

New Publication

Book and eBook



Alois Heinemann

Growing with pleasant and unpleasant Feelings

In the correlation between environment, body, mind and experience

**Development and development disturbances of individuals, relationships and groups
from the perspective of nonlinear systems and neuropsychanalysis
with an interdisciplinary study by Nikolai Axmacher and Alois Heinemann**

With five reviews

Central theme

It is only human
to have unpleasant and bad feelings.
Inhuman feelings arise
when unpleasant and bad feelings are suppressed and repressed.
Strength and happiness come
from being able to accept and share unpleasant and bad feelings.

Alois Heinemann

Current relevance

The idea that only the positive feelings (joy and pleasure) and positive behaviour (praise and understanding) promote the development of children, adolescents and adults is an intellectual, cultural invention. It became a cult in the second half of the last century, especially from the 1970s onwards. Just like the cult of the structures and rules in the first half of the last century, the cult of positive feelings led - and still leads today - to the suppression of negatively or unpleasantly experienced feelings (pain and aggression). The suppression and repression of pain in particular causes or exacerbates physical and mental illnesses, prevents the clarification of private and professional relationships, often leads to dramatic and traumatic separations and promotes deviant behaviour.

The inability of the positive cult to enable itself and others to deal with negative feelings and emotions has resulted in a return to the cult of rules and structures (including that of quality management).

Research into the nature of human beings by biology and neurobiology (brain research) has shown that we possess the natural systems (neural networks) to perceive pain and aggression at an early stage and to feel and manage them in contact with our attachment figures. From the perspective of brain research, children, adolescents and adults do not become strong and self-assured through the cult of the positive and positive feelings, but through the timely perception, expression and exchange of negatively experienced feelings (including those which are severe) and through the ability to "swing" (oscillate) from negative to positive feelings.

Expressed in the words of Reinhard K. Sprenger (2012, p. 51), we are well advised to at least listen to the voice of biology (to perceive and take the negative emotions seriously) before we silence them once and for all with the cultural arguments (the cult of the positive, the delusion of equality and inclusion) of our zeitgeist and cause even more damage to the development of children, adolescents and adults, private and professional relationships.

Main focus

To create a development concept and model that describe healthy development processes and the diagnosis and treatment of developmental disorders:

- which take into account the emotions as a bridge between the body, environment, spirit and experience, i.e. the perceptual, judgmental, motivating and activating function of pleasant and unpleasant feelings,
- which accept the vibrating (oscillating) dynamics between unpleasant and pleasant, positive and negative feelings as a development-promoting principle in unclear, ambiguous, and contradictory situations,
- which reveal supporting and destructive emotional and affect patterns (i.e., the desirable and undesirable or forbidden feeling types and intensities) of the private and professional attachment figures and groups, the social, cultural, and religious institutions,
- call into question, through the analysis of the affect pattern, the contrast between normal and abnormal, healthy and sick,
- which reveal psychosocially impaired persons, who, under the “guise of normality”, put a burden on, disturb or even destroy the development of individuals, groups, communities, and institutions, (cf. especially the descriptions of the hysterical, paranoid, borderline, and sociopathic personality disorder),
- consider, during the analysis of healthy and impaired processes, not only the behaviour patterns and the symptoms, but also the affective dynamics,
- offer realistic and practice-oriented procedures (tests and questionnaires) to assess the disturbances in the affect patterns and the emotional dynamics of individuals, groups, and institutions,
- which facilitate an influence on the subconscious, i.e. endeavouring to recognise the influence of past emotional experience and finding solutions for affect inhibitions which cause development disorders,
- which are biopsychosocial and interdisciplinary oriented (and which involve philosophical, psychological, sociological and neurobiological, as well as genetic, epigenetic and systemic research).

Review 1

"Growing with good and bad feelings"

In writing this short book review, I have chosen to mainly focus on the perspective of a therapeutic and educational practitioner who lives and works with clients in a long-term in-patient therapy setting every day. For myself as well as the clients who place their trust in me, the title of this book "Growing with pleasant and unpleasant feelings" is a reflection of our everyday lives and experiences.

