



COUNSELLING: Introducing a new profession to Slovakia

The unique nature of Psychophonetics based Counselling¹

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Counselling is a new profession of human development that Skola Empatie is introducing to Slovakia since 2013. If I was in England, Australia or USA now I would not have to introduce the profession of counselling. The most experienced graduates of Psychophonetics in the UK are registered members of the leading professional counselling association of the UK: BACP (British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy). Counselling is a very established profession in the west. But it is still a new profession. In Slovakia, it is still completely new. Until recently there was not even a word for it. I know, because in 2018, we created a partnership with the Department of Economy at Matej Bel University in Banska Bystrica, to teach the first professional counselling course in Slovakia: A Psychophonetics based Graduate Diploma in Holistic Counselling for the Workplace, where I signed a contract with the rector to that effect. We offered to collaborate with them as the first college in Slovakia that teaches professional counselling. I know that we are not the last one.

Counselling is NOT *poradentsvo*! Let us be clear about that. *Poradentsvo* is giving advice. Anyone who knows what professional counselling is, knows that it is not about giving advice. So, what do real counsellors do?

There are hundreds of various definitions about what counselling is and is not, and the differences between counselling and coaching, counselling and psychotherapy, counselling and clinical psychology. That is not my focus here. Search this for yourself on the internet. Counselling has existed in the west for the past 70 years. I will give our definition of counselling used at Skola Empatie, which is the Slovak branch of Psychophonetics Institute International. It is compatible with Humanistic, Existential and Transpersonal psychology, of which we are definitely a part.

¹ Taught professionally in the 2-years professional training course of Graduate Diploma in Holistic Counselling at Skola Empatie in Benolakovo (Bratislava) and Kosice. www.skolaempatie.com <> www.psychophonetics.com

A basic historic context is required for the creation of a common picture. To clarify, the term *counselling* did not exist as the name of a profession before 1951, and another word that was not in the dictionary before 1951 is *empathy*. It was a turning point in the evolution of psychology and consciousness in general: the centre of knowing moved from the expert into the client/person. The centre moved from outside to inside: Person-Centred Therapy was founded.

The word counsellor comes from the old word *councillor*. In Hebrew language (חבר מועצה) these two words are still the same. Councillor is a member of the council that is advising the ruler: the Calif has a Wazir. Now everyone is a Calif. The Wazir is inside. What is left for the modern counsellor to do?

Carl Rogers is the founder of Humanistic Psychology and of the profession of the *counsellor* who is not a medical doctor. All psychotherapists before him from Sigmund Freud on, were first medical doctors. That is how modern psychology and psychotherapy started. But Rogers discovered that the really effective factor in the therapeutic process is the honest attempt of the therapist to understand the client *from the client's own point of view!* That is the Humanistic evolution and it is only in its early phases of development. For that, a new profession was required: not acting on the knowledge of the external expert, as the ancient tradition of medicine entails, but acting on a new kind of authority: the emerging authority of the person/client himself/ herself: person-centred therapy. To encourage that new source of self-knowledge, meaning, authority and change is the role of this new kind of professional counsellor, who does not give advice based on the external authority of the expert.

That new profession required a new kind of therapeutic skill and that's how the word Empathy was practically created in 1951. It immediately became an internationally recognised and essential modern term. Most people assume that it is an ancient Greek word like *sympathy* and *antipathy*, but it is not, it is a new word, for a new emerging human capacity. In 2017, at Bucharest University in the international conference of counsellors I termed it EmQ: Empathic Quotient, as a development of IQ: Intelligence Quotient, that focuses on the person's reflective intellect. EmQ is a new level of intelligence, requiring another capacity of perception and conception of human reality observed from the inside. Rogers discovered it, Edmund Husserl, founder of Phenomenology discovered it in the cognitive-philosophical sciences, Rudolf Steiner prepared people for a future culture that will be based on new capacities of perceiving the inner life of others. He predicted that this will only become possible from the middle of the 20th century onward. He was right.

Carl Rogers is the first professional counsellor of the 20th century, laying the foundation for the long-term future development of this profession. It is my privilege to be the director of Skola Empatie, the first professional counselling training in Slovakia. We train people to trust their internal authority, authenticity, personal experience as a trustworthy source of genuine personal inner wisdom. That is what the new professional of the counsellor means to us. To master that new capacity is the purpose of the training for a Holistic Counsellor at Skola Empatie. When we tried together with our colleagues at Matej Bel University to find a Slovak language equivalent to the term *Counsellor*, we could not find it. It was not there. So there and then, together, we declared a new Slovak word: *COUNSELLING*.

