

# A New Moral Context For The Student Teacher Relationship

## An interview with Peter Bastian<sup>1</sup>

By Nick Drummond, Nordic Integral  
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### Summary

*“Could you imagine a school that you regularly met in a group where you experienced a completely different order of human relationship, of togetherness, of individuality, of responsibility, and of moral dignity together with other students? Could you imagine what that would mean for your understanding of your self in relationship to the world? Could you imagine the consequences of that? Experiencing relationships with people where everybody sees the necessity of taking on their own feelings and emotions. Just imagine a school that taught children to take responsibility for their own emotions. They’re your emotions, not my emotions. You have to take care of them. They’re your responsibility. You have to be able to act as a mature human being in spite of whatever you feel. Could you imagine a school where you could trust that everyone would take care of their own emotions? Wouldn’t that be paradise on Earth?”*

Danish musician, author and lecturer Peter Bastian studied theoretical physics at the University of Copenhagen for about nine years after high school, while at the same time studying classical bassoon playing by Professor Aage Bredahl at the Royal Danish Conservatory. During the 70’s and 80’s he was a private student of the conductor and philosopher Sergiu Celibidache. He is cofounder of the Danish Wind Quintet (in 1968) one of Scandinavia’s finest chamber music ensembles. From 1975-92 he taught bassoon and chamber music at the Royal Danish Music conservatory. He is cofounder of the style-transcending multimusic group BAZAAR (in 1976), which plays an unpredictable mixture of Slavian/Turkish gipsy-music, Latin, Afro, funk, rock, with a strange and unique touch of classical contemporary music. Peter Bastian plays electric bassoon, clarinet, various flutes and percussion. In 1987 his book, *Into the Music* became a Danish bestseller, with 100.000 sold copies. The impact of the book has led to Peter becoming one of Denmark’s most highly demanded public speakers, receiving wide recognition for his series of passionate lectures. He is a popular guest on television and radio, and is a producer of numerous programs about music and consciousness. He has won numerous awards for his work. In 1998 he was appointed Knight of Dannebrog by the Queen of Denmark.

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## 1. A relationship built on evolutionary tension

*ND: Peter, what it is that characterises a “good” student teacher relationship?*

**PB:** I have had a very privileged position as a teacher of bassoon and chamber music students at the Conservatory of Music in Copenhagen. The kind of relationship I experienced with my students dates back from hundreds of years ago. If you wanted to learn a craft you found a really good craftsman and had an apprenticeship. This is a very privileged relationship because their life is in your hands; you can put an enormous pressure on them. You don't have to please them. As a teacher you are much more interested in that they reach their goal than they are themselves. Your appreciation of that goal is such that they are not in the neighbourhood of having. You know how much is required and how much potential there is hidden. A potential they simply do not know about.

To be a teacher in that kind of relationship requires a very deep trust. You demand something from them that they often don't really want to do. Being a bassoon player you have to do things that are quite unpleasant and uncomfortable. It feels bad in your lungs, it's boring, much of it is actually really, really boring. So there has to be a very strong trust – actually it's a kind of a love affair – that kind of student teacher relationship. As a student having this kind of trust, you can't help but loving your teacher. My most famous music teacher was Sergiu Celibidache. He was a famous conductor and a very demanding man and at the same time I completely loved him. There wasn't a thing I wouldn't do for him. And also there was fear, what I call healthy fear. It's what Andrew Cohen<sup>2</sup> calls evolutionary tension and that's what you have to create in a genuine teacher student relationship, because as a teacher you know something that they don't know. You are higher in the hierarchy. This is very un-GREEN<sup>3</sup> thinking, but it is a basic fact. I have something to give that they have no idea about. It's like a healthy natural hierarchy between parents and their children. Because you have lived so much longer you have to take responsibility for your greater knowledge and you have to take the position of being a leader. And the same thing was very much the case with Sergiu Celibidache - he was so far ahead of me. Yet at the same time I could qualify myself as a student by being as interested in learning as he was interested in teaching so in that way we are completely on eye level. Because we have a shared interest in my development it becomes a mutual project. We are completely together.

*ND: The teacher sees a higher potential in the student that can be awakened.*

## 2. Coming together in a natural hierarchy becomes a mutual project

**PB:** Yes exactly, but it can be a bit confusing because when we talk about hierarchy there is usually not a meeting on that level, it's usually a very restricted relationship. But in this kind of hierarchy it becomes a mutual project.

It is definitely a hierarchy. The teacher has something to give that I don't have. I want something from him; he wants to give something to me. So there is a hierarchy in that he is

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<sup>2</sup> For more information on Andrew Cohen see [www.andrewcohen.org](http://www.andrewcohen.org)

<sup>3</sup> GREEN is the colour coded name for the sixth value system in the model Spiral Dynamics. It refers communitarian and egalitarian values of humanism and equality. The colours are: 1. Beige: SurvivalSense/instinct driven, 2. Purple: KinSpirits/safety driven, 3. Red: PowerGods/power driven, 4. Blue: TruthForce/order driven, 5. Orange: StriveDrive/success driven, 6. Green: HumanBond/people driven, 7. Yellow: FlexFlow/process orientated, 8. Turquoise: WholeView/synthesis orientated. For more information see [www.nordicintegral.com](http://www.nordicintegral.com)

higher developed in, say, the musical line<sup>4</sup> than I am. And at the same time we are completely together in the perfect student teacher relationship, because teaching me, so to say, is a mutual project. So in that mutuality we are completely together. It's eyelevel actually. We are exactly on the same page, and yet at the same time there's a complete difference in the hierarchy. So it's possible to be completely together in a natural hierarchy. That's the beauty of it, because in the unnatural kind of power hierarchy, the sort we were rejecting in the seventies and sixties, it wasn't really possible to be together. It was like two different movies going on simultaneously, the professors in the University and then the students.