The author considers in depth a wide variety of aspects in order to prove that the area of validity of different theories, therapeutic approaches and developmental concepts is limited. A considerable number of these approaches and concepts underestimate the "unpleasant" feelings, which the author himself considers important. Dr. Heinemann consistently demonstrates the importance and necessity of unpleasant, painful feelings for healthy development, as well as for a purposeful analysis by the individual of his or her environment. These feelings are equally as important as "good", pleasurable and satisfying feelings.

He clearly rejects both old and new theories or therapeutic approaches which relate primarily to the positive feelings which are experienced as pleasant. This refers to naive, resource-oriented approaches of the humanistic-liberal worldview, such as those found in the "I'm okay - you're okay" slogan so prevalent in the 1970s and 80s, which, in their one-sided focus on strengths and positive feelings, still have a formative influence on therapy and social work today. Moreover, we have also seen the boom in the new, no less naive approaches, such as the so-called "Positive Psychology" of Martin Seligman, which also fall short of their target due to this "one-sidedness". With its exclusively resource-oriented perspective, Positive Psychology builds on the ideas of Humanistic Psychology, with many of these aspects already being found in resource-oriented psychotherapy.

Dr. Heinemann clearly shows that the basic assumptions and attitudes of the humanistic-liberal development concept are not universally valid. The rejection of structuring and conditioning interventions in the humanistic concept (the ideal of non-directive dealings) is not conducive to all individuals in all situations, and may sometimes even cause harm. Dr. Heinemann sums this up as follows: *"If understanding, non-directive behaviour does not break down the blockades (in developmental processes, author's note), the negative emotions have to be activated, lived out and processed by confrontational behaviour on the part of the attachment figures."* (page 45)

He contrasts the humanistic-liberal development concept with the dialectical-critical-integrative development concept:

"Man and his environment are versatile, ambiguous, unpredictable and contradictory; in the analysis of the environment and himself, his reasonable, emotional, affective and instinctual components, his current and previous, conscious and unconscious experiences (his history), he has to develop his behaviour." (cf. Tab. 1, page 24)

"The conditions for healthy development processes are to be seen within the individual himself/herself and in his or her environment, i.e. in the process of analysis between the two. The important factor for this process is the ability to cope with negative circumstances, to deal with resistance and endure frustrations until solutions are found. From the perspective of the dialectical-critical-integrative concept, behavioural and developmental disorders result from

the individual's lack of attention to and failure to deal with negative external and internal stimuli, with unpleasant needs, drives, emotions, feelings, thoughts, situations, and experiences." (page 62)

It is therefore important to pay attention and give expression to the emotions, feelings and affects that are perceived as negative in order to transform them into pleasant and/or good emotions, feelings, and affects. However, the aim cannot be to achieve a permanent state of satisfaction or even happiness. Dr. Heinemann writes: *"The analysis becomes a life's work, and with it the acceptance and mastery of the never-ending alternation between frustration and desire, pleasure and sorrow, happiness and unhappiness, which are the preconditions for healthy development." (page 67)*

The result of this is the prominent importance of the emotions, feelings, and affects in all of their manifestations and strengths as the absolutely vital mechanisms in the necessary and healthy confrontation between the individual and environment.

This is how the credo of the author at the beginning of the book is to be understood: *"It is only human to have unpleasant and bad feelings. Inhuman feelings arise when unpleasant and bad feelings are suppressed and repressed. Strength and happiness come from being able to share unpleasant and bad feelings."*

He contrasts the development concepts described, which are complex, closed systems with linear dynamics at their cores, with the dialectical-critical-integrative development concept favoured by him; this is based on the concept of complex, open systems with non-linear dynamics. Closed linear systems can only describe and explain other closed systems. In his opinion, it is only through using open, non-linear concepts and perspectives that it becomes possible to meaningfully describe and explain the complex and open systems of the individual in a permanent interaction with his or her environment. Therapeutic and educational interventions can also be developed in a more meaningful manner with this approach.

