

Franca Errani & Cristina Contini

- Integration of the “Coping with Voices” Model (Affrontamento delle Voci) with Voice Dialogue (Dialogo delle Voci) and Body-Mind-Dialogue (BMD)





Our vision

- Selves and Voices: the same root
- Multiplicity is the common characteristic for all human beings!
- Voice Dialogue could be the common language at the basis for operators, voice hearers, familiars...
- Exploring and accepting "selves" facilitates an easier vision of "Voices"



Differences between selves and “Voices”

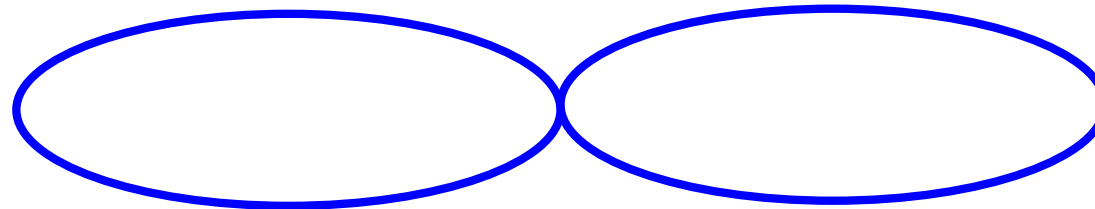
- Selves are normally underestimated in our culture. We like the idea of being an “unit”, a coherent and aware flow of consciousness under the control of the ego – the executive function of the psyche.
- Selves in us “speak” in the flow of our thoughts and emotions, but we are not used to think at them in terms of “entities” – fields of energy, sub-personalities. This concept, even if it belongs to psychology, still is felt as dangerous (at least for our dominant system and in specific contexts).
- A self is a real field of energy, with its own way of thinking, its posture, voice, emotions and beliefs. Simply, we do not differentiate between it and us, as the flow of thinking gives us the idea of **mastering** it.



Voice Dialogue and the Psychology of Selves

- Created by Hal and Sidra Stone (USA)
- The peculiar “flavor” of a Method that originates from the mutual exploration of two partners in love...
 - Respect
 - Human curiosity
 - Not pathologizing, nor labeling

The lemniscate represents the natural flow between polarities



- Yang
- Power
- Masculin
- Adult....

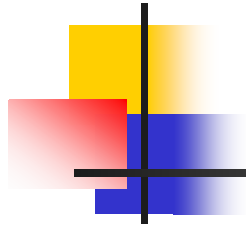
- Yin
- Vulnerability
- Feminine
- Child...





The law of Polarization

- It's not possible to use both polarities at the same time
- One polarity becomes the “preferred”



From “natural flow” to inflation

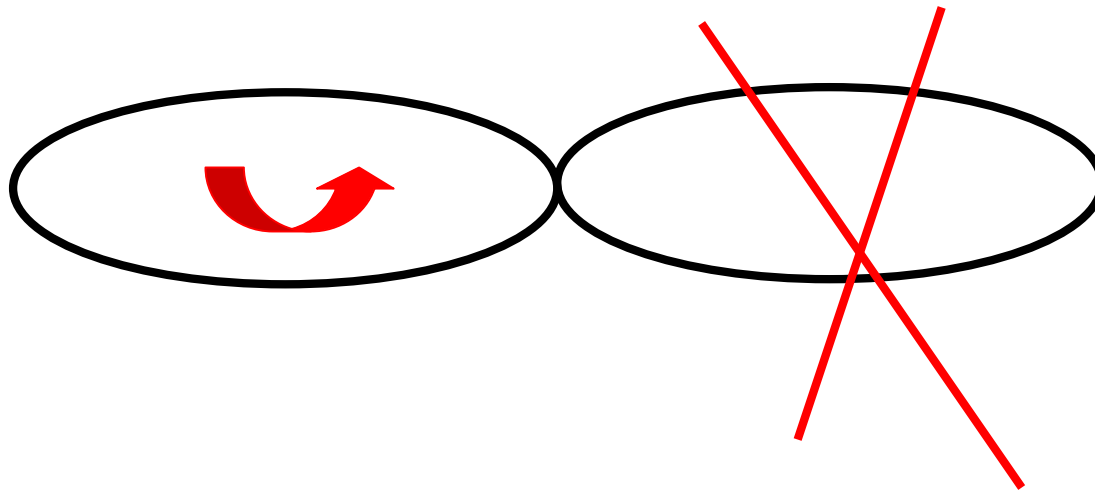
- One does not start from both sides at the same time
- One pole becomes the "favorite" : example:
Responsible/not responsible; altruism/egoism;
rational/intuitive...
- The pole that functions well takes up more and more room, thus creating the
- “automatic pilot” that makes decisions in our place
(also called operative ego)
- The other pole is suffocated and becomes disowned





What happens?

