

Chapter 5. Examples in practice

In this chapter, I will successively discuss five example sessions. These give you, the reader, an idea of what the energetics of Voice Dialogue look like during a session with a client. All client names are fictitious. In these examples, I integrate the techniques, insights and skills I have introduced in previous chapters. In a few cases, I will also provide a deeper understanding of a technique or skill through these practical examples.

Alex: control versus letting go

The following case illustrates, step by step, the subtle movements in the energetics of the facilitation process. The case exemplifies an average Voice Dialogue session and will be described in detail to demonstrate the energetic principles in process.

About Alex

As part of one of my ongoing training groups, I had the following session with Alex, 45, coordinator of a juvenile reform boarding school. His job includes both coordinating treatment programs and the financial management of the center.

Feeling sluggish both at work and privately, he comes into my group to do transformative work for himself.

Finding the right place and turning focus inward

Before this particular session, one of my co-workers explained to Alex the principles and methods of Voice Dialogue. So, in addition to Alex, some of my trainees attend the session with permission.

In the session, I first take some time to find the right place for our work; we then sit down opposite each other. Because Alex has a rather strong energy field, I ask some of the trainees present to sit a little further away so that we have enough space to work together. Once I feel we are in the right place and at the right distance from each other, I ask Alex to take the time to turn his attention inward, to the point on which he wants to work. While he is doing this, I take the time to center and detach myself from my own thoughts. From this pure center, I open myself to the energies from above and visualize my connection to the center of the earth. Thus, centered and anchored between heaven and earth, I am aware of my own energy fields and chakras and feel them begin to resonate with Alex's.

Since the circulation of vital energy through the energy fields and physical body is strongly connected to the breathing function, our breathing patterns were also aligned when our energy fields resonated in unison. With this alignment, I perceived that we were part of a larger energy field that resonated in unison. As a facilitator, I was receptive and followed the movements in his energy system in order to scan the state of his energies. What was evident to me in this phase, was the strong activity in Alex's head area and sixth chakra. I also noticed that his lower chakras were relatively closed in comparison to the higher ones.

Initial questions and shifts in energy

I ask Alex if there is an area in his life that he would like to learn more about. He talks about his work and says he often feels tired and drained. As we

discuss his work situation, it seems clear to me that the predominant energy in Alex - the energy with which he most identifies - is the energy of a very Rational Controller. Therefore, I propose to enter into conversation with this energy pattern. Alex agrees, shifts his chair about a meter to the right and finds a spot that seems to fit the energy pattern.

I now further open up to the energy of his Rational Controller. Its main center is the head and sixth chakra. As I tune into it even more finely, I allow my corresponding self to emerge and immerse myself in it. I move my other energy patterns into the background, without letting go of my Awareness, knowing that they will inform me of possible shifts in energy when necessary. The process of bringing my own corresponding energy pattern to the surface works its way into my posture: I sit more upright, with increasing tension in my upper body, especially at the top of my chest, neck and shoulders. I signal a concentration of energy in my forehead and increasing activity in my sixth chakra. I sense that my corresponding energy pattern has to do with structure and keeping an overview of my own pursuits. The entire maneuver, tuning in and immersion, takes no more than a few moments.

Getting to know and stretching the Rational Controller

While talking with Alex's Rational Controller, I make sure that my corresponding energy pattern remains present during the conversation. I ask the Rational Controller what he is doing in Alex's life. Because the energy pattern feels welcomed by my induction, it readily manifests. It describes itself as a Controller who takes on the task of taking care of Alex's affairs and bringing structure into his life. It says it is present much of the time. The energy pattern is decisive and clear, and seems to do a lot for Alex. I ask many specific questions about his way of doing things and, as a result, get a lot of valuable information to surface for the level of Awareness, which can later be

processed and absorbed by the Aware Ego. I also explore the depth and extent of the energy pattern by stretching it, as it were, i.e. inducing it to fully crystallize through induction. Firstly, I examine how the Rational Controller works for Alex in his personal life. He appears to make daily lists for Alex, for example of letters Alex needs to write or errands he needs to run. He is also concerned with the long-term planning of Alex's career and his development. When I check how he is present in Alex's work situation, we arrive at a deeper layer of the energy pattern. Through the principle of resonance, I observe that his sixth chakra is now radiating more strongly and that his energy fields have expanded. The Rational Controller explains that he is present in Alex's work situation to provide the overall structure of the organization. He appears to carry a large, archetypal energy. He says he monitors all developments in the organization, such as the performance of many staff members and the state of parts of the organization that he wants to manipulate and meld together. He states that he possesses an intuitive ability for detecting problems in the different layers of the organization.

