
EDITORIAL

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Watzlawick, Wilbur, and the Work

It is a pleasure to introduce this first volume of Hakomi Forum. It represents a significant step in the Hakomi Institute's desire to seek more dialogue with the greater therapeutic world.

To this point in time, knowledge of Hakomi Therapy has been transmitted on a person to person basis on the part of those who have participated in training workshops throughout the United States and Europe. Hakomi Therapy by Ron Kurtz currently available through the institute office in Boulder, is presently being translated into German for publication there by Synthesis-Verlag of Essen, West Germany. Halko Weiss and Dyrian Benz, two trainers of the institute, are in the process of writing a primer on Hakomi Therapy which will be published simultaneously in English and German. Other books and papers are in the mill. So, a few years hence and Hakomi Therapy will be better known.

At our present stage of growth the need for a journal has already emerged. Many psychotherapists are integrating Hakomi principles and techniques into their work and would like a forum from which to speak and listen to others doing the same. Many practitioners in related fields such as medicine, nutrition, body-work, etc. have taken Hakomi training and would like a place to talk more about how it is integrating with their work. The principles upon which Hakomi is based have emerged out of contact with both contemporary philosophy of science and ancient religious teachings which gives rise to any number of interesting discussions.

There is a certain clumsiness to the journal effort at this time which comes from it's dual purpose. The first purpose is that of providing a forum within which people already familiar with Hakomi Therapy can question and further our understanding of the work. A further purpose includes reaching out in dialogue to those in closely and more distantly related fields, including those who might have minimal or non-existent knowledge of Hakomi.

The contributions to this first edition are diverse in style and content. As editor, I hope people will take seriously the invitation included in the statement of editorial policy to share their thoughts and experiences in whatever format seems appropriate. The term Hakomi "forum" was mindfully chosen to encourage interchange through articles, letters, editorial correspondence, artwork, or poetry.

Paul Watzlawick and Ken Wilbur are two people who both interpret and influence the therapeutic world of our day. I have done some thinking about how Hakomi Therapy (HT) fits into their respective systems and am choosing to use the rest of this introductory editorial to share those thoughts. My hope is that it will bring additional clarity about The Hakomi Method to those with greater or lesser degrees of familiarity with the work and will stimulate further thinking and response.

Part of my personal dissatisfaction with various ways of working I have encountered has been the rather cumbersome, burdensome pace at which people are helped, along with a general impression that many systems are longer on diagnosis than healing or change. This has also been true for Paul Watzlawick and the associates of the Mental Research Institute in Palo Alto, CA -an institute that has been influenced by such people as Gregory Bateson, Milton Erikson, Don Jackson, and Virginia Satir. Since it is not done in the training manual itself, I would like to outline part of the way Hakomi facilitates change in relation to the research provided by the MRI group in a book called Change: Principles of Problem Formation and Problem Resolution (by Paul Watzlawick, Ph.D., John Weakland, Ch.E., and Richard Fisch, M.D. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, NY, 1974.)

In the book, first-order change is differentiated from second-order change. Systems are invariant or stuck on the level of first order change. Modern mathematical Group Theory

outlines how within the structure of a given system, there can be a change from one way of behaving to another (within a given way of behaving) according to four basic group-property laws. Things change within the system without the system itself being affected. Thus, the more things change, the more they stay the same - the horror story of therapy as when the identified patient in a family is cured of their symptoms only to have some other family member become dysfunctional. Everyone is caught up in a "game without end." Any changes are illusory.

To understand second-order change the MRI group turned to Russell's Theory of Logical Types. Second - order change represents a change to a different Logical Type of system with a different body of rules governing the structure or internal order of the system's members. The program that governs the action of the computer has been changed. The system itself has changed. Examples are changes from dream states to waking states, position to motion, manipulating an accelerator to shifting gears, scapegoating relationships to accepting, empathic relationships. This is the kind of change HT is oriented towards when it attempts to help someone reevaluate core organizing beliefs.

The problem in bringing about second-order change according to Watzlawick, following Russell, is that a system cannot generate from within itself the conditions for its own change. It cannot produce the rules for the change of its own rules. Second order change must be introduced in the system from

something outside the system that does not participate in it in the sense of being caught up in the same operating rules.

Since one's ordinary consciousness is considered a member of one's intra-psychic system, the book concludes that one's awareness is best circumvented if the goal is to bring about quick, substantial change. The use of paradoxes and the various subconscious techniques of Milton Erikson are recommended. The MRI Group has had good success attempting these methods with individuals and families through their Brief Therapy Project. A guy can't finish his dissertation because he is so perfectionistic. The harder he tries, the more bogged down he gets. He is soon finishing it up when instructed to perform one not-so-clever task a day, like asking someone where Broadway Street is when he is standing on it, or going to a pizza parlor and ordering egg rolls.