- The process of disowning stops the natural flow between polarities





Dominant selves

- The development of the dominant selves (or Primary System) is an **adaptation strategy**
- The way we adapt to the demands of the environment (adesion or rebellion)
- Develop very early
- Many of them!
- Can modify in time – adolescence – or following crucial events





The Protector/Controller

The protector puts itself in place to protect our vulnerability, that is, the child in us.

It is the armor that protects it from difficulties and defends it against wounds.

It knows the rules of the social game and allows the person to adopt behaviors appropriate to the environment. It needs to have control over situations, persons, relations...

Without the protector-controller, the child is quickly crushed.





The Perfectionist

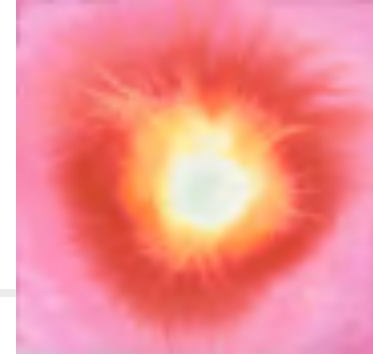
The perfectionist has very strict success criteria. “If it deserves to be done, it deserves to be done perfectly” could be one of its mottos.

It drives us to always do better and to push back the limits.

Without the perfectionist there is no major success, in art, science or any other field.



The Caregiver



The one that tries to be a good parent, who takes care of its children and also of the others.

The caregiver tends to spontaneously help others, with the same kindness and availability; it perceives their needs and fragilities.

Without the caregiver, children could not or barely survive; charitable organizations would undoubtedly not exist.



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The Pusher



**This self is devoted to “action”.
It likes to feel the energy of doing things.
It dislike any form of “being”. It’s quite
appreciated in our society.**

**Without a Pusher, it is difficult to
accomplish things.**



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The Responsible

This self is the one that activates any time we engage in something. It wants us to be reliable, accountable for our promise... even if we can “die” to complete this engagement!

Without a Responsible in us, society will have a lot of problems...



The Rational

This self is quite developed and appreciated in our culture. It likes clear and linear thinking, structure, analysis. Having thoughts, facts, named and classified. It fears and judges emotions, intuition, excessive feelings.

Without this self we will be lost in our emotional and sensitive parts.





The Critic



It is the “Keeper of the rules” of the “inner parliament”: it knows all the rules of the dominant selves. Sometimes can act like a rigid policeman who judges with incredible strength (and sometimes cruelty) any “violation of the laws”. It points out good and evil, the principles that govern moral life. It can have different connotations according to what kind of rules it is identified with.

The critic attacks for any fault, imperfection or inadequacy. It is the enforcer of all the rules and works in very strict connection with the dominant system.

Without the cricket perched on Pinocchio’s shoulder, there should be no conscience.



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The Patriarch/The Matriarch

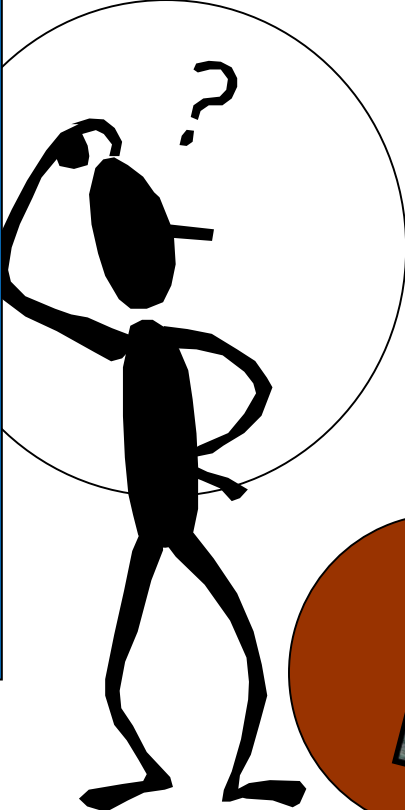
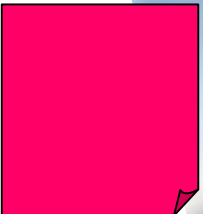

