Family constellations

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From book one:

Put simply, family constellations is a highly effective method for finding and healing skeletons in the family cupboard. The form is a workshop, led by a facilitator who guides the person seeking to resolve a family issue to set up a 'constellation'. In the constellation workshop, participants stand in for ('represent') members of the clients family (those which the client thinks are possibly relevant to the issue). The client and facilitator together position them physically in the seminar room, so that a dynamic picture of relationships within the family is made visible. The impressive thing is, that each representative feels the emotions of the family member they are representing. The facilitator asks the representatives how they feel, and depending on that makes suggestions of where one of them could move to, to see what effects the change of position has. In the course of such iterations, generally the cause of the clients issue becomes clear. I've taken part in many constellations, and I can assure you that they work[1]. They work for practically all representatives, in the sense that they have clear feelings of the (often deceased) family member they represent, and also for the client, who gets a clear insight into the cause. Even better, by moving the representatives into new positions (or e.g. giving them a cushion to hold to represent a stillborn child) the situation can be healed.

A special sort of Perception Key is at work here – the genetic or marital relationship, which is always there, always active, mostly at a subconscious level. The initial role of PTST in the Constellation seems obvious: The representatives are positioned in a constellation mirroring the clients situation. Each representatives' position is a perception key to the family member they represent. Sometimes they don't even know who (or what) they are representing, but still it works. So it seems that the geometry of the family relationships is enough to provide the connection; or possibly the knowledge of the client and the facilitator are providing enough orientation for all the representatives.

Where it gets interesting is how the healing of the situation works. The representatives get moved around, missing elements get found and represented, the facilitator works to find a better constellation where old conflicts, fears and sadnesses get resolved... And this all has a really tangible effect on the original situation. At the least, it offers new mental and emotional insights to the client, but often it has a healing effect, or makes it easier for the client to heal their situation. Things come to be at peace, even such as were in the past, involving now deceased family members.

At this juncture I'm reminded of the technique called history changing in NLP. This technique helps you use your current awareness and resourceful state to change your state in the past.

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1 There's an exceedingly biased article on constellations in Wikipedia, which spends half its words telling you, or implying, that it's all humbug. The linked articles suggest that Wikipedia is actively suppressing anything to do with ESP. The ensuing description of the method, at least, is correct.

For example, if a mother is sad that she did not support her child enough, or understand their needs, then she can go back in meditation and revisit and rewrite such episodes, such that the child got the support they needed. As strange as it may seem, yes, it may not have been true *then*, but it is true *now* – and this new truth really has an effect. In the example given, the estranged child may voluntarily come back into contact with the mother.

PTST would even provide a feedback possibility from the now to then. I don't mean to physically change what actually happened, but how we perceive/d it, how we feel/felt about it.

From book three:

Looking out from our individual organisms, the next level we see is that of family. Quite apart from the genetic relationship, and the way parents pass on their beliefs and world views to their children in the conventional way, there's more. If you haven't yet experienced 'Family Constellations' (as discovered by the German psychologist Bert Hellinger) then I highly recommend taking part in a few. I wrote a bit about them in book one. It's not difficult to find out more, and where you can participate, on the internet. The descriptions on the internet sound in general a little bit mechanistic. But when you are actually there, standing as a representative e.g. for someone's deceased grandfather, you'll notice that a *lot* more information comes through than can be explained in conventional terms.

The fact of being related to our forebears, sharing even a lot of their DNA, is a special sort of Perception Key. Unlike objects which you can take in your hand and put down again, or places which you can visit and leave, this key is always with you, as a part of your organism. So any unresolved events, such as a suicide, miscarriage or stillbirth, or an injury or fatality on a battlefield, are projected from the past onto current members of the family. In the case of relations without genetic links, e.g. wife and husband, the intense, special relationship serves as the key, albeit a weaker one.

The unresolved events and patterns which are uncovered in Constellations exist within the foundational level, and emanate along family / relational threads until they are embraced and resolved. The representatives in the constellation notice them because they are literally, and voluntarily, standing in for one of the forebears or relations, in a situation specifically designed to focus attention on these unresolved topics.