

In the Spotlight : Diana Claire Douglas in conversation with Bence Ganti

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Brief Bio of Bence Ganti

Bence Ganti, M.A. (psychology), clinical psychologist is the **co-director of IEC** together with Dennis Witrock from Germany (below) and an **originator and visionary** of this event. He is a co-founder and board member of the **Integral Europe** team and founder and **director** of one of **Europe's most successful long-term integral communities**, the **Integral Academy** in **Hungary**. He is founder of the **Integral Flow Experience** group process. He is a presenter, a workshop facilitator and a panelist in major integral conferences, gatherings in the USA since 2004. He is a guest teacher at Meridian University and San Francisco State University in California. **Ken Wilber**² asked him to be the branch coordinator of his **Integral Institute** for Europe.

www.integraleurope.org www.integraleuropeanconference.com

www.integralflowexperience.com | www.integralacademy.eu

Diana: Thank you for taking this time with me and for saying "Yes" to an interview. As both a participant and facilitator, I very much appreciate IEC 2016 (Integral European Conference) on Lake Balaton, Siófok, Hungary. It was beautifully run and you brought so many perspectives together. I especially resonated with its valuing of multi-dimensional reality.

Bence: I feel glad it landed so deep in you.

Diana: The location on the edge of a lake was beautiful too! As I mentioned, I have been doing a series of interviews published in TKF on collective constellations. I feel this is an area in Systemic Constellation Work (SCW) that is emerging.

Bence: Yes!

Diana: Both Family Constellation Work and Organizational Constellation Work seem well-established. I feel a new branch in the constellation field is developing. I am enjoying finding out who is doing these constellations and their approach through this series of interviews. By the way, I don't think we have settled on a name for this emerging branch. So far it has many names, including societal-issue constellations, community constellations, large-scale constellations. I am wondering if you have named your particular way?

Bence: I agree with you. Even I do not have one word for what I do. I usually call it "Flow-Constellation" putting the two words together, because I have some insight into how the flow works. My work is not only constellation work (in terms of what Bert Hellinger named constellation work). It is that and there are some extra aspects or layers that I bring to the original flow concept from Mihály Csíkszentmihályi.³ Csíkszentmihályi speaks about individual peak experiences when you lose your personal self sense. Your ego is temporarily dropped but not your being-presence. It is one of the most pleasant peak experiences! And that's where Csíkszentmihályi stops. I noticed, the minute that happens you are plugged into a field, basically channeling that field. The flow is actually the door, the entry to becoming a conscious participant in the field.

Diana: Say more about being "plugged into the field."

Bence: The flow is not just pleasant drifting like when you are with your friends in a pub or at a concert. You might say you are in a kind of flow with your friends. That's not really the flow. That is more drifting with the crowd. What I mean is the kind of flow that is a transpersonal flow. You are plugged into something that is deeper, higher, wider...and that's what starts to govern you. I feel Family Constellation Work entered the psycho-spiritual world through the transpersonal movement. Before that it wasn't so much used in group therapy.

Diana: You have given me an understanding of what you mean by "flow." What do you mean by "constellation"?

Bence: I think of constellation work as 1. setting up what is; and 2. rebalancing. *Setting up* is done with people usually, at sometimes facilitators do it with stones, or figures in one-on-one sessions. But I prefer using people in groups. I think that's where the real magic happens. You put out what is in the field by positioning people in the space, to make things visible as they are. I think of this as the collective unconscious of us all. It is actually a condensed multi-layer manifestation: often the larger collective

unconscious is expressing itself through the participants while at the same time their personal unconscious might also appear in the process. This is the first step, which in itself is awesome and very interesting to observe. It is liberating the soul to finally show up as it is.

By the way the word “constellation” is not the original word. It is a word that was chosen recently to name this activity in English. The original German word, which is exactly identical with the word Hungarians use for this, is “Aufstellung” (German) or “állítás” (Hungarian). It comes from the verb “stellen” or “állít” that comes from “stehen” or “áll” which means to stand. So what we say in Europe is *to have people stand there*. Or *to have people stand in different positions* to express what is unconsciously there. So the original “Aufstellung” is heard like this “to stand there...” or “to stand in...(position)” that’s why I used above the term *to set up*. To set up a structure of positions by having people stand there.

And then the next step is **rebalancing**. We set up what is in the field and let it rebalance itself. I see that the field has two states. One state is balance, when the elements are in a position so that the whole system is calm, unmoving, everybody feels in their place. The other state is unbalance. I see life as a constant movement between two balanced states in time. Between two balanced states there is the unbalanced, mis-aligned phase. I don't mean this in a negative sense. That's just how the dance of life that moves the universe works. In Buddhist terms there is desire or aversion present. You want something to be different than how it is, you want something that is not there, or you want something not to be there that is there. That's why we move, act in life usually. Even in a relationship between two people, there are moments when they are in sync and they feel that they don't need to do anything it is perfect as it is. And then bang! Again they are out of balance, something is not full, they feel that something needs to be done to be perfect again. It is the same balance – unbalance – balance movement of life for one person, for relationships, for a group of people, a whole nation, or the whole world. This is how the mind and likewise how the field works.

