The no conclusion intervention for couples in conflict

Dialogical conference Leuven

March 8 2013

Lieven Migerode


lieven.migerode@uzleuven.be
How do I participate in the impasse
Looking in the mirror, feel.
Own changes, risk taking.

Validating (of risk taking)
Falling and getting up

Speaking and listening

Validating (of risk taking)
Falling and getting up

Looking in the mirror, feel.
Own changes, risk taking.

Speaking and listening

Love/Bonding over difference
Love/growth

Figure 7
• Love is at the core of couples
• Couples are constituted in dialogue
• You are always different/unique
• When stuck couples get dua=logical
  – Twice monological
  – Seemingly devide tensions over the partners
• One hour time: lets get do-a-logical
• We can only see well with the heart. The essence is invisible for the eyes. (The little prince, de Saint Exupéry, 1943,.)
Give opposing force

Knowing and Mystery
- ...

Stability and Change
- growth...

Autonomy and Bonding
- ...

How to visualise opposing forces?

- closeness
- distance

Lieven Migerode, Context UZLeuven, IFTA
march 2011.
No conclusion intervention exercise:

Step 1
• Both partners, separately,
• name down two areas of difference that lead to conflict.

Step 2
• Separately, qualify the conflicting differences either as trivial or important
  • Important = touching on ‘who you are’
  • Important = touching on ‘who your are as a couple’
  • Important = touching on ‘how the world is’
  • Trivial = neither of the above applies.

Step 3
• Exchange the areas of difference
• Ask question to understand what is named
• Qualify the areas your partner chose
• Four kinds of differences ensue: Trivial-Trivial; trivial-Important; Important-Trivial, Important-Important

Lieven Migerode, Context UZLeuven, IFTA
march 2011.
Trivial-Trivial
Take 5’ time
Solve it!
Use cultural methods
Life is too short

No conclusion intervention
Migerode

Important–Trivial
Decide not to come to a conclusion
Make ample time.
Explain Trivial/
Listen as good as you can, show understanding
Explain Important,
Listen as good as you can, show understanding
Put aside
Let it Rise.
Start all over

Important-Important
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Cultureel geleerde ‘oplossingen’.
Therapist actions

• Help partners to make choices
• Help partners to stay with choices
• Help partners to stick to outline
• Help partners to change their choices if necessary
• Help partners to show what they understand
• Ask: Is there more you want to explain?
• Ask: Is there more you want to know?
Figure 6
Love absent in MFT.

- Love is a noun and a verb, a thing and an action, a concept and an organized set of behavior, and a subject that clinicians generally avoid (Levine, 2007)
- Love is rarely directly addressed in couple therapy and investigated in couple research (Riehl-Emde, e.a. 2003)
- Love about which is relatively little written in couple family therapy literature (Grunebaum, 1997)
- In general psychotherapist have a conflicting relationship to love (Willi, 1997)
- The lack of attention in the marriage therapy literature to romantic love and sexual attraction (Roberts, 1992)

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Love important for couples

- Former spouses name ‘the death of love’ as primary cause of divorce (Gigy en Kelly, 1992, Kayser, 1993; In Berscheid 2010, p 6)
- Love matters not only because it can make our lives better but also because it is a major source of misery and pain and can make life worse (Reis & Aron, 2008).
- A love relationship has become the central emotional relationship in most people’s lives (Johnson, 2008).
- The couples assessment of their love was the first and foremost variable for predicting whether a couple belonged to the group with high or low level well being= a greater degree of love was associated with a greater well being (Riehl-Emde, 2003).
- Being in love seems to be me of greater importance for the prognosis of marriage the marriage happiness and satisfaction (Willi, 1997).
- The most frequent reason for both marriage and divorce is love and the loss of love (Scoresby, 1977 in Roberts, 1992).

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Do we know what love is?

- Because out of the millions, trillions, perhaps even centillions of sentences written about love, very few can stand alone and still strike us as “true”. One of those few is “Love is a word”. (Bersheid, 1995)

- Love is synthetic rather than analytic. (Sternberg, 1998)

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Can we then talk about love in therapy?

• “.Despite the fact that love is one of the most polysemous words in English language, people generally know what the person using the word is trying to communicate.” (Bersheid & Meyers, 1996, p.171).

• Theoretically we find support for this in the work of Fehr & Russel (1991). They propose that love is one of those concepts that can best be understood in a prototypical way. People ‘know’ if an experience matches a concept through its resemblance with a model, a prototype. (Migerode & Hooghe, in press).

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