*ND: They weren't on the same page.*

**PB:** That's right. I think it's rare, this kind of student teacher relationship.

*ND: It demands a depth and maturity in the teacher to want growth and emergence in the student.*

**PB:** Definitely. You have an unselfish care about something in the student. You care so much about something in the student that you are willing to put enormous pressure on the student. It's not even important whether the student likes you or not. So of course trust and respect have to be there, but it's not a question of like or dislike. It's a question of emergence and growth as you say.

*ND: How can a teacher create such a relationship in today's society and culture where everyone wants to be treated equally?*

**PB:** I have been a very privileged teacher. You had to apply this kind of relationship in order to go to the Royal Conservatorium. A lot is at stake just to come in as a student. There's no free ticket. You have to play for it. You have to go through a very tough competition. It's like a half an hour trial one goes through. I have been an assessor for many years, assessing everybody, some 600 students a year who want to go to the Royal Danish Conservatorium.

Students apply to go to a certain conservatory because there is a certain teacher they like. So if someone gets accepted and accepts me as their teacher, then there is already a lot of care, inspiration and respect put into that relationship for it to happen, from my side and from their side. I have a limited amount of time, and they have to be very lucky to get in. Also the hierarchy is very obvious; I can take my instrument and play something that they cannot even think of. Usually as a teacher you can do something so subtle and so alive, they just hear it, it's beyond discussion, "Wow, I'm not there". And if it's not beyond discussion you'd better find yourself a better teacher. And that's also an important point, "I think that is enough. You have learnt everything that I can teach you. I think that you should move on to this really great teacher in Italy." That's usually what happens in this kind of relationship, you bring them to a certain point and then you say, "Okay, now you have to go abroad and fight with the big world out there." And I can see for myself that in my life I have always looked for teachers of that quality. I have always looked for what you could call evolutionary tension, like Sergiu Celibidache, you can't get more evolutionary tension from a music teacher than from that guy. He was a monster and such a sweet person also. There was this fear and you stretched completely. Your ears just opened up and you went beyond what you were able to perceive. It's like you became an instrument. And just being with him for two or three days you became alive to music, whatever you heard it just resonated deep in your soul. Simply by being with

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<sup>4</sup> Line: a term coined by Integral philosopher Ken Wilber to distinguish different areas of development.

him there was a kind of window opening up to a much deeper understanding and perception of music. Now he has passed away and that is something that I really miss very deeply. Then I was lucky to meet Andrew Cohen and found all the evolutionary tension you can dream of having, and even more [big laugh].

*ND: Do you mean that your relationship with Andrew Cohen is based on this same kind of student teacher relationship grounded in evolutionary tension?*

**PB:** Exactly. Even though I claim I want to be free more than anything else, he wants my freedom much more than I do. I'm not able to want my freedom as much as he wants my freedom. You can see it all the time when he gives you some kind of pressure.

### **3. Freedom demands pressure and discipline**

*ND: Can you give an example?*

**PB:** There was a student I had once. I listened to her at the entrance examination, and she was very talented, charming, and intelligent. She got a teacher at another conservatory and managed to paralyse him completely. She didn't learn anything because she could talk herself out of anything, and he couldn't really put pressure on her. She got it the way she wanted and when I heard her two years later she sounded pretty shocking, it was complete rubbish. She had absolutely no order, no up and down. She more or less played how she felt like it, there was absolutely no structure.

*ND: She wasn't realising here potential?*

**PB:** Maybe she was. But she was just an egomaniac and wanted to have it her way. She thought that she could musically seduce everybody, much like a beautiful woman who empathises that part of themselves because they get so much for free out of that. But I could see that there was absolutely no foundation to build on. So she came to me and I put pressure on her by simply telling her what the stakes were. I said, "I'm very hesitant to take you on actually, because it's going to be tough. Because you are charming and intelligent you have had it way too easy. It's actually very, very difficult to give a person like you some kind of professional foundation. You have to do a lot of things that you don't want to do."

*ND: Like sacrificing something?*

**PB:** Yes, she has to do something other than what she just wants to do. What is discipline? Everybody who has an education has discipline. All educations at some point are very boring. I mean I studied theoretical physics and it is very interesting to talk about Black Holes and Quantum mechanics and that kind of thing, but my God some times it's so boring, it's incredibly boring and it goes with all studies. To study to be a teacher, lawyer, doctor, engineer, musician is at times very boring. So discipline means you do it whether you feel like it or not. This means that you actually have a very high threshold for tolerating inner discomfort. This is very much what maturity is about. Narcissists have no threshold; they can't tolerate any kind of inner discomfort. They're just wimps. But to become completely sensitive and at the same time to be strong requires that you have a very high threshold for how much discomfort you can tolerate. And that's one thing I have to teach them, otherwise they will never be reliable on a stage, because there is a lot of pressure on stage. You have to play something, that's really, really difficult. You play a little here, you play a little there, now it's sixty bar, now it's twenty bar, its coming closer, now it's ten bar, its now! It's horribly

difficult what you have to play. Everybody is going to listen, it's a famous place, all your colleagues around you know about it - and there you go! You have to rely on yourself in a way that is unheard of actually, there's nerves, there's a lot of things and still you have to do it. You have to have a very high threshold for how much inner discomfort you can tolerate. So this talented girl who thought that she was great wanted to have me as her teacher. I said, "Okay I want you to think it over because the conditions are that for one year you are not going to play with anybody else. For one and a half years you are going to do completely what I say. You are not going to play in orchestras, for a long time depending how good you are doing. You are not going to play chamber music either unless I am there to control you because you have so many bad habits that we have to erase. Think it over. If you agree to these conditions then call me in two weeks and say 'okay, I trust you.'" That's pressure.