It is against this background that he describes the role of the (primary and secondary) emotions, feelings, and affects in their interrelationship between the environment and organism. In all of their various manifestations and strengths, the types of feelings are therefore not a "dispensable luxury", but rather an absolute necessity for processing external and internal stimuli in a meaningful and regulative manner, as well as creating and maintaining a viable relationship with oneself and other people:

- *"Defensive, aggressive feelings protect against pain - struggling on behalf of closeness and bonding*
- *Feelings of displeasure, pain signal interference and danger - unblocking by means of painful crying and soothing body and soul*
- *Contacts of feeling and closeness provide comfort and support - creating a bond and strengthening eroticism and sexuality*
- *Feelings of pleasure and joy give strength, reinforcing the belief in meaning (coherence) - strengthening relationships, groups, and communities (page 204)*

For successful, reality-based relationship, action and behaviour patterns, this includes the oscillating connection between good and bad feelings:

- a) oscillation from pain - to comforting closeness and appreciative contact - to joy and pleasure;*
- b) oscillation from pain - to aggression - to the struggle for attention and sympathy - back to pain - to comforting closeness and appreciative contact - to joy and pleasure;*
- c) oscillation from joy, from pleasure and appreciative contact - to pain - to aggression - to the struggle for attention and sympathy - back to pain - to comforting closeness and appreciative contact - to joy and pleasure." (page 204)*

If they are experienced in conjunction with feelings of closeness and contact, one can see that even strong feelings of aggression are helpful and sometimes necessary in order to return to close contact with oneself and others. If the emotional inhibitions and repressions can be dissolved:

"... the oscillation from aggression to pain, through solace to closeness and pleasure, i.e. the oscillating ambivalent emotional dynamics, is reactivated and stabilised. Without the oscillation into pain (particularly that which is severe), the aggression becomes fixed in a more or less vigorous defence; only the expression of the pain that has been experienced opens up the oscillation to closeness and pleasure. The pain that is experienced, lived through, and comforted is the tipping point... from loneliness to closeness, from unpleasure to pleasure ..." (page 456)

Dr. Heinemann criticises the two common diagnostic systems of DSM and ICD. Both systems become lost in detailed complexity, i.e. especially in the case of personality disorders, they do not go beyond a mere description of the symptoms. Although with every new edition these systems differentiate and extend the description of the corresponding symptoms, they increasingly refrain beyond recognition from any coherent aetiology of the disorders. It might therefore be possible not to step on the toes of any specific school of therapy, but at the same time the system loses more and more of its practical relevance.

It is only the combination of detail complexity and dynamic complexity, i.e. the linking of the symptoms with the disorders in the emotional basis, which leads beyond this and provides a more complete picture.

Dr. Heinemann distinguishes between three groups of basic emotional disorders:

The first corresponds to the "neurosis concept" of Freud and the concept of the "depressive position" of Melanie Klein.

This means: "... the possible circular causal activatability of ambivalent emotions, feelings, and affects, i.e. of the primary and secondary, positive and negative types and strengths of feeling in the subject-object relationship. However, the activity or activatability of ambivalent feelings can be inhibited in a certain type of feeling or in certain types of feelings and in terms of their strength." (page 234)

The second group corresponds to the "psychosis concept" of Sigmund Freud and the concept of the "paranoid-schizoid position" of Melanie Klein:

"Typical aspects of the psychosis and the paranoid-schizoid position are the loss of the ambivalence of feelings and the dominance of negative feelings. As a result of traumas (with the lack of processing opportunities and the absence of "attachment figures offering emotional security"), the organism-object relationship is unilaterally characterised by fears and pain, by helplessness, despair, and panic. Strong forms of defence are developed to protect against destabilisation and decompensation." (page 236)

The third group is oriented on the concept of "primary narcissism" of Sigmund Freud and the "sociopathy concept" of Hervey Cleckley:

"The primary self and object relationships are determined by the pleasure principle, not by the reality principle. The contradictions, contrasts or ambivalences between the needs of the individual and the expectations, requirements, and demands of the environment are ignored. The competition between the self- and object-related drives is denied." (page 238)

Something that is particularly useful for practitioners like myself is the "Projective questionnaire for the assessment of psycho- and sociodynamics, emotional and social intelligence" developed by Dr. Heinemann.

