

Comments on a Couple Therapy

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Abstract

Couples therapies are highly individual processes that are always different. It is necessary to understand the interaction and the interactions between the two partners. The therapeutic tasks in couples therapy are diverse and delicate at the same time: diagnostic tasks as well as help/information on how the relationship can be rescued or improved are part of it. It is ideal if the partner and the partner manage to improve their own knowledge of human nature and to increase the insight into their own „lifestyle“ (Adler).

Keywords: Couple Therapy; Features of the Couple Therapist; Interactions; „Lifestyle Analysis“; Trust Relationship

Couple therapies and their meaning

Partnership coexistence - especially if the quality of relationships is experienced positively - has a beneficial influence on health and well-being ([1], p. 447). Loneliness on the other hand makes you sick. The end of a partnership is often one of the most burdensome events people can experience. Not in vain did Holme and Rahe [2] classify widowhood and divorce as the two most critical life events in their classical work on the ranking of stressful life events. The court psychiatrist Reinhard Haller ([3], p. 155) describes partnerships as „the crippling battlefield par excellence“.

These relationships are today aware of many people. The longing of many people for a stable partnership is correspondingly large, but that does not mean that they would live their whole lives in stable partnerships. On the contrary, in many industrialized countries, divorces have increased in recent years. And the couples who stay together often complain that they are dissatisfied with their relationships. Accordingly, the last couple of years couples therapists and couples therapists are requested to find ways out of these dilemmas. How can these look? What therapeutic support options for couples or people with difficulties in relationships exist? The answers to these two questions are different depending on the theoretical orientation; behavioral, systemic, psychotherapeutic and analytical approaches set their own accents.

From an individual psychological point of view, couples therapies are highly individual processes that are always different. Sometimes they help the two people to stay together as a couple, sometimes they do not succeed. What does this depend on? Starting from a case study, such and further questions on diagnostics and

Interventions in couples therapies are discussed below.

The couple therapy with Mrs. Z. and Mr. W

Registration for Couple Therapy by Mr. W

Mr. W. asks by e-mail for a couple therapy. He and his partner, Ms. Z, both in their mid-thirties, were willing to seek professional help because their conversations would repeatedly turn into quarrels and mutual accusations. The desire for professional help had been

activated by an infidelity of his partner, otherwise he would see no chance to save their relationship. He speaks of a last chance he wants to give to their two-year relationship.

First meeting three weeks later with Mrs. Z. and Mr. W

Because Mr. W. has made contact with me in writing and has arranged the first appointment, he begins the conversation and immediately takes up the subject of „Affair“. His partner was not loyal to him. For several evenings she could not or would not give any information about what she had done. These were always calls, without anyone had reported on the phone. After all, she participated in chat rooms without informing him. Here, Ms. Z. intervenes and begins to defend herself, these have not been serious dialogues on the Net. She explains that she wants a relationship with him, he also affirms that.

I am firmly committed to this step because the motivation of the two sides is very important. When they both want the relationship, the situation is quite different than when only one half wants and the other is undecided. It becomes even more complicated when neither they nor he¹ explicitly want the relationship, but both hesitate or are only halfhearted.

I would like to point out that this couple, W. and Z., both want to continue the relationship in principle, in order to bring a glimmer of hope and encouragement into the conversation: maybe it's all right with us.

When couples - as will become clearer here sooner - have argued and fought over long periods of time, their belief in a common future often fades and they begin to doubt it. In terms of individual psychology, one could speak of a „discouragement“ of frequent and massive difficulties in the partnership. Such grueling phenomena in longer quarrels.

Mutual Criticism - John Gottman² ([4], p. 41) speaks in this context of „apocalyptic horsemen“ who can permanently ruin a relationship - are common and do not necessarily lead to separation. Crucial to the future of a couple is whether it can learn to resolve the disagreements amicably and in a benevolent-appreciative climate. To capture this point is very important to me: When couples learn to communicate with each other, apparently displaced situations can improve. If the two do not succeed in improving communication, the relationship must be certified as having a poor prognosis. For clarification, I summarized for the couple the so-called Gottman constant, which states that in good and satisfied relationships the ratio of positive to negative behavior must be at least 5: 1, whereby a negative communication can be compensated by five positive ones. At the same time, they receive a first orientation on how to improve or save their relationship. To identify opportunities for development and improvement I find important for couples therapies.

