

HOW VOICE DIALOGUE ENTERED FINLAND – A 15 YEAR STORY

Jukka Laitakari, Ph.D. and Tetra Frey-Laitakari

WHY THIS ACCOUNT? - A FOREWORD

This is our story of introducing Voice Dialogue into Finland in the early 2000s, a virgin territory at that time for the method. We hope to be able to tell our story in a way that highlights some of the difficulties we encountered, and some of our perhaps unique solutions. Our experiences will hopefully help others in similar pursuits in other countries and, perhaps, give some stimuli for the development of the theory and practice of Voice Dialogue in general.

Finland is a small country of five million people in Northern Europe (often called Scandinavia) with one third of her length lying north of the Arctic Circle. During her history Finland has suffered countless wars between east and west, and has a reputation of having hard working and emotionally reserved inhabitants. Today, after a rapid recovery from the Second World War, Finland is a technologically highly developed country with her famous Nokia mobile phone company as an example of her technological achievements. Jukka, one of the writers was born during the war and spent his first few years in relative isolation from his parents both of whom were involved in the war effort. He later got his doctorate in Health Education at Oregon State University and continued an academic career in Eastern Canada, and more recently in Finland. The co-author, Tetra, was born after the war as the fourth child of a surgeon (who was also involved in the war effort) and spent her youth in various parts of the country as her father was transferred from one medical post to another. She later got a training as a TV script assistant and has also worked with children in day care and in schools. Both of us have been interested in psychological and alternative healing methods: Jukka was trained as a Rosen therapist and Tetra as an Aroma therapist, among other methods.

HOW IT ALL STARTED? – OUR FIRST CONTACTS WITH VOICE DIALOGUE

Voice Dialogue had not entered Finland at all until the summer of 1997, when a couple from California came to visit Jukka in his hometown at that time of Tampere, some 200 km north of Helsinki. They told him of a new unique method of self-development, and offered to demonstrate it by giving Jukka “facilitations.” Jukka was intrigued by the method, and so during that week he both observed facilitations and received a few. He was impressed by the sudden emergences in him of his Father figure with a massive belly laugh, and a Nature Child who felt that the birds and flowers around him were his sisters and brothers. He was so impressed by these experiences that he made copies of a few books by Hal and Sidra Stone (1989, 1993) and by their European trainee-colleague Robert Stamboliev (1989), which his guests had with them. During that same summer, he studied the books thoroughly. He had heard from his visitors that Hal and Sidra Stone would be

visiting Holland the following summer and without hesitation he registered for the seminar to come.

In the summer of 1998, Jukka traveled to Holland, and attended the seminar. In the opening day of the seminar it was announced that he would receive a facilitation from Hal Stone. Jukka was very frightened, sitting in front of Hal, not knowing what to expect, and there were 40 strangers, i.e. other participants, watching. Hal's straightforward manner, however, put him quickly at ease. Hal asked him why he wanted a facilitation. Jukka answered that he felt that he was emotionally blocked and wanted some outlet for his emotions. Hal surprised him by saying that he had observed him during that opening day and noticed that his problem was the opposite: that he was emotionally too open. Hal offered to show him how to protect himself by closing his emotional field. So Jukka started from the Open position and Hal guided him toward the Closing direction until he reached the Aware Ego position. Thereafter, Hal told him that in the Aware Ego position one can invite in other energies, and offered to invite the Aphrodite energy. As soon as this was said, Jukka felt a strong emotion in himself and burst into crying – in front of the 40 people in the audience, something quite unusual to him. The following day he remembers singing incessantly to himself "Holy Mother and Child." In another facilitation by a seminar assistant, Jukka was guided to contact his Being Self for the first time in his life. He had made plans for the facilitation beforehand, but the facilitator wisely noticed his big Rational Mind in operation, gave it a chance to speak, and as it was speaking, the unthinking Being Self, to Jukka's great surprise, appeared.

At the end of the seminar, Jukka got an address of an experienced facilitator in another Scandinavian country, and started traveling there on weekends. Over a two year period, he traveled there once a month, and had several facilitations during each weekend. Later the facilitator moved to another country in Central Europe and Jukka continued to travel there by taking weekend flights back and forth. During these weekend facilitations (away from his work situation), it was usual that powerful Relaxed selves appeared. Sometimes quite strange parts came up, a Hell's Angel or a Wise Old Man, for example. He was intrigued by such experiences and firmly believed that Voice Dialogue was effectively working in him. He was, however, surprised that coming back to Finland to his usual work environment, the relaxed parts refused to come up. Instead, the usual tense and stressed parts prevailed. During these facilitations Jukka also, for the first time in his life, experienced being in an energetic connection with the facilitator. This was a quite unusual occurrence in his life, and evidently reflected, partially, his childhood experiences during the war and, partially, the general lack of emotional expression in the Finnish culture, particularly among men.

