
EDITORIAL

When in doubt, go with the principles

GREG JOHANSON

The trainers of the Hakomi Institute are careful to ground their teaching of particular techniques, strategies, and methodologies in the principles that undergird the therapy; principles of unity, non, mind-body holism, mindfulness, and non-violence. Likewise, I believe the articles in this edition of the Forum do a good job of integrating perspective with practice.

If push comes to shove, anybody closely associated with the Institute will affirm that learning, living, and breathing the foundational principles is a foremost importance when compared to mastery of technique. 1) Being grounded personally and professionally in the principles offers the creative possibility of generating any number of techniques. 2) If one is not grounded in the principles, the techniques literally break down and do not work. A therapist cannot invite clients to turn their awareness inward and be mindful of present experience if they themselves are not an authentic non-violent presence that respects the inner, organic, wisdom of the client. If the therapist is a good actor and attempts this way of working while in fact being ego involved in accomplishing certain objectives, that fact will eventually come out. The client will mobilize defensively, and the process will shut down. The therapist will end up writing off the client as too resistant to work with, or the client will rightfully walk away.

I am personally interested in the principles from two perspectives in addition to that of what foundation builds the greatest possibility of therapeutic effectiveness. One, I am a member of a surprisingly substantial club of psychotherapists who were once engineering students. (That would be an interesting topic for a Ph.D. dissertation.) Ron Kurtz indicates in various places dealing with the history of his work, that he too has a background in physics, computers, and experimental psych. It is meaningful to me that the principles which underlie Hakomi have a substantially wider application than

psychotherapy, and that they integrate a vast amount of material from the new physics, systems theory, biology, neurophysiology, cybernetics, philosophy of science, and other related fields.

Of even greater interest to me is the spiritual perspective. I am an ordained clergy-person in the Judeo-Christian heritage who has had continuous part- or full-time involvement in local parishes since 1968. I recommend Hakomi to my colleagues as a spiritually consistent way of working with people, and am slowly finding the time to translate Hakomi into Judeo-Christian categories, more accessible to those in that community.

The spiritual aspects of the principles came to Ron mainly from immersing himself in Taosim and Buddhism for many years. That perspective simmered on the back boiler along with notions from Gregory Bateson and the rest, and finally started to boil over into the principles as they are outlined in the work today. (See Hakomi Therapy by Ron Kurtz, available through the Institute.

Whenever Ron articulated a particular principle, I automatically plugged in the corresponding concepts from my tradition. When I heard "unity", I thought of radical monotheism. Organicity and mind/body holism reminded me of Biblical anthropology, especially as outlined by Hans Walter Wolf and Rudolph Bultmann. Non-violence brought to mind the essence of the Bible in Shalom and Grace.

Mindfulness is the concept from the East that has the most to teach Western Christians, I believe. In John Dunne's book The Way of All the Earth, he talks of the notion of "crossing over" to the culture and world view of others, and how that crossing over enriches and enlivens one's own tradition when one crosses back. Mindfulness can remind Christians of their own forgotten meditative traditions and open new possibilities.

To add to my own experience of congruence with the principles, I had the opportunity not long ago to talk with Dayton Edmunds, a Native American colleague of mine, currently in North Central Washington. It astounded me to hear him outline all the Hakomi principles in terms of his own spirituality before I had even broached the subject of Hakomi with him.

He said things like, "Indian people are basically space people as opposed to time people. The answer to questions like what is the right time to eat is found by looking to nature, to the space within one's stomach. It is not best to eat at 12:00 noon, but when there is hunger pains within one's belly. And crops. One does not harvest a crop on September 1st, but when the crop is ready in terms of its own growth and fullness. Indian time is not 'late time' as so many people think. It is 'right time.'" Sounds like mindfulness to me. And then he said, "The circle has been very important to my people. Everything in nature reflects the circle. A circle is without beginning and end. You are the first and the last when sitting in a circle. It is inclusive of all." Unity, right? And finally, "When I was young my elders taught me the importance of three things: touching, which is why it is good to have children run naked, (mind/body holism); giving away the things which you have (non-attachment and resultant non-violence); and having a relationship with the Mystery, that reality which is called by many names, including God and Great Spirit," (hints of monotheism, unity, organicity again.)

So, it seems to me that the principles reflect a universal way of understanding life that is seen in the best of scientific and religious thinking. I look forward to the day when they are applied on a wide scale to areas like education, economics, politics, medicine, art, etc. And that day is coming. I am one of those who reads Marilyn Ferguson, Ken Wilbur and Teilard de Chardin and sees communal consciousness slowly rising. One day it should accumulate a "critical mass" of people whose base level thinking is changed and who then will change the concrete realities they live it.

At the same time, I remain a Christian realist, which means to say I do not underestimate in the least the forces of fear and disunity that would continue to work against

more compassionate paradigms. As one contribution to encouraging a greater awareness of the interconnectedness and interdependence of all things, I would like to invite people to use the Hakomi Forum for discussing the principles of the work as they relate to the greater environment in which psychotherapy is done, and in which people live and move and have their greatest ill or well being.



WHEN WE TRY TO PICK OUT ANYTHING BY ITSELF, WE FIND IT HITCHED TO EVERYTHING ELSE IN THE UNIVERSE. JOHN MUIR