

Words of Wisdom:
The urgency of learning the language of the future

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In the beginning was the Word ...

" In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. It was with God in the beginning. Through it all things were made; without it nothing was made that has been made. In it was life, and that life was the light of all mankind." (John 1:1-4).

These words are at the beginning of John's Gospel in the New Testament. Seen in this way, even before human beings were created, language was present in the plan. At the beginning of the story of creation, in the Old Testament in the first book of Moses it says: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was formless and empty, and darkness covered the deep waters. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters." No mentioning of the deed for language, however of the creation of the earth, as the part of the human being, through which we receive our form by means of heredity and can eke out our life as an inhabitant of the earth. Let's look a little closer at the polarities of these two beginnings of the history of creation.

In an interview in the radio program Focus, of the ORF Radio Vorarlberg, Austria on March 31st 2016, the theologian and psychoanalyst Eugen Drewermann contrasts these two beginnings. He talks about the fact that there is unspeakable suffering in nature. In 2004, for example, the tectonic shifts and the resulting tsunami killed more than 200,000 people. Or also on the basis of the catastrophe of Fukushima it shows us, that in all teachings about nature "not the slightest answer to the human pain and suffering of all creatures that are capable of suffering" can be found. " It is almost as if nature is telling us to be cruel." Nature, he said, doesn't care what happens on its surface. Many people wonder where the divine is, when it comes to excruciating suffering in their lives. So in the Old Testament, the story of creation describes the design of nature and all life

in it. Just of a nature, which takes no consideration for the loss, which includes the death in its program, so to speak, without standing still. There should be something like a protection, a hope, a consolation, a security, according to Drewermann. Nature does not have these needs for us, but every child that is born into the world seeks it in the arms of its mother (...). A mother who ideally speaks tenderly to her child.

Now in the New Testament there is precisely in the Creation a new optimism, according to Drewermann, and an integrative answer is given. The answer lies "In the beginning was the Word" and not only "In the beginning God created heaven and earth." What is the difference? Why is this Word in the beginning so crucial?

Drewermann: " It is only possible to discover this world, this mechanics of nature, this contradiction of coincidence and necessity, this senseless stage of endless torments as a creation, if there is an audible voice in all this, which means us, in our small seemingly accidental short-lived existence. A voice, which wants us, which addresses us, so that we are! Which itself is person-like, so that it awakens in us the ability to become a person. People can become individuals only by talking to them. They can develop only an I, by speaking to them themselves, as to a YOU. To believe this voice absolutely, if necessary against all nature, certainly beyond all nature, is what connects us centrally with the message of Jesus in the New Testament of John's Gospel. That is to say, in the closeness of Jesus we begin to believe a love that we would never discover in the whole world, in the whole of nature. And only then, in trusting the man from Nazareth, we would come to believe God as a fatherly power behind everything. There we would find the security we were looking for." So only when we hear the voice in nature and in all things, then we can discover the world and experience the Christ impulse.

Faith in God as the Creator, first of all, does not serve to justify the world and its order, but it serves to justify a humanity that can withstand a world that can never be human,

and takes us by the hand and saves us from all the irritations that would otherwise lie dormant in the abysses, of the world. In other respects we would fall back into a world that we otherwise would not understand, according to Drewermann. Let's end the excursion into Drewermann's insights with the statement that "faith begins by holding on to; every single life has an indispensable preciousness."

The word that stood at the beginning is therefore the one that addresses us as an individual and makes us an individual by being addressed. We, who have borrowed our physical bodies from the earth, in the current of heredity. For when we proverbially call "A child by its name" in German language, this is an attempt to grasp something directly and truthfully without paraphrasing. The English equivalent to that proverb would be to call a spade a spade.

From the beginning language was the goal ...

If language is not an accidental evolutionary product of the human being, but was our purpose from the beginning, one should be able to see this in the history of the development of the human being. In his book "Dynamic Morphology and Development of the Human Form" Jaap van der Wal (college lecturer for anatomy, neurophysiology and embryology) has taken a close look at the development of man and has been able to present this thesis of the intention of language. But also with him we read, "In the beginning God created heaven and earth". At the beginning of every human life is the fusion of the egg cell with the sperm cell. Heaven and earth meet here for the first time. Two opposite qualities enter into a creative equilibrium between meeting and confronting, center and periphery, radial and circular, form and process, opening and closing. A here meets a there, one might say. But these opposites of ovum and sperm

don't simply merge and create a mixture of two qualities, but an elevation of both qualities arises!