It is exciting to observe in a first meeting, whether already a violent argument ignites or whether the partner and the partner can listen without falling into the word. Ms. Z. and Mr. W. proved to be good communicators and listeners at the same time, so that I could compliment them on how objective and at the same time they were listening. That was a good starting point. I encourage their mutual listening and try to create a benevolent atmosphere. In principle, it would have been possible to take sides with Mr W. and give more weight to his allegations of breach of trust. This danger of premature action should be avoided at all costs. For the time being I interpreted his reproaches to her address as an indication of his suffering. When people suffer from partnerships, it is hard to prevent them from seeing the source of their suffering in the partner, in which their eyes are directed above all on their weaknesses and vices. They then design a colored, clouded image of the other. In terms of individual psychology, „tendentious apperception“ ([5], p. 33) takes the upper hand. The greater this and the underlying sense of inferiority, the more violent the accusations against the partner, the partner can turn

¹In this article, I am talking about relationships between women and men, without connecting a normative idea. With relationships man-man or woman-woman I have less experience.

²John Gottman is an American psychologist and professor emeritus of psychology at the University of Washington. He became known above all for his work on marital stability and relationship analysis.

out. Considering such hypothetical relationships is very important in the initial phase of any couples therapy: quarrels and unilateral attributions to the other side are frequent and must not be taken one to one as truths, nor may they be interpreted as diagnostic evidence of the futility of the relationship in question. On closer inspection it often turns out that behind accusations the hidden desire comes to the fore: „Love me again as at the beginning, when we met each other!“ How strong this desire is on both sides, is important for the further course of the couple therapy. Here, as it were, the capital for the future rests. In some relationships it is almost or completely exhausted, approximately according to the motto „dispute and reproaches have eaten capital“. Despite some visible and audible conflicts, there is still a desire to return to the good times of being in love for the first time. Then the chances for the success of the partnership are intact, if the mutual understanding for the partner and the partner can grow again and new ways of dealing with each other can be found. This implies important tasks of the couple therapist, the couple therapist, tasks which, however, take time.

In a first interview, for example, it is hardly possible to clarify with a couple an infidelity or an infidelity problem „. This requires more time and a deepening of the trust relationship. This succeeds only if both sides feel that their concerns are taken seriously, without premature blame. Or, as Adler put it: „A permanent influence on a person who is wronged is excluded. One will then best be able to influence him when the other is put in the mood in which he feels his own right is guaranteed“ ([6], p. 67).

In couples therapy it is especially important and sometimes a delicate thing that both sides feel their own „right as guaranteed“. Every statement made by the therapist runs the risk of being perceived as a preference, disadvantage or criticism.

For Mrs Z. and Mr W., it would have been too tricky to focus on the delicate issue of loyalty and breach of trust in the initial interview. Rather, it was important for me to keep a certain overview of the relationship, where the problems are, and where Ms. Z. and Mr. W. are satisfied. The question of the positive aspects of the partnership is important for two reasons. First, it gives us a more systematic, balanced, and diagnostically insightful picture of a relationship, and what strengths it has. These are often forgotten when arguments and conflicts have come to the fore.

Secondly, bright spots in a partnership can bring in a new dynamic in couples therapy talks, „resource orientation“ or „more of the good“ would be suitable keywords here.

With regard to Ms. Z. and Mr. W., the two-sided desire for improvement and continuation was to be noted in a positive respect, to which both expressed the fact that they would actually like the partner, if it were not for these constant arguments... Mathematically speaking These negative interactions are far more prevalent, as shown by sexuality: sexually, he wants more, twice a month he is not enough. Mr. W. expressed his dissatisfaction in this regard. She gets on the defensive and admits to sometimes having trouble getting involved, even if her workday was severe. The topic of „sexuality“ is thus on the agenda.

There are also open questions with regard to the holiday arrangement: she wants to be able to travel here and there with friends on holiday, he is strictly against it. From the tone of his objection speaks a certain relentlessness, which could make future unification processes more difficult. I throw - thinking out loud - the thought in the round, that at the moment on this brittle ice such holidays probably are not in it, they would burden the tense situation. Looking to her, I say, a momentary abandonment of holidays without the partner is like a confidence-building measure. Deferred was not lifted. At the moment, confidence-building measures are very important.

