

How Penguins & Polar Bears got together

Fundamentals of a Complete Science

Marcus Stueck

1. Introduction and Story of the Meeting of Penguins and Polar Bears

Readers will certainly ask themselves: what is that for a title? How can two animals get together who have, due to their geographical habitats, never seen one another? Here is a short version of the story – at the end of this article readers will find the original.

Polar bears, big powerful animals, live at the North Pole. And they are very powerful; I know because during an expedition to Spitzbergen I experienced looking two of them straight in the eyes from a distance of around four metres. Had they attacked us we would have had to shoot them and if we had not succeeded in doing so, we would be dead today. That was in 2003. Those bears, a mother and offspring, were en route from Bear Island to the 80th latitude where they planned to catch seals. Which is why they did not eat us. Today, 14 years later, things would have turned out differently because the polar caps are melting and these animals are feeling something which as “rulers of the world” they did not know: FEAR. This is certainly comparable to western populations who believe themselves to be able to dominate everything, but Nature is rebelling.

In the story the polar bears are catapulted from the ice-floe and land, in the most fantastic circumstances, in the South. Totally confused they see these strange, waddling creatures - called PENGUINS - who appear in groups, support one another, in a word, who show a completely opposite form of behaviour.

The idea of bringing penguins and polar bears together came to me during a train trip from Dresden to Vienna in 2008. At the time I was working on and directing a four year project sponsored by the Ministry of Health (500,000 Euro), together with the University of Leipzig, colleagues from the TU (??) Dresden (M.Thinschmidt) and the Health Department in North Sachsen (B. Gruhne), the project being a “Healthy Life Style in the Setting of the Kindergarten” which included 22 institutions, 1,800 children and 300 teachers and parents. The challenge was to develop an integrated intervention model for the encouragement of developing the ability to empathise.

At the time I worked out for the project a master plan entitled “Healthy

Education” which entailed seven steps: 1) Non-intentional presence, 2) Relaxation, 3) Empathy, 4) Supervision, 5) Pedagogic abilities, 6) Concept, 7) Framing conditions.

In the course of the development work on this “Integrated Empathy Model” (Stueck, 2010), I got to know Marion Mueller. She worked with the Non-violent Communication method according to Marshall Rosenberg. This is a communication model in four steps (observation, the naming of feelings, speak out your needs, request instead of demanding).

I thought that this method of non-violent communication was so good that surely it must suffice to simply use this method. There is after all a clearly structured model. Apart from which Marion Mueller put the essence of this model into practice in an excellent manner in her courses. Neither did she negate the non-verbal aspect in her work and she works with her heart. No doubt about it: the lady’s got it!

I thought for a long time that others could also do this until I was overtaken by something that happened which caused me to decide to integrate non-violent communication into a more comprehensive model. In 2011 together with Marion Mueller I prepared a four-day conference in the conference series “Changes in Education Paradigms” held at the Leipzig town hall. We wanted to invite Marshall Rosenberg who was still alive at the time, but he was unable to come. So we decided to invite another NVC specialist from Vienna. The answer was for me devastating: “.... He was unable to attend because the aircraft fuel would poison the air and that meant for him violence.” Admittedly I found this perfectly rationally thought out, without however including any relational aspect, namely his own to the “heart”. It was not a loving response.

This non-verbal relational aspect of love I had long been researching with two South American psychologists: Alejandra Villegas and Rolando Toro, the latter being the founder and developer of BIODANZA, which is an experience and dance-oriented method from South America which places the affect/feeling based connection to others and to nature at the centre. When, during a trip to Africa, I asked Rolando Toro what was empathy for him he replied with one word: ACTION. For Penguins of the South action is perception and understanding (Santiago Theory of Cognition, Varela & Maturana).

The NVC colleague from Vienna had obviously found the route from the body to the brain but had failed to find the route back to his heart. To connect these verbal and non-verbal parts was now my task.

Which is why I began in 2008 to write the story “How Penguins and Polar

Bears got together”. This story acts as an introduction to the non-verbal part of the SCHOOL OF EMPATHY. This story was then published for the first time in 2010 in a book entitled Non-verbal Aspects of Care Communication in Kindergartens; in Stueck, M., Villegas A., Toro, R.)

Roger Schaumberg, a consciousness researcher from Leipzig, wrote an introduction to this book in which he very cogently explained the main concern of the contents.