If the ovum is fertilized and it comes to a nidation, then unbelievable processes begin to unfold. Again and again a point comes, where it must come to an inversion, it can't continue no more in the taken direction or it will die. An example should be mentioned here. When the embryo, shaped like a little chopstick, comes into the phase where the first blood cells are formed, about the second week, and a movement is set in motion toward the "above", this little chopstick is the earthly here and the blood cells move towards the there. Having arrived "above", they meet in the there, the outer and it can't move further. This stoppage of movement sets in motion the formation of the heart, which begins to beat on about the 21st day. The heart therefore, is so to speak, above the future head end in the outside, in the space, in the there. As a crown over the head one could say. But then comes a next step and the heart folds itself into the middle. Now we have a top, a bottom and a new middle. The head can now be formed. In these processes one can feel that a human being becomes a connector between heaven and earth. We human beings are not heaven and earth, we are the arbitrator. In German there is a proverb that says: someone wears ones heart on ones tongue. Interestingly, in English it means: to wear one's heart on one's sleeve. Here you can already guess that the heart connects both, with the head it connects the thinking and with the arms, the will. Our heart is a mediator of polarities.

In the beginning, God created heaven and earth, so these processes are also at the beginning of human embryonic development, and we find this heaven in the periphery, the sheaths and the placenta, and the earth as the center of events in the body forming processes of the human being. Before we are born we have two bodies, so to speak, the central body and the peripheral body. At birth we leave the "heaven" behind, become an

air being from a water being and as an individual we now find the polarity in the world we are born into.

Let's also look here at the second variant of the beginning of creation. In the beginning was the word, the order to speech. We find this also in the form of a human being. If we compare a human being with the animal, we notice that an animal is perfectly adapted to its environment. It has the right plumage, the long neck, the ability to live under water, to dig caves or to hibernate. You can't deprive a fish of water and you can't abandon a peacock on the North Pole. Their whole being is perfectly adapted to the living environment. If we look at a human being, we see that nowhere in its physique one is really perfectly adapted to the environment. We have no fur, so we have to wear cloths. The legs are long, the toes short, the chest broad and the shoulder blades small. Jaap van de Wal quotes from the work of Dr. Verhulst that these retardation phenomena are all put into a meaningful context. Thus, the human being possesses legs for walking upright, arms free for handling tools, and a head with a countenance that is free, deprived of environmental activity, free for speech. Because we have no fur, but many sweat glands on the skin, our breath is free. We do not have to pant like a dog to keep our body temperature in balance. In the beginning was the word, and our present physicality serves this word in the form of language. So, if we do not have an appearance adapted to the environment like the animals, we can consider us as free beings. Our thinking, our language and the freedom are the tools which we need to work with on becoming human.

The Non-Word or Silence as Punishment (When Silence is not Gold)

Let us now take the theoretical into life. Who can remember a moment in life when one had to experience the punishment with silence, the so called "Silent Treatment". Where a

parent threatens the child not to talk to him anymore. Or that a parent barricades him/herself behind a closed door and says nothing, nothing at all, no matter how much the child cries his/her soul out. These are certainly unpleasant to traumatic experiences. Why does one convey that the end of speech is the end of affection? With the deprivation of speech, the cruel, merciless side of the silent nature formally confronts the human being. Parents who use this punishment experience that the child feels guilty and changes the behavior, without them using physical or psychological violence from their point of view. This silence can feel like a dignified, sublime response; it is the way to inflict pain on someone without leaving physical marks. But what they don't see is that the child doesn't even know how to break the parent's silence and feels unwanted, trapped, rejected. Often it does not even know why it is being silenced. They try everything to break this silence. If they experience this Silent Treatment again and again, it can lead to severe personal changes. Trusting other people and confiding in others becomes difficult throughout one's life. One literally feels alone in the world.

When someone is exposed to silent treatment, the same areas in the brain react that are active during physical pain. It does not matter whether this comes from strangers, friends, family or enemies. However, Silent Treatment is very hurtful, even to adults, and can certainly be called emotional abuse. Those who are exposed to it for a long time or repeatedly can develop self-doubt and inferiority complexes. One finds oneself in a state of constant tension, one's thoughts endlessly circle around the unresolved situation, and one seeks fault with oneself. The absence of communication causes inner tension, grievance, restlessness up to depression, headaches and digestive problems. It is an exhausting condition, which can affect the whole life. If we take up again the image of speechless nature, which we looked at with the comparison of the two beginnings of the creation story, then the powerlessness in the face of a ruthless

nature is also felt here to the fullest extent. We, as small creatures, are insignificant and completely at the mercy of this situation. But if you add to the silence only one sentence, like: I can't talk now, I need a time out. Then the whole harmful, manipulative, and passive-aggressive tip is broken and the other person can position themselves in a healthy way toward the silence. Studies have shown that silence itself is not the problem, it is the deliberate one-sided withdrawal of speech in a conflict situation.