*ND: It's a big decision.*

**PB:** It's a very, very big decision, and for one year it was a tough time. So when she plays a piece of music in a certain way I reply, "Okay you have decided that it should be phased like that, that's your experience. Now I want to hear it exactly the same way tomorrow." First you have to be able to control it, repeat it, before you can let go of the control. That's the rule in this old kind of master - disciple (teacher student) relationship.

*ND: In this case you tell the student exactly what she should be doing?*

#### **4. It's your choice – How good are you when you're under pressure?**

**PB:** Not necessarily. I say, "Okay there's a phase here. You have to find out a way to play that phrase. What makes sense to you, and we can talk about this." It's very lovely to talk about interpretation. That's okay. "So now you have given it a lot of thought that this is the way you want to play it, okay now I want to hear it the same way next time. So you make the decision. It's not the instrument, Cosmos, God or whatever; it is you who is making the decision." And I told her that control is the most important thing when one is professional. Because the key question is: how good are you when you have a fever, your lover has disappeared with another woman, and you feel miserable? How good do you play in that situation? Because that's your lowest limit, and the lowest limit should be really, really high. How good are you when you are in a bad mood? How good a teacher are you when you are in a bad mood? That's when you show how good you actually are. Someone from the orchestra can call and say, "Hey, are you free Friday we need a bassoon player?" They don't have to ask first whether you feel good or bad, because if you are free you just do the job *regardless* of how you feel. That's a very important thing and I can't get that across to her by just telling her that, but that's the hidden agenda.

*ND: Teaching her to handle pressure.*

**PB:** Teach her to handle pressure and discomfort. "Yeah but I feel like..." "I don't care about how you feel." Two years later I can say that the most important thing actually is to let go of control. But you have to have it first. Usually it's not that stiff. Usually it's like getting control, giving up control, getting control, giving up control. You learn a certain piece and then there's a concert and you say "okay let's go".

*ND: So it depends on the individual?*

**PB:** Yes and their whole psychological makeup. How you teach can be very different. Even how one prepares the instrument, the reeds and mouthpiece is very individual and customised to whoever they are. So many of the bassoon students that I have taught play very different to the way I play.

But the new thing I believe is this recognition of mutuality where the teacher and student are completely together, and at the same time there is a hierarchy which is a very significant point. This is absolutely crucial. The trust between the student and the teacher has everything to do with that mutuality, that we are interested in exactly the same thing for the same reasons. Because when I put pressure on this student she didn't understand why I did it. "Doesn't he like me? Is he crazy?" But the thing that can carry her through is trust. "When I hear him play he must know what he is doing." If I wasn't a good player I wouldn't have anything to back it up with. I mean of course sometimes you have to say, "The next three weeks are going to be tough, and you really have to trust me. It's very important."

## **5. The teacher is there to free the potential in the student**

**PB:** There was one example with a student who was studying the bassoon. I exaggerate the story a bit for the sake of clarity. There is a topic in bassoon playing that is very complicated, the middle range. It's very difficult to handle really. It's like driving a car with five different foot pedals. So I say, "Now there is a very important thing that we have to learn. It can be very unpleasant and very boring and demanding and you have to practice ten times a day, ten minutes each time. Maybe eight times a day for fifteen minutes, because you have to be able to control it and be concentrated. But it's very important and if you really, really, really go for it and trust me then it's a question of a couple of months and then you are there. But if you don't do it you will never be really professional, so it's very important." In the following week she played sonatas with her friends and had a good time, and so I had to be very stern and say, "This is really important. I have talked to your other teachers and you are free from everything else. For the next week you are just going to practice this." The next week she didn't practice, so I talked with the chairman of the Conservatory and she was told that she would be suspended for one month and was not allowed to come here. "You are going home to practice and when you come back after one month I expect you to have learnt what I taught you. If you come back and have not learnt it you are not my student any more." She came back after one month and still hadn't done it so she was not my student any more. Of course she could have come knocking on my door a long time after, but actually there was no way. Because she couldn't stand a slight physical and psychological discomfort for two months she is not a professional bassoon player today. She did not fulfil the dream that she wanted. The care from the teacher is not about whether she likes me or not, it's about caring that she takes the responsibility of actually fulfilling the thing that she wants to do, that she actually develops her potential. The teacher is there to free the potential in the student. That's why you are a teacher.

We are talking about raising the threshold of discomfort and stress that you are able to tolerate without wavering your hand. It means that you can handle a lot of emotional pressure without acting from it. There are always going to be emotions coming up and you have to handle it.

She experiences all kinds of emotionally based yes's and no's that are usually completely irrelevant from my perspective. Let's say that she did do what I had asked her to do, she went home, took the bassoon and started to practice the way I had taught her. Did she do it because she liked to do it? Because she wanted to? Or because she felt she had to do it? The answer is: "It's completely irrelevant! As long as she does it I couldn't care less whether she thinks its

fun or not”. The point is that she has to do it, whether she thinks its fun or not. And if she does it then in a certain sense it’s even better if she finds that it’s horrible because then she develops strength, focus, confidence and character. So when she comes back and says, “To be really honest I hated to do it but I did it anyway.” I say, “Bravo! Good on you! That’s good!” Because then she learns something much more important.

