

An Open Letter of Clarification to the Systemic Constellations Community from DGfS and ISCA

Bert Hellinger and Marie-Sophie Hellinger have recently made public statements with regard to the state of systemic constellations that we believe to be inaccurate, and they have taken actions that are of concern to us. For this reason we want to clarify the significant differences between the understanding and application of systemic work represented by Hellinger Scienza on the one hand and DGfS (German Association for Systemic Constellations) and ISCA (International Systemic Constellation Association) on the other.

1. We are deeply indebted to Bert Hellinger's creative work. He has been instrumental in bringing systemic innovation into the world. It is also true that he has been strongly influenced by other workers preceding him, and he has also been supported faithfully and generously by friends and students who have contributed significantly to his success over several decades. We know that in addition to Bert Hellinger's newer contributions, many other facilitators are making useful discoveries and finding refinements for some of his generalizations. We believe that because of these various contributions Bert Hellinger's achievements are greater than would have been the case without them.

We hope that the systemic constellation work will continue to grow both for him and also beyond his personal contributions, just as psychoanalysis continued to grow beyond Sigmund Freud's original formulations. We regret that Bert Hellinger currently and increasingly presents himself as the sole source and transmitter of this great and constantly unfolding work and neglects to acknowledge the work of many other significant contributors.

Both DGfS and ISCA affirm the creative potential of facilitators to contribute to the development of the work, and we will continue to support networking and mutual support among our respective members and the general public.

2. Both DGfS and ISCA are non-profit associations of constellation facilitators whose purpose is to support the continuing development of the systemic approach through dialog, networking, mutual learning, and community. Both organizations are dedicated to the vision that cooperation for the purpose of mutual learning best serves the long-term success of the systemic constellation work. Hellinger Scienza is attempting to copyright the name "Bert Hellinger" and "Family Constellation" and to establish a franchise. While we respect their right to do so, at the same time, we regret their decision and their methods. Both DGfS and ISCA will continue to build an international community and to offer our services to persons interested in an "open source" approach to the continuing development of this body of thought and work.

3. In earlier years, Bert Hellinger was generous in granting people the right to use his name in developing institutes and training programs. Their work has contributed greatly to his recognition and success. Hellinger Scienza is now asking

some of those people who have chosen not to join the franchise to forego using the Hellinger name. By many reports, the methods used in doing so have violated the principles of collegial interaction and have exceeded normal business practice. Both DGfS and ISCA affirm that such methods are an inappropriate application of systemic method and theory, and we expressly distance ourselves from such methods. Further, we commit ourselves to hold to high standards of ethical behavior in dealing with colleagues and the public.

4. In their personal work with seminar participants and in their work with the larger themes of collective trauma and victim-perpetrator dynamics, Bert and Marie-Sophie Hellinger have practiced interventions and attitudes that make them immune to the usual and necessary collegial exchange and the process of professional peer review. These methods have included encouraging what we believe to be inappropriate idealization and use of group exercises historically associated with obedience to totalitarian regimes. We believe such idealization and group exercises are unnecessarily provocative and have limited constructive effect at best. In addition, these actions are highly insensitive to both the perpetrators and victims of all nations who still suffer the consequences of events documented by history.

Such actions are, in our opinion, contrary to the work as originally formulated by Bert Hellinger and as further developed by members of DGfS and ISCA. We expressly disassociate ourselves from such methods and attitudes and urge persons interested in the continued constructive development of the work to make a clear distinction between Bert Hellinger's personal actions and the larger field of systemic constellation work.

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