Meanwhile, there has been a slight shift in the energy, but it is still the same energy pattern. It is "stretched out". I made contact with its core, which I recognize as an apollonian archetype. After a few minutes of rather abstract conversation about the nature of reality, a clear shift occurs in the energy. Using resonance, I feel this energy diminish and become aware of a place on the other side of Alex that seems to attract his energies. I now consider whether the Rational Controller wants to add anything more and then suggest that Alex move to that spot to see who is there.

Getting to know the opposite pole

Alex moves to a place to the left of the place of the ego. As soon as he does, his energies change completely. It is as if he feels gravity for the first time.

His head, neck and shoulders relax and he begins to breathe deeply and slowly.

I allow the initial energy pattern in me to dissipate through visualization and become empty and receptive. As I open myself to the new self manifesting, I experience a total reversal of energy. I perceive the physical center of the new self in the lower abdomen. The lower chakras begin to open. I gently lower myself into my own corresponding energy to further induce Alex into his.

We say nothing for a while. The energy pattern seems terribly tired and takes time to relax. It is the absolute opposite of the earlier self. When I let my own corresponding self emerge, it was absolutely irrational. This subpersonality does not care a bit about structure. From this own space I greet the new self with only a: "Hi!" It raises its left hand and answers my greeting with a deep hum. It seems very tired and heavy. Gradually, sitting there and surrounded by this energy, it begins to speak. The voice is an octave lower however, and the words come slowly from its belly. Although this self is tired, I feel its tremendous power. It says something like, "Jesus Christ, this guy is crazy. Please ... I'm sick of it, of this whole filthy mess."

I take all the time I need. I choose to just be with this self and let it feel its own energy. Then it begins to gain some energy and is able to speak more. It says it's horrified by structures and doesn't give a damn about Alex's work. It just wants to exist and hang out. When I ask further, this subpersonality tells me it likes to be with "the guys" and have fun. At one point I sense a more sexual energy rising and I ask what it thinks of women. It grins diabolically, like Jack Nicholson might, and the self becomes very much alive. It tells me more about what it would like to do, if given the chance.

The conversation with this self releases more and more energy, and a strong field of instinctive energy emerges in the room. We stay in this energy for a while. The essence of this self, as revealed in its own way, consists of a very basic energetic vibration, which refuses to be structured in any way.

Introduction to another subpersonality

Once the energy has crystallized in Alex's body and in his energy fields, I detect another shift. The first thing I feel is a different vibration in my heart chakra. When I tune into Alex's heart chakra, I feel that it has opened up more. The instinctive energy seems to fade a bit and I ask Alex to shift a bit more to the left, where I first felt the new pattern. The energy rising now has a very strong quality of the heart. As I resonate with it, I experience a warm, deep feeling in my heart region. The energy I feel vibrating is of a wise, feminine quality. I call upon my own corresponding energy to further induce the self that is now manifesting within Alex.

Alex's posture has changed: he is sitting in a very relaxed position, legs crossed and looking at me. As we begin to talk, the self describes herself as an elegant woman. She says she loves sitting on a terrace with a glass of wine, just people-watching. This is the bearer of the sensitive side of Alex. She is very refined. The voice is soft and low. She says she can make deep contact with the essence of people. She has no higher ambitions, in the sense of achieving things in life. She loves being there and would like to be around more. She also has some advice for when Alex was at work. She says she would definitely help him if he gave her more space. This self has an invigorating, healing energy. This energy pattern feels very integrated and harmonious. I now experience these qualities not only in my heart chakra, but in my entire energy field and body. When we have discussed what she values, I suggest returning to the place of the ego, to which she agrees.