So whether she likes it or not, I couldn’t care less. Sometimes it’s just the biggest joy in the world, sometimes it’s a blessing, sometimes it’s hell on earth. Sometimes it’s complete heaven to be a musician, to become a musician, O-my-God. I mean when you have really come to the point where you can let go of the control and you are just learning by losing the control, it’s self propelling, it’s such a great job to have. And that’s what is waiting at the end of the road, as well as glimpses on the way. And of course it’s important that they have these glimpses because it inspires them to really go on.

There are so many parallels to this in the spiritual journey, like you have the spiritual experience, and the spiritual experience is there to inspire you, to really do what you have to do.

## **6. An obligation to develop morally**

*ND: Discipline is required there as well?*

**PB:** Definitely. Sometimes you don’t understand why you have to do certain things. You just do it. That’s also the tricky thing about finding a teacher; you’d better look very, very carefully. Because when you have given your trust for years to some big teacher who turns out to be a horrible egomaniac, then it’s very, very hard to realise that you have actually been giving a lot of your years unconditionally to an egomaniac. It’s very hard; it’s a waste of life. It’s very difficult because what happens in the student is that they get completely corrupted and cynical. So cynicism is actually what you breathe if you are a teacher of that kind – you have all these hidden motives.

What happens is that you find a way to excuse more and more of your teacher’s behaviour in more and weirder ways mutually between you. The relationship becomes more and more twisted; you can’t stand your teacher. But you stay with him anyway because you have given your life. And then suddenly you find these dark motives – impure motives. It’s a morally degraded state and it breeds cynicism

*ND: What you are describing implies a moral dimension in being a teacher or leader.*

**PB:** Exactly. I gave a lecture for some middle managers who wanted to rise in position. The message is very simple, “You want to have more power? I understand that you want to have more responsibility and understanding when you rise in the pyramid of power. I understand that. But what is driving you – you must know that the higher you go the more damage you can do, with the wrong decisions, and the more good you can do for more people with the right decisions. In order to move up you must first feel a strong obligation to develop morally. If you don’t first and foremost feel that strong obligation to develop morally you should actually question your motives of being here at all.

It’s the same thing for a teacher. When you are young and you first come to a teacher – you just fall in love with the teacher. It’s a special kind of love relationship. And so when you have a female student, she immediately almost always mistakes that kind of relationship for a

man-woman love affair, and you have to become perfectly straight there. So this has to be made clear. In society there is very much the view that everything goes, and if there is an emotional support of certain strength then this becomes, “Follow your emotions, it must be true”. It carries no moral depth other than “be true to yourself” and “follow your heart”.

*ND: This moral dimension would be equally relevant for all levels of education.*

**PB:** The teachers that you remember from school with reverence, who were they? They were people with high integrity, caring very much for what they were teaching. There was a moral dimension to what they were doing. You just felt that something was more important than something else. You felt a hierarchy of values. Actually what you wanted most as a kid – and I can see that’s so crucial from day one actually – is to live together with and meet people who take life seriously, this is so important.

## **7. Gathering around teachers who take life seriously**

*ND: And that they take your life seriously as well.*

**PB:** Yes, but it’s implied in that. I had a very confused childhood in many ways. My father was a farmer’s son and wanted to be an opera singer. We were very poor and were living six people in thirty five square meters. A very poor and noisy background so I was surviving in the reading hall in the local public library. At the same time he was so committed to being an opera singer and my mother was behind him and life was serious. Whenever he reached his goal there was a big family celebration. We were there for his concerts and life was really worth fighting for.

The teachers that really impressed me where grown ups with a big integrity, with a very developed humanity who were expressing higher values: something is very important and it’s serious. It’s not about liking and disliking. It’s about something very serious and exciting. Then I can see many fathers of course who have skills, but their skills are really hidden from their children. Sometimes you’re really good at something at another place in town but when father is home he is not really expressing higher values, or integrity, or that life is really worth something, except maybe on Sunday when they go fishing. I’m worried about that because I can see how much it meant in my childhood to meet people who actually were grownups with higher values, with morals and integrity with skills.

I can give you an example of a very good craftsman who was making leather gloves, but was a very angry man. My father would say, “Peter go down and buy him a beer and then knock on his door and say excuse me, my father asked me if you would show me how you make gloves. He wanted me to give you this beer.” I was afraid but all his anger disappeared and he was just completely beaming, “Yes, yes, sure, sure, come in, come in.” And he showed me everything about making gloves. It was a mastery to see how he could craft a piece of leather into a glove. We had a lot of heroes at that time whom we could gather around. And when we were around them there was a great togetherness between us boys, we wanted to know and we were at the same level suddenly confronted with that hero.

I remember a bicycle man that we used to spend time with and help doing different jobs. This man, he just liked his job, he was proud of his job in a very simple way, it was obvious, and he liked to have kids around and he liked to be admired in his job, and did some tricks with his tools. Actually there was a whole value system there, and emergence between us and that

man. This shows that we want to have examples of human beings who have gone further than we have. And we want to acknowledge that.

It's the same in schools; we want to have teachers who express seriousness to kids.