The constellation process is facilitating the participants to find this balance. In more traditional family constellations there are explicit sentences to help this: "You are the big one, I am the small one" said between parent and child, for example. I see these standard sentences as re-balancing sentences very cleverly nailed by Hellinger and his colleagues. When these unspoken realities are spoken, it re-balances the folks who are in the constellation.

In Flow-Constellation, I don't use such sentences often, rather I prefer to maximize the non-verbal work of group members and allow the representatives to find out for themselves where balance is in the system. Not using words maximizes the intuitive, meditative flow of movements, though with intuition the facilitator can feel when it is better to ask the participants to add some words. I observed Hellinger working not long ago and he has also shifted in this direction. Twenty years ago he was using a lot of words, nowadays he just looks with spiritual presence and doesn't instruct, he lets people find their own positions, balances and what needs to be done. I use so called “process-instructions” and bells to add some basic structure to the otherwise free-flow process.

I have found that constellation work can be applied at many scales, family, companies, human groups and larger systems. For instance, in the constellation at IEC 2016, it was an international constellation, a constellation of nations and energies between nations.

When I do my Integral Flow Experience workshops, often I let it loose and there is not even a named (verbal) focus to it. I call these “here and now constellations.” Whatever is here and now in the collective

field is set up and played out. This can be very trippy actually, very similar to what people experience on psychedelics or something similar. The essence is energetically rebalancing the Field of people.

I am also a vipassana meditator. This balance-unbalance-balance phenomena is what I observed in my mind. Unbalance is when the mind is moving and tries to solve things (thinking, imagination and feelings are going on). When I sit in meditation, I am aware of swirls and turbulences that get more intense and more intense, and then they drop or stop and there is silence, there is peace, there is balance.

I see constellation work as a projection of the mind and how the mind works, both the collective mind and the individual mind. I have found when I sit and observe my own mind and then open my eyes and go and do group work, it is the same nature working. In vipassana, you don't have a focus to re-balance your mind. You just observe and let it happen. And we can do that with constellations too. In the light of conscious awareness, then balance happens. If there is no conscious awareness, then patterns fix the flow, and the flow cannot unwrap itself because the patterns keep it running around in fixed circles.

Diana: Many questions and thoughts come up for me from what you have said. I feel your trust of the system itself to come into balance. A question though: I am wondering how much you perceive a constellation being the projection of the facilitator's mind?

Bence: I think in the constellation so many things happen in so short a time in so many people (the participants) that it simply cannot be the projection of one person (the facilitator's) mind. If the facilitator uses a lot of sentences that he asks the participants to say out loud, there is a greater chance for projection. In those cases it is either well-intuited content of the participant or the field, or a standard release sentence for a standard situation or it might be also the facilitator's belief that he projects on the participant. If the facilitator is well trained in rapport (noticing the subtle yes and no of the other's body language and flowing with that) then even if it is a projection, he lets it go if the client's interior doesn't accept it.

Diana: Earlier you said: We set up what is in the field and let it rebalance itself. The word "field" is now coming into common usage, as if it's the latest buzz word.

Bence: Exactly.

Diana: For you, does "field" have a particular meaning?

Bence: In my meditation experience, if my mind completely stops, and sometimes it does, then there is a deep strong presence and silence. There is no form-making, no thoughts, no images. At this moment powerful contents are breaking into the mind. It might be a vision, or one clear thought. This thought is stronger than my own thoughts or visual images. It is transpersonal. When we relax the mind completely then we are in this dense, empty, pregnant space. That is the field.

The metaphor of the mind of the field is God's Mind. The new buzz word "field" is a replacement for "God." In post-modern consciousness we do not think of God as having a concrete form but this creating field that creates everything, in other words, the Creator.

Diana: Let's talk about conscious awareness...

Bence: In vipassana, by which I mean pure self observation, the essence of meditation, at the end of the day it is you and your conscious [awareness] sitting there. You are simply observing whatever is already

there arising and letting it dissolve. Awareness goes through stages. When you start observing, you can feel how you are but you are stuck and it can't yet dissolve. This is an initial neutral (equanimous) awareness, but not yet transpersonal awareness. If the neutral awareness amplifies, there is a subtle breakthrough and things start to dissolve very quickly. As awareness and equanimity strengthens then things arise and dissolve, arise and dissolve in a fluid manner and then the inner flow starts.

The outer flow is the same but it happens with groups in the we-space. When we dissolve the structures, the roles, the positions of people in a group, things loosen up and people gradually get into flow. The contents of the conscious and unconscious mind throws or "vomits" itself out right into the field of your awareness until all this content runs its course. Then individual and collective consciousness comes into balance.

Diana: So as a facilitator...

Bence: As a facilitator I have a deep faith because of the eternal experiences from meditation. When I do constellation work, and when I hold the space with my awareness for people there is a deep faith, a subtle love and full presence brought from my meditations. This is a similar state to when I am sitting in deep meditation on my own. I think this matters: the state or energy the facilitator carries over from his or her own meditation .