There are many different definitions of counselling, but I will focus on what it means to us at Skola Empatie and what we are doing in the name of professional counselling and Methodical empathy in Slovakia and internationally. When we ask ourselves what is that centre at the focus of Person-Centred Therapy, my answer is: it is the human individual 'I', the core of individual identity and reality, the 4th level of the human constitution after the mineral kingdom, the plant kingdom, the animal kingdom. It is: *The Human Kingdom*, that which is uniquely human in its individual form. Minerals, plants, animals have a spiritual dimension in their reality, but it is not incarnated and not incorporated into their individual one-person being, consciousness and body, not yet. The human 'I' is the spiritual dimension of humanity in its individual manifestation as consciousness, personality and personal choices.

At the foundation of Person-Centred Therapy there stands, consciously or not, the forgotten core of the Idealistic Philosophy of Central Europe. In contrast to what has become the mainstream of philosophy and of psychology during most of the 20th century, Idealistic philosophy claims that human consciousness is *NOT* the product of biology, sociology and biography but the origin of all human life. It claims that human consciousness has its own internal origin in the higher dimension of the human constitution: the human 'I'. The human individual 'I', so it claims, is not a product of human life but a source of consciousness and of personal meaning.

The "I" lives in the soul...raying out from it, fills the whole of the soul, and through the soul exerts its action upon the body. And in the "I" the spirit is alive. The spirit sends its rays into the "I" and lives in it as in a "sheath" or veil, just as the "I" lives in its sheaths, the body and

soul. The spirit develops the “I” from within, outwards; the mineral world develops it from without, inwards. (Rudolf Steiner, Theosophy. Ch. 1)²

The human ‘I’ is an original, authentic spiritual being, entering the body and exiting it every birth and death, every waking and falling asleep. That is the true esoteric foundation of all Humanistic, Existential, Transpersonal and Integral psychology consciously or not: the Central European Idealistic philosophy of Fichte, Goethe, Schelling, Hegel, Brentano, Steiner, Husserl (father of Phenomenology) and originally, Socrates, the founder of Philosophy. The human ‘I’ is at the same time an original spiritual being and at the same time, an active force inside the ordinary human psyche. Without an ‘I’ at the centre of the human soul or with a weakened and absent ‘I’, the soul falls apart.

On this we build our kind of counselling. That is what I am bringing to Slovakia through Skola Empatie. In one way, it is unique and original and at the same time, it is a development of that peaceful revolution of the middle of the 20th Century: Humanistic Psychology, Person-Centred Therapy and for me: Practical Psychosophy, living Anthroposophy, Psychophonetics, Methodical Empathy, Radical Phenomenology, and by extension, the present and future of Participatory Medicine. We call this kind of counselling: A Psychology of Freedom.

A Psychology of Freedom type of counselling is not just an intention, philosophy, ideology or theory. It is a method, a skill, and an educational process for acquiring that skill, with a solid code of ethics. The method is a combination of what we do and don’t do as part of Methodical Empathy. What we don’t do involves: we don’t ask questions; we don’t give advice; we don’t analyse, theorise, interpret or guide.

What we do: Listen attentively and skilfully so that we can hear not only what the person says but what the person means, and confirm this understanding every step of the way by providing evidence that we understand, see, hear and know the reality of the person who is speaking to us. For that we have developed four levels of empathy which together make level 1 of Methodical Empathy:

Methodical Empathy level 1: Perceptive Empathy

1. **Reflective Empathy**—Understanding what the client actually tries to communicate and demonstrate that we do.

² https://rsarchive.org/Books/GA009/English/AP1971/GA009_c01_4.html

2. **Imaginative Empathy**—Creating an imaginative picture of the inner mental reality of the client's experience, so we can *See* the experience.
3. **Inspirational Empathy**—Allowing an internal resonance of the feeling, emotional and deep meaning of the client's experience in our soul so we can *Hear* the experience.
4. **Intuitive Empathy**—Perceiving the client's experience as a part of their overall striving for the further incarnation of their own 'I' into their own personal life.

In order to be able to do that, Psychophonetics counsellors enter an ongoing, lifetime striving of Self-Empathy—ever deepening the counsellor's connection to their own soul/psychological dynamics, as a potential source for ever deepening empathy with the client. It includes thinking to understand thinking, feelings to understand feelings, emotions to understand emotions, pain to understand pain, desire to understand desire, frustration to understand frustration. We learn to stay in touch with our own personal reality as the source of getting in touch with the client's personal reality. This process is called: *Psychophonetics Parallel Processing*. It is taught methodically in the counselling training.

Our counselling process is divided into two major parts: 1) Conversational Counselling and 2) Action Counselling, with the formation of the 'Wish' in-between. The first 'advice' in a Psychophonetics-based counselling session is the client's own advice to themselves: a declaration of the overall direction and purpose of their striving. The *Wish* puts the client in an unquestionable position of self-leadership and directorship regarding their own process. In this, Psychophonetics is taking the Person-Centred Therapy approach to its next evolutionary level. The purpose of the Conversational Phase is to lead to the *Wish*. The purpose of the Action Phase is to serve and facilitate the *Wish*. Everything experienced and accomplished in the process of the session is designed to be transformed into *Homework* for further practice, making the Psychophonetics process into a self-educational training in self-mastery.