Moreover, the entire book is repeatedly underpinned with key stories from clients, which contributed much to my understanding. The many carefully selected graphics should also be praised, which are designed such that they can be removed and help to prevent the reader from having to continually leaf backwards and forwards through the book. They are also indispensable for an understanding of the book. At this point I should also like to mention the extensive "common thread", which can be found at the end of the book and which makes it easier to find one's way around.

Besides the scientific orientation of the book, the author also has both feet firmly planted in practical therapeutic work.

In all forms of personality disorder/personality types, he provides not only a detailed description of the symptoms, but also their dynamic complexity, affect regulation, affect patterns, and inhibitions. Using detailed, practical questionnaires as well as many key stories, he explains each individual personality disorder and each personality type in all of its facets. There is a questionnaire available for every disorder, and this can be used in practice. Furthermore, he stringently develops the genesis of each personality type. From this it is possible to deduce a variety of therapeutic interventions.

As far as therapy is concerned, the author's position is clear. He represents sociopsychological and neuropsychanalytical viewpoints. At many points in the book, it is clearly elucidated how decisive the social environment of the child and the social milieu of the adult is in the development, manifestation, maintenance, and healing of a disorder or a healthy development.

"Life has always been a permanent alternation between good and bad experiences, between pleasant and unpleasant feelings. Children must learn to accept this fundamental fact, even if it is disappointing, painful, and depressing. In fact, accepting one's negative feelings constitutes a crucial step during human development." (page 468)

I found the foreword particularly impressive. It shows, with a rare degree of openness, the personal and social, as well as the scientific and professional development of the author, thereby making the background to the book comprehensible.

This book certainly does not belong to the category of easy-to-read, popular science works. However, taking the "trouble" to work through the book will reward the reader with many new and unusual insights.

Ralph Ernst

Review 2

Modern management is not possible without emotional intelligence

In recent years, it has become an undisputed fact that intelligent management within a company without the involvement of emotions is possible, although it can be inadequate and very often counterproductive. The reason for this is quite simple: emotional processes are always present and have a direct influence - most of which go unnoticed - upon all situations at the work place. If managers exclude emotions on the grounds that leadership must be limited to a purely factual

level, thus remaining controllable, they ignore the perpetual presence of emotions and feelings in all persons concerned. The consequences of this are manifold:

Something that exists is obscured and, through this, is rendered uncontrollable; the goal of situational control is not only not achieved, but renders an opposing effect. The negative consequences are devastating: poor working climate, mobbing, stress and, as a result of all this, reduced job performance due to chronic poisoning by cortisol, the stress hormone.

Furthermore, through the exclusion of emotions, an important neuro-physiological fact is ignored and therefore not used: since Antonio Damasio's studies in the case of Phineas Gage, it has been demonstrated that emotions/feelings/intuition are all strongly involved in the final stages of important decision making. This has been confirmed by many Fortune 500 top managers in countless interviews. If managers consciously use this, the error rate of decisions will be reduced significantly.

It is irrelevant as to the context in which the many managerial functions pertaining to the topic of emotion and feelings appear - in order to be able to implement their positive effects respectfully, managers have to surrender to self-awareness: only when I am familiar with my own feelings - regardless of quality - will I be perceived as being authentic and trustworthy.

In my own work as a manager, I have experienced and created a wealth of situations where the conscious exchange of views pertaining to emotions and feelings (my own and those of the others) had a strong and positive catalytic effect: instead of continually committing to affective neutrality (which is possible only on the surface and thus is not authentic) or pleasant, **good** feelings as the standard way (which, in *positive thinking* and postulated chronic solution orientation and such problem denial is seen as unhealthy), there develops - through the recognition, acceptance and dynamic integration of difficult feelings - an openness, which leads to physical and mental relaxation of both the executives and the people they are leading. The perspectives are thus expanded, often leading to quick and effective solutions to problems that had otherwise appeared to be unsolvable. In other words, the energy necessary for suppressing difficult feelings was released, diverted and then utilised in the best way possible for everyone.

