

The metaphoric Path of Life

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During the course of my training, I began to learn the basic concept of the metaphorical path of life, which are based on the teachings of Dr. Peter Reiter. However, in contrast to his teachings, I began integrating active physical movement into the practice and combined it with techniques I developed myself. My experience has been that physical activity makes it easier to come into contact with our split-off feelings. We are often separated from our own self in such a way that even our feelings only take place in our mind - our profound feelings in our heart have been lost. I often hear from patients that they can remember that moment in their lives when they decided not to feel anymore. Moreover, we also have a gut instinct, which we also like to ignore. Would it not be much more desirable if we would also be able to find togetherness in ourselves?

As a whole, we have a choice to feel and perceive what we want to. We decide what we want to see, hear or feel. This also results in our typical everyday situations, such as when we make such claims like: „you never said that“, „but I told you“, „I did tell you, but you never listen“ and so on. In my therapeutic work, I let my patients actively walk the metaphorical path of life. The physical sensations bring them more easily into contact with their feelings.

The metaphorical path can be seen as a fork in the road (as in the shape of the letter Y). By going down my life path, I reach a fork in the road. At this fork, an emotionally stressful event took place. Here I subconsciously decide if the glass is “half full or „half empty“ or if I turn left or right at the fork. What you assign to your paths is up to you; it just has to be clearly defined. Personally, I prefer to de-

fine the left fork as the destructive path (the glass is half empty) and the right fork as the constructive path (the glass is half full). The patient determines the meaning of their life paths. At my practice, I place two different colored ropes in a Y on the floor. The patient has to actively walk along the symbolic paths of the Y and then must describe the feelings that arise.

At the intersection (fork):

We make choices when hit by emotionally stressful situations like accidents, natural catastrophes, massive emotional injuries, insults, or feeling of anger and despair. At this point, we subconsciously decide if the glass is „half full“ or „half empty.“ If the subconscious decision has been made that the “glass is half empty,” then the experienced situation - that was so terrible that I never want to feel the emotion again and thus split it off - prevents the decision for a new decision in direction „the glass is half full.“ This negative and existentially threatening experience is split off in the subconscious, so we no longer have to remember this situation again. However, we never make an „update.“ Only later on in life, diseases and illnesses let us return to this point in time and give us a chance to re-decide and evaluate the situation. Our survival reflexes - our fight, flight and play-dead reflexes - influence our response patterns and our concepts; depending which reflex was activated at the time. Moreover, our unfulfilled needs that we had during that situation play an important role.

Often times, when we are at the fork in the road, we are not aware of our option of making a different decision and maybe taking a different path and, for this reason, we do not take a different route. People

rarely are capable of making constructive decisions when they are in extreme situations. At least we do not see this happen often in everyday practice.

The left path of life - the glass is half empty:

As a rule, our physical symptoms from which we suffer come from taking this path. Our basic character patterns at the causal level, such as being right, defiance, accusations and so on, can show up just as well as our main reaction patterns like our fight, flight and play-dead reflexes. Our entire palette of feelings is possible here, like "I'm cold", "I won't give up", "I'll show them", "I feel nothing", "I'll do it my way", "I don't know where I belong", "I am alone", "I can't find my place", "That is how I always felt" and so on. At the same time, we can see if we have subconsciously made the decision to go into the retreat or offense is the best defense mode (please also refer to the article "As Well As Versus Either Or").

The right path of life - the glass is half full:

Step by step new possibilities can open up if a deliberate decision was made to choose "the glass is half full." The benefit of movement can help stimulate and create new networks in the brain. By repeatedly making conscious decisions at the fork in the road and by walking down the new path, we are able to create new possibilities. This opens up a new life path. On this path, many patients are able to see their goals and are able to consciously make new decisions that are closer to the heart and correspond to their feelings. We are able to become more conscious and authentic. We have the chance to be together with ourselves and see things more as they are; and thereby we can be the creator of our own lives and we can determine and figure out what suits us and what not. Then mistakes become experiences and chances and are no longer associa-

ted with failure. Being rejected by another person is no longer considered a rejection of my self but is understood that my opposite has different needs than I do. From the guidelines of non violent communication we know the following: do I want to be in the right or do I want to be happy; we can't have both. The inner conflict with all the pros and cons and all the doubts and fears can come to an end. I can develop the affiliation to myself and thereby reduce the pressure of belonging to a system and let go. If I have a place in myself and it belongs to me, then I can approach others without having expectations.

I emphasize time and again how much our basic decisions affect our lives. Lency Spezzano is of the opinion that we are only a frozen moment when we had a tantrum in our childhood. In my opinion, this was a situation when we were emotionally deeply offended, hurt, in distress, in panic or traumatized. This pain was so life-threatening at that specific moment that we split off and subconsciously decided through which lens we would see the world. It is our decision - our perception is our choice. Generally, this subconscious decision affects our lives and basically determines which life path we take. On this path of life, we develop our survival strategies and capabilities and believe that this is our personality. However, we have actually lost contact to who we really are. This was due to a subconscious decision we made when we felt vulnerable and confused. For us, this situation was life threatening and existential.

Today we are adults and can consciously make new decisions. Since our survival is no longer threatened existentially - in comparison to the situation in our childhood - we can make new and conscious decisions. We have a choice.