“The US American clinical psychologist and founder of “Non-violent Communication” Marshal Rosenberg developed his method together with human-rights workers in the fight to overcome racial discrimination. He used two symbolic figures to point out the difference between the estranged, i.e. violent and the authentic i.e non-violent speech: the wolf and the giraffe, the terrestrial animal with the biggest heart. “Wolf language” is used without reflection; “giraffe language” is careful, self-responsible and reveals the speaker’s own emotional motives behind the speech. Prof. Stueck and his colleagues have introduced to the scientific discourse a non-verbal level with similar polarities in addition to the verbal-reflexive level. They position the socialization in the Southern hemisphere, which has a basically body conscious, emotional character (we speak superficially of a” Brazilian temperament” and overlook thereby how fundamentally different the reception of reality is from the position of this socialization) opposite the socialization in the Northern hemisphere, which has a fundamentally mental-rational character.

What they discover in the bodies with heads, that they call symbolically “Penguins” and the heads with bodies that they call symbolically “Polar Bears” are radical differences in perception, in life style, even in the scientific working methods. Precisely here we arrive at the core of our theme: just where does humanity stand regarding the evolution of consciousness and what is happening with us in this area right now? Including if some of us do not yet notice (feel) anything, or, to be more scientifically exact, do not wish to either notice or feel anything:

Empathy is connection, first biologically, behaviourally, feeling-based and then cognitive, in a self-created network (autopoietisch??) between living elements. This definition includes plants and animals, from which human beings do not live disconnected. This means that empathy is the possibility to enter into mutually nourishing connections, co-operations and interactions in which the brain is not necessarily involved. As soon as any living element possesses sense organs (and both animals and plants possess these) and are capable of reacting and interacting, mutually nourishing

connections, co-operations and interactions can take place. Then it is capable of empathy. (Stueck, 2015).

The School of Empathy attempts to bring together differing concepts of Southern hemisphere scientists (Penguins) such as Professor Roland Toro, Ruth Cavalgant, Humberto Maturana, Franzisco Varela and Pablo Freire with the rationality and reflexive intelligence of Northern hemisphere scientists (Polar Bears) such as Marshall Rosenberg, James Lovelock, Gerda Verden-Zoeller ana Ilja Prigogine.

2. Penguins & Polar Bears – a Dialogue between North & South and in Scientific Working Methods.

In this symbolisation it is not only a matter of the geographical positioning, but also the fundamentally different scientific paradigms of the North and South.

The Logic of the Polar Bears Science in the North

The scientific paradigms of the North are based - amongst other things – on the rationality of Descartes and on the fundamental work of Edmund Husserl and Carl Popper (The Logic of Research). Fundamental propositions are “Take as truth only what you can prove to be so”; “Divide an entire problem into sub-problems and try to prove them”. Already in the Middle Ages Descartes laid the foundations for the systematic rejection of our corporeality and even sealed this separation between body and reason with his famous sentence: “I think, therefore I am”. In his works Descartes speaks of a spirit that exists totally independent from the body. This is a fatal fallacy (see Damasio) that exists up until the present day for “Polar Bears” and has influence in all areas of our lives. (1) In our individualistic society most of our actions are based on dissociation from others, control and rational concepts which above all strive for classification. Our scientific approach can also be thus explained: empirical evidence and rationality; classification and structuring; the most complex behavioural expression is exactly analysed and symptom-oriented with an obsession for detail. Polar Bears do not trust. And this “crisis of trust” has invaded our pedagogic like a cancerous ulcer. The construct love is only perceived and registered when it has been described and proved. Even Einstein and Wheeler came up against boundaries with this hypothesis-directed approach. The research Polar Bears had to make concessions as to the “unmeasurable”, They became PINGUI-BEARS.

“If one day we were able to discover just what drives this universe and its evolution, then, according to all that we know today, it would turn out to be not so much a shining mechanism as what we would have to term in everyday language a wonder. We would recognise this wonder, but it would remain a wonder.”

Prof. John Wheeler: Nobel Prize Winner, “Father of the New Quantum Physics”

1. The Portuguese neurologist Antonio R. Damasio describes this fallacy in his book “Descartes’ Error”(2004). Damasio points out how greatly so-called rationality and reason are dependent upon the body and its state, and even goes so far as to say that a “bodiless brain” cannot have a spirit because the interaction with the body is missing.

“Amazement is our approach to the universe. Humility is our approach to our fellow human beings.” “The continuation of our scientific development is finally a flight from amazement.” “Whoever has lost the ability to feel amazement is practically dead.” “One must gaze at the impossible so long that it becomes a matter of small consequence. The wonder is a question of training.”