What is also extremely interesting is the fact that those people who think that they can abuse the emotional openness of others for their own purposes are quickly isolated and lose their acceptance within the ranks of managers.

Unfortunately, the psychopathological behaviour of managers is more common than expected and is also very difficult to recognise. At all management levels, we see people acting in such roles, and it is these people who really shouldn't have been given any management responsibilities in the first place. Anyone who has witnessed the incredible damage that borderline personality types can cause when they are left undisturbed because they are not detected as such, is forewarned. They polarize and divide entire teams, manipulate employees and, through this, indirectly cause major economic damage: employees become ill, discouraged or even quit their positions out of sheer desperation. The insidious thing about this situation is that the employees tend to blame themselves, or they are being said to lack personal responsibility. However, the root cause remains hidden and poisons the work environment. The positive thinking, which is demanded on all sides, then follows its course and stigmatizes those people who are unfortunately not able to recognize this despicable behaviour or even give it a name. However, if they do, they are considered to be unsuitable for everyday business and are discarded.

For those who would like to be in a position to be able to navigate the emotional aspects of the work and management environment - on the light and on the dark side of the moon - Dr. Alois Heinemann's book is an equally sophisticated as well as indispensable (when used as a reference work) piece of writing. In my own experience, it is amazing to imagine to what extent as well as how quickly and how precisely management situations can be interpreted

differently and in a much better way, when one takes the systemic-integrative approach of Dr. Heinemann seriously and uses it as a mental model to learn how to improve leadership performance, not only for oneself, but for others too. And, should we be in a position where we do actually meet ill people in a company, we shall know that we must protect ourselves - as painful as this may be.

Peter Baumgärtel

Review 3

There are no right and wrong feelings

Basic assumptions shape our perception, its interpretation and our identity. If one takes the term “basic assumptions” and replaces it with the term “normality”, the chief intention of Alois Heinemann in his scientific work and therapeutic treatment becomes clear: normality is a normative concept, and is one that people use as orientation for their identity and social interactions; this is usually an unconscious rather than a conscious act, and is in terms of right and wrong.

Many people contrast this popular, positively-thought of concept of normality with “abnormality” as being the dark, negative side of normality, which, in a colloquial sense, could be interpreted as all forms of deviation, to be different, repulsive, destructive and to act in an alienating way, from which people want to distance themselves.

This normative dichotomy is a widespread perceptual and behavioural reality that can be explained by the simple fact that humans are social beings driven by powerful needs for belonging, recognition, proximity and the need to be understood. In a social and societal context, to be “normal” can be understood as the condition needed to satisfy the above mentioned needs.

Alois Heinemann not only confronts the concept of normality with scepticism, but also its mirror image i.e. “abnormality”, which means “pathology” in the scientific context. Through his description and analysis of widespread “basic assumptions”, Heinemann can prove that both “normality” as well as “pathology” are unsuitable concepts for “right or wrong”, “healthy or sick”, “desirable or repulsive”, “positive or negative” and “good or bad”, which are used to describe and assess human behaviour.

Instead, Alois Heinemann presents a theoretical and practical concept that works with the terms function and dysfunction. Heinemann describes a mental-emotional cognitive system, which, independent of its individual structure (genetically-characterological disposition) and the social experience-related context in which it operates (“education”, relationships, experiences, cultural and social norms), is more or less suitable for functioning in ambivalent situations.

The focus of his work is the recognition that no right or wrong feelings exist. Heinemann shows that every one of us - in our genetic makeup - has been given a set of behavioural and response patterns, which, within us - regardless of internal and external factors - are constantly stimulating positive (pleasant) and negative (unpleasant) emotions, and are totally independent of whether we as people perceive or accept these emotions.

In order to be able to fully understand the social dimension of Heinemann's concept, one must accept the idea that people communicate - in social contexts - a variety of emotions both

consciously or unconsciously, and this is without being aware in detail of this fact and the effect they have on others. Many people find it difficult to recognise the fact that the expression of their own emotions prompts a variety of emotional reactions with their respective opposite. When you recognize this, it doesn't take much to imagine just how enormous the potential for misunderstandings, incomprehension and conflict is, especially when human communication is constantly in a state of change between mental-emotional-cognitive actions and reactions, regardless of how far the people involved are able to perceive, understand or accept these mental-emotional-cognitive actions and reactions, not only in themselves, but also in their respective opposite.

