



by Mark Taylor

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What can you do with conflict? Can you be **invisible**, but **present**?

«Marker» is a regular column in Coyote, written by Mark Taylor, looking at issues in training and hoping to encourage debate, questions and even - who knows? - intercultural dialogue... Present, visible feedback and conversation particularly welcome.

► One afternoon in Morocco

Usually, I do not refer to specific courses or meetings in this column. Because of the nature of the magazine, I feel it's better to combine related experiences and bring them to a point which might touch a nerve, stimulate some reactions. Usually. This time is different. I'd like to offer a small window onto a very complex situation. Maybe you can see the ocean in a small drop of water here. It took place in Essaouira, Morocco, during the third (and last) seminar of the long-term training course Training Active Trainers in Euro-Med youth work bringing together trainers from both Meda and European countries. As anyone who has done it will tell you, working in EuroMed is not easy and this training course was no exception - for team members or participants. High politics, armed conflicts, economics - these were not just things which people read about in newspapers, they are part of daily life with often massive consequences. During the blossom of the course one of the central concerns which blossomed was exactly this: how to bring such topics into the open and how to relate them to our international youth work? How to deal with "hot issues" without burning ourselves?

Meeting up again in Essaouira last November after nearly a year apart felt very shaky indeed. There had been a LOT of terrible events in the intervening period and only recently the war in Lebanon and Israel had been brought to a ceasefire. Some of the exchanges on the course e-group had been very tough. Not everyone managed to attend the course, some dropping out shortly beforehand for security reasons. It took some time for the group to find itself again. You might say that it's easy for people's bodies to travel somewhere, but it can take the soul a bit longer to arrive...

There were many "hot issues" around and their identification and treatment were organised by participants in workshops, discussion groups, etc. Participants from Israel and Lebanon came together and prepared a plenary session on the conflict in July and August. (Take a look at the Wikipedia sections and discussions about the conflict to gain some understanding of the complexity of the issues involved). It is difficult to give a picture of how important this session was in the course. Each one had the time and the respect to express themselves how they wished; to put on the table their own fears, doubts,angers; to describe how they had lived that period and to give their analysis of the current situation. And everyone else who wanted could contribute as well. Those contributions did not only come in the form of words, but also in deep concentration, in whistles of (dis)belief, in laughter... For me, this was one of the most powerful examples of intercultural dialogue I have ever witnessed. All those words which are used so often came to live and to life; you know them: equality, sharing, active listening, learning, empathy... But, how to show that to people who were not there? With his agreement, I can share with you a poem written by Nizar Ghanem from Beirut. He wrote it in the middle of the night during an air raid. He read it to us in Arabic and his own translation into English, so that is how it is printed here. Not to support any "side", but to give an idea of the power of being able to be vulnerable together and find ways to express these things.

في المساء البيروتي

في المساء البيروتي أصحو
 في المساء البيروتي أنام وأصحو
 في المساء البيروتي البحر حلاما وأوهام
 في المساء البيروتي أسطع
 وجدي صدقة ولقاء
 في ألف فهدلعي هناك شي غي كل
 حيث يموت كل شيء يسقط وجهي عن وجهي
 وحيث يترك في تعموفي ألف
 قضه تحيكي النسيان
 هيا لي حيث تقوص الشمس
 في الشفق البعيد
 في مدن بلون الزنك
 بلون الماء يبيكي الرجال دون
 الي حيث يلقى
 قلب النسادون وجل
 وتمشي
 في المساء البيروتي أموت
 وأحيا مجددا خطا ملافي السماء
 في مدينة مصبوغة بلون الماء
 بلون الدماء
 ولون ألف ألف مساء !!!

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In the Beirut Evening

In the Beirut evening I wake up
In the Beirut evening I sleep and wake up
And the sea breathes me in as dreams and illusions
In the Beirut evening I wake up
In the Beirut evening I sleep and wake up
And the sea breathes me in as dreams and illusions

In the Beirut evening I shine alone
In a thousand chances and a meeting
So come with me there
Where everything dies in everything
And where my face drops from my face
In a memory, in a tune, and thousand stories
dwelling in forgetfulness

Come with me to where the sun dives in the far horizon
In cities of the color of zinc
of the color of water...
To where men cry with no worries
And women walk with no fear

*In the Beirut evening I die
And live again as wreckage meeting the sky
In a city painted by the color of water, by the color of blood
And the color of a thousand, thousand evenings!*

Nizar Ghanem

You get an **idea**? Maybe even more than that...

► Visible, but not present?

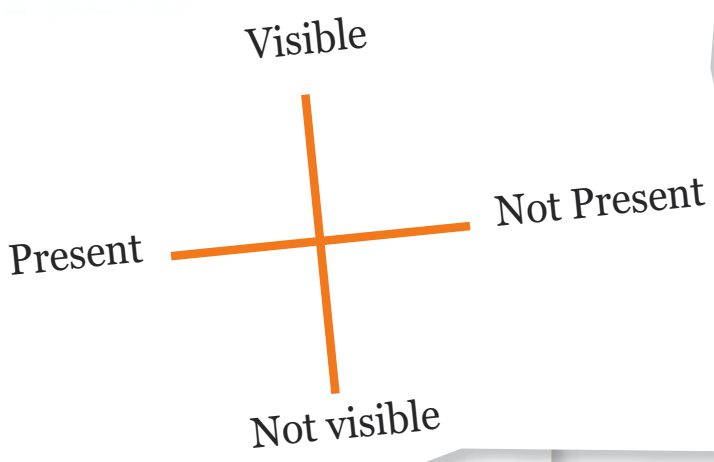
Developed by Joseph Luft, a psychologist, and Harry Ingram, a psychiatrist, the “Johari Window” has proved itself to be a useful tool in explaining the role of feedback in educational settings. Their model makes it clear what the process is trying to achieve.

	Known to self	Not known to self
Known to others	arena	Blind spot
Not known to others	façade	unknown

The top left window **arena** covers the aspects of yourself that are known to you and are clearly evident to others – usually easily identifiable facts, but still useful to check others’ perceptions...
The **façade** covers the aspects that are known to you but hidden from others – usually related to your motivation for doing things, your thoughts...
The **blind spot** covers those aspects that are known to others but not to you – often you will find that others have a different perception of your actions and their consequences, things which you will not have thought about before....

Feedback can be useful to help us decrease the blind spots and increase the size of our arena. The better we know ourselves, the better we can be.

Recently I was presented with the “HeFe Window” which may be developed in the future into a tool to help further the processes of self-reflection and feedback, especially around the issues of concentration, involvement and impact on others:



Within a course it can help to stop proceedings and ask people to look at themselves and selected others and place themselves in the “HeFe Window”. So, for example, if you are in the plenary room with everyone else, you are clearly “visible”, but how “present” are you? where are your thoughts? what have you contributed within the last 30 minutes? Conversely, someone who is not sitting in the plenary room (therefore “invisible”) may still be having an impact on proceedings (and therefore “present”).

How would you use the “HeFe Window”?

And finally

Thanks to the “wet” trainers who replied to the last “Marker” and even one who added some centimetres to the waist line with some welcome Toblerone without knowing that sweets are cool and are related to the Youth in Action programme! Next time we evaluate the use of pataphysics in the development of key competences in intercultural communication...



References, influences and sounds



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