

A DIALOGUE ON HIGHER CONSCIOUSNESS AND SYSTEMIC CONSTELLATION WORK

Stephen Busby & Daniel Auf der Mauer, July 2015

This is an edited collated transcript of a dialogue that emerged in several stages, intended to seed the field for Stephen's training in October 2015, "Healing The Whole: Higher Consciousness and Systemic Constellation Work."

Stephen:

I'm here with Daniel Auf der Mauer to explore through dialogue 'Higher Consciousness and Systemic Constellation Work'. Daniel, what draws you to the field of this work?

Daniel:

My first impulse, when you ask me this, is to split up and neatly separate those two areas you mentioned: consciousness work and constellation work. And once I allow myself to sink and feel deeper, what I discover and come in contact with is the underlying connection between the two. What draws me to this field of work is the longing to live as fully as I can, and this means to understand living as constantly exploring and completely feeling through deeper and deeper layers of being, of myself and of the world as I know it, from one moment to the next. And I notice that just by expressing this more presence and more of the space of me here, of people drawn to similar explorations and inquiries who might be reading this, is invoked.

Stephen:

Thanks for having us pause around these two combined expressions. Let's unpack what we each experience from each part. My background stretches over several decades through a broad field of consciousness work, then a health crisis brought me into contact with systemic constellation work – first of all its 'family' variant, to the point that I became so drawn into it and devoted myself to it that I dove very deeply there - into the impact of my own family inheritance as well as a personal inquiry into the higher consciousness that came through that deep-dive, with the result that I came out at a completely new level and place, emerging into what I began to call Higher Consciousness Work. I had left behind some of the places in constellation work that I'd been trained in, in order to rediscover a new synthesis or integration of these two fields.

Daniel:

My own journey has been the other way round. I started out doing constellation work for a period of time, exploring symptoms and learning to embrace those as pathways to deeper levels and layers of life. What I've always appreciated as an inherent quality in constellation work is its potential to effortlessly support and enable the clear and powerful emergence of whole fields of relationship. When people constellate together and awareness is joined, different fields of relationship become apparent on so many different levels at the same time – there is something deeply beautiful and touching when this emerges from a shared intention. And on the other hand, there was often something missing in the way I experienced constellation work – it was always a bit too fixed, overly focussed on external arrangements...

Stephen:

You mean in terms of the particular approach you've used?

Daniel:

Yes, the particular techniques – it often felt that a constellation session demanded an effort to be made so that certain life issues would be solved, and once everything was put in its place then everybody would be content and we would leave this space of inquiry. There was something missing – I feel I am meeting some barriers of resistance even as I am expressing this.

CURRENT FORMS OF CONSTELLATION WORK AND THEIR NEXT EDGE

Stephen:

I'm wondering if first we need to speak about what we mean when we refer to constellation work, for those who might not be familiar with it. There are book-loads that could be said, so let's see if we can say something concise that gives an

image or feeling.

One way is to say it's an approach that allows us to take life issues, challenges, themes, whatever may be wanting our attention in life, and to apply a very particular way of looking - an in-the-moment live human inquiry - to these themes or issues in a concise time-efficient way, so that (a) usually information is revealed from deeper layers of the field underneath the issue or the challenge that we're looking at, and then (b) there can be movements within the field of inquiry around the issue or theme - a felt experience of movement and opening and a definite energetic shift in whatever theme we initially addressed. That's important because most people's experience is that we might go into an inquiry and choose constellation work as our approach to look at that, and explore a particular, very specific theme, and then often our experience is that the whole initial field of inquiry gets blown wide open. We're exposed to far more underlying and complex layers and strata than we first allowed for. So some approaches strive to contain this, or focus it, while others *leverage* this expansion.

I favour systemic approaches that open up the deeper more subtle field in an accessible way, a very user-friendly way, while not opening it up in the sense that people need to struggle to be with so much more complexity - instead opening in a way that we are invited to *realise and embody* the important pieces of information, the layers that now get our attention, by finding economical and concise ways to presence these new layers. Constellation work is one such systemic approach among others. When used well it can be very resourcing and highly transformative. Learning to invite and presence what's emerging and unfolding in real-time in our lives, through embodied higher consciousness inquiry in a way that allows for systemic dimensions, is I think one of the most meaningful ways we can be in life.