It works the other way around too and that's why I love to facilitate groups. It is a way to instantly go to the deeper centered place within that I have cultivated in my meditation practice. I facilitate the group to go there and their presence also grabs me and puts me there so it's a circular process. It is a major reframing of the role and functioning of the psychologist, which is one of the reasons why I like to call it facilitation and not psychotherapy. Freud said that the therapists had to be neutral as external observers who should not be involved in the process. In my view facilitators are 100 per cent involved but not in the sense that your ego is triggered or you act out countertransference. Go deeper than that, because behind the ego there is your transpersonal self. And when it is there, it can be a really deep constellation, where everything flows through me and doesn't get stuck anywhere.

Diana: I'd like to give the readers a little background on the Integral European Conference where you co-facilitated that amazing constellation! The conference theme was *to reinvent a more coherent vision of Europe together*. It was hosted by you and your Integral Academy (Hungary), Dennis Wittrock⁴ and Barbara von Meibom⁵, and the conference drew 450 participants from 36 countries. I really appreciated the mix of theory and praxis: interactive panel discussions and experiential workshops covering topics ranging from individual, and couples development, business and organizational development, education, leadership, economics, applied spiral dynamics, refugee crisis, spirituality and visionary art. And the key note speakers were engaging, including Don Beck on "Spiral Dynamics Master Code in Action," Thomas Hübl on "Collective Trauma: From Integration to Insight," and Annette Kaiser "Rooted in Silence, Moved by Love a new Europe can emerge." And of course, I am happy that my workshop with Anne-Marie Voorhoeve, on "Finding a Home for the Victim and Tyrant: A Spiral Journey Exploring the Abuse of Power" was part of the conference. A full-spectrum of consciousness!

What stays with me most, now several months after the conference, is the constellation that you co-facilitated with the focus: *Europe Constellation : constellating the different countries and present societal-political situations of Europe (refugee crisis, war, etc)*. I guessed there were 250 of us participating in that particular evening process that lasted 4.5 hours. The room was full! As a participant, I wasn't sure what was really going on, and I was fascinated to watch how you were going to facilitate so many of us! Here's my participant's view on what occurred.

We started with the circle of nations, where we all joined our own country and shared with each other what is going on in our country now and then chose one representative for our country. I was chosen as the soul of Canada. Then we moved into what I think of as the constellation process, starting with a representative for the Soul of Europe sitting in a white chair in the centre of the space and representatives from each European country coming into the field as well as many other elements such as war and peace. It looked like the Soul of Europe needed to interact with each of the countries, so she moved out of the chair, and Shame sat down and stayed in the centre for a long time, until several elements collaborated together to lift her out of the centre. Many, many movements were happening around the whole circle, like mini-constellations, especially traumatic events between countries. Great grief was expressed. Eventually, awareness was brought into the field by sticking name tags on each representative. When other countries beyond Europe were invited to join, I entered the field as the Soul of Canada and began walking around the edge of the circle, only concerned about what was happening with the Soul of Europe. I needed to see her. I stayed on the outside as multiple circles of the countries surrounded the Soul of Europe and they broke into a spontaneous healing song. Eventually the Soul of Europe was complete and left the constellation. It seemed as if what remained was the need to mop-up all the traumas.

I talked with several participants the next day and know that the process deeply impacted participants on a personal level as well as seeding the field at a collective level.

Let's talk about facilitating this process. How was it to co-facilitate? There were two other facilitators, Barbara von Meibom and Péter Kemény.⁶ I imagine you might need more than one facilitator for such a large constellation?

Bence: When there is such a large number of group participants (around 250 people) you are dealing with a mass. I held the intention to do this constellation in the planning phase of the Integral European Conference (between June 2014 and April 2016). I knew that there would be more facilitators but didn't know yet who. I was sure they would show up. Rather than mental planning, I waited until the right people showed up. This is what happened. The two other facilitators showed up, they found me, expressed their wish to work together and I felt the resonance for this particular work and said yes. So I didn't think of who I might ask. I had had a similar experience at the first Integral European Conference in 2014 when we did the first large group international constellation. While we were organizing IEC1 a German coach Holger Fuchs showed up and we teamed up. I knew he was doing groups of 15-30 people working with regions in Germany. I was working with countries. There was a felt sense of joy and co-creativity in our connection and so we were two facilitators at IEC 2014. Although the constellation was

