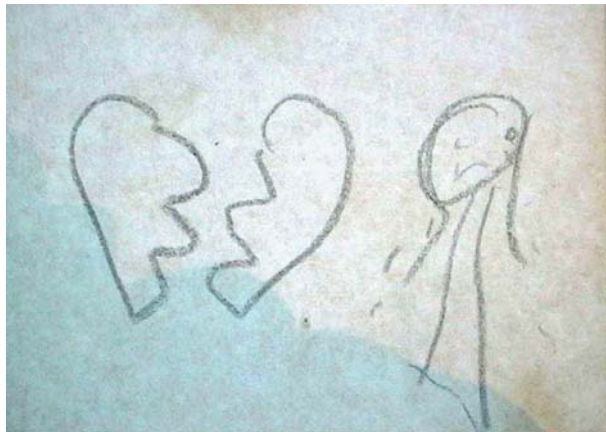


Coloured hearts

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Stephanie's 7th birthday coincided with a weekend where I had to run a weekend workshop. As it was her birthday, we decided to spend the weekend together as a family. It was a good time. In the evening of the first day Stephanie came to me to share something she was doing. As I was tired and worried about my workshop for the next day, I brushed her off and didn't give her any attention and she went away. A few minutes later she sent Erasmo with an envelope with a card inside. It was a black and white drawing of a girl crying and a broken heart. [Personal reflection 1](#)



I felt terrible. I felt oppression in my chest. I had not been aware at the time what I did to her. When I realised it, I called her and placed her on my lap. I said I was sorry and hugged her deeply. She stayed close to my chest for few minutes, gave me a kiss and she went off again. A few minutes later she sent me another envelope with a card inside. This time it was a card full of hearts in colour with "I love you Dad". My chest was open and expanded. I breathed deeply, my face changed to a look of great satisfaction. I looked at her on the other side of the room and our eyes met in a dialogue of love. Stephanie's heart had been healed.

Personal reflection 2

The time from the first card to the second was only 10 - 15 minutes. I was amazed by her capacity to express her feelings so clearly and by her ability to forgive me so quickly.

These two drawings are reminders of my ability to hurt others but also of the need that a hurt person has to openly present the pain suffered. They remind me that I have the opportunity to receive the message, acknowledge my careless action, show my regret and say sorry from my heart. They remind me of the openness that can exist in the other to receive it and to forgive me from their heart and to show it openly.

I have often shown these two drawings to friends, clients and training groups to show Stephanie's ability to forgive. My focus was always on her action not on mine. A few days ago I showed the drawings and told the story to a close friend. I highlighted Stephanie's action and she said something like, "and your action too". I looked at her eyes and they were teary. I saw what she was saying, (or maybe it was just my projection onto her history):

"I've been in Stephanie's shoes many times. I was always ready to send many coloured hearts and 'I love you' messages but the recognition of wrongdoing or 'I'm sorry' from the other person never came. I've been left with many broken hearts and tears and also with millions of undelivered coloured hearts".

My heart was suddenly opened to her. I saw the broken hearts in her but more remarkable and apparent was her pain of not being able to deliver her many coloured hearts to someone she care and needed to be care for. I saw that healing was necessary to open the avenue to deliver coloured hearts.

The undelivered expression of love weighs in our hearts as much as the pain we may have from the hurt. Resentment, numbness and apathy come as I wait for the one who hurt me to come to me, to ask me to sit on his/her lap, to look in my eyes and just say from their heart "I'm sorry".



This action unlocks the soul, frees the channels of "love delivery" and like a fountain the heart is be able to flow openly in love, without fear. I can be vulnerable and emotionally naked in front of the other person knowing that I will be seen as I am, respected and loved in return.

Opening the heart is a transcendent action. After we do it we'll never be the same person again. But there is always a risk that I may not be seen, that I will be brushed away, that I will be hurt, that I may have a wound on top of another

wound, that I would keep in my heart both a broken heart and an undelivered coloured heart of love too. This is a heavy weight to carry.

Yet there is also the possibility of being received and with that to find the channel to deliver my coloured hearts, to be empty of the draining load in my heart and consciousness, to be free to love and be loved.

Freedom is an experience that does not exist in us, but is experienced between us. I need the other person, and the other person needs me. Growth, then, is not just about my own personal growth, just within myself. Growth happens when I meet and I feel met, when I see and am seen. I need the other, the other needs me.

When there are many broken hearts in our soul it's difficult to believe that freedom may come in relationship with others because "others" have failed me so many times. How can I trust again?