In addition to his regular weekend facilitation visits, Jukka participated in a number of training workshops in different European countries. They obviously added to his experience of how facilitations are given by different facilitators. However, there was one seminar which left him with negative memories. The seminar was aimed at both the country's natives and foreigners and was held in English, Jukka being the only foreigner. During the common lunch and coffee breaks, the rest of the participants talked in their native tongue, which Jukka would not understand. In

addition, in the evenings at the hotel two other participants staying there refused to allow him to join them during their dinners as they had some private conversations going on. This all made Jukka feel extremely alone and rejected, and he decided to bring the matter up in one of the seminar sessions. The matter was discussed and a joint decision was made to encourage participants to speak English. This seemed to work for a while, but later the native tongue took over again. In one seminar discussion, one participant forcefully claimed that "I have the right to speak my language." This experience brought home the fact that even within European countries, the cultural and language differences may interfere with and hamper the learning process.

During this period of his training, Jukka already had started to give occasional public lectures on Voice Dialogue in Tampere, and he started to experiment with giving facilitations. During his lectures he ventured to pick up volunteers from the audience for facilitation demonstration. In retrospect, he feels lucky that nothing untoward happened during these demonstrations with complete strangers. He now feels that his Over-Optimistic/Daredevil part had taken over. Gradually he has learned to keep such a part in control.

In the year 2000, we (Jukka and Tetra) got to know each other and Tetra received her first facilitations. She very quickly picked up the method, with an apparent intuitive capacity, and facilitation proved to be easy and natural to her. Tetra reveals that for her the first few facilitations helped her understand her years of wondering about her personality. She had always wondered how she had so many different parts within herself... Within a year we moved to live in Jukka's training centre Honkaniemi in Eastern Finland. It was a spacious log villa in a beautiful pine-covered cape by a large lake (hence the name Honkaniemi, Pine Cape), about 10 kilometers from the centre of Heinävesi, a small rural district of 4000 inhabitants. The Centre had been used for training in a variety of alternative healing methods, but we very quickly decided to concentrate almost exclusively on Voice Dialogue. Both of us were at that time working full time, Tetra as a primary school teacher in Heinävesi and Jukka as a professor at Jyväskylä University (some 200 km away). In the summer of 2001, we registered for Hal and Sidra Stone's training seminar in northern California. That seminar was an intense experience with Hal's and Sidra's lectures and once daily facilitations by the seminar staff. To us a most remarkable facilitation was Hal's of Tetra in which he after only a 20 minute's interview had gotten a comprehensive understanding of Tetra's childhood and her life in general. He told her that Tetra's Critic is HUGE and she had to agree with that. Thereafter, Hal started taking power away from the Critic by tackling, step by step, the many demanding rules that the Critic was enforcing. This kind of dealing with the Critic through the rules was something new to us, and we carefully took that experience to heart. During the seminar Tetra experienced Hal as looking like her late father, while Jukka "accidentally" used to call Tetra "his Sidra"... One day Tetra, with her sharp eyes, noticed that one of the participants was experiencing an intense emotional reaction without anybody attending to her. Tetra promptly told the staff about her perception, and the participant got her needed support. To us, the incident revealed that intense feelings can spring up in trainings and a participant may need special attention and support. After the seminar and two extra weeks in California, we felt ready to return home and to start building our own training program.

In summary, our basic training in Voice Dialogue, consisted of studying the basic books by Hal and Sidra Stone and, of taking part in several international seminars and workshops. We also received tens of facilitations (Jukka 40-50 in number) from some 15 both European and American senior trainers. Jukka now feels that the facilitations he had received from such a variety of trainers had little connection with each other. It seemed to him that the underlying belief among nearly all trainers was that whatever comes up in a facilitation is “naturally” beneficial to the client, however random the order and contents of selves coming up. Privately, we have started to question this belief and rather think that some active role on part of the facilitator is needed in consolidating the client’s learnings over time. What this active role is we cannot tell exactly, but Miram Dyak’s (1999) ideas seem to point to a similar direction, particularly regarding the active role of the facilitator in teaching the Aware Ego.

On the whole, based on our training experiences, both of us believed at that time that Voice Dialogue was an excellent method of self-discovery and self-development and our insights of other people’s personalities and behavior had remarkably improved. The method had obviously had some impact on our own personalities and behavior. In retrospect, Jukka feels that his initial remarkable experiences of different selves overshadowed the fact that there was quite a random collection of selves he had experienced and that his Primary selves were still largely untouched. This perception has left us wondering of the possibility of Voice Dialogue working and not working at the same time (without the facilitator and client being aware of such a contradiction...)

