Challenging Organisations and Society

reflective hybrids®

Change in Flow: How Critical Incidents Transform Organisations

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Dialogue with Andrea Schueller and Maria Spindler

Challenging Flow beyond Systems

Maria: Andrea, I am excited to take this next step in our dialogue. We've been following up now for quite some time – years actually – on the interplay and flow of co-evolution of individuals, organised systems and society. What I am humble about and proud of at the same time is that we embrace theory, our own private lives and our work as consultants, scientists and coaches as well as the development of the COS community and its organised system. I realise that this integrative approach is quite a complex, deep global affair and that it touches my heart and my future, and I hope also society and the lives of others.

Andrea: Yes, a lot of different threads mingle in our lives! I feel the challenge, too. My ambition is to contribute to a conscious, transparent way of integration and the renewal that comes with it, as well as a holistic understanding of the prerequisites in Self, Society, Teams and Organisations. Prior to integration is differentiation. Without it you get rigidity, uniformism and fundamentalism. Look in the newspapers. Or, on the other hand, if integration is distorted into an "everything-is-possible" dream, action is very likely to become arbitrary, meaningless and impotent, or else automatic old patterns from the past with the delusion of having reached something new repeat themselves. In these states of mind, people are easily manipulated and manipulative, through fear or seduction. That's not the "flow" I would like to see more of in the world.

Maria: Yes, I agree. To balance differentiation and integration is an artwork of qualitative growth. One's own habits and patterns seem so normal, but at the same time they can be dysfunctional for life, growth and humanity in a lot of different ways. Negative loops are often normality ... part of daily life and business. In my work as a consultant for corporations I experience that the move from a position within patterns, within a given structure, space and pace to a position where we can connect anew, create and invent

relationships, space, structure and future can be a real game-changer and transformer when we dare to step into the unstructured and unknown. Individual and collective movements beyond known organised routines enable vitality, positive loops and shared vertical growth in quality. Differentiation opens us to new perspectives; integration allows us to connect the parts, interests and perspectives anew as a whole system.

Andrea: ... patterns understood as relations, interweaving freedom and structure within uncertainty as the time-free base drum. *The base drum* you can take for granted! My experience and sense-making in consulting and life is that people get used to thinking they create uncertainty, but actually it is always there: life *is* endless possibilities. Only when you disconnect from uncertainty with your senses can you come to the conclusion that it comes from the changes we think we are triggering. Life as the undivided source runs through all of us, so disconnecting from uncertainty is disconnecting from life. Last week I had an experience with a senior manager who affirmed many times during a session that he couldn't see or feel any uncertainty. That was during a meeting where one new team member and two new seniors joined for the first time. He acted friendly and convinced, in the pattern of his known past, and talked about "integrating" the new people. How did he manage not to be aware of uncertainty, of the openness of this moment? That's interesting!

Maria: ... interesting. It brings me back to the challenge of integration, which is a widespread issue in all fields of life: we can feel our own desire to be whole as life grows and connects through individuals, organisations and society. The real mission for me is to connect myself and others to life, to the life force, what is often seen as motivation but is more intense and deeper, going beyond current topics, structure, strategies and values and

beliefs of organisations or systems. ... to each of us with the awareness beyond given structures, beyond patterns, into the field, the environment of organisations, the potential and opportunities of a new future. ... so that life can grow through you and through the organisation. ... That evokes complexity, uncertainty, beyond solutions and answers. And I see growths of life for humans and society also related with all forms of organizations because they can reduce, enhance and transform complexity, opportunities, risks, uncertainty and the unexpected through processes, structures and decision making.

Andrea: "Flow beyond" points to getting a foot in the door of unfolding consciousness, which is probably neither structure nor freedom. I think this is the real challenge of our work. Will the door close, or will I push it to and lock it? Higher consciousness and wisdom regarding the invisible space in between changes the patterns and the sense of freedom and structure in the individual and within the collective.