People respond in two basic ways. I may become totally dependent on others, not able to think, to live, to decide, to have a personal opinion. I may feel I can't do it without him, her or them. I may feel lost in my sense of being. I may only exist if someone else makes me exist. Or, I may say "I need to do it myself. I've been disconnected from others and I need to find power in myself. I can do it!" I could create a sense of autonomy, believing that I don't need any one else and I could travel my journey as a self-contained, strong person that can cope with everything. Californian types of self-help techniques stimulate these types of feelings. "I can do it! I'm in control. The Power is Within Me. I will never allow anyone to possess me, to touch me, to make plans with me, to dream with me, to live with me. I can do it!" Relationships become an unknown experience or controlled games where I don't let go and I don't receive. "I can do it!". I exist alone.

In this process hurt people often hurt, and sometimes very deeply, the heart of people who are offering love and presence to them. This happens because they've been deeply hurt by the people who should care for them, those who were close to them. If, in our early years, a time when we needed to be loved, we received distance, neglect and or abuse, then what probably was created was disbelief, skepticism and a cynical attitude towards relationships. Now in the present, the hurt person tries to keep the power all the time on their side. They don't give trust to anyone because it was abused. They continue to do this even though their heart aches for love.

They may never acknowledge that they've hurt anyone or if they do they may say, "I know I hurt him or her, I'm sorry". But this sorry is not complete as the process is still in their mind and has not moved into the relationship with the other person. In reality what they say is: "sorry I hurt you, but bad luck, I've been hurt too".

I need to admit I'm still waiting, even though I convinced myself that I've grown up, that I don't need it any more, that I'm still waiting for him or her to come to me and say, "I'm sorry, I love you".

In one particular training course participants were guided to find within themselves a primal message they had been waiting for all their life. The results showed that there were only two messages people deeply needed in their hearts:

"You're OK" and "I'm sorry I hurt you, I love you".

But what if these messages never come?

There is a way through; it is the way, the only way. It is called healing, and it can only come with and through love.

The trick is that love can only be experienced in relationships. If I continue in the "I can do it mode", I'll never get it even though I read every self-help book, go to every workshop on healing and follow the most attractive religious practices. I will continue believing I'm OK, I'll continue hurting others and myself. I'll continue storing broken hearts as well as undelivered coloured hearts. Life will become heavier and heavier. Healing will not happen if I don't incorporate the other. Love is between. It is flow, spirit, a force that cannot be kept in one's heart. It has to be shared. When coloured hearts are kept within they are heavy and draining.

Healing is needed, I need to love and receive love. I need to regain faith and hope.

Lorna, a participant in a workshop, shared her pain of being abandoned by her mother and father when she was little. This feeling started when her parents separated and her mother fell in love with a man who had three children and she didn't fit into that scenario. Her father abandoned her mother and family. After the separation, Lorna saw him for first time when she was 16 years old.

Analysing her feelings in a group situation, she identified that she needed touch, verbal affirmations of love and a clear message of support. Three people in the group felt strong empathy for Lorna, they came to give her what she was asking for. She strongly rejected them.

The attachment to the pain and hurt of not being received and loved by people close to me is often so hard that I don't let it go and I wait and wait for those specific people to meet me to look at my eyes and say they're sorry. This attachment to pain and sorrow doesn't allow me to see that very close to me may be a person who really loves me, who I can love.

The attachment to pain as known feeling may not allow me to find God's love or if I found a religion I may find one that inflicts suffering and pain, a system without grace.

Together we could be happy and satisfied for there could be a flow of "coloured hearts" between us both. I may feel attracted to the difficult person, the one who rejects me, the one who offers a challenge, the one who manipulates. And I choose this one not because I like challenge or difficult things, as I would like to believe, but because my imprinting in relationships has been to fight and not to trust. Therefore I continue creating an environment of tension, lack of flow and resistance to love. A game that I'll lose but a game I know. Even though this creates pain it also creates certainty, I know the outcome. I'll be hurt and I'm going to cope with it as I always done it.

Opening my heart may create uncertainty. Often this is not the uncertainty of being loved, as I may know that I'm loved, but the uncertainty of not knowing what is next. Fear comes when I can't control. My hope is that I may be able to learn that control can be shared and enjoyed not just in me but between me and another, i.e. between "I and Thou". It may be time to give control to the One who doesn't hurt but heals.

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If you feel identified with Carlos; can you remember someone who has done anything that hurt someone else?

Do you feel identified with Stephanie? When did you feel that someone has hurt you?

Personal reflection 2