**Introduction to family constellation**

Family constellation work is very experiential and explaining the process in words will only give you an approximate idea how it works. Research hasn’t come up with an explanation why it works the way it does, but your experience and the resulting insights will make this process clearer.

While it’s possible to be done in individual therapy, it’s easier to understand the concept by explaining a group constellation. An individual client has an issue in mind, and then he or she will be invited to choose participants from the group to represent family members, positioning them spatially and energetically in a way that seems right, considering the family dynamics. When working with health issues the client might also choose someone to represent the symptom.

Within a very short period of time – sometimes within moments – quite extraordinarily the representatives are able to tune in, as though they have become antennae, and experience physical sensations, emotions or urges of those they are representing. This is a phenomenon in constellations referred to as the ‘knowing field’. It receives information from a ‘family soul’ or collective consciousness. Through the facilitators questions, observations, trial statements and repositioning, the client comes to see the situation in a new way, creating a picture for resolution that enables him or her to break identification with the ancestor‘s difficult fate as their own. We can then give up the childlike loyalties where love and belonging meant living out the consequences of another’s life which have only served to entangle us. Unnecessary suffering is therefore replaced with acknowledging and accepting the facts of what was happening in the past, leaving it where it belongs and freeing us to live our own lives more fully.

**Additional Note:**

It is normal in any family constellation group that not everyone will get their personal constellation done. You can gain very deep insights and healing from representing in someone else’s constellation as the issues which arise in an others constellation are often intimately connected to your own.

Understand that being a representative does not involve acting in any way. It is not playing a role but rather standing in a particular person’s position - you simply report the sensations feelings & impulses that spontaneously arise in you. People often worry about getting it right. But be assured whatever you notice or not notice is always perfect. That in itself is a big learning experience which deepens as you get familiar with the process.

**Preparing For your Own Constellation**

**Try to be well rested, with a clear mind and body**

**Clarify your question in terms of yourself.**   It can be helpful to formulate a clear, simple sentence describing what you hope will be different in you and how you approach the issue after doing the constellation.

**It is useful to know the basic facts about your family** - consider who had special fates i.e. dying young or having chronic illnesses or major traumas, and think about who belongs to your family system.(

Those included in the system are:

1.   Your parents, grandparents and great-grandparents and at times ancestors even further back

2.    Your brothers & sisters, sometimes aunts and uncles.

3.   Your children.

4.   Any children who died young, including stillbirths, miscarriages and abortions.

5.    Anybody - and this is most important - who made room in some way for the above members. This includes, for example, former partners of parents or grandparents, as well as all those whose misfortune or death brought the family an advantage or gain.

6.    Victims of violence and murder in the family or by any members of the family.

7.    Sometimes people who has saved the life of a family member.

This information can be useful but is not essential if you decide to do a constellation.

**After the constellation**

You don't need to do anything specific with the constellation for it to have its effect. The healing effects of the work unfold in their own time when we let go and trust the process. The effects often unfold over several months.

When you go home from the workshop we advise to be thoughtful about how much you share your experience with others. It is extremely difficult to explain constellations to those who have not experienced them. It is normal for many people to be sceptical about something that is so far outside of their normal experience and that is so challenging to our normal way of perceiving the world. Even if they are sympathetic, many people will try to engage you in an analytical conversation which can disconnect you from the healing image of the constellation.

Similarly, it is better not to try to analyse our own constellation. Rather it is better to replay it in our mind and especially to remember the healing movements and images, and the feelings that go with them. You may feel moved to make a little personal ritual to acknowledge this process.

Finally, whatever occurs in a constellation, usually should not be used as a recipe for your behaviour around the people represented in the constellation. Rather than that, we simply let it work within us and we may find ourselves spontaneously acting in different ways, than has been our usual past patterns. We may find ourselves getting in contact with previously distanced family members. We may find ourselves being more assertive or more conciliatory than before. Whatever the change in behaviour, it is likely that we will feel a greater sense of relaxation and connection. We may even feel more alive.