

Patterns

Pattern-making

Individual

Organisational

Agenda for the day

Ideas about individual psychology

Practical coaching exercises

Plenary discussion to join up the two

Ideas about ways of understanding organisations

Group coaching exercise

Plenary discussion to join things up and raise any other issues

Daniel Stern's model of human development

- Integrates developmental psychology and psychoanalysis while challenging elements of both
- Focuses on the development of a sense of self
- Offers a thorough account of ways of knowing and experiencing

Source: The interpersonal world of the infant, Stern, Daniel N, 1998

Stern's model: the four stages of development of the self

- 1 The emergent self first 2 months
 - 2 The core self 2-6 months
 - 3 The subjective self 7-15 months
 - 4 The verbal self 15 months onwards
- These four selves continue to exist in us throughout life
 - Each lays the foundation for the next, but is not superseded

1 Emergent self

- ‘A sense of organisation in the process of formation’
- No overarching sense of self yet, but it is ‘coming into being’
- From birth we make patterns from our experience
- Feeling and thinking processes cannot be separated; learning includes feeling

Emergent self cont.

- Creation of relationships between disparate experiences create 'islands of consistency' – leaps that make up the development of organisation
- Both product and process of these integrating leaps are part of a sense of self
- This process is fundamental to making relationships, making art, and making sense of organisations

Amodal perceptions

“Infants appear to experience a world of perceptual unity, in which they can perceive amodal qualities in any modality from any form of human expressive behaviour, represent these qualities abstractly, and then transpose them to other modalities.”

Vitality affects

The contour of a feeling or experience

Best captured by dynamic, kinetic terms, such as surging, fading away, fleeting, explosive, crescendo, decrescendo, bursting, drawn out. . . rush, flooding, racing,

Extremely diverse experiences may be linked so long as they share the same contour of feeling – and therefore be experienced as corresponding

Emergent self

The fundamental domain of human subjectivity

- Operates out of awareness
- The experiential matrix from which everything mental arises
- The ultimate reservoir to be dipped into for all creative experience
- All learning and all creative acts begin the domain of emergent relatedness
- That domain alone is concerned with the coming-into-being of organisation that is at the heart of creating and learning
- Later senses of self to emerge are products of this organising process

2 Core self

- Single bounded physical entity
- Including
 - Self versus other
 - Self with other

Core self consists of

- Self agency
- Self-coherence
- Self affectivity
- Self history

Self history [memory]

- Non-language based memory systems – movement, perception, feelings
- Recognition memory experienced as pleasurable because it is self-affirming as well as world-affirming

Self history [memory] cont.

- Memory allows all other aspects of self to become integrated
- The episode is the basic memory unit – a small but coherent chunk of lived experience
- Episodes enter the memory as indivisible units – movement, perception, feeling, sound, sight etc

How subconscious patterns form

- Episodes that involve interpersonal interactions are 'averaged' and represented preverbally
- Result from direct impress of multiple realities as experienced
- Islands of consistency somehow form and coalesce

How subconscious patterns form cont.

- Allows the organising and reorganising of experience
- Basis of 'transference' and the subconscious
- Patterns laid down early are apt to be repeated later – unconscious attraction of patterns that are familiar
- Affect our response to future experience

Self with other

- We are born embedded in a social matrix
- Some experiences can only arise as the consequence of others' actions, being with another such that self-feelings are importantly changed
 - Hungry/ fed tired/ soothed to sleep
 - What and how strongly we feel
 - Feeling secure

Self with other cont.

- Variety is what permits the baby to triangulate and identify who owns what
- Security arises from repeated experiences of being with a self-regulating other
- Core self experiences pervasive sense of being with others in multiple forms
- ‘Self with other’ is a pervasive subjective reality -
- we are rarely subjectively alone

3 Subjective self

- Intersubjective relationships require shared framework of meaning/ communication -- gesture, posture, expression
- Intersubjective relatedness transforms the interpersonal world, but core-relatedness continues. Nothing ever displaces it.
- Now the possibility of psychic as well as physical intimacy
 - Sharing intentions
 - Sharing feelings

Attunement

Inexact mirroring to achieve exchange --
attunement is largely cross-modal

*The embedding of attunements is so
common and most often so subtle that
unless one is looking for it, it will pass
unnoticed*

Purpose of attunement – interpersonal communication

Attunement allows us to share internal feeling states

“ . . . feeling states that are never attuned to will be experienced only alone, isolated from the interpersonal context of shareable experience. What is at stake here is nothing less than the shape of and extend of the shareable inner universe.”

Difference between art and behaviour

Engaging with art [not necessarily making it] requires contemplation:

“My grasp of the essence of sadness comes not from moments when I have been sad but from moments when through art I have seen sadness before me released from entanglements and contingency”

4 The verbal self

“Language is a double-edged sword. It makes some parts of our experience less shareable with ourselves and with others. It drives a wedge between two simultaneous forms of interpersonal experience; as it is lived and as it is verbally represented.”

Narrative

The making of a narrative is not the same as any other kind of thinking or talking. It appears to involve a different mode of thought from problem-solving or pure description.

It involves thinking in terms of persons who act as agents with intentions and goals that unfold in some causal sequence with a beginning, middle and an end.

Narrative-making may prove to be a universal human phenomenon reflecting the design of the human mind.

The experienced world and the spoken world

- Language may capture our inner experience beautifully –but this is rare
- Language may poorly represent the experienced version
- Language may not capture the experience at all

Some experiences at the level of core and intersubjective relatedness cannot be communicated [such as the very sense of a core self]; these then continue underground, nonverbalised, to lead an unknown existence.

Language as alienator

To watch a patch of sunlight a child can engage the global, amodal properties, till someone enters the room and says ‘oh look at the yellow sunlight!’

The ‘yellow sunlight’ becomes the official version, and the amodal version, the intensity, warmth, shape, brightness and pleasure of the sunlight – goes underground.

A mixed blessing

The infant gains entrance into a wider cultural membership, but at the risk of losing the force and wholeness of the original experience.

Double-binds and other mixed messages

- Gap between personal world knowledge and official world knowledge encoded in language
- When two messages, usually verbal and nonverbal, clash in the extreme, it is called a 'double-bind message' [Bateson]
- The surest way to keep a channel deniable is to prevent it from becoming a part of the formal language system
- You become accountable very early for what you say, more than for what you do
- What is deniable to others becomes deniable to yourself.

The privileged status of verbal communication

- Prior to language, all behaviours have equal status.
- Infants' initial interpersonal knowledge is mainly unshareable, amodal, instance specific and attuned to nonverbal behaviours in which no one channel of communication has privileged status.
- Language changes all of that.

The privileged status of verbal communication cont.

- With language, infants become estranged from direct contact with their own personal experience. But also with language, infants for the first time can share their personal experience of the world with others.
- *It is possible for the first time to distort reality, and to transcend it.*

Some implications

- The root of making art, making relationships and making sense of organisations is the same – a sense of emerging organisation
- We are hardwired to make patterns, and the patterns we make in early life will influence us throughout life through our subconscious
- We need to become as aware as possible of our own patterns and pre-dispositions to be most effective in working with others
- Communication began before words came, and words open the possibility of deception of self and others
- Words are generally overvalued as a means of communication. What can we learn about feelings and intentions non-verbally? How can this help us?

- **Pause to think**
- **Critically examine the evidence**
- **Notice the patterns**
- **Explore them with others**