Maria: I like your grey hair! It grows ② and flows. The river of life takes on various colours and forms, hierarchical, limiting, supporting, matrix, network, creation of swarms, of forms that more or less contain or ostracize us, that position themselves permanently or disappear again immediately. We give them various temporalities. I consider it decisive that we as a collective have developed further and further. We construct forms to be simultaneously stable and flexible. We can take a bird's eye view, a meta-level, and use the foot, the beak and the hair to reconnect ourselves again and again to the river of energy and life. The more initiative and responsibility we can take on, the greater is our capacity to integrate and the more differences and resources we can interweave.

I imagine a flow beyond and within structure, an energy flow being directed into channels energies of life more or less broad or narrow. ... like in this drawing – related to knots, spirals, roots and branches, organisations and structures are like intensifier, multiplier, dead end or highway, like a converter, transformer and so on.



Andrea: Having no miraculous X-ray device at hand that could help us to see the different layers and frequencies between people, parts and subsystems, I rely on the interactive body as the supernatural integrator of multiple intelligences in the work. I am talking about the body as the interface of matter and field of possibilities as Gendlin understands it. No generative or transformative process in people and larger systems is possible without it. On the other hand, my hair turns grey and alters its structure without asking this so-called me. Life runs through us. Actually we can't achieve new, fresh ways of life or organisational forms without it. New forms don't come from mere intellectual thinking. Thinking is only a tiny part of the life force. There's feeling, sensing, breathing, moving, reproduction, emotions, physical and biochemical processes and so on. New forms come from new action which arises from a felt sense in the body.

Maria: Structures are creative space: inventing new forms and content for the future are essential to help us influence, support, grow or limit each other and our doing. Structures and organisations give or take space, and space is needed in order to create shared space ... forms and processes in corporations which seize on life and flow into separate and connecting vessels and spaces, giving vitality to individuals, organisations and society. They do not destroy; rather they penetrate and generate various forms. We decide for ourselves which forms we will give to ourselves and with the forms of the systems we decide also the energy flow. Forms are neither good nor bad; rather they can represent the flow of life in different ways. In our process oriented consulting we create architectures/forms that withdraw given structures – unstructured energy – for a certain timeframe in order to give space to create new structures. Individual motivation meets new collective opportunities and new connections for opportunities beyond their current.

Andrea: Game, it's not good or bad and the crucial points are: How much life is informed in the social patterns when I combine life and patterns? Is it fulfilling in terms of freedom and structure, security? And how does it hold and channel the particles? The patterns we are talking about come as vivid manifestations of different relationship-qualities: between humans, objects, inside of each human, humans and nature, technique etc. As Bateson said, it's not about the objects but about how they relate and how we relate.

Maria: ... what I realise now is that we are operating here with different images and definitions of flow. I also have in mind Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's concept: if we want a meaningful job or life, a passion that comes from doing our best. Regardless of culture happiness and flow, meaningful, ecstatic, clarity, state of mind, not the ordinary routines, experience life in a more concentrated form: Intense feeling as if you do not exist. Being involved in an engaging process of creating something new with others. Not so much attention to the body, as this absorbs attention. Flow experience: spontaneous feeling process, sensing that it is better than before. Opening a door that flows up to the sky. Merge yourself with what you are doing makes you feel

happy and gets immediate feedback from what you are doing. Doing for it's own sake. The ego falls away, is not in focus.

Andrea: What is flow? I think for most people and company leaders it is a desirable state. Where does it come from? Jump into a river; it will carry you away. You call that a flow? Probably only if you come out alive. What we are talking about here is disciplined flow, which is intentional. We are humans, we have the ability to think and conceptualise and we give shape to organisational forms and forms of life. That's not good or bad, but more human or less human. The embarrassing thing I see is that we create and have created organisations and other bigger structures which have turned into prisons structurally, cutting off human potential which is generated within by not allowing a more natural flow of creative energy and allowing old forms to die and new forms to rise. Probably safe dams for uncertainty = life. Nietzsche coined the term "dangerous securities". This is a power issue and an issue of consciousness. Some "heads of" are simply not aware of what they are producing for a collective and in turn are numbed by the collective unconscious of the people daily doing what they did yesterday. You need courage and a higher consciousness to move away from business as usual. From what client leaders and entrepreneurs share I see there is a suffering and a desire. You will notice when the FLOW is over if you turn inwards - your mind, body and inside of your systems. Find out, ask the people how they feel, sense. You cannot MAKE a flow.

