

As well as versus either/or

Or put it more simply: The Glass is half versus the glass is half-empty. Constructive versus destructive

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In the course of my many years of practice, I have developed the following working model, which I would like to describe here without going into too much detail. Even in its simplicity it is enormously complex, since at all levels there is a large variety of expression possible. My intention here is to encourage people to look at things from a different perspective in order to foster the readiness necessary to make new decisions and changes in their life.

On our journey through life, we often find ourselves at a junction where we have to make an unconscious decision to either turning left or right. In a sense, this means: From which perspective or lens do we fundamentally look at our world? There are essentially two ways of looking at the world: constructive or destructive. Or to put it in other words: the glass is half full or the glass is half empty.

We all want to see our needs satisfied and, as a rule, we expect the people around us meet these needs. Years ago, in further training, I coined the phrase: Once the umbilical cord is severed our needs are no longer met. Thus, we have to do something for our own needs. Already as an infant, we know how to have our needs satisfied. We learn how to behave in a certain way so that our needs are met; first by our mother, then our family and then by our environment. This decisively shapes how we behave and we remain with this behavior - we want to continue having our needs met from the outside. This creates the basis for being dependent or independent.

It is a big step for us to even recognize our needs and to find out how to meet them. While our technology (computers, smartphones etc.) permanently

receives updates, we try to avoid our own updates as much as possible. However, habits are notoriously hard to change. And, of course, it is easier and nicer to have our needs met externally; with far-reaching consequences. Due to our life crisis, we come into the situation where we have to make up our minds if we want to continue choosing the path of the least resistance or if we choose the constructive path.

We usually choose the destructive path (the glass is half empty) when triggered by an emotional wound, insult, shock, and so on. Also on this destructive path, there is a junction, which is based on the respective personal reaction to emotional wounds, insults, shock ...

In simple terms:

We either pump ourselves up in the sense of "the best defense is offense" or we retreat. These two possibilities are mutually dependent, like lock and key. They literally seek each other out.

Only a few of us are able to deal constructively with insults etc. And, therefore, we absolutely need an update in how we treat ourselves. From my experience I know that an update is necessary, especially on the needs level, which also entails choosing personal responsibility. My expectations of my environment need to be reconsidered and changed. First, I need to ensure that my needs are met by myself. If someone in my social circle also helps out, I can accept. Many of our emotional wounds are based on unsatisfied expectations and thus on unsatisfied needs. In this context, if somebody says NO to me, it should be interpreted differently. It is not a rejection of my person, but it rather means that my

opposite has a different need than I do. This inner attitude allows me to have easier access to a constructive path.

For us, being on this constructive path means always working on and with ourselves. It is not something that lands in our lap. Here, we need to be prepared and willing to change our perspectives when necessary. This also means that we have to uncover our habits and patterns in order to add different perspectives and to achieve what I call “as well as” and a spirit of togetherness. A one-of realization is not enough. It is like learning once again how to walk, however, with ourselves, and, of course, at the beginning we do not succeed very well in achieving permanent success. I once received a wonderful description of what being on this path is like: At the beginning of our journey, we are in a hole and without noticing it. Then one day we discover we are stuck in the hole. We crawl out and stumble into the next hole. Then, in the next evolutionary step, we fall into another hole. However, after this phase, we start seeing the holes and manage to bypass them, and at some point we choose a path without holes. Unquestionably, it is process that takes a long time before we are able to choose a path without holes.

It takes a high degree of personal responsibility and willingness in order to keep choosing the constructive way - to remain aware that emotional wounds, insults, shocks etc. will occur again and again. They belong to our lives and I decide how to deal with them.

The easier path is that of pain, and, thus, the path to victim and perpetrator dynamics, to dependency and independence. Here we are thinking in terms of black-and-white rather than either/or.

This destructive path, with its parallel possibilities, is usually the playground of human interaction, with all its different manifestations and possibilities. No matter which variant we have chosen on the destructive path-victim/perpetrator, ependence/independence, narcissist/helper, and so forth - we will always have both sides in us.

We should be aware of the fact that we have both paths in us - destructive and constructive. The choice for which path we choose is in our own free will.

This is nothing new and has been known since ancient times. And yet it is still one of the greatest challenges for us. Our decisions have a massive impact on us, on our environment and on our world.