



Finding Coherence II

Catalyzing Embodied Change Processes in Conflict

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Cultural nuances are distinctive, yet they are often overshadowed by larger agendas that dominate conflict interventions. Conflict practitioners and intercultural theorists recognize this dilemma and have developed specific classifications to categorize cultural differences. These models may provide an appropriately structured framework for some contexts, but the risk of falling into stereotypes or generalizations has inherent limitations. As a Swiss coach and consultant, in the context of intercultural work I face the challenge of devising interventions that consider different systems of rationality. To understand the symbolic dimension of conflict dynamics, I propose that embodied approaches address diverse value systems and worldviews stretching beyond predictable frameworks. Culturally fluent strategies drawing from kinesthetic intelligence can foster a more in-depth understanding of the interplay between sensory experience, cultural identities, and conflict dynamics. Implicit cultural norms influence conflict dynamics, and effective interventions need to explore the roots of conflict behavior through an integration of the senses.

With reference to cultural frameworks, the Swiss are considered to have a cognitive-data and word-oriented culture.¹ Formalized documentation, efficient procedures and outputs, and highly structured meetings characterize our work environments. We are classified as linear-actives who plan, schedule, pursue action chains, and do one thing at a time.² Our dominant forms of individual and collective expression correlate with these cultural frames of reference. Swiss people often tend to express themselves with reserved and polite mannerisms, giving priority to logical and rational communication strategies.³ With minimal allowance for physical expression or emotional behavior, the retention of emotional expression is a common result. There can even be an overt dismissal of emotional involvement in certain scenarios. While navigating through conflictive behavior, we tend to believe that rational arguments are a sufficient form of persuasion. As a result, we neglect our emotions and become limited in our capacity to express the tensions or contradictions that we are sensing.

Emotional responses can be unpredictable and difficult to regulate; inviting the expression of emotions into linear negotiation processes could be perceived as threatening or simply inappropriate. If emotions are integrated with greater awareness, they can add valuable insights in conflict interventions. Leading conflict theories indicate that emotions, when properly

