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The **spiritual** part of trainings: The Size of the paper

I think that the spiritual part of the training could be when trainers do the best they can do; when their art is understandable to the participants and they are moved to co-operate the best they can in the process of making common art. It is not a question of methods or technique but it matters how deeply the trainer touches the people in different levels of intelligence.

There was an article in the Slovene newspaper *Delo*, with the inquisitive title: “Inventing everything new, how creatively amazing!” The article was about how nowadays we are becoming increasingly familiar with the concepts of rational intelligence (or IQ), emotional intelligence (or EQ) and spiritual intelligence (or SQ). To go a little bit deeper into this interesting topic I took a look inside the book *Spiritual Capital* where it is written that in our capitalist-orientated society, material capital (meaning money with which we buy material advantages, power and influence) is closest to the hearts of human beings. Nowadays, society is run mainly by rational intelligence, with what **we think**.

Social capital can be defined as the richness in our society and organisations which enables effective performance for common well-being. Emotional intelligence is the capability to understand other people and the capability to empathise with them. It is the ability to recognise others’ feelings and our position in society and to give adequate responses to others. With emotional intelligence, **we feel**.

Spiritual capital is dealing with thoughts and ideas about what it means to be human, what is the purpose of our life and what its final purpose or meaning could be. We build our Spiritual Capital with spiritual intelligence (SQ). With spiritual intelligence, **we are**.

The concept of (SQ) was invented by Danah Zorah and Ian Marshall. They explain that the spirit is the deeper meaning of our basic purpose. Without the spirit - the active principle of human beings - we are not humane. This is the foundation for all other types of intelligence. What I think, feel or evaluate has an important influence on the whole world.

It might sound complicated and theoretical but from my experience you will see it is part of our everyday life and it is very connected to the trainers work. As you can probably tell, the *Delo* article had a huge “aha effect” on me – that feeling when different things come together and you suddenly see something new or in a totally different light. I agreed that what we think, feel and who we are, has a big influence on the whole world. We need to be aware also of these 3Q’s when we work with youngsters and when we prepare different types of activities for and with them. We need to deliver facts, emotions and spiritual elements into the sessions where everybody can gain at least something. Usually the spiritual element is **the** existential element of our work.

Having all this in mind I will share my recent experience with you. Working as a trainer in the TiPovej! Institute for Creative Society we have the basic mission to help young people to develop and realise their ideas. The final goal is creating an idea-friendly environment that will enable the young to take an active part in society. TiPovej! believes that people who can clearly present their ideas have more opportunities for success. The more people are capable of realising their ideas the more successful the community is. I hope you agree with us!

Together with other members of the TiPovej! team, we were designing workshops on the topic of creativity for different target groups, such as students, NGOs, governmental and private sectors. Our aim was to move people to think “out of the box”, to go beyond their limits, to name their gained experiences from everyday life and to learn more.

• Coyote Spirit



In the preparatory team we start from the belief that everyone is creative by nature. But this creativity seems to disappear with time and the habits we learn during our lives. What we had in mind was that creativity is something we need to stimulate and be aware of. Creativity is joy and freedom. Sure, we wanted to test this on our own to see how far we can push ourselves and if we are able to think outside of our own small boxes. We just knew that we had to use inspiration which could bring us to new dimensions!

In the preparation phase we were thinking (as always) that we had to design/ invent new workshops and use tools to fascinate the participants; to make them feel comfortable, creative, not to get bored; to bring them to a higher level - but in the end we felt we were still sticking to old stuff, at least for us. So we pushed ourselves further to use our inspiration and we were able to create ways to reach a new dimension.

It looked like we did not forget that we have all we need inside us and we are in the same situation as our participants. We were well aware what kind of knowledge and information we would like to deliver to the participants but the most important part was how to awake the spiritual dimension (capital) of the training. How to provoke the “aha effect”?

It was not easy but slowly we moved further. Brain gym, brain fitness, brain wellness are all great ideas to awaken spiritual dimensions. We combined different fields of science to make art.