THE TRAINING PROGRAM TAKES SHAPE – HOW OUR EARLY EXPERIENCES WERE INTEGRATED INTO A FULL PROGRAM

Our first attempts to train anybody about Voice Dialogue were weekend courses that we started to offer in the Centre in the fall of 2001. We bravely called the centre “Honkaniemi Voice Dialogue Centre” in English, which in a basically rural Finnish community was held as something unusual, even odd. In our first training courses we were initially following what we had experienced in our own trainings abroad. In the summer of 2002, we ventured into organizing an International Open House of Voice Dialogue, with the hope of attracting senior trainers and participants from abroad. To our disappointment, only a couple of international participants registered in addition to about 10 Finnish participants. When we contacted Hal and Sidra Stone about our experience, we received some wise advice, i.e. to start slowly and not be discouraged.

It was only in the fall of 2003 that our training started to take a more definite shape. Both of us happened to be on a leave of absence from our regular jobs. We also had discovered Miriam Dyak’s (1999) new book, and had started to study it thoroughly. Based on our training experiences and on Miriam’s fresh new ideas, a full schedule of potential training events started emerging and was ready to be implemented in the spring of 2004.

From Miriam Dyak (1999) we gained, e.g. the following understandings:

- (1) The end result and focus of facilitations is the Aware Ego (Process), not the experiences of emerging new selves as such.

- (2) The facilitation starts with and is always carried out under the guidance of the Primary selves,
- (3) The choosing of the opposite self need be carefully performed from an opposing Primary self or from a familiar part of the “continuum” of selves,
- (4) The facilitation should try to reach to the ultimate reason for the existence of the self, the origin of the self.

Points 1 and 2 had already been mentioned in Hal and Sidra Stone’s books, but we felt that Miriam had given them a more powerful and practical outlook. Point 3 was something quite new to us and gave Jukka a new understanding of his earlier facilitation experiences. He realized that he had been “climbing the tree upside down” which could explain his apparent lack of progress in his everyday life. We have used the “continuum” concept in our facilitations and noticed that sometimes it is quite valuable in preventing premature choice of a disowned self as an opposite self. Point 4 was totally new to us. We have tried it and whenever it works, it seems to give a powerful deepening effect to the experience of a self. We felt that the above concepts from Miriam Dyak were very important conceptual developments in Voice Dialogue, and we gratefully integrated them into our training program. In developing the content and scope of our training program, we did not follow any specific international models, but were aware that its length was about the same as some Dutch training programs. Table 1 shows our training program as it was finalized around the year 2006.

TABLE 1. The Finnish training program for Voice Dialogue facilitators around 2006.

Weekend courses:

1. **SELF UNDERSTANDING I:** How to understand one’s self in work and leisure (through the basic Voice Dialogue concepts).
2. **SELF UNDERSTANDING II:** How to understand stress and maintain good health (through the basic Voice Dialogue concepts).
3. **STRUCTURE OF PSYCHE I:** What directs us in everyday life – getting acquainted with primary selves and the Aware Ego.
4. **STRUCTURE OF PSYCHE II:** What do we hide from ourselves – getting acquainted with disowned selves and how they show up in everyday life.
5. **APPLICATION COURSE:** How the structure of psyche shows up in close relationships (bonding patterns), in communities and society at large.
6. **FACILITATION SKILLS I:** Learning the basic skills of the facilitation process.

7. **FACILITATION SKILLS II:** Fine tuning the facilitation skills. Facilitation of the Awareness level.

Other requirements:

8. 10...15 facilitations received from the trainers.
9. An essay of 7-10 pages on a Finnish textbook of general psychology,
10. An essay of 7-10 pages of own personal development and development as a facilitator.
11. 5...10 supervised facilitations (each discussed thoroughly afterwards with and given detailed feedback by a trainer).
12. 10...20 independent facilitations (discussed in one session with a trainer on the basis of trainee's notes).

The training was to take place in our Centre with a few exceptions elsewhere in the country. We gradually discovered that a big shortcoming of the Centre was its long distance (300 km) from the population centers of the Helsinki area in the south. Even the closest medium size cities were some 100 km away. In the Centre we could accommodate a maximum 10 participants with reasonably priced meals delivered conveniently by the community food service (that catered the schools, hospitals etc). We had one spacious living room with scenic windows overlooking the lake to accommodate lectures plus a smaller room which we used when we divided into demo subgroups. On sunny summer days, we could use the spacious 100 square meter terrace overlooking the lake for lectures and demos. Usually our training group was 5-6 in size, and the training lasted from the Friday evening until Sunday afternoon.