Selma Rudert, of the University of Basel, and Kipling Williams, of Purdue University, show in a study that people respond gratefully to truly any word when they experience exclusion, even if it is an outrageous justification for rejection alleviates the agony. For example, in one experiment, participants in the study had to apply for a room in a shared apartment. The worst thing the test persons found was the rejection, which was dismissed without any reason at all. If there were warm words in the rejection, no negative feelings arose at all. But even if the reason for the rejection was that the applicant was a horrible person, this was less bad than no reason at all.

So there is also a responsibility of the people who have to issue rejections. If only a small sentence is added, the recipient is less likely to lose heart. There are of course more areas where silence is doing great harm. When grown up children move out and cut all the stings to their parents and disappear in silence. Or when a relationship is ended on one side and there is no possibility for any communication anymore. These are all very heavy issues we have to deal with. And still, silence is a need too.

Silence is a wonderful power when used as a loving gesture. "I need to retreat and collect myself for a moment, and I'll come back to you later" can initiate such a powerful silence. Or when we pause to reflect, meditate, walk a distance together without conversation, or give ourselves completely to listening, silence unfolds its full greatness

and is truly golden. Both silence and speech have powers that, used in the right place, can change the world.

The language of the past

We, Chris and Anne, refer to the mother tongue as the essential foundation of the language of the past. A child is born and then cannot choose which language he or she would like to speak. "I may have been born in the U.S. now, but I would prefer it if you spoke Finnish to me." No, this choice is not available to a child at the beginning of life. It learns the language of the parent or caregiver. In this sense, the language of the past is one which arises from the stream of heredity. The child is completely dependent on the people who speak to it. So the first language approach comes from the outer world and the individual, in this case the newborn, has no choice but to learn what is given. We talk to a baby in the first year of life in a way that the baby can best hear and, in a certain sense, understand. This baby talk or infant-direct speech is characterized by the fact that the articulation is exaggerated, the pitch is raised, the speech tempo is reduced and the syntactic structures as well as the vocabulary is simplified. Repetition is an essential tool in this phase. In the second year of life, we move into what is called supportive language or scaffolding, which is used to build vocabulary. This is about limiting information and focusing attention on a small section. A simple dialogue structure is used. In the third year of life, we use teaching language or motherese to build grammar. Now language stimuli are applied through open questions and also corrective syntactic feedback. It is amazing that without us ever having learned this theoretical knowledge of the techniques, people all over the world apply it. As if it has been woven into us from time immemorial. Another very important point is, that language is learned in relationship. Children need caregivers with whom they can form an emotional bond in order to

understand the language, develop it themselves, and imitate it. It is also crucial that children grow up with other children, as the interaction is crucial to grasp the complexity of language. Many developmental steps of language acquisition occur interdependently with the development of social skills. A child begins to understand NO, for example, when crawling away puts him or her in danger. The playful element is also of utmost value for the development of language, that is where other children for example are important. Thus, with the content-container game, children also begin to discover at the same time that syllables and words have content and meaning. (Remo Largo, *Baby Jahre*, only available in German) From these two small examples, one can guess that language is not just a construct that describes an object or a feeling, but develops from a universe of infinite interactions, relationships, experiences, play and encounters.

It is important that language acquisition can proceed as undisturbed as possible during the first 4 years of life. Before the child is even born, it can receive auditory stimuli; this is possible from the 24th week of pregnancy. From the 32nd week of pregnancy, the auditory system is mature enough to perceive auditory stimuli passing through the mother's body. Thus, language acquisition begins in the womb. This can lead to the question of what happens to language formation when a child enters another language culture through adoption? Moreover, each word of the mother tongue carries the whole history of the culture. Let's take for example the word WATER. In Switzerland, which is also called the water castle of Europe, we associate water with cleanliness, good quality drinking water, the production of electricity, our lakes and rivers, which invite you to swim. If we take a country like Ethiopia, where there is a great water shortage due to persistent drought, the word WATER means an infinitely precious good. Life and death depend on it. And when one talks about water in the coastal areas of the

Netherlands, in addition to energy production, one is also interested in ensuring that the land does not sink due to too much water. So it is with the language that an unspoken part is delivered right from the beginning.