The approach I've been developing over recent years whereby we bring systemic elements into a field of heightened consciousness, using constellation-type techniques, opens people up to their own subtle sensitivities and awarenesses and can bring extraordinary insight as part of a much more complex reality, especially when we've been used to approaching reality with an oversimplified focus, which we can tend to do when a particular theme or challenge compels our attention. We're really being trained or opened to include *much more of subtle reality within us*, without backing away from that or fitting it only within our existing paradigms or worldview.

Practically, a constellation may look in the room like a kind of human mapping exercise, whereby we unpack whatever theme, issue or challenge we are choosing to look at in terms of one, two or three principal components or ingredients. We may then label these two or three components and there may be many more, or work 'blind' without naming them, and we represent them - either using other people in the room who are co-inquiring with us - one person each as representative of these different aspects or facets, or we use objects or apparently empty space as a way of representing.

HIGHER CONSCIOUSNESS THROUGH CONSTELLATION WORK

Essentially what we're doing is learning to address simultaneously *different layers of reality*. We're working at one level in the material realm - with real people or objects and real issues and challenges in the room, mapping something physically out in the space, or indeed even in nature or a landscape, and at the same time - in the physical mapping, because of the high intention or aspiration which is invoked, higher levels of consciousness are becoming available to us *as we work*. This was so striking to me in constellation work that I began to be equally struck by how some constellation practitioners became so focussed on the *technique* of their constellations that the whole unfolding extraordinary field of higher consciousness seemed to pass them by, whereas it is actually the background - the canvas - from which constellation work emerges - making it possible. I guess this is the focus on technique that you're referring to.

In any constellation we're working simultaneously at other energetic or subtle layers which correspond to the more material work going on in the room. The invitation to us is to deepen into layers of sensitivity and of seeing *that include and transcend* whatever physically is unfolding in the room. I think the work is at its most successful when we deepen into ourselves as much as we're able, according to whatever stage of inner development we might be at within ourselves, so as to invite and bring together this beautiful simultaneity of different layers.

Daniel:

Yes, felt experience is very tangible and accessible in constellation work. As soon as a life issue, a certain theme, is set up - as soon as the constellation of an issue 'sets itself up' - a very direct and felt experience appears, which can be very liberating. Constellation work is a powerful vessel for this direct felt experience. And because energy flows

and deeper layers and levels of reality become so tangible, there is a real danger in working too fast in constellation work, in constellating in such a way that everything is resolved efficiently, through following the method. For a while this worked well for me, there was a time where I could really feel that the issues I touched upon in constellation work were showing up differently in my life. But at some point it also became a bit of an obsession to solve everything through constellation work because it's such an accessible tool.

Stephen:

What therefore is the effect of more slowness?

Daniel:

I can choose to fully feel through all of the energy layers and movements that I invite in a constellation, and not rush towards a solution – because I might miss the most interesting things along the way. So I have a lot of appreciation for your multi-layered approach that opens up constellation work so deeply. This brings me to what I think is the essence of what we're touching upon here. Every time I do constellation work, it is an invitation to practise this sensitivity in myself so that after a while for instance my next meeting at work *is* a constellation. Or that in my intimate relationship I bring more awareness to the subtle fields of relationship, of connectedness. This for me opens up a deeper, more vivid and intense level of life. The direct felt experience becomes very alive and enjoyable, especially for people who start to work with this as a tool – and for me, for a while, I missed this part, which I feel is more essential: to really feel all of the layers of experience available to me in this sensitivity and then to see what is the next movement that wants to open up by itself, without me intending it to be a certain way.

EXPLORING REALITY THROUGH HIGHER FREQUENCIES

Stephen:

This is very opening, what you just touched on. One intention behind any field of higher consciousness work would be to either slow down or become sensitive enough in a way that is not necessarily time-bound, so there is *more of me available* to embrace the deeper or inner movement. Any field of inquiry that I'm participating in or facilitating, in whatever form that takes, can embrace and reach *beneath* a constellation. I can allow the consciousness that I'm tapping into to slow me down sufficiently so that I become sensitive to the whisper of potential for these deeper movements. Then my attention and my focus or perceptual awareness also slows, or at least if it no longer needs to slow down in terms of time then it begins to widen or deepen beyond the ways in which my perceptual focus is conditioned to operate. So we're becoming wider, deeper, sometimes slower, perceptual operating systems, if you like, *so as to encompass more of reality within us*.