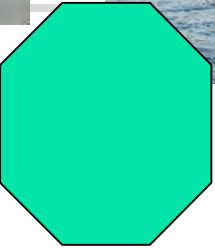

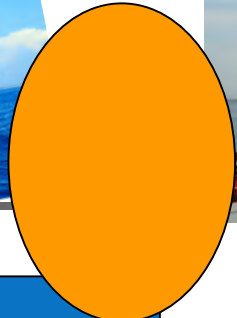






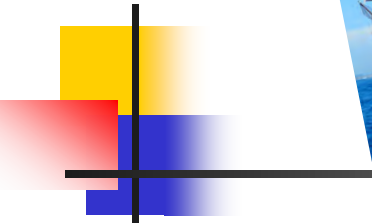
These are the culturally inherited voices that indicate men's and women's social roles:

- **the patriarch is the male authority figure that gives women their place in society.**
- **the matriarch is the female authority figure that gives men their place in society.**

They appreciate more the qualities of men and women, respectively.

Without them, the social structure would lack stability.



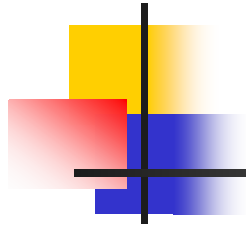


Each self has its
own idea about life,
how to do things, to
behave....

And it is
CONVINCED
that it's the
RIGHT one!!



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The Protector-Controller

The Care-giver

The Child within

The Patriarch

The Critic

The Matriarch

The Perfectionist

The Responsible

The Pusher

The Rational

How can we connect all this?



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.....
And... and... and...



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Conscious development

- **Naming:** identifying the differences
- **Unhooking:** take distance from the “automatic pilot”
- **Reclaiming:** withdrawal from the projection
- **Transforming:** the new space allows changes and different choices



Conscious development/2

- This process functions following the principle of re-balancing, that gives back energy to the system (psyche, body, mind, spirit)





The Child within



**The inner child is the most vulnerable part of oneself,
the most intimate and the most sensitive.**

It is very close to the soul.

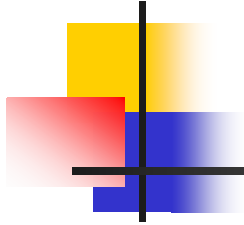
**It needs an environment in which it feels safe so that
it can manifest itself.**

**Without an inner child, there is no spiritual life, no
intimate relationship with others.**

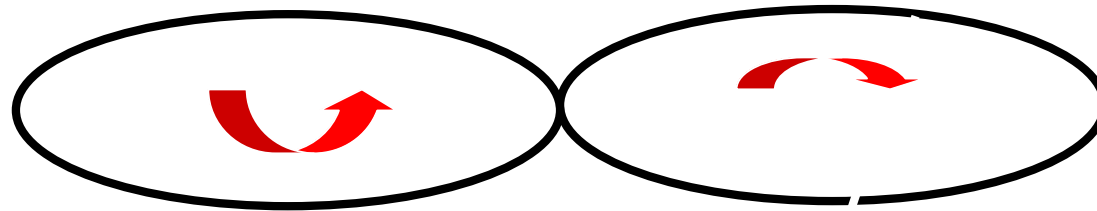
**(This self is at the origin of the primary system, that
quite often ends up in suffocating it – another risk
is to have the Child dominant, thus becoming
“victim” of the world)**



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- The disowned selves can rebalance the system...