very good, it was not as powerful as the one we just did. It was more structured, and shorter. Holger and I also created and led a German-speaking-countries constellation in June 2015 at the German Integral Conference (held in Germany for Germany, Switzerland, Austria and Luxemburg) organized by Integrales Forum. That's where Barbara von Meibom was introduced to me I went to Barbara's workshop and was convinced about her energies. She was a participant in the German countries constellation that I led there and she also liked my work. A few month later we invited her to join the IEC 2016 conference in two roles: as a co-anchor (wo)man to extend anchoring the conference with a powerful and elder-wise female presence and leadership, and also to co-lead the constellation process. So Barbara joined us. She is a psychotherapist and constellator herself specifically working with cultural issues like the German shadow after the war and how it lingers in today's green German postmodernism. She used to be also a scientist, a professor in a German university and wrote a few books on the subject. So that's how we were two and we started to plan for the constellation a few month before IEC2. We had our plan in place by the time the conference week had come. But then one week before the conference started Péter Kemény⁶ was attending a pre-conference Spiral Dynamics course with Don Beck ⁷ that I organized in Budapest. Peter asked me if I had considered involving more constellators. I said that I hadn't and asked if he was talking about himself. He said yes. I asked him what he would do and he poured out his visions and ideas. I felt that he would creatively enrich what Barbara and I had already planned and both the group experience and our small (planning) group would be better. He added value. Also we had previous connections as he was a student at my Integral Academy for three years. He graduated with good skills and marks and we trained him to be a one-on-one integral therapist. We also did a lot of group work as part of the training. Then he continued his studies and went for further training to specialize in integrative constellation group work where constellation and psychosomatic work is combined, very popular in Hungary's integral scene today. We felt a lot of joy, creativity and inspiration in our connection and it also had the beauty of a once-a-student turned into a creative colleague.

Three days before the conference Barbara arrived in Budapest and I asked her if she agreed to having Péter join us on the team. She felt positive and we started to plan it all over again. The planning went on until the very morning of the constellation day. We met several times at the hotel while the conference was going on. We felt this constellation was so important that we wanted to give our full mind, heart and meditative intuition. We also had so many ideas! It was a continuous creative process as we felt into the constellation and we needed to keep some ideas and drop others. We were purposeful and intuitive as well. We had to agree on a focus. It was a beautiful process! It was very powerful, connected and in the flow. But also needed a lot of work.

Diana: It is an interesting combination of planning and not planning.

Bence: Exactly. That's also often how my life works. I often travel with the flow of life. I try to be open and sensitive when someone wants to connect with me, detect the real content that wants to enter, and intuit whether this is a fantasy with no outcome or something that really wants to happen with deeper purpose. I also check if the person is really delivering or just talking. When it is the former, I say let's dance, let's weave together.

It is very important when co-facilitating that we exactly shared the roles. We had a script when we went on stage to open the constellation. The script was attentive to the group and also to the facilitators so that each facilitator had an equal role. Also, we are beyond the green⁷ trap of arriving on the stage and we will

see from the moment and just co-improvise-lead. That's a fertile ground for red situations in green disguise.⁷ We consciously planned the structure. The first part (60 min) was structured and verbal, the middle phase (90 min) was semi-structured and non-verbal, and the last phase (90 minutes) was completely unstructured. It was full-spontaneity and no-instructions flow unleashed while the space was fully held and there was a precise moment-to-moment and musical following of the crowd mind state.

Diana: The first part was when we went into groups according to the country we came from and you guided us in some exercises?

Bence: Yes. The purpose was for participants to open up and share with each other through talking. We shared in the small groups and then the whole group. It was a way to create the setting, and mentally prepare. Get into the mindset of the countries, each participant locating where they were and then listening to other countries. It was also ice-breaking and warming up and opening to prepare the deeper states to come.

Diana: I hadn't realized until that evening that there were 12 of us from Canada at the conference! We had quite a dynamic conversation about what was going well in Canada now. And from the sound in the room it seemed all the other countries were very engaged.

Bence: Yes people were very engaged. Then after a short break we went into the second phase that was semi-structured and non-verbal. This was the actual constellation phase. The structure included the circle of 250 people forming a thick ring sitting on the large floor to encapsulate the sacred center space where the constellation took place.⁸ We then chose the representatives of the European countries and the different qualities and they entered the empty centre. The unstructured part was for the representatives to go inside and follow their impulse to move, feel, and make postures, sounds, be alone or connect. This phase was the collective unfolding of what is in Europe and the rebalancing-healing process. A lot of things happened, 50 people were in the center all in some process and many of them interacting. All without words and powerful music in this 90 minute phase. Barbara and Peter went in and did individual facilitation and healing. I held and overlooked the whole crowd and moved around and did some energy work. Part of my work is some energy work in the field (physically making movements in the air between people). I also handled the music which is never a pre-selected playlist (that would kill any flow) but selecting tracks from and for the moment, minute by minute. It is a seamless, continuous oneness with the group, flowing with them as a facilitator and as a "DJ".

The final phase of the process was inviting the presence of the Global Being (that wasn't articulated, rather held in our intention). The instruction was to let go of the circle and all the 250 people could stand up and find their place and the whole room became the scene now. From wall to wall, door to door, the whole ballroom was the sacred space. No words, conversation, lying around was allowed, just participation. The full flow came at this phase where we dissolved the circle structure and let loose everyone. The last instruction was sending people in and then there were no more instructions. That's when the process fully opened up. We didn't even bring the constellation to a close. We had agreed before we started that we would end at 10 pm, and then as the process got underway, we said 11pm. At 11pm the process was still fully going on and that's when I said, "Okay, no more plan even for ending it, let's go fully free!" The constellation continued until it stopped in one particular second simultaneously at the

same time, as when a school of fish turns together suddenly at the same time. Suddenly the whole group relaxed as if it would go “hahh...” and I felt that’s it. There was no more movement of the mind for the crowd mind, all content, that was the balance point. I looked at my watch and it this is what I saw: “0:00” It was exactly midnight! And what is midnight? Midnight is 0:00. Zero. Emptiness. All movements, all forms rested in the void. That was balance. It was fantastic! It really felt like a divine orchestration being in synch with the cosmos. See, for the full flow you have to let go of all structures, plans, ideas, just like in meditation. The more elements you let go of, the more the here and now and flow occurs. And a facilitator can also do this as if the people in the room are the contents of his or her own mind. As facilitator, you hold the structure and define the roles. Let all these go and the constellation will come to its own life and finally its equilibrium its stopping point.