Returning to the Aware Ego

We have been working for a total of one hour. Once we are back at the place of the Aware Ego, both Alex and I feel it is time to finish the session. Once he is at the place of Awareness, I summarize the session and pay special attention to the energetic shifts that have occurred, so that he can begin to perceive and relive them from this perspective. Once back at the place of the Aware Ego, we discuss the session and, after I am satisfied that he feels balanced, we conclude the session.

Reflection

This session clearly reflects the natural process that occurs when one fully explores energy patterns. Once one pattern is fully "stretched" with the help of an energetically sensitive facilitator, the energy will flow through to the other side of the polarity. In other words, once Alex's Rational Controller was given space, the instinctive energy manifested. After this came another opposite polarity of a very different nature. By using energetic work to follow and stimulate this organic flow, Alex was able to restore his balance and gain vitality.

The session proves to be a major breakthrough for Alex; it helps him find a new balance in his life. It causes him to stop identifying solely and unilaterally with his Rational Controller. He has now been introduced to his instinctive, "demonic" side AND he has allowed the wise, feminine side to return to him. Thanks to this encounter alone, an important and irreversible inner healing process takes place.

Claire: the liberation of the green monster

The next session began with a specific area of concern because the client had a physical symptom. By energetically tuning into the physical problem, things came to a dramatic climax during the session.

About Claire

A young woman, Claire, who is a dancer by profession, had reached out to me. She had had an strained feeling in her chest for some time that was hindering her in her work and she wanted me to do some energetic work with her.

Focusing

We sat across from each other and I asked her to focus her attention on her chest and keep breathing calmly. As I opened my energy fields to Claire and tuned into the area of her chest, I felt our energy flows resonating. As I scanned, I noticed a lot of tension. She breathed in and out slowly for a while around that area of tension and I resonated with her energies, working from my heart chakra. The intensity of her energetic experience intensified.

Face to face with the green monster

Suddenly, a kind of energy surge occurred that shook her entire body, releasing emotions. She began to cry. I asked what had happened. With a shocked expression on her face, she said she had seen a terribly ugly, twisted, green face, the same face that had been chasing her for the past two years during recurring nightmares. I asked if she could keep her attention on her chest and at the same time let that monstrous green face be present. I asked if I could speak to the green face. Claire said she was willing to try. I asked her to shift her chair. When she did so, I opened myself up to this unique energetic vibration. She felt a mixture of anger and deadly fear, and I felt a

strong pressure in my chest. Once I was on the same wavelength as the energy and resonating with the green monster, I held onto the energy to induce her more deeply into the experience. It was not necessary for me to give into my anger to hold the energy, but rather to feel my corresponding "power."

The green face appeared to want to talk to me. It appeared to be angry with Claire and did not want her to dance. When I asked why not, it leaped through time. We were in the Middle Ages. Several jolts of energy passed through Claire's body- she was now in a deep trance, but she could continue to talk. The green monster described the images it saw. Claire was a woman who lived in the woods and worked with herbs. She loved dancing and singing outdoors, expressing her deep sense of harmony and connection. In between bursts of energy that passed through her body like surges of electricity, the monster told me that she had been captured by the Inquisition, horribly tortured and burned at the stake. As Claire went through this, I was empathically with her to support her. Once the green face had told me this story, Claire experienced a powerful release of many emotions for about another ten minutes.

Shift in energy

At this point, I experienced a shift in energy. The green face had changed, the energy felt softer. We stayed in this new space for about fifteen minutes: just being in the energy. It felt very harmonious. Gentle waves of energy seemed to pass through her. After a while, when I asked if she perceived an image corresponding to this energy, her voice sounded soft and deep. She described herself as a young woman in white. I myself experienced a very light and warm feeling in my chest and my heart chakra.

I then asked how her chest felt now. It felt warm and light. I asked if she wanted to dance in this space. She stood up and began to move slowly, gracefully and fluidly through the studio.

The green monster had transformed. Claire radiated the ethereal energy of an archetypal high priestess. She danced for about fifteen minutes. We ended the session.

After this session, her nightmare did not return and her career on stage changed for the better.

Reflection

The transformation described here occurred due to the energetic principles of Voice Dialogue. I went along with the green monster, not because I wanted to change it, but solely to get to know it.