For myself, I think that it will be difficult in the long run, if sir.

His partner alone makes holidays completely forbidden. To go on holiday alone is no longer something special, because tour operators are increasingly reporting on this need for individual travel, even for people in a relationship. Another open discussion point is concert and event visits. He prefers modern light music, she prefers classical music. For Mr. W., a certain balance of visits is important, while Ms. Z. sees fewer problems here.

This concludes the first couple therapy talk. I point out the need to clarify such open questions so that misunderstandings and conflicts do not constantly shake the relationship. No relationship endures constant conflicts with no chance of improvement.

The two would like a second couple talk quickly, it could reflect the reawakening hope to make it as a couple yet. So, we set as a preliminary setting the tripartite situation³.

Second conversation with three - one week later

The objective of the first interview, "to get a certain overall picture of the relationship where the problems lie" and where they are satisfied, I pursued in the second conversation by asking the respective requests to the other side.

His wishes to her began with the first conversation: she should keep to agreements, especially in terms of loyalty. He wants to be first and not one of several men. This includes being publicly mentioned by her and referred to as a partner. Sexually, he expects more activity from her side, he wants to be loved and not get the "cold shoulder" in the evening.

Her wishes for him can be summarized with the motto „More understanding". He should not be so stubborn, especially as regards his "loyalty expectations". She wanted him and no other man or she would not be with him anymore. She was not so clear what he meant by "agreements". In an agreement, both partners agree. For her tiredness in the evening she could not do anything if she had had a hard day. With a working day of 10 or more hours - she works as a journalist - is it not possible for her to play the perfect lover in the evening.

She wants to keep her circle of colleagues and not to renounce previous friendships with women, which would occasionally include a week's holiday. Here you can feel that there is a line for her that she is not prepared to give up. It goes to their personal identity if they end old friendships or have to give up holidays. Occasional holidays with a good old friend would have been a matter of course for a long time.

When both sides voice their wishes and become louder and louder, the listener becomes aware of the implications of the compromise strategy. The ability to compromise in certain situations is vital to the survival of partnerships. When in conflicts one word gives the other, if sir W. insists on the need for „loyalty" and she insists on preserving her old friendships, the dispute threatens to escalate or end up making both feel frustrated. Confrontation and escalation are in this context false and dangerous strategies that are avoided by happy couples. Gottman ([4], p. 215) says to couples: „Whether you like it or not, the only solution to marital problems is compromise. In a personal, loving relationship, it is simply not possible for everything to go to your will, even if you are convinced that you are right. „ It makes more sense to find a compromise, a strategy that the couple urgently needed in the second conversation because they planned two weeks of vacation. Having two weeks for a long-term dispute was a dangerous prospect. At the end of the second interview I suggested that you proceed as follows:

1. They let their sensitive issues rest. These should not burden the holidays. These could be a chance to get closer, go on trips together, have time for sexuality. Both have interesting reading material to which they can devote themselves individually and then can tell.
2. They already know each other and their life stories and habits. She knows that he can experience frequent chatting against himself. But he also knows that as a journalist she has to get a lot of information and therefore relies on mails, chats, Twitter or surfing.

Everyone in the world today deals with communication technologies differently. Such biographical habits, the map of the other, the knowing and understanding the „life style" (eagle) of the partner is important to avoid being attacked. Habits have their origins, which is helpful to recognize.

Before going on these two weeks of vacation, it was important for me to address certain issues with her and with him in order to better sensitize her to the dangers of escalating in togetherness.

In the conversation so far, Ms. Z. had fallen on the defensive several times, having to react to allegations by her partner. So he wanted more sexuality than her and had expressed this criticism several times. I talked her about sexuality as she was doing. She said that her

³I do not exclude supplementary one-to-one interviews categorically, but they must be considered carefully.

job absorbed her so much that sometimes she could not switch off. Then they suffer from their willingness to engage sexually. He realized it had nothing to do with his attractiveness when she was tired in the evening or absorbed in journalistic work. She added that she was beautiful as ever, but then came under pressure to perform, if she could not bring what he expected of her.

The German sexologist Ahlers wrote: „Sexual relationships are usually affected by the fact that the partnership communication erodes. There is no longer talk about each other” ([7], p. 30).