As part of my work I give a lot of lectures in high schools, sometimes its seven to eight hundred students at a time. I talk about discipline, higher morality. I normally talk to this age group as I seem to be very good in connecting with them, especially if I have a large audience. In a way they have left a transition phase as young kids. These are kids who are 16 to 19 years old. They need grown ups and they know they need grown ups, that's my impression.

*ND: What sort of topics do you talk about?*

## **8. Into the music**

**PB:** I wrote a bestseller book in 1987 called, *Into the Music*, very much about all kinds of music. It was influential and I became demanded as a lecturer at that point, and when I was invited to give talks at high schools I always talked about going further, not that there is something wrong with the music you like but there's always something that is difficult, the idea of exposing yourself to something that's difficult in music, to challenge yourself all the time. Exploring your capability of understanding is about development of understanding. Musical understanding is a specific way of understanding and is very much about integrating very differentiated parts. So musicality is about differentiation and integration into a higher unity.

So I was talking and giving examples about difficult music, how to appreciate it and the thrill of listening to music that you don't have any clue as to what it is about, but just trust that it's made by a human being for human beings so somewhere inside there is a faculty of finding out. But in the last years I have been talking more about interest and choice, responsibility, about our memetic situation [different value systems existing simultaneously], and the Mean Green Meme.<sup>5</sup> I have developed strong arguments about how completely insane the victim position is seen from the actual freedom of choice that we have as a birth right. I am very inspired by Andrew Cohen, Don Beck, Ken Wilber, Mihály Csikszentmihályi, and many, many more. And I am drawing a lot from my education in theoretical physics.

## **9. All our interest and passion is directed on ourselves**

**PB:** Cultures in countries like Denmark, Sweden, and Holland have reached a level of development, a level of values that can be called global consciousness or a worldcentric perspective. This level shows a much greater care towards the whole world than previous levels. We show care for whales, rainforests, climate change, and for people and disasters in other countries that we have no blood, religious, ethnic or political ties with.

In other places on the planet you will not find that same value system present. They might still be centred at an ethnocentric level of consciousness and don't care a damn about whales and rainforests. A good gorilla is a cooked gorilla! We have stretched our care to the whole biosphere, the whole global system. The important point is that if there was a *passion* behind our higher care we would inevitably be able to put such a pressure on the rest of the planet

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<sup>5</sup> A termed coined by Don Beck and Ken Wilber. It refers to the negative displays of the GREEN value system which have blocked the healthy integration between all presently existing value systems.

that we could accomplish change in a positive direction on that level. If we could put personal passion behind the care that is already developed, we could do a heck of a lot differently. Let's look at the famous question; what is the difference between me and Mother Theresa? All her interest is directed toward the other. And all my interest mostly is directed towards myself. So the reason we are pretty useless in our very highly developed culture is because all our passion and interest is self focused. I can't take care of the world because I have my own problems. I have problems with my girlfriend! It's so radically out of context it's incredible! It's disastrous! "I can't take care of the planet because I have problems with my girlfriend." If you look at a sentence like that it's incredible. "I can't take care of my job as a teacher because I have problems with my girlfriend." That's actually how we live our lives. When I'm happy I'm a good teacher. Tomorrow I'm unhappy so I'm a bad teacher. I talk with the kids about that very much and I make it very clear just how self focused we are. And you know what happens?

## **10. Evolutionary tension creates the conditions for moral growth**

**PB:** Evolutionary tension. They stretch, they shine, they beam, and they get in touch with it. They're smiling, they're happy; they give a standing ovation after hearing about a higher moral obligation. It's so inspiring. I allow myself to be very positive and optimistic in spite of all the things happening. Look at what happened in Leipzig in East Germany in 1989 at the time of the fall of the Berlin wall. There were some fugitives who escaped into a church and the Stazzi and the police were outside, and the priest said you cannot come in. People from West Germany escaped *into* East Germany and into the church in order to support them. I mean this East German population was the most morally spoiled you could imagine. Everybody was giving their old Aunt or Grandmother in to the Stazzi in order to have a summer vacation on the Black sea. Nobody trussed anybody. I know because I've been travelling a lot in these counties. It was a nightmare. Nobody trusted any kind of good intention. And suddenly they find that this is enough and they meet in that church. There was a demonstration in Leipzig with some 300 000 people. The Stazzi and the police had their guns directed towards the crowds. If one man had thrown one stone, we would have had another history unfold, but no one did. That's what we are able to do when we are under pressure. And yet from one day to the next, the moment communism was overthrown, society degenerated once again. Selfishness returned and people started making decisions from a much lower mafia type value system.

But that higher level came about because of the pressure. And the pressure right now is increasing because of the state of the world, because of this intolerable painfully self focused life we are living were any kind of genuine meeting is almost impossible between human beings. People are miserable, they see it, and they can feel it on a gut level. So this increase in stress is actually a very, very healthy situation in a way for change and emergence to occur and I think that we are ready actually. It's just a question of timing. Suddenly something will break loose and people will come together. It is very much like a pressure cooker. You see the misery, you say the right thing to an audience and they become ignited.

When we made the summit with Don Beck and Andrew Cohen in Copenhagen in May 2003 we created that same sort of atmosphere.<sup>6</sup> You felt that everybody was just "Wow! We have a responsibility!" People were so grateful to find out that they had a responsibility. And the same thing happens in the high schools, when I speak to teachers. They understand the

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<sup>6</sup> Leap into the Future. Leadership for the 21st Century. A two hour DVD presentation of the conference available at [www.wie.org](http://www.wie.org)

message and they like it. In the beginning I'm up against resistance to change, but at a certain point it just gives in, you can feel it, almost always. It's very inspiring.