Diana: Does a facilitator represent something when working this way? For instance, conscious awareness itself?

Bence: Well, in my case honestly I am not exactly seeing what I represent since it is people who see me, I see them. So we should ask maybe what they see when they look at me. Anyway, what I experience is full presence with a density. I think the density comes from the heart space, it is love. Even if my face is serious or unemotional. Witness, compassion and being plugged in. But I don't represent any further quality or direction that would push people somewhere. People report again and again that a key quality they feel in my workshop space is safety. What might be also important is that I have a deep understanding of all levels and I have an equal love, welcome and holding for any of them whether it is a regressed state of a 2 year old or a progressed teal state.⁷

Diana: It is so helpful to hear your plan after having experienced the constellation! I really appreciate how much planning and preparation went into the process! How did you choose the elements?

Bence: That was a big conversation. We thought that perhaps more than one person would want to represent (for each element) so part of our plan was to invite Brigitte Wingelmayr⁹ who we had identified as one of the elders in the room, a shamanic wise women. We felt who was chosen to represent should be a spiritual choice. We trusted that Brigitte could feel into that person and make a spiritual choice. We have witnessed Brigitte working with people many times over a 20-year period and she unmistakably points to the core of things and can discern the subtlest ego movements (personal/mental will) from the soul's movements (flow). The soul is our deep heart. She is a “heart-expert” and a female elder.

Prior to the constellation we (Barbara, Brigitte, Bence, Péter, and Annette Kaiser¹⁰) had discussions about what elements should be included. First would be the countries, one person representing each country. Then the qualities that were lingering in the collective consciousness of Europe (including refugees, war, etc); positive qualities (peace, etc) and more general qualities (male and female, etc). Péter and I felt that Barbara and Brigitte and Annette were the wise female elders and so we were happy to get out of the way and have them, with their female intuitive wisdom, choose what elements would be included.

So we started with countries, all the countries from Europe represented at the conference.

Diana: Did you choose Annette as the Soul of Europe? It seemed that she was already chosen prior to the start.

Bence: Yes, when we were discussing what elements needed to be in the constellation, Barbara named the Soul of Europe and everyone suggested Annette be the representative. Annette agreed. We wanted someone who was spiritual, deep, grounded, female and European.**Diana:** Is this the biggest constellation you have facilitated?

Bence: Yes! Not only did I have co-facilitators by the way but we had an invisible team of 12 helping us during the process. They were all experienced in this kind of group work and graduates or in-training students of the Hungarian Integral Academy and were recruited during the conference. During dinnertime before we opened the doors to the event, they helped with setting up the room: putting the direction signs on the walls, East, West, etc; calculating the sacred circle size; putting markers on the floor; and building the altar on the stage and navigating people when they flooded the ballroom. During the constellation process, they were spread through the crowd, ready to assist with tissues, helping navigating people in the different episodes, holding space for processes, etc. They weren't part of the planning and preparation but they were part of the on-scene action.

Diana: During the constellation, I had noticed the many helpers. What was the constellation's personal impact on you?

Bence: Personally, it was a very deep, grounded experience for me. During those moments I felt the best of the whole conference. I felt the community gave me the present of their trust, even Barbara, Brigitte and Annette, who are wise spiritual leaders for me. That was such a humbling empowerment and put me into a deep centredness of being and seeing without thinking. I feel very grateful. It is rare that the community you love and respect is in a great number gathered in a room including the elders and they trust you to do such an intimate and delicate process for them. It put me into a kind of deep centre and presence. It felt truly sacred.

Diana: Definitely.

Bence: I am grateful for all the participants. I seemed to be that I was leading (that's what people say) but actually I was also nailed there to that 'asana' by the people as much as I was leading. So it was cocreating each other and the field. I am also grateful to the co-facilitators for their trust.

Diana: I find that we can see an out-picturing of the constellation process in the world. Sometimes that happens immediately, and sometimes over time.

Bence: Not yet. For me when we went into the constellation process it was completely non-verbal. I wasn't thinking or reflecting on what was going on. Since that time the team and I have been collecting documents. We plan to put together the core text (script), the non-verbal experience and content, what we as facilitators saw, as well as the individual accounts from representatives of their internal experiences. We have to stitch together a narrative. It is so complex, after that I will be able to consider the world!

Diana: So you are in the middle of this process.