When we experience the deeper layers of energy patterns, remarkable things happen that cannot be predicted or anticipated. It is the interaction of the full energetic experience - at the hand of an energetically minded facilitator - with the conscious perception of Consciousness that brings about such transformations.

Martha: the importance of breathing

The next session illustrates that contact with the body is essential, both for the client and the facilitator.

About Martha

Martha has a good job at an airline. She has decided to enter a coaching program because she notices that co-workers do not like to chat with her; they seem to shy away from her. She wants to closely examine her way of communicating and figure out why it is that others do not readily seek her out or confide in her.

Making contact

As Martha relates all this, I notice that I am slowly starting to get a headache. As I consciously resonate I notice that I don't feel any connection with Martha and wonder how this is possible. I also feel a tightness in my chest area, as if I am short of breath. I ask myself: what do I need to really connect with Martha? Then it really hits me: Martha is not breathing! Many words flow out of her mouth, she seems like one big head while she is trying to explain things. Meanwhile, where is her body? I decide to share this with Martha first and tell her: you're not breathing! Amazed, Martha stops her deluge of words. She doesn't understand at first- she doesn't know what I mean and doesn't know how to breathe.

Conscious breathing

I suggest to Martha that she be quiet for 10 minutes and just pay attention to her belly as she breathes in and out deeply. Meanwhile, I induce by consciously and audibly breathing in and out. It helps. After 10 minutes, calm prevails and Martha can follow her breath. The next challenge I set for her is to continue talking but only if she breathes while doing so. This is a difficult

task for Martha. At first she succeeds by saying something, then breathing, then saying something again et cetera, until she gets the hang of it and can combine the two actions.

Communicating from the mind and communicating with the body and the breath

I discuss with Martha what we just experienced. While doing this, Martha felt the difference between communicating with and from her mind, and communicating with the body and the breath. You could say that the former corresponds to a Thinker subpersonality within her, the latter to the Body. I chose a very basic entry point. The starting point is that there actually cannot be any contact at all between people if the body as a whole is not also involved. When you start paying attention, all too often you hear people who just talk nonstop, without a period or a comma. In Voice Dialogue lingo, 'the Head' ('the Mind') as a subpersonality takes over and conveys all the messages. This is very tiring for the receiving party and ultimately also for the person in question. Martha was unaware of this. Rigorously stopping talking brought her forcibly into a different state of being, without knowing what exactly was happening.

After this, she understands and feels that she has a choice: either communicate only with the Head or communicate while being in contact with her body. A resting point in her has arisen from which she can observe what she is doing, from which she can put a stop to the Head within herself. This creates space for herself and others and creates a liberating experience.

Reflection

Martha's question and approach show that at least two conditions must be met for a Voice Dialogue session to be successful: the client must feel contact with the body, and the facilitator must feel contact with the client. Through

the principle of resonance, the facilitator uses himself as a benchmark. If he cannot detect contact, it is important to take that signal seriously and find out what is lacking. This also means that we assume that the facilitator is in contact with his own energy and breath and has gained extensive knowledge and experience in directing his own subpersonalities with the corresponding energy.

It is not uncommon for the counselor to find that a client identifies with the Head, or the Thinker. Among other things, this may have something to do with the society we live in, in which it is considered normal to argue and talk a lot. Either way, this is a great opportunity, should this occur, to look at the balance between the Head and the rest of the body. If we examine the latter, we cannot help but arrive at one of the most essential parts of communication and of life: breathing!

Annette: in contact with the Field

This case description is an example of making contact with "the Field" as an energetic omnipresent dimension that can be invoked and experienced as helpful. This omnipresence can then be perceived as a source of strength and support.

About Annette

Annette is a 45-year-old woman whose relationship has just ended. Annette reports to the practice with despondency and thoughts of death. She indicates that she is not doing well emotionally after her relationship ended last summer. It troubles her that he has been able to continue with his life while she herself has become deeply despondent. At times, she even thinks about death. When these thoughts became more concrete, she decided to seek help. She is aware of her dependence on her ex-partner, and cannot stand the fact that he is able to continue with his life and she cannot.

Getting to know the desperate self

During this session, we reflect on the desperate self within Annette. She indicates that she wants to explore this.