This also happened to our couple. They no longer talked about what really occupied them at heart. He experienced his declining sexual activity against him, as evidence of his low sexual attractiveness, without having the real reasons for this development together in the conversation would have gone to the bottom. This was a good opportunity to talk about certain prerequisites for successful sexuality. Under pressure of achievement or expectation, nothing works in sexuality. The man is in some ways the weaker part, he has to provide intermediate services, that is, erections that cannot be controlled at will. But even in women, expectations or stress have a negative effect on sexual desire.

Furthermore, it was important to me in this second couple therapy talk to show him certain dangers of his behavior. His demands on her were sometimes difficult to meet or even unfulfillable. If, for example, he was strictly against the fact that she occasionally went on vacation with girlfriends, a certain relentlessness sounded from his words, which could make future unification processes more difficult. She was afraid of the question of her friends: „Why do not you come with us on vacation?” What should she have said then? That’s an order from my partner?

In this way I tried to arouse Mr. W.’s understanding of his partner’s situation, to make him more lenient towards her. She was an active journalist, with many professional contacts she did not want to miss. A closer look also showed that his contact circle was much smaller than yours, which is why a certain jealousy shimmered in his turn. I talked about that direction „Enlargement of the circle of contact”, assuming that this would make him less dependent on his partner. A greater dependency on his partner than on the other hand was already evident at this time, without this important question already being able to be clarified. He had three younger siblings, as Aeltester had been dethroned several times. Had this in his tracks Leave a „lifestyle” (Adler)? Was he a jealous elder? Or did he have specific, culturally conditioned ideas of „loyalty” that left little room for his partner? Or did both play together?

Does the couple therapy need a „lifestyle analysis” ([8], p. 80)?

Brigitte Titze speaks in the „Dictionary of Individual Psychology” of the „Lifestyle analysis” as the „core of individual psychology marriage therapy” (ibid.). Their goal is „to give the partners insight into the dynamics of their interaction resulting from their respective life plans” (ibid.). The question of the „lifestyle” ([9], p. 253ff) Arose in Mr. W., because it became apparent that he made his demands more and more uncompromising and demanding, thus creating a certain danger for the relationship. One hypothesis was jealousy in the context of the situation as the oldest boy, so a Enthronungs hypotheses, however, stood unchecked in the room. As far as Ms. Z. was concerned, I asked myself the same question about her lifestyle, about the influence of her personality structure on the partnership. I had understood her well so far, had been able to empathize with her, that she had not responded to all the wishes of her partner, because she had probably given up too much. When I asked her about her share, her contribution, she became thoughtful and pointed to her father, who was very authoritarian and demanding. She would have had to defend herself against it, she suspects therefore already had a pronounced tendency to secure their own freedom in relationships with men.

Thus both Mrs. Z. and Mr. W. indicated certain lifestyles that could influence her relationship. So far, however, no time was available to deepen these important questions. For the verification or falsification of these hypotheses, as the further course of this couple therapy showed, it should not come anymore. However, we are already reaching for that, let’s go in order.

The third common conversation

I started the conversation by asking what had happened during the holidays. „Fifty fifty” is his first answer. Nice in his eyes were the common trips, the time together to be able to tell the reading, carefree hours, 14 days for two. It manifests itself more negatively in the

course of the conversation. When she talks about sexuality, she becomes critical. In that respect, things did not go well, he wanted more. He then complained to her and often spoiled the mood. Mr. W. himself admits that he is very vulnerable in the relationship. If she does not participate in sexuality, does not desire him, he feels a rejection that it is very bad for him. He had been rejected in his childhood, especially by the mother, this would have applied the withdrawal of love as a strategy. He then apologized to his partner, he was sorry. Here, the additional hypothesis „experienced rejection in education” is brought into play by him without us being able to elaborate on it at this point.

She confirms his disbelief that she was on a mountain dynamite, like on a mountain Time bomb felt. She had never been able to please him. She had felt compelled to sexuality. She had always felt reproaches, once she had an upset stomach and no desire for sex, because he did not understand her.

For they had been a bad holiday, she did not want to experience such a thing. As a result, it escalated, one word yielded the other. They covered each other with allegations, also referring to more recent incidents, which is rarely a good sign ...

Gottmans ([4], p. 215) Recommendation to couples who want to be happy: Making „compromises” and making concessions, this empirically derived recommendation had been completely forgotten.

