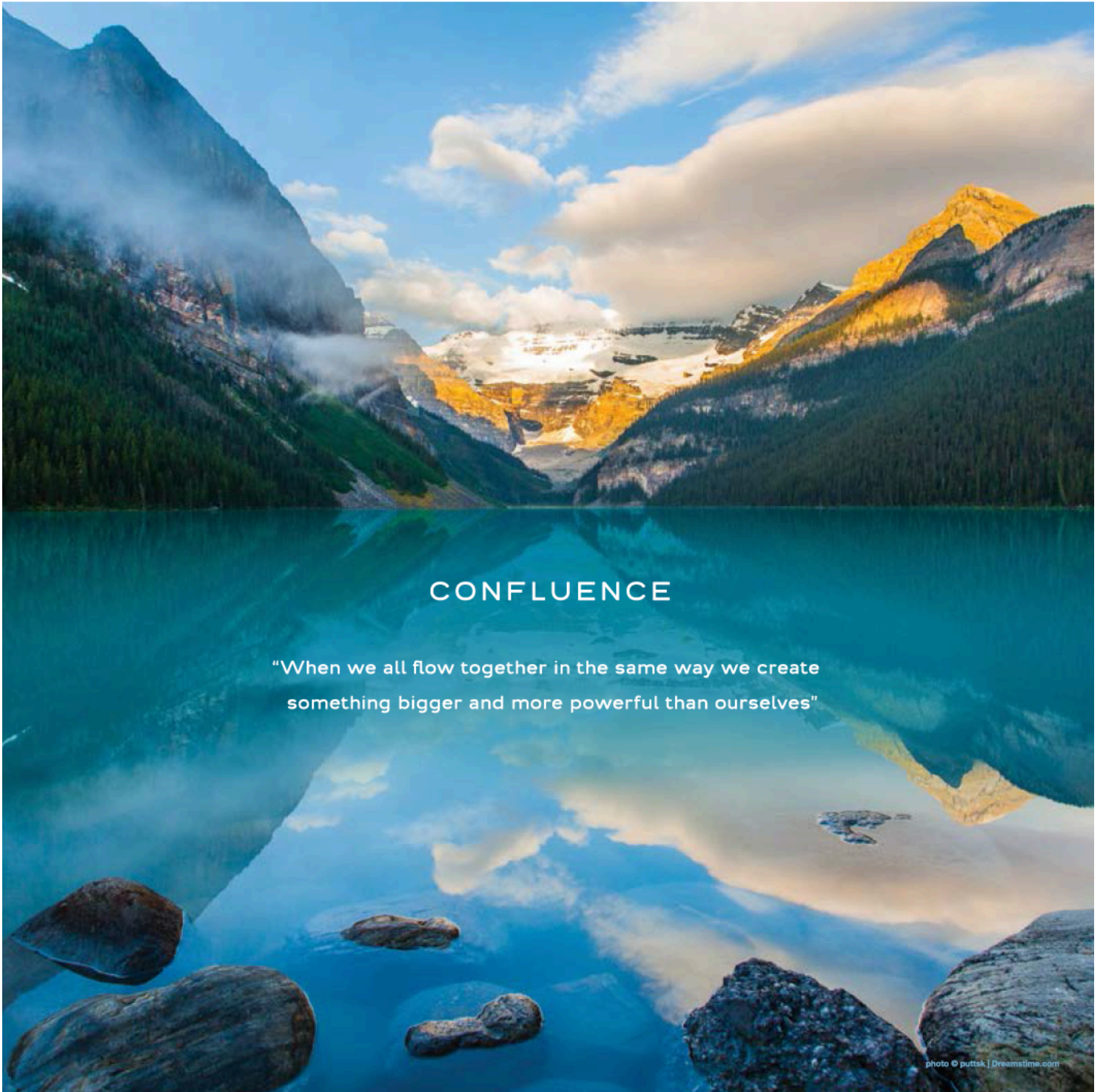




International Kinesiology Conference 2015 | BANFF



CONFLUENCE

"When we all flow together in the same way we create
something bigger and more powerful than ourselves"