We got our trainees mostly on the basis of our public lectures, which we gave on our own accord or were invited to give. We got a few trainees through our internet home page or printed leaflets. Our public lectures usually included a short introduction to Voice Dialogue, with the help of overhead slides, a 15-20 minute authentic demo by ourselves to each other, and a 15-20 minute group facilitation of the whole audience. In the group facilitation, one could observe tens, sometime one hundred participants to move to left and right, according to instructions. The usual selves used in the group facilitation were the Work self and the Relaxed self, and we were surprised how many trainees "got" these selves. Our impression was that it was the direct experience of both observing and experiencing that accounted for the effectiveness of the lectures over the other marketing methods. Over the years, we have been interviewed by a number of reporters and several articles with pictures have appeared in newspapers and health journals, but, to our surprise, the articles have not led to important contacts with us.

Our trainees received a private session from us before entering the program. Prior to the first session (whether in connection with training or given independently) each participant filled a client consent form, in which we inquired of his/her health status, use of alcohol, drugs and medication, contraindications to being facilitated (multiple personality disorder, mental illness etc.), and in which the participant proclaimed his/her sufficient understanding of Voice Dialogue and signed it. After any private session, the facilitator (Jukka or Tetra) made a short written summary of the selves visited and filed the summary sheet in the participant's/client's personal file, in which all material concerning him/her were kept. We estimate that over the period of about 10 years, we have facilitated altogether some 100-125 clients, of which some 25-30 started the training program, and of which some 10 have now been graduated. Upon entering the training program, the participant also completed a questionnaire about his/her Primary and Disowned selves in his/her everyday life. This questionnaire was again completed upon graduation (We have not yet analyzed the changes in selves in all of our graduates, although in early graduates such changes were seen). We had no prior background requirements for the training, thus they represented a wide variety of backgrounds such as nursing, alternative healing etc. A medical doctor and an academic researcher were among them. In retrospect, we feel that some kind of screening of trainees upon entering the program and in the middle of the training would have been useful.

We had envisioned that the Centre would be used by the trainees in between courses for facilitations and self-study, but, to our disappointment, this did not happen probably due to the distant location of the Centre. We also compiled an international library of Voice Dialogue related books, videos and tapes to be used in the Centre. We set the training and facilitation fees as reasonably as possible. A week-end training course cost about 100 Euros plus a small fee for accommodation and meals. A private facilitation was kept as 39 Euros. Initially, we estimated that the training would take some 2-3 years, but the usual training duration turned out to be much longer, 5-7 years.

THE PROGRAM GETS FINE-TUNED - OUR TRAINING IN THE TEST OF THE REAL WORLD

We used our training program (Table 1) for almost 10 years, and discovered the things that did and did not work in practice. We also found ways to further develop our own training skills.

We discovered fairly soon that several of our trainees gravitated to the rational side of the program, believing that a rational understanding of the principles covered in the weekend courses was the most important thing. In one case, a trainee came to the courses only once a year and took only one facilitation in the year in connection with the course. We strongly felt that this was not sufficient for personal and professional development, and started to emphasize the experiential side of learning. We suggested, e.g. that one should take a few facilitations in between the courses. Some selected trainees took our new emphasis to heart, and took altogether double or triple number of facilitations required (We later discovered that just these trainees seemed to internalize our teaching the best). However, for a number of trainees our new emphasis seemed to fall on deaf ears. We became aware of the Finnish culture's strong tradition

of academic excellence and cognitive learning which may have led our students to rely overly on the given “requirements”. (One possible reason for this type of academic orientation may have been Jukka’s known position as a University professor). In any case, the underlying idea among some of our trainees seemed to be that, if one merely completes the given requirements, one learns to “do” Voice Dialogue. In retrospect, we feel that the program could have had a larger percentage of doing: both receiving and giving sessions etc. Perhaps a more flexible program built individually to suit a trainee’s capabilities and needs would have communicated better the importance of one’s own process in the skills development.

Regarding the maintenance and further development of our own training skills, we had initially tried to facilitate each other but soon discovered that this did not work well. We were too close to each other to maintain an objective stand. However, in other aspects of training such as the style and content of the course work we found it helpful to discuss the matters thoroughly with each other. We also frequently discussed our facilitation experiences with each other (carefully avoiding revealing the client’s personal matters). Consequently, there rose a need to be in contact with senior trainers. We invited two prominent senior trainers, Martha-Lou Cohen and Judith Hendin to Finland to conduct a few of our week-end courses and carry out facilitations with our trainees. From Martha-Lou, we learned important aspects about the use of dreams, and from Judith about the use of the body symptoms in facilitations. (Actually, three of our graduates received a diploma from Judith for her Conscious Body method). In addition to Martha-Lou and Judith, we contacted several European senior trainers and arranged meetings with them in their respective countries. We also participated in Hal’s and Sidra Stone’s “Transition” Seminar in Holland in Summer 2007.