Analog childhood - a MUST for a good encounter with the digital world

It is therefore essential for a child's language development that it can take place under the full attention of parents or caregivers and in playful interaction with other children. Then language development is optimally guaranteed. This is where the advent of the smartphones has created a great affliction. It is observed that the children by the time they enter kindergarten, their language skills are more and more often only insufficiently mastered. Here we want to take a closer look from one possible direction. In the 70's Dr. Ed Tronick developed an experiment that went down in history under the name "Toddler-Still-Face Experiment". The experiment investigated the effect of a mother's expressionless face on the infant. Mother and infant were supposed to connect in a normal relationship interaction and then after a certain time the mother would put on an expressionless face, this for about 2 minutes. During this time, it could be observed that the infant immediately looks disturbed. It tries to re-establish contact with the mother with all its possibilities. It smiles, points at her and looks around the room. If it continues to be ignored by the mother, it appears more and more stressed and frustrated. It eventually overwhelms the central nervous system and cause the child to physically collapse. A further study, which also examined the time of resumption of contact, shows that the relationship after the Still-Face time is not the same as before. The stress remains for a while and the child may continue to turn away from the mother. Also, a similar effect of the Still-Face phenomenon was discovered when the expressionless face was replaced by smartphone handling.

If we now look at the absence of parents and caregivers when the smallest family member is present, the smartphone, then it can be observed that attention decreases significantly. McDaniel coins the term "technoferece," which describes the disruption that occurs in connection with technology. He uses it to name the disruption of social interactions caused by technology. It has been documented in studies that adults feel less internally connected when a smartphone is used or merely already present. The toddler thus learns from early childhood that parents seem absent for no reason. On the playgrounds, where investigated what happens when mothers and fathers use their smartphones. Being distracted increased the number of accidents, which is obvious. But it was also observed that the ability to empathize was lower. There was less talking to the child and he/she was less addressed in his/her activity. This despite the fact that the children sought contact with parents, through eye contact, calling or physical contact. Prof. M. Spitzer, neuroscientist and psychiatrist from Germany, explains in his book Smartphone Epidemic, only available in German, that in every human being there is a brain region for speech, movement and, for example, empathy. But just the presence of the brain areas is of no use if they are not addressed. For example, a child has to try thousands of times to stand up until it can stand and then walk. The area in the brain needs this input so that the movement can be stored properly. It is exactly the same with language. In a family where there is a lot of talking, reading aloud and singing, where the parents are with their attention with the child or the child can play with other children over a longer period of time, has heard over 30 million words at school entry, according to Spitzer. Now, if you look into a family where the smartphone or tablet constantly interrupts attention, bonding is constantly disrupted and not as much is spoken, such a child starts out with a brain whose language area has only just received 8 million words to train. At some point, this disadvantage cannot be made up.

It's a grim picture to paint when it comes to smartphones and tablets and their effect on young children. What does a young child naturally do? It moves incessantly, babbles or talks, is interested and curious. What happens, for example, when you turn on the TV or hand him/her a tablet? It stares almost motionless at the screen. This small observation shows that in a very short time, almost in seconds, the natural behavior stops. It should be noted that in Silicon Valley, where all the technology is being produced, the schools are smartphone and tablet free. There are Waldorf schools there. And in 2019 it became forbidden in China to use smartphones or tablets in classrooms. 80% of the children in China became nearsighted and the ability to concentrate decreased.

One last point that Prof. Spitzer raises should be pointed out. The brain area of empathy must also be fed with an infinite number of interactions in order to develop. A small child learns the language, sees the expression in the face and notices at one point, that is sad what is spoken and he/she looks also sad. Or he/she is happy and so on. At some point, a look is enough and without words, the person feels how the other person feels. That's how you learn empathy. Every hour used by modern device in childhood keeps the child away from real and necessary experiences. A computer developer said that they design the programs to be child's play. This means that children have no disadvantage at all if they come into contact with the computer or smartphone only later, because the ability to handle it requires only a very short learning phase. Thus, the toddler does not receive any advantage if he/she comes into contact with this technology at an early age. Quite the opposite, because less brain activities has a definite consequence on learning, interaction, empathy, creativity, encounter, courage and so on.

In summary, language learning is only possible in an analog environment. It is the basis for peaceful coexistence. Villém Flusser, a philosopher wrote in an essay that

whoever has a really good command of his/her mother tongue can recognize and experience the beauty of his/her own language, when meeting someone with foreign language and thus also discovers the beauty of the language of the other person. Then an interest in the other develops. If, on the other hand, the native language is only rudimentarily developed, the foreign language causes fear and it comes more likely to a conflict, as one feels threatened. This is not difficult to observe, because a conflict or a declaration of war does not come in lyrical form. Therefore, Flusser has seen linguists as true peace workers. We see parents and caregivers as these peace workers. An analog start in life is the best foundation for a digital world!