A young couple can't get their overly well-meaning parents to stop running their house for them while visiting until Watzlawick instructs them to provide three times the work for the parents than they usually do. The parents promptly tell the kids they must run their own life. These methods can be wonderfully fun and effective if not done in a contemptuous, superior, or sarcastic manner. I certainly have used my share.

To my mind, the brilliance of the HT that Ron Kurtz has pioneered is that second-order change can be brought about quite rapidly with a person's consciousness intact the whole way. Nothing happens that the person is not aware of and does not approve of. How is that

possible? How is it accomplished? In our brief outline form which the reader would do well to check out on his or her own, I believe it has to do with at least five central aspects of the work:

1. Encouraging a mindful or witnessing state of consciousness which suspends habitual reactions and participation in the overall system.
2. Working with the body, which steps outside a person's normal way of understanding, reacting, and defending.
3. Exploring non-violently, without preferences for a particular outcome, going with the flow of a person's experience, which means going where they want to go and supporting as opposed to confronting defenses. This, too, generally confuses a person's normal set to defend, fight, justify, entrench, etc.
4. Using verbal and non-verbal probes which completely contradict what the person is braced, armored, mobilized to expect.
5. Orienting a person's consciousness toward satisfaction and how to reduce barriers to satisfaction. This, as opposed to letting them swim forever in the familiar and comfortable waters of their own pain, brokenness, and unfortunate history, hoping for some mysterious new integration to emerge.

HT's work with consciousness can be set within Ken Wilbur's system developed in his book No Boundary (Los Angeles, CA: Center Publications.) Hakomi is a Native American word which has to do with the issue of who we are. Wilbur indicates that when people answer the question "Who am I?" the various responses indicate the presence of a number of boundaries that divide up consciousness into a spectrum.

At one end of the spectrum, a person's sense of identity is severely restricted to only partial facets of their mind with the other parts of the psyche relegated to the shadows, to the other side of a boundary which has become a battle line for separating opposing or warring factions. Then, consecutively, a person may identify with their minds to the exclusion of their bodies; their total organism (mind & body) with the rest of the environment being bounded off as 'not me'; their minds and bodies along with partial aspects of the environment included; and finally a person may identify with All. That is, they may have no ultimate ontological boundaries. They sense that their real self is not just their organism, but is involved with all creation. This is termed "unity consciousness."

The beauty of Wilbur's book is that he brings order to the vast array of conflicting, confusing Western and Eastern therapies by demonstrating that each one makes sense within its own frame of reference. Each one is valuable and logical if considered in terms of what it sets out to do. In particular, each therapeutic approach can be seen to be addressing primarily,

though not necessarily exclusively, a particular split in the spectrum of consciousness. Psychoanalysis and Transactional Analysis for instance, attempt to help heal the persona/shadow split and help people toward a whole mind or ego. Bioenergetics, Gestalt and various humanistic psychologies work to unify ego and body into a sense of total organism. Maslow, Proffoff, Jung, and Psychosynthesis reach a transpersonal level where identity transcends in some way the boundaries of the individual. The facilitation of identity with all of creation, of unity consciousness, is primarily the realms of such religious approaches as Taoism, Mahayana and Vajrayana Buddhism, esoteric Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, and Vedanta Hinduism.

If HT is placed in this system, it can be seen dancing up and down the spectrum. It always attempts to facilitate communications within the mind as in making the unconscious conscious. It is constantly working the mind/body interface and facilitating organismic wholeness. It is transpersonal in encouraging mindfulness, which evokes "the witness" and a resultant sense of a transpersonal self existing beyond the normal limitations of one's personal identity. This last place is where the therapy aims and hangs out the most. The goal is to help people access, witness, and reevaluate core organizing beliefs in their life. By definition, this means the client is led to disengage from attachment and immersion in the normal aspects of their personal identity lodged in world view, relationships, work, etc., and realize the limitless possibilities for being many things or no-thing.

Hakomi stops short of deliberately fostering unity consciousness, though it certainly does not deny it. The unity principle is the principle above all others that generates and guides the whole method. Plus, the character work is aimed at helping people become characterless, that is, devoid of artificial barriers and limitations to full experience

and expression in life. So, someone participating in HT is given a strong, though usually unspoken, disposition toward expanding their personal boundaries in the direction of ultimate inclusiveness. They experience a person and a process that are both steeped in notions of unity, organicity, and wholism. In addition, they learn the basic spiritual tool of mindfulness.

States of Consciousness (Hakomi Therapy Session)