All in all, our meetings with senior trainers and observing and receiving their facilitations did seem to work well and we felt that our facilitation skills improved upon these contacts. However, our attempts to discuss the basic principles of our training program did not seem as fruitful. We were disappointed when we noticed that the theory and practice of Voice Dialogue did seem self-evident (“written in stone”) to many of the senior trainers. Our attempts to bring up new ideas or to question the old ones, did not prompt fruitful exchanges. We gradually learned to drop such topics. It is possible, we must admit, that our lack of fluency in verbal English may have contributed to these difficulties – it is hard to enter into deep intellectual discussion, if one needs to worry about clearly understanding the other and how to express oneself in the midst of fast exchange of ideas. Also, it is possible that the “unassertiveness” inherent in the Finnish culture contributed to avoiding “confrontations”.

In our observing and receiving facilitations from senior trainers, we could learn a lot. In most cases, we could not but admire their knowhow and apparent routine in working with clients. Sometimes, however, we felt that the strong routine interfered with their sensitivity to the clients. A few times, we witnessed and experienced in ourselves quite untoward incidents in facilitations. We managed, however, to turn them into fruitful learning experiences and to integrate them into our training. In one couple’s facilitation that we were receiving together, the senior facilitator pushed us to tell each other what displeased us in the other. It started well, but the facilitator kept

on pushing us against our protests, and continued it even after we felt we had exhausted all possible complaints. This finally angered us and left us feeling bad afterwards. We actually felt that we had not benefited at all and we had to take time to recover from this type of “rough” treatment. We later discovered that the facilitator had had an emotionally shocking experience the same day prior to his facilitating us. From this incident we learned that a facilitator is a human being with his/her vulnerabilities, which may interfere with the work. On another training occasion, the senior trainer suggested that Jukka’s facilitation be started with the Protector-controller. Jukka agreed to this as he had never before experienced such a self. He tried to find in himself a Protector-controller, but nothing seemed to appear. Actually, the whole session was characterized by the facilitator pushing from outside and Jukka pushing from inside without any useful self appearing. Afterwards, it seemed clear that Jukka’s inherent strong Pusher (probably learned already in his childhood during the war) would have been the obvious choice of self in the facilitation. This experience taught us about the need to be sensitive to the energies of the client and to avoid unfruitful pushing. On separate training occasions by different facilitators, we both had the similar experience that immediately after receiving a facilitation, the facilitator expressed quite serious criticism of our ability to facilitate at all. This left each of us feeling discouraged and even depressed. The last mentioned experiences highlighted to us the fact that the facilitation time, and time after the facilitation, are very sensitive periods, and we carefully integrated that notion into our training.