The language of the present

Chris and Anne see in the language of the present the direct exchange in conversation. In the here and now, we talk to each other. We greet each other, ask to be handed bread, get upset about a parking fine, negotiate a wage increase, ask for a date, offer consolation or plan our dream house with an architect. It is always words, gestures and facial expressions that accompany what is said and essentially shape our life together.

Dr. Heinz Zimmermann (1937-2011, among other things was head of the Pedagogical Section at the Goetheanum) describes in his essay "the art of conversation" that conversation stands in a certain way between thoughts and deeds. Words can express thoughts, inform, instruct, rebuke, praise or even call to action, prepare resolutions and establish agreements. A single word can change the relationship with a person rootedly. The direct conversation has as a special characteristic: the immediate mutual influence.

Everything can play a role in a conversation. For example, the location is a decisive factor in the course of the conversation. Does the conversation take place in a subway, or side by side on a bicycle, in a bomb shelter or in a church, around the lunch table or in a conference room, in a teacher's office or at the bedside of a patient? Every place influences the conversation. Then time also plays a big role. Is the conversation in the early morning or at night, on a hot summer day or in a dark winter time? Do you have five minutes for it or a whole afternoon? Do you need a break and are all participants receptive? All of these time issues need to be factored in. Another aspect is the motive for the conversation. Are you meeting for a casual conversation or for a test? Is it to share an important message or to freely strive together for a solution? These questions indicate a goal or the occasion of the conversation as its motive. Finally, the circumstances surrounding the conversation should be mentioned. Does the conversation take place in a noisy train station hall or in the midst of children's screams? Is there construction noise or a large window front? Are the chairs comfortable or the table too small? The surrounding circumstances also play a role. The relationship between the participants in the conversation is also decisive. Do they all know each other or does only a part of the group know each other, are they family members, the partner, a salesman or a teacher?

One could already be completely overwhelmed by everything that plays a role when reading these lines. And this is just a small sample when it comes to conversation. In everyday life we do not actively think about every single point, but we have experience values, which we could acquire through thousands of conversations. If we briefly look back at the language of the past, the learning of the native language, and how complex and time-consuming that was, then we can guess that the conversation needs a similar amount of "fodder" until it can fully develop. It can already be said that the more

opportunities we have to expose ourselves to conversations, the better we will learn to understand our counterpart in life and thereby also ourselves. For it is only through the other person that we recognize who we are.

The fact that a conversation is only very rarely about a purely factual communication, because then misunderstandings would be easy to get out of the way, should be shown by a small example:

He: "What are those bits in the sauce?"

She: "If you don't like it, you can cook it yourself next time!"

On the factual level, this dialogue makes no sense at all. The reality of the conversation takes place on a completely different level. He actually means: "I think your cooking is terrible and I'm very unhappy that you don't make more of an effort!" and it is precisely to this message that she reacts, saying that if he doesn't like it, he can cook for himself.

Zimmermann then points out that in this dialectical game the man can still be the winner if he adds expectantly: "I just wanted to know what these bits in the sauce are. Is it not even allowed to ask more?" But it was not a question at all in the first instance, but an accusation, and by changing the dialectical level of conversation he can pretend that it was a question out of interest. If we think for ourselves, we quickly discover such dialectical hide-and-seek games in our own conversational culture. "I would like to ask a question sometime: why..." or "I quite agree, but...". Tone of voice is also a crucial element that can carry what is said to another level. Sometimes a yes in a certain tone of voice can mean a definite no. Filler words can also emphasize the nuances of feeling: aha, so-so, but, just, again - are such words. "Where did you put the bills again?" "Aha, so you were home at 1." So a good conversation culture needs to be practiced. Thousands

and thousands of times we need to have the opportunity to listen to conversations and be involved in them ourselves.

When we can listen to a lively conversation on the train, for example, it seems self-evident that the individual contributions are uttered in a meaningful sequence of words. But this self-evident is almost a miracle. For if we observe ourselves closely, we realize that we rarely know what we are going to say when we start talking. By talking, the thought develops further and only now comes to our consciousness. One can experience that from time to time one is astonished, where the just said thought might have come from. Heinrich von Kleist (German writer 1777 - 1811) has written an essay about the "gradual refinement of thoughts while talking" and in it he writes to his friend, if he does not get further by meditating on a problem, that he should talk about it with others. It does not matter whether the other person is familiar with the topic or not. "The idea comes while speaking." Toddlers learn language through movement; it is in speaking that they come to thinking. Because if I want to clarify a thought, I have to try long enough to formulate it linguistically, then it becomes clearer and clearer. By listening to others, I can expand and clarify my thoughts in conversation. It is the next level so to say.