According to Heinemann, this dynamic takes on further complexity by the fact that, apart from the interplay of action and reaction between people, a constant interplay between positive and negative emotions takes place in everyone. Humans "oscillate" constantly between action and reaction, proximity and distance, and positive and negative emotions and this takes place in varying degrees of intensity and frequency, regardless of the social context in which we find ourselves in.

Therefore, Heinemann puts forward the concept of the oscillations between unpleasant and pleasant feeling as a criterion for the development of social and emotional competence. Through this, Heinemann means the ability to be able to accept one's own positive and negative emotional actions and reactions - in which a person finds himself or herself in - as being their own emotional reality as well as to ideally be able to consciously communicate them, and, at the same time, to be in a position to be able to perceive and accept the positive and negative emotional actions and reactions of his or her counterpart as being their emotional reality.

Indeed, Heinemann acknowledges that people feel the need to strive for a state of well-being in which they feel comfortable. However, according to Heinemann, in terms of the mental-emotional development of people, it is not desirable to ward off each individual state of temporary discomfort. Heinemann goes even further by saying that it is not the quantity or intensity of negative, frustrating or hurtful events that decide whether a person is emotionally ill, but whether he or she has someone at his or her side, someone who can empathetically stand by him or her during this painful reality without taking away his negative feelings through interpretation or evaluation. Only acceptance ("containment") can create the conditions needed for emotionally getting back into the counter-movement following strong negative experiences, and to be able to perceive and share positive feelings again along with pain, sadness and anger.

Negative emotions only become potentially destructive if one "remains trapped" in such feelings or splits the reality of these feelings in order to protect oneself from their painful effects. Depression, violence, and illness can be the consequence of this numbness or splitting.

A similar dynamic applies to positive emotions. There is no sustained state of well-being, nor would this be desirable, according to Heinemann. Neither happiness nor self-confidence, contentment, or joy are reachable permanent states. But even their experience may be disturbed when negative emotions are avoided or repelled. Heinemann has documented that pain and anger are among the most tabooed emotions within the common basic assumptions. Particularly, in the conflicts that fire up during separation, people are not only confronted by pent-up, repressed emotional pain, but also face the most violent of aggressions. It is in such situations that it becomes evident just how unsuitable and inhuman the so-called humanistic guiding principle is.

From the perspective of this guiding principal, in the “normality” for both the direct participants in conflicts, but also for the participants indirectly involved in the conflict in the family, circle of friends, youth welfare office and family courts, there are no concepts in existence that can adequately deal with the reality of experiencing intense negative emotions, other than trivializing, looking away, denying or splitting.

Andreas Gehlen

Review 4

Theory of the book, therapy, and partnership

Even though the theories and individual behaviour patterns are described and documented in specialist terms, which is difficult for me to understand as a layman, the theory can be described in one sentence: "Man can only grow up to be sane, when he has experienced pleasant and unpleasant feelings." In my opinion, this is completely normal human behaviour.

My relationship with my partner was fraught with a great many problems. We really needed help and managed to find this with Dr. Heinemann. As a former "patient" of one of his therapy groups, I can fully verify the theory that is presented here in his book.

As the fifth child of seven, I form part of that group known as "surrogate children." As an individual, I wasn't really noticed. It was from my father especially, that I didn't get any recognition, no pride, no support, no respect, there was only rejection, disrespect, and devaluation. In the group, I was confronted with my childhood problems (with the unpleasant feelings). The more and more I worked in the group, the more I came to realize just how much I was so influenced by my parents, how much I chased my desires and yearnings, my floundering, screaming fight against my unpleasant feelings in search of the good feelings that I had never experienced.