Some examples of disowned

- Generally... the opposite of the dominant system!
 - *The vulnerable Child*
 - *The Relaxed side*
 - *"Aphrodite"*
 - *Aggressive aspects*
 - *Instinctual energies...*





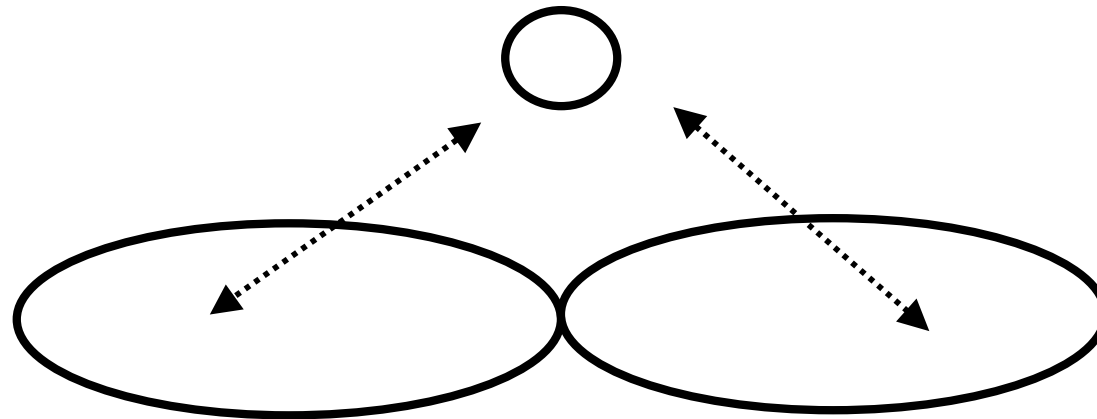
How can we recognize our dominant and disowned selves?

- A CLUE: judgment (or admiration)
- (Exercise)
- When there is no Awareness, there is judgment