So now we have landed at another important point of the conversation: listening. It is to be contrasted with talking on an equal footing. Conversations only work if there are speakers and listeners. The quality of listening has a decisive influence on the conversation. If someone wants to convey an important message and is constantly interrupted by interposed questions or other requests to speak, it can be very painful. Let's think of a coming out that falls on deaf ears because the other person puts his or her story first. In fact, the concept of deaf ears contains the pain of not being heard. Even thorough listening can reach its limit of meaning. Because when we are in a boisterous

company, laughing, telling stories and being completely satisfied and relaxed, it seems strange when someone consciously listens and thereby brings like a heaviness into the situation. That means that listening also has to be learned. When is depth required, when a lightness. When can I contribute something, when do I hold back. Does it make sense to want to contribute something in a strongly emotional state? Can one also insist on not wanting to hear something?

The conversation is also becoming a focus of research in our time. This new interest in conversation is amazing. If we assume that at the end of the 1990s the Internet became accessible to everyone, today we see that the young people use this network as their main communication channel. So it makes sense to research whether that changes the culture of conversation and in what way. For example, one study looked at why people find more substantive conversation more enjoyable than small talk with strangers. It found that at the beginning of the experiment, people tended to think it would be strange to discuss significant issues with strangers. But in the end, the tenor was that this was much more appreciated. So where does the desire for deep conversations come from and at the same time the inhibition against it? Well, many people have the feeling that they would bore the other person, while research shows that there is indeed an interest in personal experiences.

The same group of researchers led by Nicholas Epley has also investigated which media are more suitable for communication than others. They found out that wherever people talk to each other, i.e. hear each other's voices and possibly even see a picture, the conversation proceeds with fewer misunderstandings. It does not matter whether the other person is a stranger or not. Text-only messages fared the worst.

After all, this shows that the language, even if it is used somewhat distorted electronically, still leads to a good feeling and a better understanding. If you take away

the language completely and additionally act anonymously, the door is opened to evil, which can be seen in the hate comments that can be posted on the net with a simple tap on the keyboard. The apparent freedom gained through anonymity is an extremely destructive field, which can cause the greatest damage to an individual whose hatred in words. Anything that you would not say to someone personally, you should not write should be the rule.

The sideshows - the well-intentioned distraction

So what you say and how you say something is important and there is a freedom in the use of language. And then there is also much said that does not want to be heard. That restricts or even takes away the freedom of the listener. Also the listener has a freedom in wanting or not wanting to hear something. We call this phenomenon, where more is said than the listener wants to hear, the installing of sideshows. Example:

She: "I don't want to go on vacation to Italy this summer, I'd rather go to the north because it's cooler there. I also want to see something new for once. The airfares are cheaper and we could move into a small summer cottage instead of camping. The kids could then swim in the lake."

He: "It's hot in the north in the summer too, that's what climate change does. And we could try a new campsite in Italy a little further south, they have little houses too if you don't like the tent. The kids can swim in the sea. And if we go a little further north, we can go there by car, that's cheaper."

She: "But I want to go north!"

He: "But there is no real reason for that!"

What this example is to point out is that with the switching of the actual statement, already equal the explanation why, is along-supplied. Each supplied, unasked explanation is a side show and distracts from the actual statement, so that at the end, the actual is not discussed at all. How could this conversation proceed without side issues?

She: "I'd like to go up north in the summer."

He: " To the north? Interesting, why up north?"

She: " I was thinking that I would like to try a different climate."

He: " Do you know that it can also get very hot in the north? But maybe it's less humid.

Where would you have wanted to go?"

She: "I would like to see the northernmost tip of Europe sometime."