Govert van Ginkel, LL.M – Netherlands and Canada

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Govert van Ginkel, LL.M

Govert van Ginkel, LL.M, keynote speaker, workshop leader, trainer, executive coach, mediator and author. "Govert is an expert in dealing with stress, open communication skills and strengthening resilience in individuals and organizations. Presenting to hundreds of people each year, he is an international speaker (Europe & N-America) with a master's degree in law, a masters degree in Neuro Linguistic Programming, trainer in Nonviolent Communication, the Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP), the Expert Center for Restorative Justice in Education (ECHO) and facilitator for Restorative Circles. He also is the chairman of the Mankind Project Foundation in The Netherlands. When you get Govert you get practical how-to's that decrease stress and miscommunication while increasing mutual understanding, productivity and workplace satisfaction. He is a humorous speaker who delivers his message in an insightful and playful manner. He'll show you how to access the hidden potential that is in all of us.

Empathic and Needs Based Coaching of Your Client

You and your client: two universes collide

Seeing a client can be complex and go beyond normal experience - like travelling to another planet. The richness of the experience resembles two universes colliding. To appreciate this fully requires an adventurous attitude and a certain understanding. Life in that alternate universe may be harsh and difficult to comprehend. Yet you find yourself being asked for guidance in a universe that may seem alien to you. However, when we understand what both universes have in common, it can be much easier to find our way together and be of support. Afterall, the person you just met came to you for help and is your client.

Thinking, language and our needs

We see the world through a specific lens and each lens has both unique and common features. The uniqueness of our individual lens is determined by the specific experiences we have had in life. You could say that we are the qualities of the lens itself. Examples of the features we have in common with others are the cultural influences of the society we grow up in and the language we speak.. This already may give you an idea of what may make our universes both different and alike. But there also is a part of our uniqueness we share which is often less obvious: These are our needs. We all have needs and they are what move us into action. What makes it less obvious is the fact that all over the world people have found myriad ways to meet their needs. This is what makes what in the core is the same look different by effect. A very common observation between people stuck in a conflict is the idea that their needs are just different. But after closer examination, this is never the case. People's ways of meeting their needs and the time at which they each experience this need may differ, but people all over the world always have the same needs. Both the fact that we have our needs in common as well as the fact that they are our main motivator make needs based coaching an excellent tool for change. Understanding our own needs brings us closer to understanding our clients' needs and helps us to get an idea of what will support them best.

In order to do so effectively, we may need to learn to understand how lenses work and separate the cultural and linguistic conditioning from the underlying need. Albert Einstein is often quoted as having said, "We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them" (<http://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/changing-mindsets-prevent-environmental-disaster>). To untangle your client's reality you may need to separate fact from interpretation, feelings from thoughts and needs from strategies. You are a guide in a reality in which they may possibly have lost their way.

Neurology and the blame game

What we now know from neurology is that only a small part of who we will be and how we will express ourselves is genetically predestined (Dr Gabor Mate and Professor Robert Sapolsky, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Z9WWZddH9w>) and this means that the good news is that we have a lot of influence when we know where to look. The environment/universe we grow up in and the life style choices we make contribute greatly to the life we will eventually experience.

The first thing that comes up for me then, is the question of whether clients are to be blamed for the problems they experience in life. From my perspective this is never so. Even though a client may at least in part be responsible for his present situation, to me this is more a question of accountability than anything else. Instead of trying to determine where guilt lies, I'd rather identify the source of the problem, so that together we can determine what can and needs to be done and by whom to create change. The research done by people like Marshall Rosenberg, Brene Brown and others indicates that it is the "blame game" that may keep people stuck and make them feel powerless to change. It is my experience that while working on the body is an important part of the equation when working with a client, there also is more. The work to me becomes complete when we also address the thinking (or lack thereof) that contributed to the problem. This may become more obvious when we think of our thoughts as subtle energies like we do when we think about our meridian system.