Methodical Empathy level 2: Conceptive Empathy or Transformative Empathy

It involves engaging the will of the client towards action in their life. It includes Challenging, Concluding-Focusing and Forming the Wish. What follows is the Action Phase of Psychophonetics, which goes beyond counselling into the domain of consultancy for personal and social development, psychotherapy and psychosomatic healing.

A Psychology of Freedom requires a Philosophy of Freedom code of ethics and practice in order to be a sustainable reality. The following are:

Seven principles of Psychophonetics Counselling freedom Code of Ethics

1. INNER EQUIPMENT: Human beings are inherently equipped for the journey of their lives.

A human life is considered to be primarily as a purposeful learning and growing opportunity, including its challenges and crisis. Digesting one's experiences is at the same time the forging of the inner equipment and its application to the growing process. People are also inherently equipped with the ability to sense the next step in manifesting that potential. The choice to come to a counsellor is an expression of that sense. Trusting that inner sense, we also assume the chosen counsellor is also equipped to be the right counsellor for that person at that point in time.

2. INNER GUIDANCE: Guardianship and inner Guidance are inherent to the human soul. The client's inner guidance is to be in charge of the process.

If we want the client to end this journey in the driver seat, we must start it with the client in the driver seat. People do not swap seats in the middle of the ride. What that practically means is that enough opportunities and safeguards must be provided in the counselling process for the client's/student's internal Guardianship and their internal Guidance to manifest from the realm of potential within the inner life, into one's actual conscious life. The counselling interaction is seen as a training ground for that manifestation.

3. SELF-KNOWLEDGE: The client is the one authorised to determine and to know the meaning of his/her experience. Meaning is not given but is a creation of the human spirit.

Only the owner of an experience, can determine the meaning of that experience. No information given from the outside comprises knowing. Only a unique union between one's own perception and one's own conception comprises real knowing. External authority-based interpretation of the meaning of clients' experience is out of place in this modality.

4. TEAM-WORK: Psychophonetics session is a teamwork of two equally important partners.

If the client is fundamentally equipped for the journey of his/her life, including the exclusive ability to realise the meaning of his/her experience, and if the counsellor possesses the skills for encouraging

the manifestation of that equipment, then they both need each other equally for the journey they are to travel together. They have to become a team of equally important partners, with all the respect trust and support that successful partnership requires.

5. **THE 'I AM' TO TAKE CHARGE: The client's 'I Am' (core self) is to be given every possible opportunity to enter the process, the body and one's life, to guide, to make choices, to know, to take charge. All professional choices in the counselling process must be governed by this principle.**

Essential to the Anthroposophical model of the human constitution is the notion of the 'I', the integrative centre of the human psyche, one's core identity. In light of Anthroposophy the human 'I' is not a product of heredity and upbringing but an authentic source, whose existence predates one's birth, and will outlive one's death. Each human 'I' is considered to be a unique spiritual being, a species in their own right. The 'I' is the Observer, Feeler, meaning-giver and Choice-Maker in regards to their own experience as well as in regards to the encountered phenomena of the world.

6. **HIGHER ACCOUNTABILITY: Based on the above, the counsellor, while counselling, is at all times acting according to being accountable to an authority within one's own being which exists beyond the dominion of one's personal emotionality, intellectuality, desires and theories.**

This internal higher authority is of a universal nature, its interest is all human, although its presence emerges to the individual from the core of their individual humanity. Rudolf Steiner named that inner authority: THE UNIVERSAL HUMAN BEING.

7. **SELF CARE: The counsellor is committed to an on-going process of self-care, self-awareness and further personal development that can be clearly articulated, shared and witnessed by peer review and by supervision with qualified professionals in the field.**

We who put ourselves forward as encouragers of other's self-care and personal development must be self-caring and personally developing ourselves. The counsellor is a mentor and coach for people who intend to upgrade their wellbeing and self-management through deeper, broader and higher consciousness. This is an ongoing path. The counsellor must be a person committed to such a commitment and upgrade for oneself in order to mentor it to others with integrity. If upgrading self awareness is something I cannot do, choose not to do, or it does not work for me, there is no ground on which to stand mentoring this in others.

These are the core principles of the code of ethics of Psychophonetics Counselling and Psychotherapy. It represents the universal spirit of the counsellor, the *Skilled Friend on the Threshold* in the practical and methodical process of 21st Century Person-Centred Counselling. The new profession of Counselling is coming to Slovakia. Blessings to all present and future Slovak Counsellors.



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