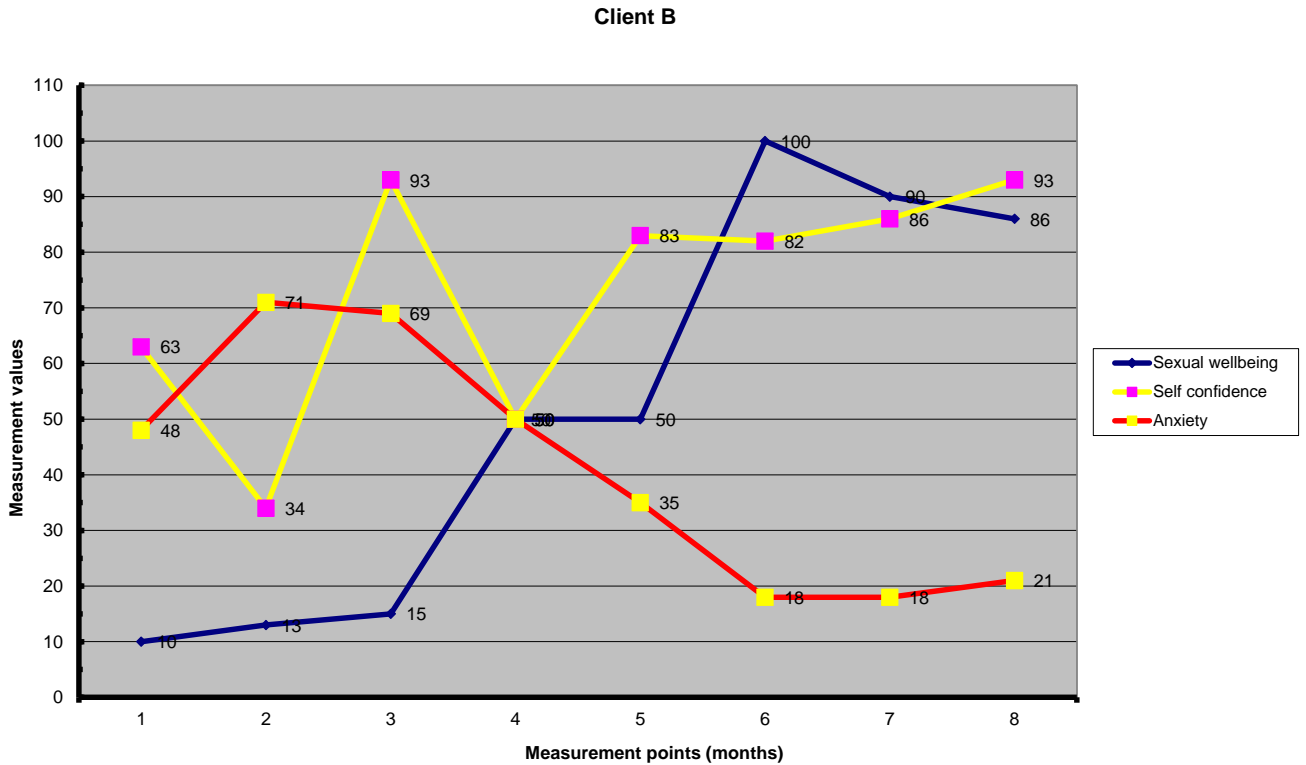
In retrospect, we understand that trainers and facilitators are only human and can have “bad” days, we included. On the other hand, through these kinds of experiences we came to understand what Susan Schwartz Senstad ([Delos-inc.com/reading room](http://Delos-inc.com/reading%20room)) meant when she wrote that among facilitators and trainers there are some who are not psychologically well... Privately, we started wondering whether there may be a possible built-in pit hole in the method of Voice Dialogue, whereby a client/trainee may systematically avoid contacting and dealing with his/her deep psychological issues and problems. While avoiding his/her deep problems, the client/trainee may however become convinced that one is OK having received so many insights into oneself. Whether or not we are on the right track in the matter, our experiences point to the great challenges (both personal and skillwise) which are faced by those who are in supportive and training roles, particularly in multicultural and multi-language situations.

Being constantly in a teaching and facilitator role did seem to impact favorably on our training skills. Jukka has been surprised that his initial apprehension about giving a facilitation have started to disappear. He feels that, increasingly, he has been able to put aside his Rational side, to be more present in the energy flow of the session, and to learn to expect the unexpected. Miriam Dyak’s emphasis on the central role of the Aware Ego has been very helpful to him, and he has consistently applied that concept in his facilitations. For Tetra, a central issue in her facilitation has been being “in a small place”: not really knowing where to go with the client and then the path suddenly opening up. Her clients thank her for being fully present with them, and her having no agenda about how to go about the facilitation. From her Christian background, she sees the similarity between New Testament’s Gospel and the “gospel” of Voice Dialogue in helping the

individual to be merciful to oneself, to one's all sides, good and bad. When our first trainee graduated in 2006, after some five years of training, we were very happy to perceive that we had been on the right path in our training. We had clearly seen changes in her life, and her apparent training skill amazed us. We could see a direct link from Hall and Sidra to Miriam (and other senior trainers), to us, and finally to our first graduate. The same sound principles seemed to have been passed on to her, which we could later verify by receiving facilitations from her.

Another verification of our being on the right path came from the research of Pekka Mustonen (2007), one of our trainees. At that time he was a sexology student and did diploma research for his studies by applying Voice Dialogue to a number of his clients. This intervention lasted over half a year with once a month sessions. In connection with each session, 12 subjective scales of attitude and health status by the psychology professor Markku Ojanen (2001) from Tampere University were applied. Each scale ranged from 0 to 100 points with several wordings of the degree of attitude placed on the scale to aid the assessment. From the scale values obtained, individual curves of progress could be drawn. For selected participants, very clear improvements could be demonstrated over the intervention period (Picture 1). The results suggest that these and similar scales could be used by other Voice Dialogue facilitators to obtain feedback on their progress and to demonstrate the validity of the method to outsiders. The scales have been shown to have good validity and reliability indices (Ojanen 2001) and have been successfully used in Finland in the follow-up of other healing methods (Svennevig 2003).