The world we live in

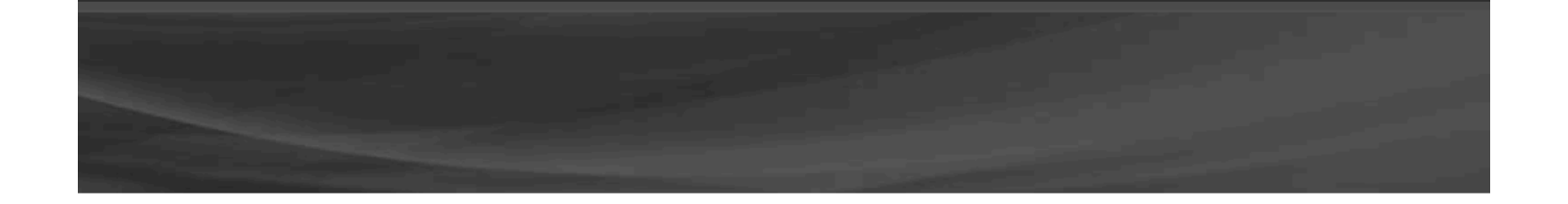
Our western society has achieved a lot through its intellectual development and it certainly is something to be appreciated. But what may not be obvious is that in doing so we may have lost touch with other parts of ourselves. I see this in a consumer society that rushes on from one thing to the next assuming that doing so will have a positive effect on our wellbeing. It is my guess that many clients you see, will by their symptoms show you otherwise. It may look like a car with no breaks, bound for trouble. We live in an achiever society. A society in which someone's success is defined by results: material wealth, power and good standing. Such a society is shaped by values we are all taught to believe in. This may mean that we take these values for granted and do not question their truth nor the effect they have on our lives. And so we may rush on believing we are doing the 'right' thing.

Time for change

A client will often come to you to be fixed, wanting their health to be restored to what it was before - preferably without making any life style changes. This alone poses a number of problems. I see the idea of wanting to be fixed as an invitation to see someone as broken. This means they need to be repaired, which to me is very different from seeing them as 'stuck' and needing a different direction. Repair allows you to see things as an incident after which you can continue and do as before. Stuck to me means that when I repeat the same behavior I may expect similar results (get stuck again) and so a change of direction is in order. If we are not aware of how this works, we may even be in danger of aligning ourselves with our clients thinking and in doing so affirm the very thoughts that are part of the problem.

Perhaps a very simple but profound illustration of this is the difference between appreciating someone's performance and the results. We live in an achiever society that is focused on results. We do this from early on in our lives. We are programmed to think like this in school and motivated by punishment and reward. It becomes a form of habitual thinking and so we may no longer be aware that we have a choice. You may recognize this when you look at how we organize our society, our work life and raising our children all much in the same way. Although achieving results may bring high rewards, it also stimulates a kind of thinking in which those that do not achieve those same results then become "losers." This is where the problem lies. When we make everything a contest, there can only be a few winners and there will have to be many losers. This kind of thinking will cause a lot of stress, negatively affecting self-esteem and well-being, and be a source for depression. Referring to this last qualification, the cultural anthropologist Dr Ernest Becker wrote in his book "Revolution in Psychiatry: "Depression is not an illness, depression results from cognitively arrested alternatives." "What he means by that is that our thinking blocks us from being aware of our needs, and then being able to take action to meet our needs." (Marshall B. Rosenberg: Getting Past the Pain Between Us).

So while also appreciating results, would it not be far healthier to appreciate our whole process of learning: in other words "our performance?" Instead of living a life of adversities just this change in our thinking would stimulate us to live a life of continuous growth and learning. Every little step becomes a success in itself and even a mistake becomes a learning moment rather than a "failure." I do not see this as sugar coating



reality. It is rather appreciating reality as it really is in contrast to the stressful concept of results-oriented achievement which creates an artificially divided world of winners and losers.

To support our clients in making this transition from “self-stressing” to “self-supporting” thinking, we can restore balance and “self-direction” by getting them in touch with their needs. Even though we live in a Western society, a large number of people are emotionally illiterate. This may well be one of the reasons why people can be so “out of touch” with themselves. Understanding our emotions is essential for identifying our needs. As a therapist wanting to help your clients, you first need to raise your own emotional awareness. Getting to know yourself better is directly linked to understanding others better. This is what is involved in developing empathy. Even though empathy is a quality most of us are born with, our achiever upbringing may have slowly numbed us to it. Developing empathy in this sense is stimulating someone’s inborn ability to feel and understand it’s meaning in altering contexts.