Bence: We were thinking of doing a verbal sharing after the constellation. We made the decision finally to let that also go, which I often end up doing. When we've gone non-verbal for so long (for 45, 60, 90, or 120 minutes) the atmosphere becomes so sacred, subtle and tender that words are too gross, uncomfortable and would break the field. We could have done a verbal sharing the next day, but it was

not planned into the original conference schedule and changing that would really mess up the conference. So we respected the structure in place as a wider frame for the constellation evening. The whole process was 4.5 hours long. So for the verbal sharing we decided to ask people to write down their experiences, and then the team would reflect on these, write a narrative and send it out to the community for feedback. The process will then be complete.

Diana: It seems to me there are three stages in a constellation process: the preparation (planning), the process with representatives, and the post-process stage (integration or impact stage). Facilitators are using several ways of recording what happened during the process. Now we need to find a process that works when there are so many participants involved. After one collective constellation I interviewed each of the 18 representatives plus several witnesses individually. I had the time to do the interviews because we were at a conference and everybody who participated stayed for a few days after the constellation!

I know many of us want to make meaning out of the experience. I believe the constellation itself seeds the field no matter what we see or notice or are able to record. However, when we can also bring our awareness to what happened...

Bence: That's the deeper, magical aspect of constellations. If it really hits the field, it can have an effect beyond the room and beyond the people there. I have a recent example of facilitating a process with a client who had a very deep scream, almost as if she was being tortured. I knew it was a cleansing scream. Finally she found a part of herself she had not been able to find in any other therapy for years. She needed this dramatic intensity to get there and express it fully. Later I received an email where she described the process and told me about her son buying a lottery ticket two hours after her process. He won! And he won 10 million Forints which is 3500 USD. The son then didn't keep it but offered it to her so she could pay back her ex husband (the son's father) to get out of a two decade long unresolved debt-bond. So now she has became fully free inside and outside. With that scream came the liberation of that deepest stuck energy and within 2 hours came 10 million forint and the liberation from the husband financially and legally. It was just amazing! A messy divorce has ended and a soul got more liberated. So for me the flow-field scream impacted the field, it was re-structured and she saw the impact. I believe in this. It doesn't always happen to such an extent, but sometimes it does. So you can say you are making up this connection in your mind (between the scream and the son winning the lottery, it is all by chance), or there really is a connection that can be intuited and felt with the heart-and-mind.

Diana: There are occasions where I have seen this personally and certainly with Hellinger there are many stories where the change happened immediately or very soon. I am wondering how you came to constellation work.

Bence: Before I was involved with constellation work, I had spent six years practicing in other group modalities, including psychodrama, humanistic encounter groups, holotropic breath work. And I was 6 years with my mentor in a group-work style that has no category or name but was manifested by his genius. I also have a Masters degree in Psychology but to be honest this has very little to do with this kind of group work. That's more like a permission from society. I have gone to many vipassana retreats that also open the spiritual eye and deepen a nonverbal presence, sensitivity and intuition. And I had a Master mentor, Laszlo Honti "Eldor", who always did group work that you can't really categorize. It was a humanistic-transpersonal-gestalt-psychodrama-hypnotic-NLP-circling combo if you wish. This prepared me for all what I do today. Eldor was constantly training us to sense the higher being in the group and see

people as an expression of a transpersonal Field, so that was a strong seeding before the constellation period. With Eldor it was together with confronting people in the group with their deepest character fixation and psychodynamic moves, so I was burning in that oven with great pain and liberation for long. There is hardly anything more unpleasant and also liberating than our ego being radically unveiled and caught in a group.

Later I found a Hungarian woman constellator, Kriszta Kövesdi, who was very good so I started to go to her groups for a while and learn. Actually she found me to learn from me but I found her better so I started to learn from her. I spent quite a bit of time in her group and that was another shift, an opening to the constellation type of group work. Then later I went to a masterful young therapist Nóra Pecsenka who was my classmate in university so we grew parallel and watched each other coming out. She learned integrative movement and dance therapy and also advaita vedanta meditation. And she is just a blessed talent so I was drawn to her work and learned from her too. She does what in Hungary we call "bodywork" and in North America more like "psychosomatic work." This was another breakthrough for me. All my training in all these modalities started to come together naturally for me and this is what I call Integral Flow Experience work now. I often do less constellation work and more bodywork and sometimes it is so combined it is hard to put it into a category. When I say bodywork I don't mean people massaging each other or giving some kind of treatment. What I mean is more close to contact-improvisation, ecstatic dance, gestalt and psychotherapy. At the conference we tilted towards constellation work in the flow context. So the facilitators that were involved were all constellators.

Diana: I really appreciate that tilt!