We had hopes to do some further formal research with Voice Dialogue, but time did not allow that. The only manifestation towards research direction was our attempt to collect a battery of questions to assess the Aware Ego Process. Unfortunately, besides preliminary testing, the questionnaire has not yet been truly validated with outside criteria. Jukka remembers telling Sidra Stone about this pursuit some five years ago and that Sidra was quite skeptical about the possibility of such a questionnaire. We think that were this possible, what a wonderful tool that would be to assess client progress and facilitators' success in the long term.



Picture 1. Sample curves of progress in a single case (Client B) of sexual counseling using Voice Dialogue over 7 months (Mustonen 2007). Measurement point 1 was from the pre-intervention and point 8 from the post intervention period.

One specific method that emerged in our training is what we call the step by step manner of teaching the facilitation process. The participants are paired and each given either the facilitator or client role. Thereafter, we introduce by a short lecture the principles related to the first step of facilitation (e.g. how to interview the Operating Ego), and then ask the facilitator to apply it for 10-15 minutes. Thereafter, we discontinue the exercise and the pair discusses how the principles were applied and what choices were made. A general discussion follows. The process continues with another short lecture on the principles on the second step (e.g. how to choose the Primary self) and they are applied on top of the previous step. The exercise continues in this way until the whole facilitation process is completed, and then the roles are reversed. When the trainee starts to manage the small steps, he/she is given a possibility for longer steps or a complete facilitation. After each facilitation exercise, whether stepwise or uninterrupted, we take time to thoroughly discuss and analyze the choices made and the manner of performing, including even analyzing the selves that were involved in the facilitator him/herself.

In summary, based on our various experiences in different countries, our training developed into incorporating a strong emphasis on professionalism, which included keeping systematic records, following strict confidentiality, avoiding any possible risks to the client, and following strict ethical standards. In practice, professionalism means to us, among other things, the following. (1) If someone wishes to have a facilitation, we have learned not to jump with joy. Instead, we take pains to make certain that the potential client knows enough about Voice Dialogue, is genuinely motivated to work with himself/herself and has the capacity to experience the Aware Ego. (2) During the facilitation, we exercise strict respect to the client's all selves, even if a certain self may, in our current view, be counter to the client's wellbeing (e.g. a Pusher or a Perfectionist causing stress). (3) In choosing the opposite self, we want to make certain that only suitable opposite selves are chosen. If there is any indication that the potential opposite self cannot be integrated by the client, we explain the matter to him/her and explore with him/her what the suitable alternatives would be. Sometimes in this, there may arise a need to go against the initial wishes of the client. (4) After the facilitation, we take care that we do not use the information revealed in the facilitation to influence the client. We avoid all pushing of our views to the client regarding his/her values and behavior. (5) We strictly avoid talking about a client's personal information to anyone including our fellow-facilitators. (6) We have also stressed the importance of the facilitator admitting his/her inability to facilitate certain selves and admitting to mistakes made, but we have to confess that this has not been an easy principle to follow (Actually, the only time when we have witnessed a trainer admitting a mistake done was by Hal Stone in one Holland seminar...)

TIME OF TRANSITION - OUR TRAINING COMES TO A CLOSE

Around the year 2010, we started considering a possible transition for ourselves from the 10 year training process. This was prompted by several factors. We had both experienced serious health problems and were in the process of moving our home from Heinävesi to Jyväskylä, a moderate size city in central Finland. We also noticed that several of our trainees had been hanging on with us for a long time without fully completing the requirements. After some thought, we decided that this was the time to terminate the training. In the years 2011 and 2012, we arranged a series of final seminars, in which those lacking items of the requirements were able to conveniently complete them. We felt a strong resistance within us against putting an end to a decade long "occupation" and letting go of such trainees as we felt were not fully ready to be released. However, in our deliberations, we came to the realization that we could not be in full control of our trainees, that we are all imperfect, and that in the final analysis everyone needs to find their own ways of developing as a facilitator in spite of any perfectionistic wishes by us or others...

At the time of these deliberations, we found time to produce a 50 page booklet in Finnish on Voice dialogue to support our graduates, and to advertise Voice Dialogue to the Finnish public in general (Laitakari and Frey-Laitakari 2010). The booklet was based on the work of Hal and Sidra Stone