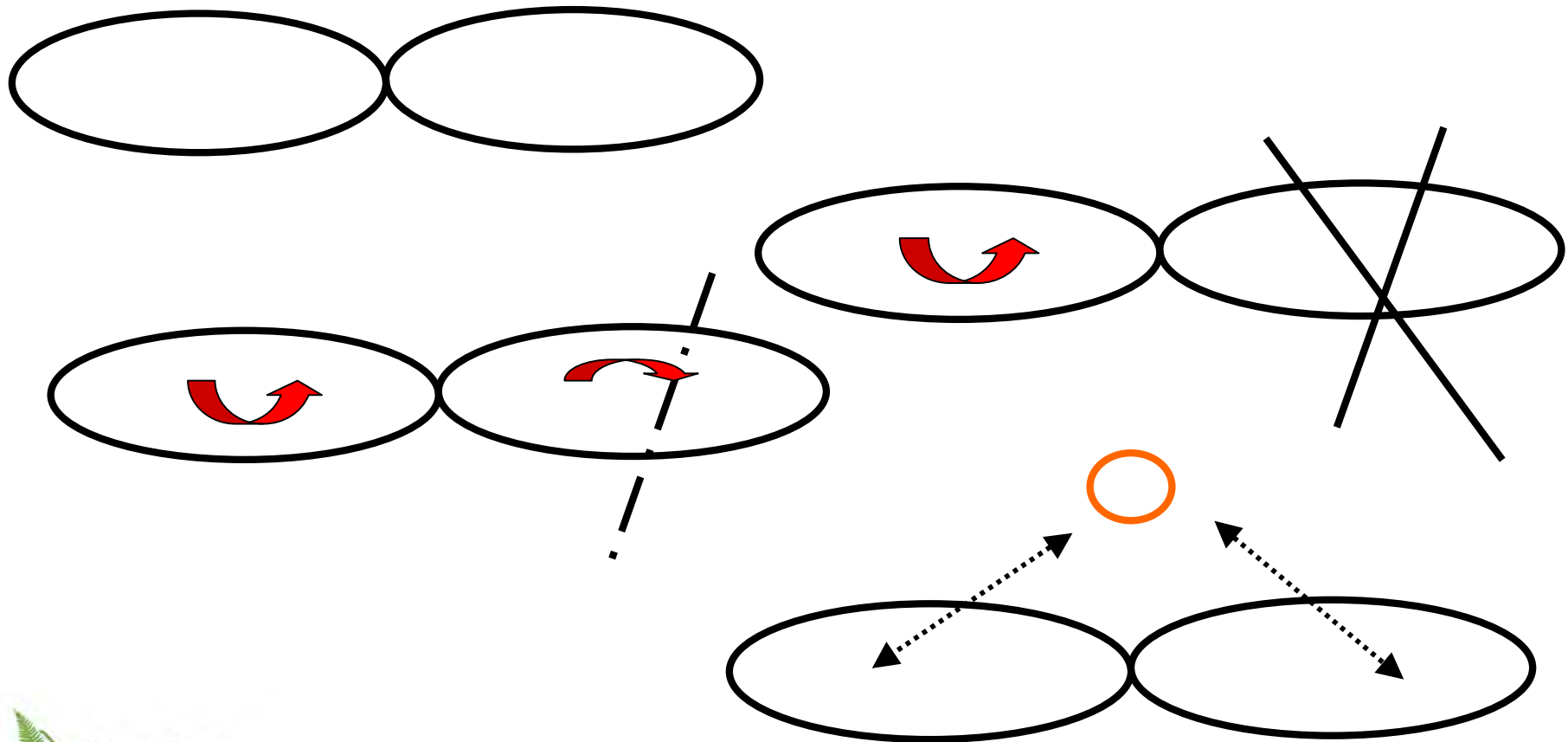


The “aware ego” process (AEP)

- The AEP is more and more conscious of the polarities and their dynamics



Summarizing...





“What” is the Aware Ego?

- It is not another self (even if many “candidate” themselves for this! The Critic, the Spiritual Self, the Responsible... ecc)
- It is not a state: it is a process
- It is not “experimentable” like a self. We perceive its action more from the results in our life than from a direct experience.
- It is a “meta-level” of consciousness that grows more and more through the separation from the different polarities.
- We will always be a “mix” of operative and aware ego, as polarities in our psyche are so many!!





Voice Dialogue

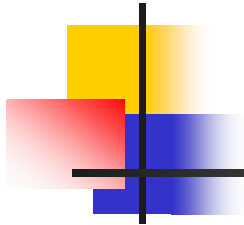
- With Voice Dialogue, we can learn to “give voice” to our selves (primary and disowned)
- There are some important rules



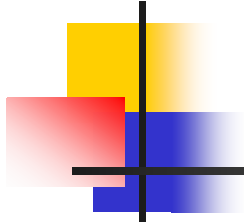
Body-Mind-Dialogue (BMD)

- We can learn to “give body” to our selves:
 - Movement
 - Breath
 - Body awareness
 - Creativity through colors, sounds, etc.

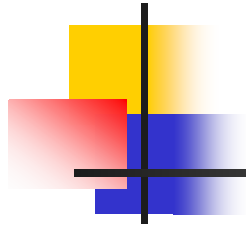




- Selves in us act quite often unknown. We need to get acquainted to this reality.
- The first reaction is **FEAR**: of fragmentation, losing control, craziness and pathology. The medical language supports this process – dissociation, fragmentation, schizophrenia etc.
- The second reaction is **DENIAL**: this stuff belongs to pathology.
- Another reaction is **CONTROL**: try to control outside any manifestation of multiplicity, because of the fear of this possibility inside.
- All these reactions belong to OUR PRIMARY SYSTEM – that in Occident is quite similar to the one used as example.
- So the polarity that can be activated when people are faced with Voices are:
 - ✓ *Unitary – multiple*
 - ✓ *sane – insane*
 - ✓ *mastery – lack of mastery*



- Voices are selves that take control over the ego. The ego crashes under the “violence” of the Voice. BUT:
- Even the Voices arise for some kind of protection (like the selves)
- The Voices are the expression of a problem and a scream of help.
- If they are suffocated (through denial, too long pharmacology, despise) the possibility of understanding the underlining problem and to solve is, is lost.



Some ideas...

- The person (in contact with the Voice Hearer) who will experience Voice Dialogue for his personal process, will get in touch with his/her own selves.
- Knowing these selves is, first, an extraordinary opportunity of transformation and evolution; second it will help in facing the Voice hearer in a completely new way.
- Connection, questions, comprehension will arise much easier, fear (and or judgment) will be reduced.
- A new kind of com-passion will appear.

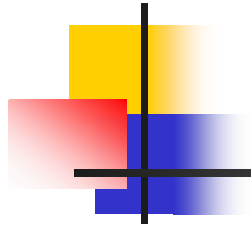




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