

Advanced Dialogue Process for Supervisors with Edna Murdoch & Alison Hodge

In dialogue, we listen and speak ‘*from the silence within ourselves*’. Wm Isaacs (2000).

OUR QUESTIONS

- What is happening to conversation?
- How is digitisation affecting our being with ourselves, being with each other and being able to pay quality attention to our supervisees?
- What is happening now to our capacity for dialogue?
- We have many means of communicating: texting, email, Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, What’s App, Viber, and Snapchat.
- All possible, “on the run” - sitting on the tube, walking along the street. We have ever-increasing options for how we communicate with each other, or at least send a message to another or to lots of others - in an instant. Thirty years ago, Victoria Wood asked: “is television killing the art of conversation?” We wonder what she would say now?
- What has happened to the art of dialogue: when two people come together and neither knows what the outcome will be?
- How is this affecting how we co-create supervisory conversation?
- What impact is this having on our relationships in supervision?

OUR EXPLORATION WITH YOU

Our work is carried through the medium of words - and through the silences between words. We connect through words. Healthy, successful professional and business relationships depend on our ability to be in dialogue – to use the ‘best words in the best order’.

That is why we need to become Dialogue Artists. Dialogue allows each person in the conversation to think and share clearly – allowing the right words to emerge at the right moment. It ensures that the best ideas and solutions emerge naturally out of collective reflection, imagination and cognition. Respect for the others’ thinking and the capacity to be in the flow of exchange appropriately, are key ingredients in skilful dialogue processes.

In this session, we will engage in a dialogue, exploring some of the issues that these questions raise, noticing our own process of being with each other and how this contributes to (or hinders) our being together in dialogue.

We will frame the focus on dialogue with reference to the relational skills required for us to be dialogue artists, and to the effects of digitisation on our minds.

We will then invite participants to engage in a dialogue with another/within the group and notice how we are with each other and what impact this has on our relationship. We can then consider how this informs our practice as supervisors.

Presenters' Profiles:

Dr Alison Hodge - Profile

I am an EMCC accredited coach at Master Practitioner level and an APECS accredited Executive Coaching Supervisor. I have been working with individuals and groups to facilitate learning and change throughout my career and I delight in the power of the relationship to heighten individuals' personal awareness and tap into their massive capabilities and talents.

Professionally I offer individual and group supervision for coaches and consultants working primarily in the corporate world, and for those who have particular interest in individual, group and organisational change and development. I graduated with my Professional Doctorate in Coaching Supervision at Middlesex University in July 2014.

Edna Murdoch - Profile

In 2001 Edna pioneered the first Supervision-on-Call Service for coaches in the UK and she is a Founder and Director of the Coaching Supervision Academy (CSA). CSA has trained over 560 executive coaches and leaders worldwide and currently runs an EMCC accredited/ICF approved coach supervision programme in UK, US, Singapore, France and Australia. In her role as Course Director for CSA's supervision programme, Edna creates course content, supervises students and CSA's international faculty.

Edna is an APECS accredited Executive Coach Supervisor. She trained for one year in psychodynamic supervision and for two years in creative supervision at the Centre for Transpersonal Psychology, London. She is a global leader in the field of supervision and an ambassador for it.

Dialogue and Digitisation in Supervision

Dialogue

It is the supervisor's responsibility to create the conditions for profound attention and for a safe relationship in which both participants can rest *'in open presence within whatever experience arises'*. (J. Welwood 1996)

'We listen from the silence within ourselves.'

'In dialogue, you are part of the method. To engage in dialogue is to engage with yourself in a profoundly new way.'

Dialogue: 'to listen together as a part of a larger whole.'

'In dialogue we look at the dynamic fields that arise in each moment, continually shifting, among groups of people and large organizations. A field of conversation derives from ideas, thoughts and quality of the attention of the people involved here and now.'

Wm Isaacs 2000 Dialogue and the Art of Thinking Together.

Because the nature of Dialogue is exploratory, its meaning and its methods continue to unfold. No firm rules can be laid down for conducting a Dialogue because its essence is learning - not as the result of consuming a body of information or doctrine imparted by an authority, nor as a means of examining or criticizing a particular theory or programme, but rather as part of an unfolding process of creative participation between peers.

Dialogue is not discussion, a word that shares its root meaning with "percussion" and "concussion," both of which involve breaking things up. Nor is it debate. These forms of conversation contain an implicit tendency to point toward a goal, to hammer out an agreement, to try to solve a problem or have one's opinion prevail. It is also not a "salon", which is a kind of gathering that is both informal and most often characterized by an intention to entertain, exchange friendship, gossip and other information. Although the word "dialogue" has often been used in similar ways, its deeper, root meaning implies that it is not primarily interested in any of this.

The word "dialogue" derives from two roots: "dia" which means "through" and "logos" which means "the word", or more particularly, "the meaning of the word." The image it gives is of a river of meaning flowing around and through the participants. Any number of people can engage in Dialogue - one can even have a Dialogue with oneself - but the sort of Dialogue that we are suggesting involves a group of between twenty and forty people seated in a circle talking together.

Participants find that they are involved in an ever changing and developing pool of common meaning. A shared content of consciousness emerges which allows a level of creativity and insight that is not generally available to individuals or to groups that interact in more familiar ways. This reveals an aspect of Dialogue that Patrick de Mare has called koinonia, a word meaning "impersonal fellowship", which was originally used to describe the early form of Athenian democracy in which all the free men of the city gathered to govern themselves.

David Bohm 2004 'On Dialogue'

"Words," Ursula K. Le Guin wrote in her abiding meditation on the magic of real human connection, *"transform both speaker and hearer; they feed energy back and forth and amplify it. They feed understanding or emotion back and forth and amplify it."* But what happens in a cultural ecosystem where the hearer has gone extinct and the speaker gone rampant? Where do transformation and understanding go?

Digitisation

The new normal for many of us, is '*continuous partial attention*' (**Stone 2006**)

Justin Rosenstein, the former Google and Facebook engineer who helped build the 'like' button: 'Everyone is distracted. All of the time....One reason I think it is particularly important for us to talk about this now is that we may be the last generation that can remember life before,' Rosenstein says. It may or may not be relevant that Rosenstein, Pearlman and most of the tech insiders questioning today's attention economy are in their 30s, members of the last generation that can remember a world in which telephones were plugged into walls.

It is revealing that many of these younger technologists are weaning themselves off their own products, sending their children to elite Silicon Valley schools where iPhones, iPads and even laptops are banned. They appear to be wary about the perils of dealing crack cocaine: *never get high on your own supply.*

From the Guardian 2017

'...the interruption system known as the Net'

'The Net delivers precisely the kind of sensory and cognitive stimuli—repetitive, intensive, interactive, addictive—that have been shown to result in strong and rapid alterations in brain circuits and functions.'

'Never has there been a medium that, like the Net, has been programmed to so widely scatter our attention and to do it so insistently'...the Net is, by design, an interruption system, a machine geared for dividing attention...frequent interruptions scatter our thoughts...and make us tense and anxious...we willingly accept the loss of concentration and focus, the division of our attention and the fragmentation of our thoughts, in return for the wealth of compelling or at least diverting information we receive.'

Nicolas Carr 2010 'The Shallows – How the Internet is changing the Way we Think, Read and Remember.'

'To be everywhere is to be nowhere.' (**Seneca, 'Letters from a Stoic' Penguin 1969**)

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