Bence: Oh yes! I also attended two events in Hungary with Bert Hellinger when he came over from Germany to teach. I observed him both times. I definitely sensed that he had a very strong presence. He was there at a time when he wasn't saying any words. He would put a family on the stage and just look and look and say nothing. Just looking but with a full and dense spiritual presence. He didn't give any instructions. We call it "Spirit movement" or "soul movement" style of constellation which is a newer school. Hellinger himself shifted to this from previously being more instructive. In Hungary we talk about "classical constellations" where statements are used and "soul movements" where you don't give any directions or sentences. Hellinger was originally using the sentences and later he became very flow-like, intuitive, like a very powerful meditative presence, uncompromised, neither kind or unkind, the eye (I) of Truth who doesn't attend to much bullshit. I have to tell the truth. I went to him, asking for him to do a constellation with me. I did this because I wanted to experience him. He was sitting and not looking much at me and he said, "You are not ready yet." He was right. Spiritual Presence was not bullshitting! I did not go because I had a deep family crisis or because my whole life depended on it and needed the healing. I went out of curiosity and a desire to learn from him. I felt he was saying, You are just a spiritual tourist who wants to learn. You are not in a real deep need of me helping you right now. That was such a teaching for me, this capacity and spiritual depth and truth and honesty. That was my way of learning from him. I did not do a formal training, with Hellinger or an official constellation certificate program in Hungary. I learned the techniques most in Kriszta Kövesdi's groups. She was tuned to soul movements and had a deep presence of self which allowed a deep unfolding of things. And she had a refined awareness of being able to point out things that no one else saw, which was like an unveiling for us. I also attended later Annamária Angster's groups. She is the most famous Hungarian constellator and works in the classical constellation way and offers certificate programs licensed by the German constellators.

Diana: It sounds like you have devoted yourself to being prepared when you are serving others. This is a bit of a shift, but what do you do about fees?

Bence: I do charge for my workshops, in the strong mid-range price. I don't charge cheap (expressing low value) and I don't charge exclusive fees (I don't want to be elitist). For my international work, when I go to a certain country I also research the realistic workshop prices for that country or economic zone. What can be charged in the US would be exploitative for Central and Eastern Europeans.

Diana: What preparation do you feel facilitators who wish to do large-scale constellations need to do to be ready to do them? I have noticed that the impulse to use constellations to serve the larger collective is being felt by a growing number of facilitators.

Bence: You can do constellation by learning its techniques and principles. But to be really good at it, it is better to work on yourself. Generally for any deeper constellation work make sure that your presence and meditative awareness is trained and your silence is deep. Also it is good to enhance your intuition. Practice meditation regularly make it part of your life. Sit in silence long and frequently. You can do any constellation from the mind or from the soul. The more meditation you do, the more you will be operating from the soul or spirit.

When you do large-scale constellations then create a clear concept in your mind. What is the focus of the constellation? Also examine why are you doing it. What is your own search and spirited inspiration that is expressed through your impulse for doing such a constellation? Then define the elements (representations, roles, qualities) to constellate? We spent a lot of hours planning the conference constellation. We had many ideas what to constellate and part of our job was to narrow the list and focus.

Bring your own questions and desires. Why are you doing this? Why are you interested in doing this work? What is your own story with the subject for maybe months and years that makes you search and be inspired? I had my own history, being a Hungarian, then becoming international carrying a European identity and in the last years partly becoming an American too. I vividly experience all these layers in myself so I am honestly motivated to awaken people to these realities in themselves and explore together what is there and what realities we share and how can we co-create. That's why we offered it at IEC. I think it is true for Barbara too. So we did this not merely because we are skilled facilitators but this is also our passion to share and research the subject. I think that adds to the facilitator's presence. If you are interested you are more present so there is an extra power there beyond technical skills.

Diana: One of my understandings about the difference between family/organizational constellations and collective constellations is that there is not a client in collective constellations. Jan Jacob Stam has said that we can think of society as the client. I have seen other facilitators who have a host or sponsor for the question to be constellated. I noticed that you did not do that at IEC.

Bence: No. We felt there was no need for such a person because everyone entering the room knew we would be constellating countries. It wasn't a blank, undefined space. And everyone knew this was not about doing personal constellations.

Although the next morning I was approached by a woman who said, "You didn't do Brexit. We need to do Brexit!" I asked her what she wanted to do, and she said she didn't know but we had to do something. So I said that perhaps the following day at the closing ceremony we could do something. In my heart I felt the

request wasn't somehow right, it felt more to me like coming from the person's mind or maybe ego but not from sensing what needs to be done in this field of people here (channelling the field). I did not really want to do anything on Brexit (although personally I was really concerned and did not want England to leave the EU, I just didn't feel that that was necessary to do in a next constellation in this conference). I spoke with Barbara and Péter about it and we decided (from the mind) to bring it to the closing ceremony. And what happened? The woman had gone home before that ceremony! She demanded it and then wasn't even there when we gave space for her request, she went home. So we decided to tell all the participants honestly about the request and that the woman had gone home. We asked if there was anybody who felt it was important to constellate it at that point. No one stepped up so we finally let it go.

So one important message to facilitators is that your main instrument to use is your heart space. Think with your heart. The heart has two layers: the upper layer and the deeper layer. The upper layer is when you learn to love each other, to sit in circle, to share, to touch and be touched, to be compassionate. This is very important as the first opening. When that happens often a deeper layer of pain comes up. So opening the heart isn't just light and yields love but it goes deeper and calls for a deeper cleansing and opening. Usually it includes the deeper pain and unresolved issues from childhood and beyond. So you have to work through the therapeutic cleansing of the heart. And then the heart is so deep and relaxed that it gets plugged in to the transpersonal Field. Cleansing the personal heart through therapeutic work creates the room for the deeper heart to sense the field. That's what I mean by listening to the heart. You can use this sensing in many areas, for example when selecting the roles and selecting people for the roles.