It was in the group that I had to once again perceive my unpleasant feelings which had been hidden and suppressed for a long time. Together with my partner, we experienced our unpleasant feelings again and again, and made the connections to what we experienced in our childhood. We were able to understand our own feelings and those of the others and properly resolve the dissonance of the dissimilar perceptions. This was a very painful process. Through this I learned to know myself anew and discovered my new behaviour in the way that I really am and not what I wanted to be or how I yearned to see myself. However, slipping back into my old ways is quick: "click" and I am there. This can happen faster than you think. I am always trying to avoid these unpleasant feelings. Dealing with this is not easy, even today.

Today, I can distinguish between the behaviour of my partner and the behaviour of my father much better, and I recognise very quickly the people who have a similar behaviour to my father. I try to go out of the way or avoid such people. It is only together with my partner that I can get over the hurdles (coping with my old ways) again and again and live through the pleasant and unpleasant feelings with him. And it gets better the more I continue in the "training".

After many years of group therapy, today I have the impression that I have reached another further level of development, I can live more consciously with my unpleasant feelings, and I am grateful to have met Dr. Heinemann. With this in mind, this book is highly recommendable.

Maria Fortmann

Review 5

“It is what it is, says love.” Erich Fried

The Earth is roughly 4.6 billion years old and, about one billion years following this, life began to develop here. Since that time, the evolutionary processes that have played out upon our planet have been nothing short of one miracle following another. When you contemplate the fact that everything around us has turned out the way it has, we should really be living every single day with a feeling of awe, humility and a tremendous sense of happiness that we are alive.

Even though the 10-digit figure representing geological time is so impressive - we can neither comprehend this figure nor the relationship of the last 600 years in relation to the entire history of the Earth: 0.0000167%.

However, the period stretching from 600 years ago right up to the present day is comprehensible. When we count back the years, we find ourselves in the era of the Renaissance: three-dimensionality within fine arts is created, music sheds its days of servitude from the clergy, the EGO is discovered and subsequently becomes a major driving force in social development. Moreover, factories are established, thus forming the foundation for the medium-term struggle against serfdom and total God-given dependency.

When mankind discovered its pleasure for thinking in a way that was no longer bound to religion, there was no stopping us: scientists and researchers brought forth ideas that creation was not only to be admired, but could also be measured, dissected, analysed, and, through the development of experiments, could be even reconstructed. Scientific societies were founded, which, without any constraints, created new worldviews and proved them (or believed that they had done this). In terms of theory, the potential usefulness of the ability to measure and the use of science were proven by Isaac Newton, and the emergence of industrial production showed this in the real world.

This development is to be viewed from a historic perspective, even though it still currently affects us and is ongoing: by emancipating himself from God and the world by making it controllable (as was foreseen in Genesis), mankind becomes lost in the labyrinths of analysed details, separating the world and our perception of it. Even more: that which does not fit into those separated slices of perception is eliminated: doubt, fear of the consequences, the negative effects of the analysis on the underlying trust in the world, an almost defiant denial of evolutionary facts. But even the rebellion against the functional thought that life can be controlled is an old tradition that spans the millennia: the representatives of ‘perennial philosophy’, including Lao Tzu, Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas or Wilhelm Leibniz, have always postulated upon the reintegration of the separate parts that are no longer useful.

It can be seen that today’s prevailing world view of controllability, which itself is in a constant state of refinement, ultimately has consequences for mankind: having to fit into the requirements of this world view of controllability oppresses the natural condition. People control themselves, banish basic needs in terms of social functionality, needs that were laid down in the cellular history of mankind: to be held, comfort, security, to be whole. When these aspects are not taken into account, interferences arise. It is no coincidence that, after two

centuries of rapid social progress, psychoanalysis came into being, attempting to explore and treat intrapsychic occurrences that arise from social phenomena. The fact that, at the same time, Einstein, Planck and Bohr laid the foundations for the material world to be viewed once again with other (old and wise) eyes, can thus be seen as being quite logical.

The fact that the effect and consequences of these social and scientific contrapositions that were taken by the said scientists only fully came to fruition after a further 80 years, proves the significance and truth of their discoveries; as the human species has to defend itself most of all against the comprehensive refutations of the prevailing doctrines and maxims. This was even more so due to the fact that Freud, Einstein, and their students paved the way for using their established research paradigms. Through the application of their reasoning paradigms, they have shaken the system up to the last layer, if not refuted it altogether.