In the following paragraphs I'd like to describe some interesting exercises. They are easy to use and they seem to have quite an effect on participants. These exercises can be used during a workshop when you see that the concentration level is low and where you feel it is necessary to remind participants who they are and how they feel.

► Cools connection method to make all meridians harmonised.

This method connects and integrates energy circles in the body and mobilises all electric body energies to move them in case they are blocked. This exercise helps us to be more focused. It helps when we feel confused and we have a kind of “floating” feeling.



► How to use this method in practice?

We stand and keep legs and arms in the position of number 8 (*see photo*). This means that we put the right foot on the floor and then you put left ankle over right and left palm (of hand) over right. We maintain this position for about 1 minute and then we repeat the exercise with the other ankle and hand for another minute. After that we put both feet on the floor. Fingertips of both hands are put against each other, touching in a triangle and we look through the triangle into the far distance (*see photo*). This position allows a flow of energy to run harmoniously between both brain hemispheres.

The method of connecting left and right brain hemispheres helps us also to improve the state of weak concentration and coordination. With this exercise we can raise self-confidence and improve the level of energy in our bodies. This is a great technique to practice very simple movements for investment in our future in the sense of combining IQ, EQ, and SQ....

And it brings quality in the long run to try to use more than the 10% of our brain capacity we often hear about. The limits of what the human brain can do are only set by our own imaginations!

▶ Paper size -

How much do you need to write?

We can taste the idea of pushing limits in this next exercise, where youngsters are requested to write down their ideas. First you give the participants a sheet of paper format A4 and ask them to write their idea in 5 minutes. After that you give them another sheet of paper format A5 with the same task but only 3 minutes to write. And at the end you give them half of A5 and only 1 minute to write. Try it! You will (see) realise how words gain a different quality and very precise meaning. The amount of text seriously reduces, when we NEED or WANT to make it short (see photo).

Is it the limit of paper size, time or meaning of words that motivate the person to clarify his or her thoughts, ideas? The "Paper size" exercise is transparent in that it awakens rational thinking connected to the material capital within participants. If you are doing it with a group of youngsters, you can witness a lot of "aha effects" and effective personal experiences. It touches you as a trainer (deeply) and it can influence other participants in the workshop as well.

In one of the Tipovej! Workshops we started with trying to find the meaning of what an idea is by using this method. The final versions of the participants' descriptions of their «idea» become very similar and close to the Tipovej! definition which was the result of our many previous workshops. For us, an idea is an image of change. Imagination needs to be clear and provide an exact description of how to reach the change. Change is the improvement of a current situation in the life of an individual or society, with which we can reach planned actions. So what is your idea?

You probably think you know all of that already and some of you actually are familiar with that kind of workshop. And now you are asking yourself, where is the spiritual part here?

Julia Cameron, the writer (novelist playwright, songwriter and poet) would say: "Questions keep us alive as much as answers do."

Without using spiritual capital and knowing who we are in our work we cannot provoke any changes. Without the spiritual part everything is plain. No joy. No "Aha effects". I will use the words of a very close friend and co-worker of mine, when she said in a figurative way, that everyone is writing his or her own book. We have no right to jump into each others' books just to correct the content in the way we think is right. Everybody is responsible for his or her own book.

So the trainer should keep track of his own book but at the same time should take care of the flow of awakening "aha effects", to make the participant's book more interesting for many different reasons, sometimes only known by the young person. Based on what they think, who they are and what they feel, they can make change if they want to. Or not. It is up to the individual. In the same way that spirituality is.

Notes and references :

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- *Duhovni kapital: bogatstvo od katerega lahko živimo* (Spiritual capital), by Danah Zohar and Ian Marshall, ISBN -10 961-238-773-7
- *Hitro in efektivno sprošč anje, Postaviti priroteto, Postaviti cilj*, by Irena Gilbert (manual for seminar 29.7./5.8. 2006)
- *Knjiga o mo ganih (The brain book)*, by Peter Russell, 1979, ISBN 86 – 341-02427 -3

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