A constellator is like a little shaman. There is no democracy in shamanism. If individuals want to do something in the constellation the constellator (or as at IEC, Brigitte served this function) needs to be able to read whether it is authentic and that it is coming from the field, not just the personality of the individual. And only do what feels authentic. You can't impose something or fake something.

Diana: Anything more about being a facilitator?

Bence: Love people! Heart-space, presence, intuition is love. There is a powerful and non-invasive fire energy of love in the heart space. It's not always a kind love. It's not unkind love either. It's love by knowing the deeper and greater is coming out and wants to work and you are in service of that and it knows. We try to be as clear channels as we can. We do have this capacity and it is able to come out when doing constellations.

Diana: Who do you feel you are serving? For instance, some say they are serving the planet.

Bence: I say I am serving the field. I'd say, honestly, that I am serving the Creator. The field is the Creator. I don't feel ego-inflated or anything special when I say that. I feel being just a guy who pays attention and interested in this.

We have to have skills also. So facilitators, please learn the method and techniques and exercise them. It's not enough to have a loving presence and yet not have learned the method. Freud said the same thing hundred years ago as a general rule for psychotherapist: learn the theory, go to therapy yourself to have your personal experience of the approach and then learn the skills, the method of it. Also use supervision for a while.

Diana: Thank you so much! This has been so rich. The written word misses how your face lit up many times. Your passion and alignment are palpable.

Bence: Thank you. I simply love it, it enlivens me.

Diana: And I feel great gratitude for having participated in the IEC constellation, for having experienced how you facilitate and now hearing from you directly. Thank you!

Bence: You are welcome!

¹ Zoom, <https://zoom.us/> Zoom is a cloud video conferencing service.

² Ken Wilber and the Integral movement: The world-wide Integral Community/ movement springs from the voluminous writings of Ken Wilber and others who for the last several decades have searched for a comprehensive map of human potentials. The map uses all the known systems and models of human growth. For a quick and image-based overview see: Ken Wilber, *The Integral Vision: A Very Short Introduction to the Revolutionary Integral Approach to Life, God, the Universe, and Everything*. Boston & London, Shambala, 2007.

³ For example, Mihály Csíkszentmihályi, *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*. New York: Harper and Row, 1990; and *Creativity : Flow and the Psychology of Discovery and Invention*. New York: Harper Perennial, 1996.

⁴ Dennis Wittrock, <https://www.linkedin.com/in/denniswittrock>;
<http://integraleuropeanconference.com/our-team/>

⁵ Barbara von Meibom, <http://integraleuropeanconference.com/prof-dr-barabara-von-meibom/>
<http://www.communio-fuehrungskunst.de/>

⁶ Péter Kemény, <http://www.integralakademia.hu/integral-pszichologia-szak/tanaraink/2015-09-24/kemeny-peter>

⁷ Don Beck and Spiral Dynamics: <http://www.spiraldynamics.net/> Based on the research of Clare Graves, Don Beck and Chris Cowan evolved Spiral Dynamics into a colour-coded mapping of the evolution of human consciousness that is applicable to all scales, from individuals to large collectives.

First tier: Beige (survival); Purple (security); Red (energy and power); Blue (absolute order); Orange (success and entrepreneurship); Green (community). Leap to second tier: Yellow (systems and synergy); Turquoise (holistic life system).

⁸ We wanted them to sit on the ground not in chairs to get them from level 4 and 5 state of mind (amber-orange, roles and being rational) and flexibly shift to lower (3, 2, 1 or red, magenta, infrared) and higher (early and late level 6 - green, teal) states. That's an example of how I use the lower-right quadrants (room setting, sitting formations, music, lights, etc) consciously to induce levels and states.

[Diana: Spiral Dynamics and Integral integrated to become Spiral Dynamics Integral. Ken Wilber created his own colour system based on the spectrum of light which coincides with the SD colour scale at some points. When learning these two systems, this can be confusing. For example, Blue in SD is amber in Integral, Yellow in SD is Teal in Integral.]

⁹ Brigitte Wingelmayr, <http://program.integraleuropeanconference.com/project/brigitte-wingelmayr-europe-and-i-a-mirror/>

¹⁰ Annette Kaiser, <http://integraleuropeanconference.com/annette-kaiser/>

Diana Claire Douglas is a systemic constellator/facilitator, coach and consultant (family, organisational, and social issues), social architect, artist, writer, and explorer of the depths. She believes that constellation work is a vital tool for co-creation in the 21st century. She is on the core teams of Integral City and The Hague Centre for Global Governance, Innovation and Emergence, where SCW is used regularly for decision-making, designing creative projects, and team building. Along with expanding Knowing Field Designs, she is participating in the emergence of collective constellations and enjoying networking with constellators in Europe and North America who are doing them. She would love anyone who is doing societal/collective issues constellations to be in touch with her.

dianaclairedouglas@bell.net.

www.knowingfielddesigns.com