The way this shows up is an ability to work, as you said, simultaneously at different levels of reality. As one deepens into this approach - as one works in a way that invites ever more consciousness *into* constellation work - then one effect is a natural embracing of these different layers. And time is a factor too. My experience of higher consciousness as a frequency is that time can become collapsed or condensed, as if the space itself intensifies, which I believe is an effect of consenting to invite and live at these higher frequencies – which vibrate at faster speeds. Generally, the inner shifts, insights and actual movements of energy within our physical and other bodies tend to become more spontaneous. The effect is of energy *needing much less time and life-experience to work itself through towards integration*.

Daniel:

Yes – and we can feel and include more the sheer complexity of relationships between whatever is there and arising. I notice sometimes the impulse for instance to move towards somebody in a constellation – noticing when this impulse is just too fast. People often move reflexively, in life just as in constellation work, instead of staying for a while and seeing where the impulse for movement comes from, and where the deeper movement behind the first impulse might lead to.

Stephen:

As you've said, we're being invited to notice all those places in us where we might automatically or by default step over something because that's just the way our awareness has habitually become *trained*. That's very radical in its implications, because it's inviting us to *become perceptual beings in far more complete or complex worlds than we were educated to become*. That's a training in or an exposure to something important in itself.

Then if we're able to hold a strong enough container or structure so that there's a natural slowing-down in the field which

is felt and respected, there is a deepening in our sensitivity. We're coming into more intimate contact with what we're calling here these deeper potential *movements in life*, and also becoming more able to respond to these in appropriate ways; appropriate in the sense of the inquiry within the field that we're looking at.

THE EVOLUTIONARY INVITATION

So when people in constellation work become very touched by what appears to move through them or the way they then become able to move within a field of inquiry, I think part of this touched-ness is because we're coming into contact with a *new way of being*, and may also be sensing where this could *lead* us. We could say that a constellation inquiry is a kind of research container or crucible which leads us into far deeper life-inquiry within ourselves. And I think at collective levels too, because when groups, communities or teams engage in this work together then important layers also unfold within that *collective* level of consciousness.

What all constellation work and any higher consciousness work is doing, is allowing us to become more proactive in terms of layers of potential within our humanity that are more accessible to us. We become more practised and curious and proactive in how we open up to more of life, and therefore also open up to the next layers of our own evolutionary development. And that's particularly so when we work within strong collective containers, because there's something in higher consciousness in my experience which is encouraging people to gather and engage in these forms of work together as collectives - because of the higher or deeper access that they seem to afford.

Daniel:

Let me bring awareness here to the beautiful movement that just happened when you spoke. We started out with two areas or with the labels of two areas which now seem to have merged. I'm not so sure anymore of the border between them. I feel a natural impulse in these two areas to merged more because in their essence they are similar.

EMBODYING THE NEXT UPDATE OF A METHOD OR APPROACH

Stephen:

Yes, and this is a natural movement within any area of applied approach or toolbox. That there are different places or stages in our development and which - if we follow them thoroughly and profoundly enough - will naturally bring us to a point where we begin to sense their next potential, or we could say *the next updated version* of the toolbox or approach that we had become schooled in. We feel into what might be its next potential or layer of application through us, and through our own next-development. So the tool or approach, for example constellation work, has taken us a certain way, on a developmental journey, and we've come to a point in following that approach - first of all being grateful for what it has yielded to us, and secondly noticing in what subtle ways we've become dependent upon it or rather too, in a sense... it's not exactly laziness, it's more a structure of consciousness within me whereby I become content at having arrived at some place.

I know this very well in myself: a sense of security and stability which arriving and appropriation of something seems to provide me with. So we may have enough consciousness to notice that, and allow whatever approach or toolbox it is that we've learned to then carry us *beyond*. Then the toolbox or methodology either travels with you or is left behind, with appreciation. My conviction is that there are forms of what we're calling, perhaps in old ways, 'constellation work' that are asking to now be left behind by those who are ready, and inviting a next level of experimentation.

Daniel:

Yes, I sometimes feel there is a sort of tiredness that goes along with certain approaches to constellation work, in a way it feels exhausted. There is a form of constellation work - as you say - that has brought us this far, and something in it is longing for a fresh infusion of inspiration. It's appropriate to honour what it has brought and to give space to what now wants to expand. There is something in the nature of constellation work which caters to the need in myself, in my structure, for *order*, because in constellating life issues there is this tangible level of relaxation when relations and individual truths are seen and then may move to their proper place to rest. It seems important to acknowledge the structure in me, in you and in all of us that can easily invite us to *rest* within a system.