We talk about her life history and whether she has experienced any despair previously in her life. Annette explains that this feeling is often associated with a dependence on others. She recognizes this in relation to when she moved into her room when she was studying in Leiden. She kept making up excuses to be home, especially around her mother. Looking back now, she also recognizes her dependency in her relationship with her ex-husband. Now that he is no longer responsive, she feels rejected. We decide to reflect on her tendency toward dependency, which repeatedly triggers feelings of abandonment and despair in her. We enter into a conversation with the

dependent self. I ask how long this self has been with Annette. She indicates that it has been with her from a very young age. I ask what the dependent self does for Annette. By stretching this self, we soon arrive at her feelings of abandonment. This is her abandoned Inner Child. Resonating with this abandoned self creates enough safety for the Hurt Child to come forth. A safe place is created for the abandoned self to be allowed to be completely present. It recounts that she was virtually invisible to her parents. "They don't see me at all." I resonate with it from my own Vulnerable Child. I see a large house with bare walls and empty rooms. A deep sadness arises in Annette.

Shifting energy through contact with the Vulnerable Child

I then ask her to suggest that she let the Fragile Child sit on her lap. An energy shift begins to occur; Annette indicates that she begins to feel more warmth. The energy of her vulnerability is softening and she is able to care for it. I help her strengthen this energy by inducing a pervasive energetic field. I feel a shift is taking place towards a powerful energy, and Annette indicates that she is beginning to experience it as a pervasive primal force.

Asking for assistance from the Field

I subsequently suggest to her that she ask this omnipresent primal energy, this Field, for help. Annette was not raised religiously but is open to this idea. With the child on her lap, we ask for help. At this point, I also invite her to go to the center position of the Aware Ego and from this center position make contact with the space around her. Then, from this contact with the space around her I ask her to make this space bigger and bigger, starting with the room, then the house, the surroundings and so on. This is also known as "space meditation. From this space or field exercise, Annette feels that she is connected to a larger field. I now invite her to return to the painful feelings

of the child. This succeeds and it empowers Annette to have confidence in connecting with her Inner Child who is in pain. Archetypal images emerge. She sees the image of "a little child in a wicker basket quietly bobbing on the water, right between the reeds. It has a belly full of warm milk, but is still so unhappy and afraid. It yearns for love and attention. Annette indicates that she is now more connected to her Vulnerable Child, and she succeeds in asking for help from her connection with the Field. Through resonance, a shift in energy is evident. Annette begins to radiate more power. She now experiences that she herself is able to take care of her Inner Child; she now experiences a deep inner peace and strength.

Annette manages to connect with the Field of her own accord. After asking for help, she was able to let go of the question and wait to see what would occur. This session proved to be a breakthrough and Annette is now able to consolidate the experience by making regular contact with the Field and cherishing her Inner Child.

Reflection

Issues like Annette's involve the existential level. When the counselor has to deal with this kind of issue, it is necessary to let go of the technical side of counseling and methodology and to sink to a deeper inner level of existentialism himself. Only from this level is it possible to meet the other person. Not so much from the perspective of the counselor-client relationship, but much more from an interpersonal type of connection. With these types of questions, I experience that it is possible to meet the other person on a deeper level. Of course, as a counselor you keep all your therapeutic skills at your disposal, but the connection you make is one on a deeper human level and not that of a therapist who looks at a client from a technical standpoint. Therapeutic skills are of aid to the counselor. For

example, they help keep track of the counselor's own triggers: at what point does the counselor begin to identify with a savior, or at what point is the counselor tempted to overcompensate by working extremely hard? Because the facilitator keeps himself "pure" as it were, this allows him to remain conscious of what is actually going on without too much personal projection or transference.

In working with existential issues, three major dynamics can be recognized:

1. the client becomes comfortable with the facilitator, 2. the client makes contact with her Inner Child and learns to care for it, and 3. for the big issue, the client invokes the help of the Field. By doing the latter, as you see in this example, Annette acknowledges her own insignificance. She shares that she is incapable of solving this. As a facilitator, I encourage Annette to do this. The concept of the zero-point energy field, or Field for short, comes from quantum physics (subatomic physics) and quantum mechanics (Albert Einstein, Niels Bohr, David Bohm being experts in this field, among others). It has become more widely known through the publications of science journalist Lynne McTaggart.¹⁵ As far as I am concerned, the Field symbolizes something larger than the individual. For some it is God, for others the Inner Knowledge, still others talk about the Transpersonal, about quantum consciousness, et cetera.