Maria: ... That is like deciding to be innovative, creative and free now. You cannot switch it on with a certain technic ... it has to emerge ... it needs and gives space ...

Andrea: ... exactly. According to Teilhard de Chardin, Evolution goes in the direction of the Spirit. And again, talking about Flow: we're talking about the quality of the BETWEEN. The frequency of the between. We are like radio stations sending and receiving – cognitively, somatically, emotionally, biochemically, physically and I don't know what else – we are complex beings – the worlds in us and outside of us have been separated for too long

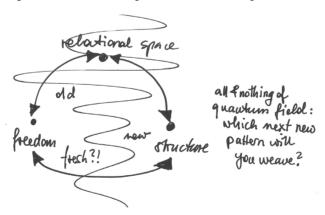
now. Opening these channels, cultivating them and bringing this to awareness ... complex inside, complex outside, simple again. ...

Maria: Between and beyond stimulus and response, there can be THE new space to create. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lie our growth and our freedom. To some degree or another, we are often carried away by or consumed with the ever present flow of thoughts, feelings, criticisms, worries and private stories that present themselves moment by moment throughout our day. We judge and evaluate what is happening within us and around us, often comparing it to our idea of how things "should be", thereby creating additional layers of dissatisfaction and anger that do not necessarily lead to any actual effort on our part to respond creatively to the challenges we are faced with. Cultivating awareness can help us to work directly with these challenges, turning towards them instead of reacting against them. In this way we can discover opportunities or solutions that become more visible and available to us once we allow our perspective to open and shift away from the "busyness" of our everyday mind.

Andrea: What you are addressing is the connection to the undivided source of life flowing through each living human and social body. Through intellectual and technical abilities we influence this flow, make use of it. For me the core question in organisations is whether we join life or want to control life. That's why we need the wholeness of the body as the interface between inside and outside. You go crazy if you separate yourself from feeling and sensing and your vital needs. So let's use this living intelligence of our whole body and its multiple lead systems - thinking, sensing, feeling, connecting ... for diving beyond imagined systems. Flow states arise when opposites or different parts are connected, connect and create a new form or relationship. You can feel that, see that, sense that. You will see an aesthetic new pattern, a different one which will resonate with you. If these opposites or differences are combined but not "in flow" you will also notice a lack of energy, inspiration or productivity. A huge part of the work is to provide space, conscious action and fresh connection of the parts within the new whole the person, the team, the network want to weave. ...

Maria: Co-creation requires a consciousness of individual and collective self, of one's own intentions, values and interventions, in order to have a certain positive energy and power for the larger whole, e.g. group, organisation or society. A sort of positive loop. When it comes to moving beyond our current flow-or-stuck patterns, swimming beyond patterns and systems is bewildering, unexpected and expanding space: minutes – hours – days inner and outer space not filled with old, well-known thoughts, words, actions, reflections, not filled with downloaded, well-known patterns. I can feel it like freedom inside me and around me right now ... Wow! An open space, a cloud or something like that: a playful and serious energy that opens minds and hearts.

Andrea: ... In this sense and for the larger whole I pray for love for the old patterns! Collapsing in love and being carried forward in a new, lively way. Patterns are challenged in a crisis; a shock wave hits matter and/or spirit, through loss of identity, power or intention: Face it – it no longer works! OR: Through the desire and the vision of something new that is waiting to be borne by you and the people you connect with in this journey. Someone – or many – wants to change the frequency, if you will. Which makes me rephrase the question: How do we pattern matter and spirit?



