Not ordinary logic and psychotherapy: communicative and therapeutic double bind, paradox, contradiction, logic of believing and self-deception as instruments for effective therapeutic change

ABSTRACT:
The interactional-systemic tradition has studied the logic of ambivalence in communication and has introduced the “double-bind” concept, at that time associated with the logical paradox, that is to say a message that conveys a content and its opposite. The research of G. Bateson, J. Weakland, and D.D. Jackson on the etiology of schizophrenia (1956) have stressed how a schizophrenic patient could “shape himself” as such through the redundancy of paradoxical communication within the family dynamics. Bateson, Watzlawick and others were the first to bring Bertrand Russell’s study of logical levels (Whitehead, Russell, 1910-1913), a particularly refined logic, into the fields of psychotherapy and psychology. By studying communication ambivalences and ambivalences of people’s answers, they went as far as establishing the logic of paradox, which has become one of the fundamental concepts of the traditional strategic approach. The phenomenon of paradoxical communication with one-self, with others, and with the world is the basis of the etiology of the most serious mental disorders and at the same time the structural basis of therapeutic interventions. But back then, people were still talking of paradox rather than self-deception; self-deception is actually a more basic mechanism that includes paradox, but is not limited to it. When I feel something in myself and at the same time its opposite - “I love him and I hate him” - it’s a paradox just like when I desire something that at the same time I dread. But when I think it’s fair to act a certain way and I am doing the opposite, or when I believe so much in something that all my actions are aimed to confirm my belief, or else when an idea repeated over time becomes true, precisely because of its repetition, we are no longer in presence of paradoxes.

It’s thereafter possible to build subgroups, subclasses within the logic of self-deception. With this intent, as we will see, we have developed non-ordinary therapeutic stratagems for the majority of the most important pathologies and their respective treatment protocols. If we did not metabolize the non-ordinary logic criteria, we will not be able to apply the stratagems,
even if when they were prescribed through protocols to follow; and especially when we need to use penetrating techniques. Knowing the various non-ordinary logic criteria and the functioning of non-ordinary logic is consequently fundamental for a strategic therapist. Obviously, when a patient clearly and lucidly describes his problem and we can negotiate the solution with him, we immediately move to direct instruction and we do not need non-ordinary logic. The problem is that in my clinical experience of over ten thousand people treated, I met perhaps 10 persons of this type. It may of course be that for the past twenty years I have only met with “extreme patients”; but if we analyze the majority of these so-called pathologies, we notice that they are functioning on the basis of non-ordinary criteria. We can rarely find pathology based on ordinary logic. The paranoid, who needs to defend himself from others’ aggressiveness, who is afraid of mafia because he received a threat, uses a seemingly ordinary logic, but following his perception whoever is waiting near his house is a mobster and therefore he cannot go out after 8pm as he is scared of being the victim of a mob attack. We are entering in another logical level: a phobic obsession turns into a belief that builds the perceived reality and that conducts to pathological reactions. As suggested by Pinel (2006), maybe “the logic is valid but the premises are false”.

To effectively intervene in these realities, **we need a logic that follows their structure and that is able to reorient their direction towards a functional management** - that is to say, to transform dysfunctional self-deception into functional self-deception.

**PROGRAM**

*This training will be with practices : demonstrations by clinical case presentations and demonstration in direct by G. NARDONE*

### Day 1

**AM**
- Self deception and interaction
- Not ordinary logic

**PM**
- The logic of paradox, contradiction and believing - How to use them to solve problems
- Constructives operating: The therapeutic stratagems

### Day 2

**AM**
- Therapeutic counter ritual for OCD
- Strategy and stratagems for eating disorder

**PM**
- Advanced technique for phobic disorder
- Demonstration with a person / show of some cases

**BIOGRAPHY**

**Giorgio Nardone.** with Paul Watzlawick, found the Strategic Therapy Center in Arezzo (CTS), where he practices psychology-psychotherapy and coaching, and where he teaches. Nardone is considered the main exponent of the Palo Alto School. He is renown for his creativity as much as for his methodological rigor, which allowed him to create many innovative techniques and specific treatment protocols: proved to be best practices for treating panic attack, obsessive compulsive disorder, phobias, anorexia, bulimia-vomiting, binge eating and many other psychological problems. Research and experience lead him to formalize two original operative Models: Brief Strategic Therapy® for the rapid treatment of severe psychological and behavioral pathologies; and Strategic Problem Solving & Coaching® which is highly effective in those personal and interpersonal situations where ordinary techniques fail, in business environments, to achieve specific objectives or for
improving managerial or athletic performance.

Blending creativity and rigor is one of the fundamental traits of his work, testified by his sophisticated theoretical-epistemological assumptions and by his research methodology, transforming his techniques from an ‘art’ for few into a ‘technology for many. These personal and work characteristics make him uniquely capable to both theoretically discourse and practically intervene, putting together the ‘man of science’ and the ‘performer’.

He is President of the “Strategic therapy Centre of Arezzo” (CTS) and Director of the Specializing School in Brief Strategic Psychotherapy of the CTS. With his sister M. Cristina Nardone, he found the “STC Change Strategies” with 138 affiliate offices in Italy and one in Spain, with official associates and teaching venues in Mexico, England, Russia, Romania, Ireland and Colombia. He is probably the only therapist who has successfully treated more than 20,000 patients, and conducted more than 300 training or consultancy interventions using his Model, with a customer satisfaction above 90%, to macroscopic institutions as the Italian Army or the Italian Mail Service, or to multinationals as Barilla, Tamoil, Illy, Johnson & Johnson, etc., as well as individual consultancy and coaching for athletes, managers and entrepreneurs. His two intervention models are officially registered with the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) as trademarks and patents and exported in the whole world. His institute has become an internationally recognized Center for Excellence and Innovation and his school of thought is followed by specialists in the fields of psychotherapy, communication and managerial consultancy. He authored of more than 30 books (including some true best sellers, and some that are now classics, sold for more than 20 years), translated in more than ten languages (English, Spanish, French, German, Russian, Rumanian, Japanese, etc.), through which he divulges his research and practice. See bibliography

At present, he dedicates his time to:

Restless and intense clinical practice, and training the numerous students who take part to any of the 50 annual courses organized by his companies.

Personally tutor in the art of clinical practice the students of his psychotherapy School, as a “renaissance master” in his art workshop.

Constant study and applied research activity, a continuous update and guide for the numerous group of CTS associated researches. Planning and carrying out research, as presented in his books.

Supervision for the 134 affiliate psychotherapists, guiding them in overcoming difficulties with resistant patients or particular complicated cases.

Constantly traveling around the world to present his work, both clinical and managerial, through brilliant lectures, public conferences, specialized seminars and workshop. Always sharing not only his “knowledge” but also his “know how”, through live demonstrations of his strategic therapeutic and problem solving techniques.

And finally improving himself through reading, music, daily practice of Martial Arts, of which he is passionate student, and playful time with his beloved dogs.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Caught in the middle of a double-bind: the application of non-ordinary logic to therapy

When the diagnosis "invents" the illness

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Sillonner la mer à l’insu du ciel
Leçons sur le changement thérapeutique et les logiques non ordinaires

La connaissance par le changement. L’évolution de la thérapie brève stratégique
INSTITUT EUROPEEN DE THERAPIES SOMATO-PSYCHIQUES IETSP
41 rue Boissière 75116 PARIS - Tél : +33 (0)1.44.05.05.90 - www.IETSP.fr
SIREN : 498 872 753 R.C.S PARIS - NAF : 804C - N° Formation : 11754262075