## **10. Being completely together and independently interested**

**PB:** I can give an example. I was giving a talk at one high school some time ago and they had put mattresses on the floor in front of the chairs. There were a lot of young people grouping there, girls and boys in between each other. Usually that would have been a very difficult situation, because usually they group in some kind of collusion against the teacher and there is some irony and sarcasm that you have to fight. So usually I would say, "Hey, that doesn't work we have to have chairs, please." But this time I couldn't rearrange the hall because I was late. I couldn't put up my conditions. But it turned out very different. They were completely together, lying together on the floor, it was very sweet, and they were completely independently interested. Wow! That's something new. They seem to be able to come together and at the same time be completely focused individually. And that's actually a new thing, because in our paradigm you can't have both, either you are together *or* on account of individuality you are out for yourself and then you lose the togetherness and the collectivity. But it seems as if, and this is a sign of the new emergence, they are able to be very individualistic and at the same time they seem to be very naturally together.

*ND: This was being expressed?*

**PB:** It was very obvious. They were so sweet, because they were innocent, and their innocence came from interest. They individually related what I was saying to their own lives. Sometimes they were saying "wow" to each other, but I could see that they were focused the whole time. They were able to put themselves in the picture. This was a whole new behaviour that I was seeing.

*ND: What sort of questions do they ask?*

**PB:** I usually don't take questions when there are 600 - 800 people, but I do when its smaller audiences. That's why I think the ideal would be to work with someone who could make a follow up. At the moment the follow up is left to the teachers, and this needs to be a lot better. I have had some great responses, like from one high school where the headmaster called me afterwards and was completely ecstatic. He said, "The whole school is upside down! It's like people are on fire! The students and teachers have continued talking after your speech in a way that they have never done before. It's very inspiring." So what I need is like six young students who can follow up after me and go into the classes and facilitate these discussions and do workshops with them. When this happens then I think we can really make something.

## **11. Maybe the students are expressing something higher**

*ND: A change in the relationship between the teacher and student?*

**PB:** Basically yes. But also I think that the teacher has to realise that when we stand in front of a new emergence then they might not be able to understand what the heck is going on. Usually the teachers interpret the students as being pathological narcissists, and my point is that maybe they are not. Maybe the teachers see the students as just a reflection of themselves and are thus preventing the students from growing. That I feel is a big part of the picture, and why I hesitate when you talk about the student teacher relationship. The natural hierarchy is actually more complicated, because maybe the students are expressing a higher value system than the teachers, and still the teacher has to operate with them in a natural hierarchy but

without limiting their emergence. I think that is problematic. We humans are proud creatures, so to realise that you are dealing with students who might actually express value systems which are beyond what you are able to express is a tall order to handle, but is very important actually.

I gave a speech several months ago at a private high school in Copenhagen called Det Frie Gymnasium. It is regarded by many as being the cutting edge Danish high school.

## **12. We need to look forward in order to get to the future**

**PB:** I said something tough and they actually respond in a healthy way. The headmaster was telling me how some of the children had made idols out of their 70's hippy parents, because they were the ones who were demonstrating against the Vietnam War and those kinds of things. I could tell them where their parents were at as a consequence of the Spiral, because that's where I am myself. I pointed out the narcissism, that they were looking back instead of forward, and the kids stopped it right there. You can see that there is a nostalgic interest in looking back to what happened in the seventies. It was a fantastic period of time actually. A lot of what happened then is something that everybody misses now. We experienced the emergence of a new meme on a massive scale.

*ND: So these kids are looking back instead of looking forward.*

**PB:** That's usually what we do all the time. We think the solution means returning back to the past to recapture something that was good. But *if* it was "good" then we would have found it already. I was a student back then and we were real fighters for the new. There was a revolutionary spirit at that time – we wanted to break out and find something new – wow it was so interesting. We didn't smoke drugs; we were drinking Earl Grey tea in big cups – that was our drug. Talking until early morning about the world, there was so much evolutionary tension; there was such a passion. That was the emergence of a new value system we were experiencing – the GREEN meme. Then it degenerated afterwards. But during that period it was emergence. It's that spirit that these parents tell their kids about, but their not able to express it anymore, because it isn't alive in them any more. But there was a spirit, we can hear it when we listen to the Beatles and that's what they are missing. And so I tell them, "You are the generation who are going to make an even more incredible leap than we did in the 60' and 70's [from GREEN to YELLOW]. You just have to look forward and then find out and describe whatever that is."

*ND: And that gets them going.*

## **13. Free your interest from yourself and you uncover passion**

**PB:** Exactly, because suddenly they say "Wow there's responsibility!" So you have to confront and take on the narcissism that your parents developed for you, because that's stopping the new emergence. You have to direct your attention to something higher than yourself. And that's actually the biggest part and the most important step of the whole thing. To free your interest from yourself.

*ND: And that releases the passion.*

**PB:** Yes. I mean the moment you free your interest from yourself there is passion.

*ND: That's not an easy thing to do.*

**PB:** Sometimes it happens by itself and sometimes it's very difficult. It wasn't easy in the 60's or 70's either. There were big disagreements and fights between children and parents, between students and teachers, and even with Police. It wasn't easy; you just felt the passion that it was necessary to develop that free spirit. Now we have to find a new kind of collectivity. And to tell these young kids, that they are standing on the threshold of something that is very important because the future of the planet depends on YOU! Not because the universe cares about you personally but because you have reached this high level of development.

