that allows her to show herself naked. The reward is big. It is like equalization on the level of love takes place between the group leader and Maria. It is a basic love one can feel towards human beings. Suddenly she gets like electric shock and in a split moment she seems to be totally changed. What happens is very hard to explain as facts with words.*

*(Lisa)*

When this happens the GL explores what happens with her body and her senses. She expresses the feeling of humiliation and GL focus on what does she do when she feels humiliated? How does she manage this feeling? How does she sense it and how does she sense when it change? He wants to make her aware of the movements in her senses in order to make her capable of what makes the shifts in her. By doing this he connects her body to her head and make her aware of her feelings.

He invites her to enter the difficult space where she feels she is nothing now that she has shown herself and showed us her shame. This is the shame of feeling insufficient and worthless. Physically he follows her to the floor in order to create symmetry in the relation so she feels more comfortable. By doing this he also shows her that he is not afraid of being with her in the room of shame and worthlessness and that he respects her in this room. When she accepts and lets him enter this room he gets the chance to explore her feeling of being nothing. In this room he makes her aware that “nothing” can be touched and in the relation be made to something. Her feelings of being touched, as nothing becomes an important clue in helping her recognize her existence even when she is “nothing”. When she is nothing, she still feels something. At all time he keeps in contact with her and stay with her even if it is to do nothing. He holds the space with her and shows her acceptance by being there and comforting her.

It was so incredibly relieving to see her physical reaction when she got the shock. It felt so liberated. It was like giving up a control that had kept her back from life for so long. (Diana)