As you can imagine, this may take time and is much like flexing and strengthening an unused muscle. For this reason it may even feel “weird.” Yet, the best experience you can give your client is by using empathic listening. To experience this is so rich, that people often only want more. To quote Professor Carl Rogers “When someone really hears you without passing judgment on you, without taking responsibility for you, without trying to mold you, it feels damn good. When I have been listened to, when I have been heard, I am able to re-perceive my world in a new way and go on. It is astonishing how elements that seem insoluble become soluble when someone listens. How confusions that seem irremediable become relatively clear flowing streams when one is heard.”

The client-therapist relationship

The relationship you have with your client is one of trust. It actually is a requirement for having a workable relationship with your client. Without trust your client may not cooperate or volunteer necessary information. You nourish this trust not only by being good at what you do. You are not a surgeon performing in an operating theater. You actually need to have an excellent relationship with your client to be able to do the work you need to do. And by this I mean a relationship that allows for transparency and a certain directness without which you would not be able to

address what needs to be addressed. Provocation without alienating your client only works in a relationship that has a solid basis in trust. An empathic attitude builds this kind of relationship.

You may need to work on this. To quote Stephen Covey’s principles, “Empathy takes time while efficiency is for things, not people.” See yourself as creating the fertile soil in which something new will grow. We do not change our minds because other people tell us what to do. We change our minds because we experience support from someone who understands us and who helps us see a different perspective. When this perspective is valid and more beneficial to our lives than the perspective we had, we will change our minds. “The most precious gift we can offer others is our presence. When mindfulness embraces those we love, they will bloom like flowers.” (Thich Nhat Hanh) A lot of what passes between therapist and client may be through empathic listening. This is a “mindful” way of listening and much more than just hearing the sound of someone’s words. Empathic listening means an in-depth understanding of someone’s experience, motivation, feelings and needs and being able to reflect this in your own words. Your silence as a therapist is not so much a not doing but instead an intense way of being present in which you become a magical mirror for you client. When you speak it is not your words they hear, but the core of their own inner truth revealed to them. This is why it is such a gift. When for the first time without judgment you are seen and heard for who you really are it is the most precious moment of your life. The ensuing relaxation response in itself has enormous healing powers and it will support all the other therapeutic work you do.

Not necessarily as a therapist but you as a fellow human being are the best example of what can be achieved here. You are the role model for the clients to find their own unique and authentic way of being. Part of your influence is to stimulate personal integrity, authenticity and accountability, which are all guiding factors for someone finding their own direction into a healthy life.

A new way of life

A new way of life is one in which all emotions are welcome, even the intense ones. Experiencing life as it is, allows emotions to pass through us without holding on. It is not necessarily strong emotions that negatively affect us, but the fact that we do not allow them to pass. Understanding ourselves better enables us to feel, understand what is alive in us and for what

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reason, and actively engage with the underlying need. Once this becomes our normal process we will flex with the ups and downs of life as we were intended to. Once we remove the concepts that keep us stuck, we can flow freely with life as it presents itself. This is the core of mindfulness, as it is understood in the Buddhist Noble eightfold path. It is a certain attitude towards life that allows life and you in it to flow naturally. Needs based coaching is focused on the most elementary part of your being: your feelings and needs. Instead of struggling with life alienating concepts, it helps clients to understand themselves better and to focus on their inner needs.

Needs based coaching is not a matter of advanced psychology but a matter of fully being human. In this sense this approach may be the easiest and yet the hardest thing you'll ever do - the easiest because the steps towards it are easy and you only have to access your inborn ability to reflect on life this way. The hardest part is not allowing everything you learned before and the concepts you were taught previously to get in your way. Yet once understood and in touch with your felt sense of being, you will understand exactly what your clients are going through and can be their best resource in moving to good health.