Today it is becoming more and more undisputable that something other than a systemic, non-segmented approach to what we refer to as reality, cannot be called into question anymore: chaos theory provides explanations of complex non-linear models such as the weather; at MIT in Boston, Peter Senge is working upon the implementation of the theory of learning organizations; Francisco Varela and Humberto Maturana have explored the area of self-producing biological systems; David Bohm and John Bell have proven that the smallest particles have a memory; Peter Higgs received the Nobel Prize in 2013 for his work in identifying the innermost subatomic forces. To a growing degree, it is also undisputed that mankind will not survive without these systemic observations and courses of action.

In particular, it is the last three aspects of modern research approaches that now receive their own psychological equivalents in the work that is presented here by Dr. Alois Heinemann. Why?

Through decades of research, he shows that the price for controllability of the world can result in a loss of humanity, which is profound because it is genetically anchored. Insensitivity, coldness, isolated alignment and loneliness may form a functional part of our social reality, but have been shown to destroy tissue structures in our neural system, which, in extreme cases, are irreversible. The "insane" truth of the matter is that every single person carries an ontogenetic and phylogenetic heritage, imbuing them with the ability to love, show compassion, respect and empathy (this is the 99.999823% of human history prior to the last 600 years).

Moving beyond the discussions about the methods and solutions for psycho-therapeutic approaches of the last 100 years led by Dr. Heinemann (which often read like a very exciting psychological and methodological historical novel), at the end of the day, this book is a scientifically-based invocation, calling to the fact that humanity's deep heritage, that of compassion and love and the ability to feel responsibility for others, should not simply be cast away to land upon the trash heap of history. Dr. Heinemann offers us the opportunity to delve deep into the findings of his socio-therapeutic work and social psychological research, and we realize how far we have already been removed from the deep-rooted aspects of humanity. He recommends to us all, quite emphatically, that we should take that 99.999823% of our evolution very seriously indeed and not sink into delusions of grandeur and controllability of the world, and, in particular, we should never confuse this megalomania with freedom.

Dr. Heinemann recommends that counsellors and therapists should commit themselves to a systemic way of thinking and acting and follow holistic treatment approaches that release people in their entirety: ripe in their vulnerability; vulnerable in their maturity; valuable in their imperfection; in constant evolution; fortunately unstable in the sense of not being rigid; capable of holding and being held. Man is a being that is in a constant and lively process of development and contraction.

Heraclitus would have referred to this as PANTA RHEI (everything flows). The Chinese Book of Changes would say here: "Nothing is more permanent than change." Dr. Heinemann would say: he who is locked in his own experience and feelings, will become ill.

At the same time, it could be so simple: we reflect upon very old parts of our humanity, which are anchored in our body and never diverge from that path: we accept ourselves and are there for each other in good times and bad. Here, age is, at the same time, the revolutionary: we no longer accept that society only wants the good days, for only during these we work in accordance with the objectives from those who benefit from it. It is about the abolition of the separation of something that is considered to be so normal.

We all know that this is true and that it can bring about a real change in our lives. Why else would we have the Ten Commandments, the requirement for modesty in Lao Tzu, the recognition of the inseparability of the Buddha? And yet: to get there requires some doing. A Chinese proverb says:

How are we to understand the simple, if we do not even understand the complicated?

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Dr. phil. Alois Heinemann, social psychologist, born in 1942: studied philosophy and theology; worked actively for 8 years in pastoral care; studies in sociology, the theory of psychoanalysis and psychology with the emphasis on clinical psychology, group dynamics, organisational psychology and organisational sociology; 1980 Doctor of Philosophy in the subjects of sociology and psychology; taught for many years at the University of Siegen and Dusseldorf University of Applied Sciences; since 1977, freelance work as a consultant, supervisor and sociotherapist; 1982 Foundation of the Institute of Applied Social Psychology (www.eq-sq.de).

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