(1989, 1993, 1997, 2000), and of their students-colleagues Robert Stamboliev (1989), Miriam Dyak (1999; Delos-inc.com/reading room), Martha-Lou Cohen et al. (2005) and Judith Hendin (2009), but its special focus was self-help through Voice Dialogue. The self-help focus was chosen mainly as a marketing technique, however the booklet still contains the basic principles of Voice Dialogue. Actually, we have had some experience of self- help in practice. Our experience has been that once the client has received a few regular facilitations, he/she can try out and supplement facilitation work through self-facilitation. This can vary from walking on a road and choosing its opposite sides with opposing energies to taking time at home and doing a complete 1½ hour self-facilitation by, e.g. writing it out on paper. Our experience has been that sometimes self-facilitation works wonderfully, at other times it may not work at all. The reason for self-facilitation not working is usually that an unnoticed self wants to take over without the person being aware of this actually happening. Thus a big Self-developer or Struggler may be in charge and tries many tricks to no avail, until one notices that underneath, the facilitation is prompted and carried on by that particular self. As soon as one realizes this, one can direct the self-facilitation to the real source of trouble. Sometimes just realizing the real source is enough... The booklet includes detailed verbatim questions, which the reader can use to interview his/her own or a client's Operating Ego and selves. There has been some discussion about translating the booklet into Estonian.

In the terminology section of the booklet, we needed to use our wits to develop the Finnish terminology for Voice Dialogue. For example, there is only one word in Finnish for Awareness and Consciousness, and the word Ego has a very negative (egocentric) meaning, Consequently, we had to develop terms like Operating I, Aware I, Pure Awareness, Holistic Awareness etc. We chose the term " I " for any larger aspect of the personality and omitted the term self as it could refer either to a larger aspect or to a part of the personality. As to the term Voice Dialogue itself, we had been in trouble since, in the Finnish language, there is the same word for both voice and sound. Thus the term voice dialogue in Finnish is misleading. We decided to find a substitute Finnish term with the English term in brackets "Eheyttävä dialogi (Voice Dialogue)". Eheyttävä means unifying or harmonizing...

Table 2. Chapter titles and synopses of the Finnish self-help booklet on Voice Dialogue (Laitakari and Frey-Laitakari 2010).

1. What is Voice Dialogue all about?

How is our personality developed? What is facilitation and what results can one expect from it? To whom and for what purposes does Voice Dialogue suit?

2. How do you learn to perceive different aspect of your personality?

Examples of common power parts and sensitive and vulnerable parts of the personality. How do they function in everyday life and how to begin to identify them?

3. How do you give yourself a Voice Dialogue facilitation?

Step by step process of facilitation plus verbatim examples of questions one can ask oneself in self-facilitation (altogether 12 steps).

4. An example of self-facilitation.

An authentic example from a personal diary.

5. How do you use self-facilitation in every day situation?

Different ways of self-facilitation. How often and how much? How to strengthen self-facilitation if it does not proceed well? Frequently asked questions about Voice Dialogue and self-facilitation.

6. Recommended resources.

English and Finnish books, videos and tapes.

7. Voice Dialogue terminology.

Finnish terms for English ones, some translated and some developed specifically to suit the Finnish language and culture (see text for examples).

We do not know exactly what will happen to the Finnish Voice Dialogue from now on. We have some 10 graduated facilitators across the country out of which our best estimate is that one or two could continue to teach and/or develop a training program of their own. But it is too early to predict whether this will happen, when and by whom. We ourselves are happy to have had a part in bringing Voice Dialogue to this country, but are quite ready to just observe what its position and role will be in the near future in Finland. In spite of terminating the training, we still give facilitations in Jyväskylä and have offered our services as supervisors to all our graduates. A few of them have so far made use of the offer or otherwise kept contact with us.

AFTERWORD – WHAT COULD BE LEARNED FROM OUR EXPERIENCE?

At this point of the article, we are tempted to formulate conclusions from our 15 year experience, but are quite aware of the fact that we represent only the experience of two persons under quite special circumstances. Thus we rather think that through this article we have offered a kaleidoscope of mirrors which the Voice Dialogue community can make use of as it sees fit. Our experience is hopefully bringing in useful topics for the development of Voice Dialogue theory and practice in, e.g. the following dimensions:

- Understanding the cultural and language variations in training and facilitation.

- Developing new concepts to aid facilitation (in the line of Miriam Dyak).
- Stressing the importance of ethics and caution in facilitation.
- Developing criteria and measurement techniques for assessing personal readiness and progress of clients and trainees.
- Developing skillful and sensitive support systems for international settings.

Finally, we wish to extend our thanks to Hal and Sidra Stone for developing this potentially marvelous technique, which has given us such a number of unique personal experiences together with a few grey hairs... We also want to offer thanks to people like Robert Stamboliev, Martha-Lou Wolff, Judith Hendin, and Miriam Dyak for their active role in bringing Voice Dialogue to Europe. You have truly been “Planetary Teachers” as envisioned by Hal Stone (1985) over 25 years ago. Through your work the “Planetary Network” has nearly reached the Arctic Circle. Thank you!

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