The question of whether or not the Field really exists is irrelevant. So is the question of whether it is an entity inside or outside yourself. That is like asking for proof that God does or does not exist. This method is not scientifically tested, but rather empirically established. Invoking help from the Field is effective. Two aspects seem essential in this regard: 1. is there contact with the Hurt Child? and 2. There must be a real "request for help."

Is the client in a position where they have the Hurt Child in their lap, so to speak? Without acknowledgement of one's own vulnerability and the intention to attend to this vulnerability, contact with the Field is difficult. Again, Hal and Sidra Stone's statement holds true: The Vulnerable Child is the window to the soul. Thus, there needs to be a genuine "request for help." This asking should be done with conviction, "like a child. It requires a form of surrender, opening up and becoming receptive to the workings of the Field."

From my experience, the 'working with the Field' approach seems to work well, especially when dealing with issues such as grief and deep pain resulting from traumatic experiences. By bringing someone with existential pain into contact with the Field, real and lasting 'healing' can be achieved.

James: an exercise in personal and impersonal energy

This session perfectly illustrates working with a polarity.

About James

James is an executive at a large company. One of his tasks is to chair the meetings of the work council, but lately this has been going rather rigidly. James is rather rational and businesslike; put another way, you could say that he is somewhat disconnected from his feelings. This brings him into conflict with several women on the work council, who have a more complete style of communication. The rigidity sometimes even escalates into conflict when more emotional topics are on the agenda. James cannot cope with this, but he realizes that he needs to seek help.

In touch with the rational thinker

When we sit across from each other, I notice his rational nature when it comes to thinking and acting. He literally states that he doesn't really know any kind of attitude than a detached, matter-of-fact one.

It's time to get to work, because transformation happens through experience and not analysis. He's already an expert in analysis. I ask him to move a little to the left to fully embody the Rational Thinker. This takes little effort on his part. He explains that he is able to map out the best conceivable strategy for a meeting during the time that most people take to tie their shoelaces. He pulls the best, most rational plans out of his sleeve while standing in the elevator, and loves coming up with practical solutions to problems.

He accomplishes a lot by doing this, and is deeply appreciated by some colleagues for his creative intelligence. But when emotions get involved, as they sometimes do in a work environment, he wants to get rid of them in the

same decisive way. As a result, people not only get angry with him, but also feel some fear.

After the Rational Thinker has been speaking for half an hour, I notice that I begin to resonate differently. The subpersonality starts to get tired and the energy decreases; James also notices this within himself.

Back to the middle

I then ask him to go back to the place he first occupied and to silently bring his attention to his body. James mentions that his tension is dropping and that it is a little calmer in his current position. Together we explore whether he is at all familiar with this more relaxed side in himself that doesn't need anything. It turns out that this is the case.

In contact with his sensitive side

Now James can move a little to the right and empathize more with the person who lies on the couch at home at night. When in conversation with this energy, it becomes clear that this is someone who loves a drink while listening to music. Bach can move him to tears; during these moments, he is able to forget the world around him as well. He has a gentle expression on his face as he talks about it. I think to myself, "This is a sensitive person."

Back to the middle again

After fifteen minutes, the story of this subpersonality seems to have been sufficiently told, and I invite James to return to the starting position. He once again examines how he feels now, after his brief visit to the position to his right. Again, he notes that he senses peace and a feeling of space. It is a crucial moment. After all, who is actually sitting in his chair? It is no longer the rational person, nor the gentle quiet one. Here sits a James who is becoming

aware for the first time that he has always thought - wrongly - that he was exclusively a Rational Thinker.

He doesn't feel this way for no reason; his father also lived this way. However, he now feels personally that he is more "James" than he had always thought. Rationality is only one side of him. He is also quiet and sensitive. In fact, at the end of the experiment, a new man is born. There is a James who no longer automatically co-exists with his cognition. He understands that reason was his survival strategy for a long time. Now that he has an Aware Ego, he understands that he has at his disposal both a rational and a sensitive side.

