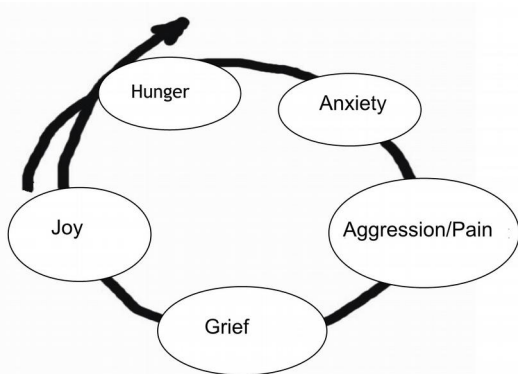


Basic feelings as a compass for Hero's journeys of all kinds

By Dr. Helga Weule, philosopher, organisational consultant, artist, teacher of the LSB training "Art of Counseling" and Dipl.-Ing. Manfred Weule M.A., ethnologist, organisational consultant, supervisor and LSB.

In processes of change, development, crisis and maturation, we leave familiar terrain and enter unknown territory. In the unknown we are challenged as pioneers, this is a "hero's journey". It makes sense to 1. have a good compass that provides orientation for navigation. And 2. we need quality tools that are suitable for moving and exploring where no one has been before.

One compass that all people always have with them is feelings. Unlike emotions and affects, feelings have duration and are not necessarily goal-oriented (fear, for example). With feelings, the element of consciousness is added, they open a space and tell a story. "C.G. Jung points out that feelings bring in an assessment, a judgement, a decision: Do I like my inner echo of a sensation? Or do I not like it?"¹ The exploration of feelings - a largely still unknown field - resulted in the distinction



of five basic feelings.² These can be represented as a spiral process. We see the currently perceived feeling as a location in heroic journey processes and use it to recognise what is already behind us and what still lies ahead. Captain Jack Sparrow does something very similar in *Pirates of the Caribbean* with his magic compass.

For new paths, we also need good tools. Paul Rebillot, artist and Gestalt therapist from San Francisco, got to know the mythologist J. Campbell in the 1960s in Esalen and developed his "Hero's Journey Seminar"³ on the background of the "monomyth" described by him and his own experiences in a spiritual crisis - first for drama students, then as further training for those working in psychiatry and finally as further training for therapists, counselors, social workers and all people who want to experience rites of passage. In the "Hero's journey" he combines art, symbols, myths, fairy tales, meditation, body and gestalt work in ritual spaces in order to be able to grasp, understand, integrate, transform and express our experiences in processes of change. The bridge that is thus built between ancient indigenous knowledge of healing processes and art on the one hand, and modern counseling and therapy on the other, enables participants to playfully experiment, explore and discover.

But the use of compass and tools of this quality needs to be learned, practised and loved. The authors, who had researched the application of the basic feeling cycle in the 1990s together with the

1 WEULE, H. and M. (eds.) (2019), *Among Heroes and Demons*. 25 people from 6 countries explore feelings and shadow themes in a cooperative research project, Wasserburg/Inn, p.119

2 MACHLEIDT, W., GUTJAHR, L., MÜGGE, A. (1989), *Grundgefühle. Phänomenologie, Psychodynamik, EEG-Spektralanalytik*, Berlin: Springer Verlag

3 REBILLOT, P. and KAY, M. (1993) *The Call to Adventure: Bringing the Hero's Journey to Daily Life*. San Francisco: Harper. Wasserburg/Germany: Eagle Books 2008

psychiatrist W. Machleidt⁴, met Paul Rebillot in his "Hero's Journey Seminar" in 1998. Enthused by this work of art, we learned from him until his death in 2010 and started to organise and lead Hero's Journey trainings ourselves in the EU framework in 2006. The enthusiasm that arose from the experiences and insights of the participants slowly expanded. An European association "Adventure Life" was founded around the Hero's Journey, in which Hero's Journey leaders are trained. Based on the experiences in these trainings, we were able to identify five distinguishable process steps in the Hero's Journey that provide orientation in any change process and resonate with the cycle of the five basic feelings. These are:

1. taking up the impulse for change ("call of the hero"/hunger).
2. resistance to it shows itself ("demon of resistance"/fear)
3. crisis, conflict, decision ("confrontation and agreement"/aggression, pain)
4. trials in the unknown ("land of wonder and greatest trial"/grief)
5. sharing new things with others in everyday life ("behind the wound lies your gift to the community"/joy)⁵

In many years of cooperation since the 1980s with shamans from three cultures (Moche/Peru, Shipibo/Peru, Dagara/West Africa) we have gained deep trust in the power and effectiveness of creative rituals in our counseling and seminar work.⁶ The protected space of a community created through rituals enables conflicts to be transformed and the "other" to be included. This healing feat of establishing community with diversity in a sustainable way can only succeed through rituals, feelings and symbols.⁷

Constellation work and group dynamics trainings, which are about community capacity, need rituals and symbols if the experiences are to have an impact in everyday life. It is necessary to do constellations in a ritual space because, for example, in family constellations one explores relationships to immaterial entities (ancestors, deceased etc.) or in structural constellations one works with symbol systems (organigrams, the indigenous Indian tetralemma). The bridge to everyday life can be built through ritual prescriptions.⁸

In the group dynamics trainings of the OEGGO school⁹ the setting, which has remained the same for decades, forms a ritual space in which the "spirit of the group" is the focus. The symbolic circle of chairs with an empty centre also shows what is always repeated and yet always produces new content and new "communities for a time".

4 WEULE, H. and M. (1998), The emotional organisation. Feelings, meaning and consciousness as new challenges for organisations, Wiesbaden and on www.i-cons.info

5 WEULE, H. and M. (2019), p. 10

6 WEULE, H. and M. (2003), Indigenous and Modern Rituals - Across the Boundary to the "Sacred", Wiesbaden and at www.i-cons.info

7 HAN, Byung-Chul (2019), On the Disappearance of Rituals. A Topology of the Present, Berlin

8 See seminar "Symbolic Constellations & Ritual Prescriptions" with A. Lechner, H. & M. Weule at www.i-cons.info

9 Austrian Society for Group Dynamics and Organisational Consulting (OEGGO) www.oeggo.at

Paul Rebillot's Hero's Journey training, which forms a work of art for personal development out of all these elements, and the basic feeling cycle were the reference point for a European research project ("Heroes of Inclusion and Transformation HIT") in 2017-19, in which we wanted to gain impulses for working with excluded people. We dared a collective hero's journey and it could - not without obstacles, confrontations and trials and with the help of rituals, art and reflection - be successfully completed and documented - as a book in German under the title „Among heroes and demons“.

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