

Silence and listening arouse motivation towards self-actualization

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The difference that makes the difference with pastoral counseling:

When we are in a therapeutic relationship, we are engaging in a relational process. Once involved in this process, we are no longer experts or the experts, because the emphasis now is on a quality of presence.

For Louise Pronovost, when we are in relation with the other, we create a bond of security. One becomes “a significant being for the other and that this other becomes one for oneself”, thanks to this relationship and this presence.

In this regard, Jacques Salomé emphasizes that “to accompany... is to echo the possibilities of the other by walking as close as possible to him, but by being different from him”.

Yves St-Arnaud, for his part, places the relationship at the heart of being and at the heart of the actualization process. Because the person who wants to update (develop) himself will seek through a healthy relationship to meet basic needs, such as: security, consideration, consistency and competence.



Silence and listening at Institut Therapeía

Christine Aulenbacher in her text: Between psychology and spirituality, says **that accompanying is part of a movement: “going with” and “going towards”**.

In effect, according to her:

The act of accompaniment has three interdependent dimensions to follow the person in his quest for his basic needs:

1. **A relational dimension** (it is about "joining someone, getting together"),
2. **A temporal dimension** (“to be with someone at the same time as him, to go hand in hand with, to be in phase with”),
3. **A spatial dimension** (“going with someone where he is going, going towards a change of place or position, of transformation”).

What is important in these three movements is the presence to the other, with all his soul, his intellect, his strength and his heart.



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Where does the importance of listening come from?

For Yvon Saint-Arnaud, **what characterizes the therapeutic relationship or the helping relationship, in this framework of presence, is listening to the deep values of the person.** For him, these values translate through implicit and explicit messages and expressions of disappointment and joy; hence the importance given to the quality of listening.

Authors like Curran, Pronovost, Yvon Saint-Arnaud, in their definition of the word value, emphasize “the element of taste, of attraction. The resulting pleasure, despite the effort required, allows the person to flourish, to actualize themselves in and through the value they favor.

From a humanist-existential perspective, the blossoming of individual values is seen as central to the process of self-actualization. This is because a person finds fulfillment, according to Rollo May, insofar as they live in accordance with the core values they have chosen.

It is this connection that provides the person with a “sense of wholeness and fullness of being” that expresses itself in joy of living.

This awareness or contact makes the value “the engine that fuels the action of the person, encourages him to invest the best in himself. It leads him to devote time and energy because it joins a good perceived as fundamental.

This good, Yvon Saint-Arnaud, calls it The Most Sought-after Good or Fundamental Value in the words of Marie-Line Morin.

This makes it possible for the person, subsequently, to identify the choices they must make to access this good and strive, thereby, for its full realization.

Listening

For this to be attainable and achievable, the accompanist must acquire the gift of listening to allow the person being accompanied to perceive their Fundamental Value.

In effect, this listening puts the “person who accompanies in contact with the” heart “of the accompanied. In this case, listening also implies “silence to make room for the other in the interior space”.

In effect, this listening centered on the accompanied, impregnates the listener with the truth of what is heard and leads to the discovery of the latter's values.

Let's see the importance of listening

For Yvon-Saint-Arnaud, **the disappointments, the joys expressed and the emotional intensity conveyed, in the speech of the accompanied person, constitute the three basic elements making it possible to identify the privileged values.**

Listening to these elements with the said and the unsaid, with all the hurt that this brings, leads to the identification of the backstory of the accompaniment. Hence the need to **make room for silence**. This also allows the accompanist to develop the sense of the right word by its reflections and the reformulation with accuracy and finesse of the experience of the accompanied, to unite with his experience, allowing him to progress in his approach. **Because with this interior silence, the word is able to help the client to bring out his experience and bring out the basic value.**

This in-depth listening makes it possible to gently bring out the good sought, to identify and name the fundamental value. "Feeling then listened to and received in what is most intimate to him, the person who gives himself up can more easily contact the suffering he is carrying and see with more lucidity the fundamental need to which he seeks to respond".

This listening allows the person to get in touch with themselves and therefore they become aware of their resources. Thus "this process can then promote a reframing of the experience, making it possible to give meaning to an ordeal and to maintain hope". It is this ability to meet basic needs and to connect with their own resources, which allows the person the ability to actualize their psycho-spiritual potential.



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In preparing this article, I was inspired by the unpublished documents of Mrs. Marie-Line Morin and her book: *For deep listening. The fundamental value*. I also quoted an unpublished document from the APPC, the current ACIP. As I also consulted the article by Louise Lavoie: *Accompaniment, listening to values and the practice of the psychology of human relations*. I also referred to Larry Yevenes: *Pastoral counselling: the Ignatian contribution to the dynamics of the counseling relationship*.