CONSTELLATIONAL PROCESS WORK

Stephen:

Perhaps we've arrived at a time to begin to stop 'doing constellation work'. In the groups over the last couple of years we've been allowing exercises to emerge that are forms of *constellational process work*. They aren't systemic constellations as we would recognise them within the constraints of that approach. They are more an invitation to people within a consciousness-inquiry space to explore in subtle and systemic ways whatever themes as a collective we want to look at. In these exercises we apply the principles of constellation work in terms of somatic awareness - in terms of the deeper systemic principles which come into force whenever we invoke this work - to our ability *to follow through from inner movements*.

So far as I can tell, it's possible for people to practice this kind of systemic process work without any former training or experience in constellation work. At energetic levels, all those who feel drawn to the arena of higher consciousness work are potentially prepared, equipped and open for this. So long as we've prepared ourselves by exercising and opening our body energetic responsiveness and sensitivity, then we're quite able to follow systemic principles in a very powerful way, and in a very much more freer and unconstrained way than classical constellation work would invite us to. This is an amazing and fascinating development and it feels as if it has just really begun to be touched upon. There is a sense or a scent of the potential future, the next update of constellation work which I want to explore through these trainings.

Daniel:

When this is touched I start to feel very alive. There's an edge of development here which is pushing against borders. I get more attuned to what you're inviting because I feel such potential. It's all about a certain fluidity: that we can move much more *fluidly* in these multi-layered fields and within these tools. As you say, once I've tapped into this underlying stream of energy I can let it emerge in some form of constellation work, or in some sort of one-on-one work – it's just a constant flow and there are different tools to support the embodiment of the energy and make it more tangible, visible. What I notice when I do consciousness work with elements of constellation work in it is that I can practice more *sensitivity of relationship*. Constellation work is a powerful learning vessel for this – not just to practice my sensitivity towards *one-and-one* relationship but whole *fields* of relationship: how is it to allow myself the sensitivity and the mindfulness to really feel these expanded fields?

Stephen:

And perhaps deeper levels of choice as to how you then can *participate* in that field, beyond whatever default mechanisms or structures might be driving you.

I want to backtrack here and remind ourselves that these aren't simply new versions of old techniques that we're interested in and developing here, neither that they are becoming available to us just because we decide to do an exercise. Rather that they are part and parcel of a wider movement in higher consciousness work that is happening now and is available to us. Because my own frequency was attuned to constellation work through natural affinity and training, then that became one area of my life where these frequencies began unfolding more radically. For people who share this affinity or interest I can accompany them in deepening their own journey through constellation work, where outcomes will of course be very personal. One outcome at least will be a growing capacity to 'see' and act in systemic ways with more intuitive immediacy – without needing to follow the process of a constellation through stages and time as they may have needed to do before.

It's amazing how, when groups consent to gather together in higher intention so as *to invoke and make available a stronger stream of consciousness* to themselves and to the collective, then all kinds of things become available within an inquiry space. If we choose to bring in updated forms of constellation work as part of this deeper inquiry then those new forms will become *enlivened and electrified* and taken very easily to their next level. That's less due to the new forms that we might be interested in and more due to our becoming *vessels* through which higher consciousness more easily flows, and that we're consenting to bring that into more areas of our life and to embody it more fully.

THE NEW TRAININGS

So let's say something about what it means to come together as a group to inquire into new forms of constellation work through higher consciousness - what we're calling here a training, and why some of us are drawn to be curious about the

next level of integration or synthesis between these two areas.

First, we'll be exploring the essential underlying principles of constellation work in a way that is as meaningful for existing practitioners as it is for people less versed in the constellation form. This is important – that we're calling out to people who are on a higher consciousness path and who feel called to constellation work and who, given what I've said before, may not be called to – or need to – undergo a classical constellation training path. On the other hand, many existing constellation practitioners are being called to deepen their experience of the form – to go to its and their next edge through it.

So questions we're interested in are how and why do we work through the constellation form, and how come this tends to be so powerful in the field that it opens up. What is the inheritance here - where do these forms of work come from and why? So that we learn *to enter into resonance with those seeds or aspects of the work* and its principles which feel most powerfully compelling to us now – *which resonate with our own frequency*, so as to better be able to leave behind those parts which are no longer vibrant in us, or which we can incorporate in ways other than needing to follow the method to its natural ending-point or place of next unfoldment.