Even the individual psychologist Theo Schoenaker warns of mutual allegations. He writes, „That you are disappointed when things do not go the way you intended is a natural reaction. But when you react with allegations and accusations, you create an atmosphere of fighting and devaluing. Why should that be good if you are looking for a good relationship. Rudolf Dreikurs once said, ‚Making a mistake is in most cases less serious than what we do to ourselves after the mistake.’

So, blaming the partner puts you in a cycle of accusation and counter-accusation ([10], p. 71f.).

It was precisely to such a cycle that Mrs. Z. and Mr. W. had come during these holidays. I was alarmed because this time had brought no progress but regression.

Schoenaker ([10], p. 73) proposes an observation mission for everyday life in order to prevent the development of cycles:

- “Watch if and when you blame your partner.
- Shut up twice in the coming days if you want to blame.
- Talk to your partner about your experience and tell him with a wink that a compliment would do you good ”.

Without spontaneous reminder of this continuation possibility of Schoenaker, I asked the two for solution variants for the tense situation. Mrs. Z. immediately took the floor and suggested that she could sleep on the sofa for one or two nights a week, if she so wished. From this she hoped for more freedom.

Mr. W. countered at once whether this should always be so, that would not be a relationship. He always had to make compromises, he has been doing that for over a year now. He already does that all the time. She points out her long working hours in journalism, because he lacks the understanding. He thinks she must be able to do something about such over-times, that is against the labor law.

In such situations, the couple therapist or the couple therapist is required. It is noticeable that Mrs. Z. and Mr. W. need help from outside, because their conversation threatens to become an endless - and for all grueling - back and forth. But what to suggest, what to say, without feeling the one side disadvantaged? In such conversational situations, I find it important to propose to both halves a way to improve the relationship without any blaming. I propose that his partner be released, not force her.

Sexuality cannot be tempted. Lust is so little to talk like erections in men. On the contrary, pressure drives his partner into the distance rather than close to him. The holiday had clearly shown that his strategy of conquest did not work. Then it’s time to stop the vicious circle. If something does not work, something new has to be tried.

Ms Z. I suggest that you meet your partner wherever you think this is justifiable.

It is absolutely necessary in this situation that both sides feel: their personal interests and needs are taken into account. If one side feels that they are being disadvantaged or patronized by the therapist, everything will go awry and resistance will be the result. Mrs. Z., Mr. W. and I succeeded again in this conversation to find a meaningful compromise. He suddenly suggested sleeping one month apart and then joining together if they both wanted. She agrees, so I formulate next motto: Normally sleep in two beds! Only with mutual consent in the same bed!

In the follow-up of this conversation, I notice that the tension and the number of my questions are increasing: how long will the two still find a compromise? How will the next meeting come out? Should I address him to the problem he has been addressing, „heavy childhood, rejection of the mother“?

Or was that part of a single therapy? Where was your share in developing your relationship? Questions about questions. The couples therapy had gained in intensity and tension at the same time, both had also suggested that it could not go on forever. In the first conversation, this ultimate tone was still missing, the tone was gentler at the time, and hopefully more hopeful.

The fourth joint conversation

When I asked how it had gone, she answered directly with „good“. She could thus sleep better and quieter, which was important for her in her job requirements. He also answers positively at first, but lets more and more of his concerns and objections follow. He had slept a lot alone in the living room, and that's not a relationship like that. He feels a distance that is getting bigger and bigger. In the end they are so completely separated. He continues to introduce the topics „household“ and „leisure“. She does almost nothing in the household, leave this to him, he wants to make a plan that it is clear who is doing what. She defends herself, but agrees to make a plan for these activities. Even at leisure, he is too short, they just think about him and make him hardly ever a joy. The conversation becomes more emotional, he always has to put off, she is doing better, and this at his expense. She defends more and more and brings counter-arguments. He questions the strategy of possibly sleeping separately for one month, because at the end they are separate people.

She in turn thinks that the mistake is that he falls into good reproach after good hours. Ms. Z. is more resolute, determined than in the past Conversations.