And so on. So if we stick with the core statement "go north in the summer," then the freedom lies with the other person to ask his or her questions. It comes to a completely different course of conversation. It is very difficult to free oneself from unasked explanations and to remain true to one's core statement. But with a little practice, you will notice that the power of the statement increases and that the imposition of one's own opinion on the other person falls away. It remains dynamic and does not falter. Especially in conversations with children, it can be very liberating to avoid creating sideshows. If, for example, you want to tell a child that he or she will be going to a different school than originally planned and describe how great the new school is, where the path goes, who goes to school there, what projects they offer, what the playground looks like, how big the class will be and what the support programs look like, then you can feel that this can be very overwhelming. If you just say " you will be going to the other school house after the summer." without side shows, then the child may or may not ask questions themselves. Maybe it takes a while before questions come, maybe he/she just wants to know if the teddy bear can come too, or if they have a swing. Here

we realize that it is important to respect the ears of the other person and to convey the essentials in such a way that the ears remain free and the child's own thinking remains free too.

The family council - or how to create a culture of conversation

The family council is a wonderful way to practice conversation. It can form a profound, positive foundation in family life. The concept is relatively simple. In a rhythm adapted to the family, such as once a week or twice a month, all family members sit down together and all sorts of things are discussed. If there are still small children present, it might be about the menu plan for the next week or the visit to grandma. Things that were difficult during the past week are also discussed. Maybe getting dressed in the morning was difficult, and now it's time to talk about it and try to find a solution. Everyone can have a say in the process. It is amazing how solutions can be found in a conversation that the individual could never have thought up. Here is an example. In Anne's family, the children wanted to play street music around Christmas. The big sisters played the flute and guitar and the little brother the bassoon. They would line up in different places and play. Now it so happened that the little brother took in about 8-10x more money each time than the sisters. This led to great resentment and jealousy. At the family council it was discussed what could be done. Everyone was allowed to express his/her frustration but also his/her pride, everyone was heard and a solution was sought. In the end, it was decided that everyone could double their monthly pocket money and the remaining money would then be transferred to the child's bank account. Since the big sisters had more pocket money, they could keep almost the whole amount and the little brother got large sums in his bank account. As a result, he always

generously invited the sisters to a hot chocolate at the end of the afternoon. So everyone was in a good mood and the subject was off the table.

The possibility of postponing a conflict to the family council and not having to discuss everything in the heat of the moment also helps to look at the matter from a certain distance with a calm mind. Of course, the parents have to take the lead a bit in the beginning and stick to it even if it's resinous. It can help if the children are given bee wax clay to keep their hands busy so that boredom can be kept in check. It helps to take notes on the new arrangements and then pull them out the next time and see how it went. The family council is not just for the problems, everything can be discussed. As the children get older, the topics change automatically. In youth, the family council gives a platform of security to be able to express themselves. Respect, being listened to and heard out, feeling part of a decision, being allowed to contribute and being valued are some of the experiences that can be made. Anne's children once said at a family council that their parents were not humorous at all anymore. That was an eye opener, because they were right. It made it possible to look more closely and set a new course for everyday life.

To sum up, the language of the past comes from the YOU and we have to absorb it, there is hardly an individual. The language of the present is a form where the I and YOU become a WE and on all sides the speaking and listening must find its form in direct exchange.

Language of the future

In the language of the future, everything is different once again. If in the language of the past it was important that someone spoke to us, that is, the weight lay in the you,

then in the language of the present the I was added and it became a flow between ME and YOU, so now in the language of the future the whole force lies in the I. It is a language that is completely solitary, each person has to find his/her own language of the future and this is always new for a lifetime. How can this be understood? If we look at the speeches of personalities such as Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela or also Rudolf Steiner, someone speaks completely out of oneself. We recognize a truth content that can be understood as universal. This newness picks us up in the present and brings a change for the future. Nelson Mandela succeeded in abolishing apartheid in South Africa and steering the country in a previously unimaginable direction. Martin Luther King believed deeply in nonviolent action such as marches, sit-ins and prayer circles as his weapon against racism. "I am tired of the violence I have seen too often. I've seen this hatred on the faces of too many sheriffs in the South ... I'm not going to lower myself to their level. We have a power that cannot be found in Molotov cocktails." So spoke Martin Luther King. Mahatma Gandhi, whom Martin Luther King was fascinated by during his studies, also lived nonviolent protest. The language of the future is always based on nonviolence. The examples are exemplary of this.

Another characteristic of this unique language is that it cannot be forced. Learning it requires an inner attitude of patience and openness. As it is so beautifully said in Shakespeare's Hamlet: „The readiness is all.“ In German there is an appropriate saying, "The grass doesn't grow faster if you pull on it." The preparation or openness to one's own language of the future lies in one's own life itself. The attempt to live one's own life, to find meaning and to enter with courage into the unknown again and again is necessary. The unknown is the future itself.