So we'll come together in a training to inquire into those next forms of systemic process work that are waiting to be explored, tapped into, and realised in our lives. Whether that's as a professional who works with other people, for example in a healing or therapeutic capacity, whether as a dancer, artist or musician, whether as a leader or an innovator within a field of work or an organisation, or simply as somebody who feels compellingly called for their own personal interest to dive more deeply into this.

We want to learn - through what's been inherited as constellation work – to sense the *next levels of revelation* to come through it. This is what's being asked of those who are called to come together this way. So if you listen into this or read these words and you feel called, intrigued, challenged or confronted even by some of the things that we're saying here, then my experience is that this is usually a sign there is something in you that wants to be activated here. I have a longing and a passion to work with people in this way, because I know that's the next level of my own calling.

HEALING & CONSCIOUSNESS

Then I think you said something, Daniel, also of importance earlier on when you spoke of healing. To explicitly invoke higher consciousness work is to approach the realm of human experience as one whole unified field within any inquiry, to come into contact with embedded fields of human experience. So that we learn to stretch ourselves and sensitise ourselves to become aware of the way in which *fields of energy* are available through us, and are working through us all the time, and can be sensed more deeply into, can be followed, can be leveraged and can be worked with more creatively through consciousness.

That for me is the primary focus of those who are being called to this work these days. And I like how you mentioned earlier in another conversation that when we refer to this work as 'healing the whole', what we're also healing are the separations between the different compartmentalised approaches, techniques and methodologies that we may all have been differently educated in. I think this is part of the healing work that we're doing here.

Daniel:

This inclusiveness resonates deeply in me. When I spoke earlier of 'tiredness' being apparent sometimes in more classical forms of constellation work, or as you said: this inheritance – for me it is a practice to approach tiredness and heaviness of inheritance as *part* of the process. Not see it as an obstacle to something but as an invitation. When we include this tiredness as something very valuable then there is inclusiveness. This touches me on a deeper level, not only with constellation work but in every aspect of life. For me this is a fundamental paradigm shift which I need to practice, and for which I need other people to practice with.

Stephen:

Yes, the more we open to our whole inheritance, particularly those aspects of which I'm less inclined to embrace or contain because either I feel that I'm finished with them or there are no lessons there for me, then of course this whole embrace is very radical in its implications, and healing usually in its consequences or effects. Embracing of all those aspects and dimensions of myself which haven't been fully acknowledged, accepted and integrated within myself -

whatever that means, and are now available to do so.

Daniel:

It is also a constant invitation to and between people who enter these fields professionally, as healers or therapists, to hold each other in these spaces of tiredness or exhaustion, to be in a more expanded space where other people or deeper forms of consciousness can hold us. This is healing - it goes all the way up and all the way down.

Stephen:

Particularly so when we come together as collectives, because then I'm taken far beyond my individual preoccupation with my own development or healing, and I'm noticing that as a collective we're able to touch into layers of human experience that seemingly are only available to us *as* a collective for our work.

Daniel:

There's a strong calling also in me towards this and I feel we're ready... consciousness is really expanding in a way to hold more of this, of us, and we're here, ready. It's calling more people and this feels deeply beautiful and powerful.

The next residential ***Healing The Whole: A Training in Higher Consciousness and Systemic Constellation Work*** will be held over three days for an international group at the Schloss Glarisegg Seminar Centre in Northern Switzerland in October 2015. We'll begin on the evening of Thursday 22 October and go through to the end of the afternoon on Sunday 25 October.

Some previous experience either in Stephen's work or in systemic constellation work is required – either as a participant in constellations, or as a beginner or more experienced practitioner. There will be a mixture in the room of people who are well versed in these approaches and others who are relatively new to them. What we'll have in common is a shared calling to inquire through higher consciousness. We'll be using some of the essential precepts of systemic constellation work and seeing where these wish to take us through higher consciousness in our inquiry. Do join us if you feel called.

Although we'll be working in English without translation, non-native English speakers may sometimes have the opportunity to work in their own language in smaller groupings for some exercises. We may also be able to informally and creatively provide occasional translation of terms in the room into some languages (for instance in German, French and Spanish) if this is required.

More information on the training is at stephenbusby.com