She names her limits and implies that her willingness to be part of this partnership is not limitless. As a therapist, of course, I try to think for both sides, not premature to take sides for a party. However, I sense the danger that, with his fierce accusations against her, he undermines the strategy of being separated-and thus giving her the freedom to sleep - instead of compromising. I feel a great dependence on his side, that he suffers emotionally when he does not feel their closeness and affection in emotional and physical terms. This dependence and the resulting desires, coupled with allegations to her address, I call in the sense that he must know that he brings an ultimate mood into the relationship, which overstrains. He must release her: „Love is a child of freedom“⁴.

Interestingly, Mr. W. addresses this point, affirms the severity of his childhood situation, that he had felt rejected early as a child and sees the connection with his sensitivity today.

With such a heavy and emotional conversation, a positive ending with continuation hopes is important. He said in conversation that he had to learn a lot at the moment. We'll end up thinking about how to help him with this not-so-easy task. At first he does not think much of it, but then he agrees.

⁴Love is the child of freedom. Rowohlt, Reinbek near Hamburg 1986. This is the title of the book by Michael Lukas Moeller, who points to a similar French proverb in the blurb.

A short summary of the conversation could be: The strategy of sleeping in separate beds is continued. Shared sleeping requires the consent of both sides. Sexuality cannot be forced. I disagree with his objections, he comes too short. Giving her more freedom is a chance to win her over for herself and for the relationship.

She, for her part, wants to think about what is good for him and how she can strengthen her back during further education - she claims a lot at the moment.

We will arrange the next appointment in two weeks. I am very much looking forward to the sequel, because the tension in the last few talks has increased noticeably and I am unsure whether the couple will succeed in the future.

Continuation

The fifth conversation with three people is no longer possible. Ms Z. informs me by e-mail, sir W. had become ill.

After another two weeks, I ask how it's done. Ms. Z. replies that she had to split up a week ago, that she could no longer bear his criticism and dissatisfaction. She thanked for the therapy, she could „take a lot of therapy“.

What would he have answered my question about how he was doing? To be abandoned is known to be something of the most difficult for man ...

Final reflection

The four couple therapy talks had begun with allegations of Mr. W. to his partner, after the fourth conversation, she parted from him, thus saying: with these reproaches I cannot and do not want to live longer. In the first conversation I had still felt hope: maybe the two will find a common way. I also expressed this hope in order to reinforce the positive development and learning opportunities of the couple. From his side I felt a certain pressure of expectation, I should influence Mrs. Z. in the direction of "more faithfulness". I resisted this expectation, not least because, in the sense of countertransference, I rather developed a certain sympathy for them, not allowing everything to be prescribed by Mr W. But this "sympathy" also had a dangerous side, I was in danger of taking sides with Ms. Z., which was absolutely to be avoided. I had to stay open and try to see their share as well as their interactions as objective as possible. Because I sensed the danger that he might bring an ultimate mood into the relationship through his fierce reproaches, it was important to me to point out this danger: "Attention, this is how your relationship perishes", which - unfortunately - came out that way. Such interventions are somewhat the most difficult in couples therapies because the preliminary diagnostic assessments are delicate and error-prone processes, most of which are time-pressed. But as the saying goes: "He who remains silent seems to agree". And I did not want to remain silent, since in all four conversations Mr. W.'s tendency to demand much, indeed too much, from his partner came to the fore.

And last but not least the question: is it necessary in couples therapy?

"Lifestyle Analysis" ([8], p. 80)?

Brigitte Titze speaks in the "Dictionary of Individual Psychology" of the "Lifestyle analysis" as the "core of individual psychology marriage therapy" (ibid.). Their goal is "to give the partners insight into the dynamics of their interaction resulting from their respective life plans" (ibid.).

The question of "life style" came to Mr. W. as it became apparent that he was putting his demands more and more uncompromising and demanding, thus creating a danger to the relationship. How is this behavior to be explained? A hypothesis was jealousy in the context of the situation as the oldest boy (Entthronungserlebnisse?), A hypothesis, which, however, would have needed the review. Mr. W. himself mentioned the rejection by the mother, experienced in his education, about his own sensitivity and corresponding.

Make reactions to his partner more understandable. With him, it is clear that he needed more insight into his biography, in his "lifestyle", in order to behave differently towards his partner. For Mr. W., a more accurate "lifestyle analysis"⁵, which would have allowed him new and, above all, more flexible behaviors, would probably have been helpful. Maybe the relationship could have been saved ...