Drawing: relational space and patterning between freedom & structure

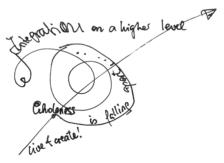
Maria: ... and respond reflectively to situations instead of reacting to them based on conditioned habits or reflexes. ... shift our relationship to ourselves and our life experiences and intentions in a way that allows for greater spaciousness, acceptance and future desires and actions ... and in doing so we can dramatically improve the quality of our life and the quality of leadership and entrepreneurship.

Andrea: People in different professions, Management, Consulting, Research, Education, Technology or Medicine, serving this purpose will come out as Creators. When I look into the future – as you said before it's a gamechanger; I clearly see this as the new role in Society in the future. Boundaries between Body, Mind, Technique, Medicine, Arts and Science melt down, transparently holding the essence of each *and through this* forming new roles and forms in society. Not only will new roles surface – and are already - but new forms and new organisations will be carved out by the people acting from these new roles. I call them Creators as their mission is to generate fresh forms of life and work.

Maria: There are challenges in terms of intentions, visions and missions for us: attuning to emerging realities and energies, listening to one's intuitive capacities, being aware of our motivations and shadows, linking one's development to thriving in times of increasing uncertainty, developing deeper appreciation for each person's uniqueness, creativity and purpose, maximising mutual influence by becoming more self-actualised oneself, integrating and differentiating by being uniquely fragmented, hybrid and whole, co-creating and expanding our capacity to bring out the best in ourselves and others. Generating, inventing tailor-made organisations and transforming society through organised collaboration and forms. I see us as reflective hybrids (individuals and collectives) ... we are hybrid and whole at the same time, we are aware of a complexity and interlink and go beyond differences (life approaches, layers of awareness, disciplines, theory-practice, different forms, body and mind), we realise that we can interlink and hold differences and create integrated solutions for complex answers that we need in our globalised world. The more differences an individual and/or collective tries to

combine and hold, the more reflection is required in order to integrate. It is a special form of integrative reflection, diving in and stepping back, that brings together feeling – thinking – acting – reflecting, integrates and differentiates, dares to embrace differences and to misfit in order to have the strength to take part in the creation with and for all of us.

Andrea: ...and with the new COS Creators Curriculum and COS Creations http://www.cos-journal.com/cos-creations/ we address this need and support the evolution of Holistic Creators, courageously and mindfully initiating and processing the changes they want to see and be in their lives and work and/or those of others. Through innovative forms of generative development, and as Creators – of COS and the Creations of this new, evolving form, reflectively and generatively we are flowing beyond our forms as "Reflective Hybrids & Holistic Creators" and who knows what else the future will bring.



... Here the circle ends that you started this dialogue with: Integration. Transparently embodying all layers, light and shadow. As a certain Zen master said: The world is inside of you.

Maria: This was and is an emotional and intellectual body and brain pleasure for me and I hope also for you as reader of this dialogue. I am very much looking forward to our continuation that opens life and work space for us to grow the generative flow we are in. And I would love to invite and embrace you as reader and friend and your friends into our global movement and much more. Contact us and flow and grow with us \odot

About the Authors

Suzy Adra, Ph.D completed her dissertation entitled The States of Presence and Insight in The Painting Process at the California Institute of Integral Studies, in May of 2016. She is a frequent presenter at the Science & Nonduality (SAND) Conference where she shares her academic research, and artwork. She is a freelance art curator, a painter, and has been studying, and teaching yoga since 1998.

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The future is an unknown garment that invites us to weave our lives into it. How these garments will fit, cover, colour, connect and suit us lies in our (collective) hands. Many garments from the past have become too tight, too grey, too something...and the call for new shapes and textures is acknowledged by many. Yet changing clothes leaves one naked, half dressed in between. Let's connect in this creative, vulnerable space and cut, weave and stitch together.

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Volume 5, Issue 2

Title: Leadership that counts

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