#### **14. Scientific evidence of a new emergence in consciousness**

**PB:** It is interesting to look into the emergence of the next meme, but I don't think that it is one person who will suddenly appear, it's like signs, some signs in me, some signs in you, some in my daughter. It's being expressed here and there.

It would help a lot to do some thorough investigation of the signs of a possible second tier emergence. It's very easy to just take it for granted that it is going to happen, but I think we have to be very interested in looking for these signs.

*ND: You have a science background, so how would we apply science to this?*

**PB:** I think the method that Mihály Csíkszentmihályi used when he was gathering his results into his Flow theory is a very promising and interesting way to do it. He made a scientific investigation about a higher state of consciousness. He didn't use questionnaires or interviews. He did something in between. The participants in the investigation had a beeper in their pocket that beeped eight times a day. When it beeped you recorded a one page diary entry describing the situation you are in and how you feel about it. In an interview you usually ask for a certain kind of answer and in a questionnaire from one to ten you just leave everything out, and so you would never find a new culture. You wouldn't be able to find anything new, it's not possible. So we have to answer the complexity of the human experience in a way that's not too simple and not too complex. I actually discussed this with Mihály and he agrees that you have to find a way to make it as simple as possible but not more simple than necessary because then you will leave out things, especially the new and unexpected.

We have to inspire some psychologists to look into these kind of things. If you know someone who knows these kind of people you should inspire them to do that kind of research and make them aware of Mihály Csíkszentmihályi's work. I regard him as a hero because he's a scientist talking about higher states of mind. Wouldn't it be great if we could make a scientific investigation about consciousness and about higher states of consciousness, about inter-subjective consciousness; consciousness beyond the individual brain? So that we could actually show mainstream scientists who feel more comfortable with empiricism that this is something that actually happens: "It's extraordinary; it's beyond anything that has happened before, it's real, you can look at it, you can experience it, we have reportable evidence of it, it's concrete. It's not a question of opinion, it's a fact. Here's the evidence."

Mostly psychologists are interested in malfunctions, not in the optimal experience of life. The subtitle of Mihály Csíkszentmihályi's book on Flow is called The Psychology of Optimal Experience. It's very difficult to make healthy wholesome science on states of mind. Old

fashioned science is about something out there that you can locate and report on. Like heart surgery – that’s something that is interesting if you are interested in the welfare of human beings. It’s something that you can locate and it is very concrete [an object]. But the moment we go to a state of mind [the subject] it’s not something that you can locate, in one way or another you have to interpret it. It doesn’t satisfy the criteria of truth inherent in the scientific domain. So usually you would choose something where beauty is very apparent but that excludes the whole study of consciousness and that is something that we want to know something about, especially right now [an objective study of the subject].

## 15. The enlightened mind

**PB:** That’s something about the Enlightened Communication groups where they really start to develop because then you have an objectivity inherent in the investigation of the state of mind that you usually don’t ever get near because there’s so many people experiencing exactly the same thing. Here we can experience inter-subjective objectivity [an objective study of the collective subject].

*ND: What role do you think this can play in education and facilitating this new emergence?*

**PD:** I think we are just seeing the tip of the iceberg. It’s actually a possibility for a human being without a lot of preparation to experience the Enlightened Mind together with other people. It’s a much higher level than what we usually term collective intelligence, so we don’t want to confuse it with that. What Andrew Cohen is dealing with is what he calls Enlightened Communication, or inter-subjective consciousness as a state, it’s actually meeting in the Enlightened Mind – and it’s a very, very high achievement. When it first started to happen it was really, really, really difficult. Unbelievably difficult – it was so subtle. The whole thing crash-landed with the slightest level of self-consciousness.

*ND: But you recognised that something significant had happened.*

**PB:** Definitely, it was explosive. There was absolutely no doubt. And last summer (2003) at the retreat in France, I think between thirty and forty people were completely stabilised in that. We were able to meet in that state of mind right away. Being by myself I didn’t feel particularly enlightened, it was just me, and then you meet another person – “bam” – there it was. And it is spreading. Maybe we need to use something like Rupert Sheldrake’s theory of Morphic Fields or Morphic Resonance to understand consciousness, because definitely there is something more going on than the old paradigm of consciousness where consciousness is understood as something that’s being produced between our ears and is located between the ears. There is a collective quality of consciousness that we really don’t understand. I think there has always been a collective quality of consciousness, but right now with these experiences in the Enlightened Communication groups you experience something that definitely does not conform to the old paradigm. It can’t be called collective intelligence and yet it’s very difficult to avoid that kind of term. And in that collective consciousness something has changed. In France we had the feeling that we were holding it, we were the key holders. There are no key holders right now, it’s like free. Wow! So what’s the potential of that? I have no idea. It’s awesome. I mean there is such hope in that thing, unexpected hope. Not to promise too much, but there is such a possibility suddenly in this nick of time something, because of the pressure and urgency felt in the collective, something is happening right now that is beyond our wildest dreams.

## 16. A new model of education

**PB:** Could you imagine a school that you regularly met in a group where you experienced a completely different order of human relationship, of togetherness, of individuality, of responsibility, and of moral dignity together with other students? Could you imagine what that would mean for your understanding of your self in relationship to the world? Could you imagine the consequences of that? Experiencing relationships with people where everybody sees the necessity of taking on their own feelings and emotions. Just imagine a school that taught children to take responsibility for their own emotions. They're your emotions, not my emotions. You have to take care of them. They're your responsibility. You have to be able to act as a mature human being in spite of whatever you feel. Could you imagine a school where you could trust that everyone would take care of their own emotions? Wouldn't that be paradise on Earth?