For Ms Z., her conversations so far had made it less clear where she was in dire straits and then began to burden the partnership. She had, as I have mentioned in her possible contribution, a pronounced tendency to secure her own freedom in relations with men as a hypothesis. The extent to which this lifestyles tendency had an effect in the partnership and thus had an effect was difficult to assess, but must be taken as a hypothesis. How would it have come out, if she had learned as a child, to fulfill his wishes as well as possible with a loving-oncoming father? If she had then in the relationship with Mr. W. more flexible behavior? Could she then have met her partner without the fear of giving herself up? The questions remain open in the room. However, the initial question can be stated more clearly whether couples therapy requires a "lifestyle analysis" ([8], p. 80). If Mr. W. understood his own emotional neediness, his vulnerability, his jealousy and his behavioral tendencies towards "demanding" and "desire" even better, if he had understood his contribution to the downward spiral of their relationship even better, this would benefit their partnership come. Ms Z., which is now a reasonable but unproven hypothesis, might have been able to give her partner more flexibility without feeling the fear of compromising too much and thus giving herself up. Insight into one's own "Lifestyle" (Adler) as well as personal knowledge of human nature in any case increase the chances of understanding the interaction and the interactions between the two partners and thus be able to act more adequately.

Importantly, the lifestyle analysis is not schematic, but situational and necessary, addressing the need of sovereignty of the unconscious, then motivation and insight into the dynamic connections are much greater.

How much "lifestyle analysis" and/or enlargement of the personal human knowledge are necessary, is again very individual. For Ms. Z. and Mr. W., the need for "lifestyle work" and "lifestyle analysis" was high because the lack of self-awareness took revenge and probably led to the inevitable separation. Of course, there are also couples who can solve their problems a bit in a therapy, at least so that they decide by mutual consent to stay together. So, for example the couple A.

Mrs. A. answered by phone. She hinted at partnership difficulties on the phone. She had been married to Mr. A. for many years, children did not have them. About 5 years ago, her husband wanted to attend a dance class, he initially invited her to come, but she did not want to. For a long time, she did not really care about these dance classes until she found a mail exchange with a woman on his cell phone. She asked him, he averted that it was simply a dance partner. This subject became more and more of an issue for her, once she drove up to the building where the dance class took place and took a picture when he and his alleged dance partner left the venue. The discussions between Mrs. and Mr. A. became more and more heated in the episode, he continued to assert that there is no sex in the game, that is simply a dance partner. She was less and less sure if she should believe him. At her suggestion, then she also wanted sexual freedoms, he reacted energetically, that was out of the question.

Since those discussions, the couple has been in a downward spiral, they think they should accept their apologies and assurances, then everything would be fine. In this sense, she was also to blame for the misery, he found. She, on the other hand, did not trust him anymore, he had also fallen in her esteem since he was looking for these adventures in the evening. Above all, they hurt his excuses, that was the

⁵"lifestyle analysis" exists m. E. from cognitive and emotional parts, whereby the enlargement of the emotional self-determination is probably more difficult to achieve because for that the unconscious has to be addressed. Cognitive enlightenment is not enough for a real change, as has been found by modern brain research for a long time, cf. for example, Roth G (2001): Feeling - Thinking - Acting. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp. 2001. In the words of Roth (2001, p. 321): "So, given the knowledge we have here about the neural bases of affective states, we come to the insight familiar to every human connoisseur that emotions dominate the mind rather than the mind controls the emotions.

worst thing that she could no longer believe him. In the almost one year of couples therapy, Ms. and Mr. A. learned how to come to this downward spiral. For example, Ms. A. was unable to express her wishes in partnership with Mr. A. because she was afraid of his outbursts of anger. As a result, soon came on the defensive. She kept her independence by withdrawing. Mr. A. reacted to this with his dance-course adventures, as if invoking her: If you do not want, I can do it differently ... In the course of the therapy, Mrs. A. began verbally to counter her husband more verbally.

For his part, Mr. A. realized how "effective" he had intimidated and exiled his wife without being aware of it. If Ms. A. also had a choleric side and as much verbal clout as her husband, the relationship would probably have been different.

In another sense, she might have been better off if she had the impression of being heard more. We see that partnerships or couples therapies are highly individual processes that are always different. That's why they are so exciting and alive.

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