Prof. Albert Einstein: Nobel Prize Winner “Father of the Theory of Relativity”

The Intuition of the Penguins

The Scientific Concepts of the Penguins

What is expressed in non-verbal behaviour in southern cultures, which tends to be intuitive and experience-oriented, can also be found in intervention programmes. Far more value is placed on encounters in feedback and on the integration of the body. Put briefly: the effort is made to reduce stress by making possible the restructuring of mental patterns via bodily experiences, as Maturana envisaged. (2) At the centre is above all the entire range of feelings. This fundament is also at the core of the body-oriented method BIODANZA founded by Rolando Toro, which is the basis for this book and which will be described in more detail later.

Knowledge is arrived at intuitively, above all in action, without any lengthy prior rational analysis. One observes specific effects in individual cases and thus continues to use this method. Implicitly a theory is arrived at as to why these effects take place. However, just because there are no scientific explanations for the effects does not mean relinquishing the method. Rolando

Toro, for example, when treating his patients, discovered certain effects with music.

The approach of the “Penguins” tends towards being integrative and holistic; which does not however mean an abstention from any scientific theories. It is a route from the head to the body – a route of trust, which does not require any scientific proof.

Rolando Toro describes empathy as an experience-based process which takes place in the activity of human encounters. The basis for this is the Santiago-theory of cognition by Maturana & Varela, which states that we arrive at knowledge through activity (3) and through Rolando Toro’s method BIODANZA. Thus it can be said that empathy is the total perception and respect of and for the Other in mutual social communal living and the recognition of the Other’s needs which is expressed above all through our behaviour towards the Other. This is not a process that takes place in our brain, neither is it purely affective. It is a vivid occurrence that is expressed in the encounter of human beings with one another, but also of human beings with nature. (4)

2. Maturana, H.R. & Varela, F.J. (2009) “*The Tree of Knowledge*” Frankfurt am Main: Fischer PB.

Maturana’s & Varela’s theory of knowledge will be described in more detail below.

3. Maturana, H.R. & Varela, F.J. (2009) “*The Tree of Knowledge*”. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer PB.

4. Maturana, H.R. & Varela, F.J. (2009) “*The Tree of Knowledge*”. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer PB.

In an era in which more and more cultures are turning towards rationality and the separation of body and spirit, Humberto R. Maturana, Francisco J. Varela and Rolando Toro developed a definition of life which reminds us of our fundamentals, that shows us what human nature really means. In their theory they emphasise how important it is that body and spirit be lived as a unity and that communication can be realised above all by our behaviour towards ourselves, towards others and towards nature. (4)

3. SOLUTION: An integrative Research Concept: “The Complete Science”

In 2012 I was appointed Professor of Psychology at the University of Applied Science Saxony in Zwickau and also given the post of Scientific Director of the College. I started to integrate the fundamental knowledge into a holistic

research concept. This research concept “The Complete Science” comprises five Research-Gates and three research-areas.

Gate 1: The Experience

Gate 2: Qualitative Research

Gate 3: Quantitative Research

Gate 4: Laboratory Research

Gate 5: Practice

These five gates describe research methods to gain knowledge in three areas:

Area 1: Biology / Medicine etc.

Area 2: Psychology / Pedagogy

Area 3: Other Scientific Fields (Anthropology, Ethnology)

Edmund HUSSERL: “... To come near truth we need to withdraw from any theory. We need to switch off all pre-interpretations, to be in the moment with our investigation object. Then we can see the world in its true structures. This withdrawing he calls “Epoche”. (Riccœur, 1967).

Edmund Husserl: Studied from 1876 to 1878, mathematics, physics and astronomy at Leipzig university. At Leipzig he was inspired by philosophy lectures given by Wilhelm Wundt, one of the founders of modern psychology. Husserl’s thought is revolutionary in several ways, most notably in the distinction between “natural” and “phenomenological” modes of understanding.

Edmund Husserl noted that: “An attitude is pure when no feeling is mixed in with the experience.”

He is a pure Polar Bear. Because the knowledge is won without any feeling. Feeling hinders the knowledge. For Research Gate 2 this method is correct. For Research Gate 1 it is not. Here is where the separation of body and spirit begins, the separation of human beings from nature, the separation of truth and trust. Here is where the separation of Penguins & Polar Bears begins.