

Personal Reflections

Beyond the Constellation Room

Stephen Busby



Stephen Busby has been working as a coach and consultant for over 25 years in Europe, Africa, Asia and North America. He is an associate of the nowhere academy (UK) and of the Academy of Inner Science (Germany), and is the founder of Deep-Systems Healing for Individuals and Organisations. He works in English and French and is based at the Findhorn Community in Scotland.

stephen@stephenbusby.com
www.deepsystemshealing.com

Stephen Busby explores aspects of a systemic consciousness and its potential impact on our lives at the level of self and society.

Sometimes to 'see life through a systemic lens' feels like struggle enough. I shrink from it back towards a snapshot view. Yet I know that systemic work leads me deeper even than seeing, if I allow it. More than a particular stance in life, it is a way of being which impacts upon my sense of self and amplifies my ability to effect positive change in the world. It is suggestive too of a next step in human evolution. The systemic path can take us to profound places when we trust enough to surrender to its natural logic and flow.

The constellation community strikes me as rather mute on the nature of the consciousness that gives rise to its work and that which the work cultivates in us. Systemic work invites me as a practitioner into a more embodied experience of life, where I more fully feel 'the whole' – the embedded interdependent systems

of which I'm a part and of which I am sometimes afforded a glimpse.

The subtle skills and sensitivities intrinsic to working inside the constellation room are just as applicable outside it, where we may also continue to navigate intuitively and creatively within hidden systems, using an inner compass. This is the compass that Judith Hemming describes¹ and which overrides our conditioned tendency to see and create mutually exclusive opposites. When I follow it, I connect with a deeper reality in which all distinct or separate things are aspects of the unnameable in relationship.

Suspending this conditioning – or simply bringing some compassion to it – can be disorienting. We may experience ourselves less as people equipped with the autonomous power of navigation to make things happen (to facilitate healing movements

for instance), and rather more as part of 'whole intelligence'. We may find that we are guided in what we do and how we act from a deeper place, and are sometimes given a glimpse there of a level of human development where the nature of this 'we' – who or what we are when less identified with our individuality – would be radically re-defined.

Constellation work helps to cultivate an expanded sense of the collective self. If we follow this in a spirit of enquiry, then we sense a world where the impact of what we do and how we are as individuals becomes more immediately, spontaneously and wholly transparent to each of us and to everyone around us, regardless of our relationship to each other in time or space. This is a world where our inner realities are understood as being less owned and exclusive to us and more understood as the shared source of all creative

inspiration. In this world, if we embrace it, we are called to much higher levels of responsibility in how collectively we make decisions, act, respond, and love.

No wonder that immersion in constellation work can feel so dizzying in its suggestive power and effect. It is as if we are on the tip of an iceberg. Under the water we glimpse the potential for a new, more evolved way of being and living. We are then moved to explore together where we tend to draw unhelpful boundaries around the conventions of current practice, what we are being called towards when not formally constellating and how fearless we can be in evoking the kind of life and society that this work is pointing us towards.

Recently, while participating in research into field-intelligence, I found the same sense of a strong evolutionary invitation. As with systemic constellation work, there was insight into collective spaces of inner experience and more sensitivity to different levels of awareness, which can lead to heightened states of consciousness in everyday life and a real shift in the collective. When constellating, we know that if we allow ourselves to become ever more sensitive to the field then we are enabled to read information there, and may increasingly experience people, structures or systems from the inside. In time, we may also experience ourselves less as 'reading' or 'receiving' and more as participating in a shared transparent and transpersonal space. After all, what would I need to stand outside of in order to read it, and from what other place or dimension outside of me could my intuitive impulses arise?

As practitioners we are open to subtle kinds of information, energy and intelligence which we know are available within any field, and which support actions and decisions that spring from a more organic place. In our work and in our everyday lives, we know that the potential for healing and transformation within any system may be felt, found, and often released.

If we allow it, systemic work raises ever more fascinating questions about knowledge and intelligence, which at subtle levels become more discernible and accessible only to the extent to which we become more embodied in ourselves – a 'being-in-the-body' upon which systemic 'seeing' depends. A deeper experience of embodiment helps to bring insight to the tendency to see apparent polarities or contradictions whenever we remain on the surface of things. If I bring awareness to my dependency upon surface, to the play of symbols there and to the sense of security this affords me, then I am enabled more courageously and vulnerably to imagine and thereby experience more wholly. My feet may remain rooted upon the river-bank while I relish the experience of the river and the other-worldliness which becoming water would entail. I am simultaneously both, more than both, and the space in-between.

The most powerful constellators I have experienced seem to have mastered that elusive art of working with objective things, people or qualities, without necessarily buying into their objective existence, thereby respecting the integrity of the whole. Moreover, they consent to becoming relational space rather than to merely holding it. This seems to enable them to work more provisionally and spaciouly with polarity, embodying a form of consciousness which is less content- and more context-identified. A consciousness that summons us toward a sense of something more complete, whereby we see people and things as they actually are (as simply themselves). A consciousness that recognises how things which exist as separately defined or opposed at one level of reality, exist simultaneously in another (co-arising, as a part of a larger whole).

It is this which allows us to do and to not-do while constellating, or while elsewhere outside of the workroom. And there is a handy circularity in it too. As I allow things their integrity, my view and experience of reality change: I am less divided and

more whole, more healed and so more effective in healing work.

The more I am able to embrace the reach and the implications of this work with my whole being and body and not merely as a mental construct, the more I may come to dis-identify with a form of the self which is bounded, discrete and autonomous. This seems to enable a more systemic sense of self – one that is less self-referential – and to afford access to more evolved forms of participatory intelligence: surely this is our evolutionary next step. It is a more humbling perspective too, reminding us that whatever we might presume, perceive or claim as healing is but a natural effect of some more essential and mysterious relationship or alignment. We know that our work is most useful and probably most interesting too when we live first in service to this mystery, rather than seeking to effect healing in its name.

The implications for society are great. Evolution like this will produce higher forms of social competence as we become aware of our responsibility to enquire into more of ourselves, bringing shadow aspects into the light at both an individual and a group level. Shadow work undertaken collectively nourishes the clarity and authenticity around us, cultivating an ever-more transparent field. This emerging clarity leads us to explore the true nature of creativity and the source of inspiration – potentially allowing us to become clearer channels for innovation and co-creative breakthrough, and to creatively support others in this process. Innovation-ability is located both within and beyond ourselves – in the sense that we may experience it as some form of access to the next step in our potential, while this potential may seem less personal than before. This next evolutionary step is available to us through systemic work, whereby we may glimpse more of the exciting iceberg underneath.

Note:

1. See Judith Hemming's article 'Applying a Systemic Perspective in Everyday Life' which appears elsewhere in this journal.