But what is the future? We distinguish two currents. One stream comes from the past and forms the future by planning something or by avoiding something out of fear or by

longing for something through hope. But this future, its called FUTURUM is actually like an empty box. By the fact that we plan it fills itself. If there was only this stream, we would not even think about whether the future also has its own quality. It would be an empty future to be filled. But we all know situations where something completely unexpected enters our lives. Our plans are crossed and sometimes we end up being very grateful that fate has taken a different turn. If we were to imagine for a moment that everything we have planned since our youth had actually come to pass, then perhaps our lives would look totally different. And where would be the freedom, which can be brought to life by unplanned things? Rudolf Steiner says: „It is characteristic of human beings of our present age to be inwardly hollow – and we should acknowledge it. If we practice life-retrospection honestly and faithfully, we find that the influences other people have had upon us are much more important than what we ourselves have supposedly acquired.. (Dornach, December 28th 1918. The Change in the Human Soul Constitution) So it is a blessing that there is also another quality of the future. It is called ADVENTUS. It is this stream which works from the future into the present. Rudolf Steiner again: „... but there can be no real grasp of the life of soul until we recognise that something is perpetually coming toward us from the future. This concept is essential. We shall have to rid ourselves of the mode of thought which looks only to the past when cause and effect are beign considered. We shall have to learn to speak of the future as something real, something moving towards us, just as we trail the past behind us.“ (Lecture three, The task of the fifth post- atlantean epoch, November 7th 1910) In the futurum movement of meaning, the future lives in the movement of advancing of breaking out. Ion the Advent movement of meaning, the future lives in the encounter, the arrival, the streaming in. The futurum is what will be, adventus is what will come. The futurum strictly distinguishes between it is and it is not yet. The Adventus is not

experienced in reaching it, but as something close, something that is approaching. It's not about becoming, but about arriving. So we can better understand that the language of the future brings both something from the past into the future, through the words and concepts that already exist, and also brings something from the future into the present, namely new ideas or rather ideals that can set the new course for changes towards becoming human. We, Chris and Anne, have the feeling that this language is an abstract one, this in the best sense. Because it does not bring the ready-made solutions into the world, but it connects with the level of ideas and ideals. The language comes from the heart and serves the greater whole. Another characteristic is that it includes the beautiful, the good and the true.

Nonviolent communication - a first step into the future

Marshall Rosenberg developed the technique of Nonviolent Communication. He was influenced in his youth by observations of conflicts between people of different skin color in the USA in the 1940s and by his own experiences because of his Jewish roots. Later, as a psychologist, he pursued the basic idea: If you want to create peace, you have to pay attention not only to what you say - but also to how you say it. In conflicts, the question is: what need is the person trying to fulfill with this chosen strategy? When we recognize this strategy, we can look together for a strategy that will not harm anyone. Because the strategies can also separate us, because they were developed, for example, in a particular situation, culture, religion or other relative context. With Nonviolent Communication, these patterns and imprints can become conscious. The goal is to develop life-serving systems and to speak a language that really touches us and makes encounter possible. From this short description we can already guess that here lies a

training field for the language of the future. One insight from Nonviolent Communication is that when I evaluate a situation subjectively and notice this, I have the chance to switch to observing what is happening. The conscious separation between evaluation and observation can make me open, curious and unbiased. The subjective evaluation comes from the past, the objective observation is present and the curiosity and openness points to a future. Another important part of Nonviolent Communication is the expression of one's own needs. This is based on the absolute individual. Because nobody knows what my needs are and it is difficult even for oneself to name them. But it is precisely this inner struggle for one's own truth that is a good training ground for preparing oneself for one's own language of the future.

The Art of Goethean Conversation

Marjorie Spock pointed out in an essay in 1983 what is important. She cites a little conversation from Goethe's fairy tale "The Reactions of the Serpent and the Beautiful Lily".

It states:

"Whence came you hither?" asked the golden king.

"Out of the clefts where gold dwells," replied the serpent.

"What is more glorious than gold?"

"Light!"

"What is more quickening than Light?"

"Conversation!"

This answer of the serpent may probably rather cause head shaking in our time. Because the ability to communicate is not exactly great and is also corrupted by modern end devices.

The Goethean conversation is however something completely different. It takes place in the realm of the ethereal, where thoughts are intuitions - that it breaks through into the realm of First Causes, as Marjorie Spock writes. This form of conversation requires preparation on the subject. Rules are set for how long the conversation will last, and in the process there is only reflection on the topic, there are no distractions. Thus, by preparing and focusing on the topic, a common field can emerge where insights can mature. Although this is a form of conversation with others, it belongs to the field of the language of the future, because a common aspiration of everyone requires its individual language.