I conclude the experiment by teaching James in the newly established free position that he is the one who is in control. He can act from the rational self (with all its qualities and pitfalls) and he can act from the relaxed and more sensitive side (to which the same applies). I briefly practice with him how he can turn both sensations on and off from the middle position of the Aware Ego, and because he is quick-witted, James immediately understands that he can also attune to these sensations. We decide that he will occasionally experiment with his newly rediscovered side in work council meetings.

Reflection, exploring and accepting subpersonalities

Let's see what process James is undergoing here. Where can we refer to moments of liberation? What does the Voice Dialogue facilitator do to enable the birth of the new James?

As illustrated in the story, I first ask James to explain his question. The place from which he does so we call the middle position. Shortly after comes the suggestion to move slightly to the left; from there we listen to all that the Rational Thinker has to say. James does not yet realize it, but this is an important moment because at this point the facilitator subtly begins to distinguish between James and "a self" of James.

From the beginning of a session, I begin to listen to the selves that dominate or undermine James's story. I pick out one self that seems to be calling the shots. Chances are it contributes to the problem being the way it is. In Jeff's case, the Rational Thinker causes clashes with colleagues in communication. With such a self, it is important to find out what role it plays in a person's life, for how long, in what way and why. The ultimate goal is to see and accept such a self completely in the context of the important role he fulfills for someone. His goal is for each Self to feel seen, heard and respected, until it feels saturated, making room for other selves.

This stretching naturally increases the pressure; the Rational Thinker in James becomes even more rational than it already was, so to speak. James still does not know that the facilitator is only talking to a self. After a while, the need for relaxation or rest may arise naturally.

Soon thereafter, the balance tips over to the other side. This is the yin-yang principle. A subpersonality is never alone; it always lives with its own opposite in a polarity. So, opposite a Hard Worker you will always find an Enjoyer or a Lazy One. Opposite an Egomaniac, you will always find a Collaborator or a Compassionate Client, although sometimes you have to look carefully in someone's personality because it may have been hidden away for decades. Deploying one self too often is not effective; it creates an imbalance. Tension rises, sometimes within a person, sometimes with the outside world. By magnifying the polarity and its associated tension in a session, we learn more about how it works.

At a certain point, it is also noticeable that James' Rational Thinker is talked out and another more peaceful and sensitive side emerges naturally. This self is questioned in the same way. In a playful way, James has explored two subpersonalities. At the same time, he experienced that, because the

subpersonalities were allowed to be completely there, acceptance grew for who he is, and for who else he could potentially be. This initially has a liberating effect, often indicated by the words such as 'calmer' and 'more spacious'.

Creating Space for the Aware Ego

After two short trips to the left and right, James returns to his middle position and reflects on what has happened. It is the counselor's job above all to make the distinction with the client between this middle position, the Aware Ego, and the positions of the various subpersonalities being explored. Indeed, it is at this very moment that clients learn not to fall into any one subpersonality, especially the dominant one with which they are already so familiar.

That is why it is this middle position to which James is repeatedly asked to return. From this place he eventually learns to take the reins himself. It no longer happens to him, he is able to make a free choice which allows him to think and act consciously.

In the position of the Aware Ego, he learns that there are different states of mind within him and he discovers on the spot that each of these states of mind just took place in a different place in the space. He has, in this way, gained insight into his selves so that he is able to consciously take control of them.

We regularly come across the metaphor of the driver on the bus. The driver is the one who learns to recognize who is sitting in which seat on his bus, and who realizes what effect that has on the journey of his life. James as a driver realizes that there is quite a difference between allowing the sensitive self to drive the bus and banishing him to the back seat. Moreover, he now perceives what his life is like now due to the fact that he lets the Rational Thinker steer so often. This has taken him a long way, but he runs into problems for a

reason. The moment James is able to put this self in the passenger seat, he also creates free space for himself. It is exactly this movement that allows a new James, with more freedom of choice than before, to be born. This allows him to better open up to whatever presents itself, and to no longer feel the need to follow fixed patterns of thought and action.