And it's so important because in order for us to be available for the world we have to sacrifice our self-preoccupation. It's a very simple equation: To be available for the world means that our interest and time is given to the world, not being available for the world means, that our time and interest is given to ourselves.

For it to happen in schools the teachers must be able to facilitate it. They would have to be trained in that, and it's a tough training because the prerequisites are that you have to take on not only your own emotions, but you have to take on your ego. You take on yourself. Your self infatuation, that's what you take on.

The moment you take on your ego there's dignity and there is self respect, and that is something that the students are going to feel immediately, the teacher simply has to get over what Andrew Cohen calls pathological narcissism that most of us are actually expressions of.

## **17. A radically new moral context for the student teacher relationship**

*ND: What you are describing would put the teacher student relationship in a radically new context.*

**PB:** Exactly because when both the teacher and student are pathological narcissists then it's going to be a pretty messed-up hierarchy.

What is in a relationship between two pathological narcissists? Sometimes they will be able to express higher moral standards and there will be a genuine student teacher relationship, but for most of the time they will never be able to genuinely trust each other.

The teachers have to be expressions of that integrity that comes from the highest possible perspective: for the sake of the whole, in order to take on the ego.

Let me illustrate this with a true story. I met a guy who is a consultant for public schools, a really good speaker, and a very inspiring person. His self image was that he was a really good teacher and he was a good teacher when he was in a happy mood. But when he was not in a happy mood without hesitation he would just throw whole garbage cans of aggression and sarcasm over some poor student, and usually not a strong student, usually the weak student. We know those kinds of teachers. We know those kinds of human beings. Maybe we are even those kinds of beings ourselves. So that's what we have to look at. It's not them we are talking about, we are talking about ourselves. That's how we act.

A group of us including this teacher met one afternoon after work for a few beers and the atmosphere was jovial. We asked how you could say that you are a good teacher when you can do a thing like that to a student. We were sort of having fun with him and teasing in a way. And then he replied, "I'm a whole human being and when I'm happy I'm expressing the happiness that is pouring out of me. It's like I'm blessing them. And when I'm angry I want to express that also, they have to know what it is like to meet a whole human being and I don't want to suppress any of what that means."

Then my friend said, "Wouldn't the same argument apply for a rapist?"

Then he commits what can be called intellectual betrayal and becomes very emotional, "You don't dare compare me with a rapist!" And usually we just give in and say, "No, no, no, I'm sorry, of course not." But we were tough guys and replied, "Yes we do." And he just kept on fighting trying to defend himself. My friend then said, "Let's say you were painting fences. How would you know if you were a good fence painter? Would you look at your self image? Of course not, you would look at your fences! If your fences are really good you can say that you are a good painter regardless of how you feel. So in order to find out if you are a good teacher, don't ask yourself, your self image – it's called self image because we make it ourselves. You have to look at your actions. And what do you think you look like as a teacher seen from the student's perspective? You are completely untrustworthy because whether he's doing his best or not, it doesn't influence the way that you teach him. The student is a complete victim to your way of feeling. It's an act of volitional violence. We were hammering away and had to fight to get this teacher to understand. And in the end he kind of gave in, and was shocked. It wasn't a big dramatic thing. I wasn't really sure whether he got it, but he could actually see that it was a volitional act of violence. It was a violent thing to do. It's evil! There's no excuse; it's evil! And you know it! You're paid to raise kids. From this perspective of self image you are in the same category as a rapist. He was trying to avoid it by being emotional. That's how we protect the self image.

## **18. What is your motive and highest priority for being a teacher?**

**PB:** I met him some time after and he said that he wanted to thank us, wanted to call us and tell us that he was ashamed about what he had done, that something had shifted in his relationship with his students. Usually he just saw radical differences like between a computer, a flower, and a glass of water; the one who is sharp, the girl who has beauty, the boy who is irritating, and the one whose parents give paintings to the school – these kinds of differences. Now he could see that his care was of a different kind. He felt like they were more like flowers in the same flower bed. They were different but they were the same. And then he said, "Now I feel that they rise together, and when someone rises quicker than someone else, they inspire the slow ones to go higher. It's one collective emergence of the whole thing." The quickest are going further and they pull on the ones coming after. He was just expressing that he was caring for what he was paid for, which was raising kids. What are your motives? Because as a teacher there is only one motive, "I want to free the potential and I want to raise the potential – that's what I want to do as human being; in speaking English, in doing mathematics, whatever." That means that your highest priority is your actions as a teacher. And your feelings and emotional state is of a much lower priority. But if you are a pathological narcissist then your highest priority is your emotions, which means that you will inevitably express your emotions rather than be concerned about your actions for the good of everybody.

It's basically very simple. Just get in contact with your main responsibility which is to raise kids, and what's more you're educated for it and you're being paid for it! So that's your highest priority when you are in the school. What you do outside school is another story. It's very simple. So being a professional teacher means that when you are really angry, when your girlfriend, boyfriend, husband or wife has left you, when you have a 40 degree fever and when you feel absolutely miserable the question is: how good are you then? If you're good then you can call yourself a professional teacher. If you're not good then you are an amateur, because amateurs as musicians can play beautifully but you can't count on them. That's the difference. An amateur can be a beautiful musician, but usually he is not. A professional musician is always good, sometimes it seems like he has a direct link to God and then it's really good, but his lowest level is always good and the lowest level of a teacher has to be really, really high because there are human beings on the receiving end. So right there is a moral context.

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