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The metaphor as a manner of an effect in the pre-school age

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Generally speaking, metaphor could be defined as a means for message, a mechanism thanks to which the ideas could be transmitted and developed. When a story is addressed to the listener with the intention to give him an advice, an instruction for the solution of some problem, it transforms in a metaphor.

Each fairy-tale, fable, myth, joke represents a metaphor because beyond the direct literal text it contains another, quite different and hidden meaning which accords a heavier, emotional effect.

M. Erickson in collaboration with the psychologist E. Rossi, ascertains that the treatment of messages of metaphoric type commits in the right hemisphere of the brain, which into bigger extent than in the left hemisphere, is connected with the emotional and figurative side of the thinking. As an unrivalled master of “ training fairy- tales” he has had the ability to communicate on two levels- he has worked at the same time with the conscious and with the subconscious. While the conscious is listening to the literal meaning of the story, the deliberated and deftly mixed in the narration tissue suggestion, evokes, in the subconscious, the necessary associations and returning reactions. Finally, gradually amassing, they “ blend together” in the conscious even in sort of a new knowledge or attitude reaction which provoke the necessary beneficial variation. In his practice Erickson has often proved that with the help of the metaphor, it is possible to activate, in the subconscious, associative models (for instance: of repose, comfort, happiness) to displace old attitude models (of pain, complaint, irritation).

Upon usage of therapeutic metaphors, you have to back on the positive associations. It is important to reveal the good side of the child’s life - hobbies, favorite films, friends, joyful events... This information will help the therapist not only to penetrate into the inner world of the child but it will serve him as a base for the erection of the metaphor as well.

This approach allowed Erickson to create a new paradigm in the therapy when the center of the heaviness moves from the pathology to the potential

resource. Thanks to his stories he has contrived to represent the problem to child in a different context, he has impelled him just to look his attitude from another point of view, he has directed him to choose a decision.

The purpose of the therapeutic metaphor is to initiate the child conscious and subconscious search for own individual resource for a resolution of a lived at the moment conflict, on the base of a successful past experience. In order to happen, it is necessary to create a personal relation with the content of the metaphor, to provoke an interaction between the story and the listener's awakened to life "inner world". That is why it is important to use all types of information for the child and for the tints of his attitude.

The quick orientation in the sensitive preferences and the skill to transform them immediately in a metaphorical form, define the power of the remediable effect. If the content of the story is comprehensible and in unison with the child's world perception, if in the exposition is given an advantage to his preferable visual, audio or cinesthetic predicates, it appears inevitably a feeling of identicalness with the characters and the events from the world of the metaphor.

The content of the stories could be miscellaneous depending on the particular purposes – to relieve the adaptation of the first – grade student, to vanquish the feeling of guilt for the parents' divorce, to learn how to distribute his pocket money... But in order to be therapeutically valuable, the stories have to possess a similar structure, i.e. it always exists a problem (conflict) which requires the hero to use his individual resources (gift, quick – wittedness, bravery) in order to vanquish it and to transform the ostensible defeat into a victory. And all of them possess one basic quality – they all contain important advice or instructive messages concerning some specific problem.

The question if the metaphoric stories are suitable for children from the pre – school age, could be posed. We know that for them is natural the concrete, literal thinking and the metaphor requires a skill to make analogies, to establish abstract relations.

But little children possess another qualities, as well – they like fairy – tales, they implicitly indulge in their magic, from their point of view everything is possible. Therefore they anthropomorphally adopt the world, i.e. they can identify themselves with animals, trees, clouds and "import in themselves and in their own experience some characteristics of these exterior objects".

Wiglsuort refers to the R. Windbag's message (during the congress of NLP – 1988) for the successful use of metaphorical stories in her work with children between 3 and 5 years old (suffering from enuresis or feeling a little

anxious upon separation with their parents). Summarizing his experience, Windbag recommends the following manageable principles upon usage of stories for pre – school aged children:

Define the desirable result.

Make the story brief and directed.

Not very deep metaphors are suitable.

Use your voice expressively.

Let your language be simple and comprehensible for the child.

Let the child from the story be from the same sex as the listener.

Build strong permanent components (feeling or action).

Achieve the desirable result, make a synchronization with the future.

If it is necessary, repeat in brief intervals.

But there is a subtlety here – the exact representation of the child's problem shouldn't be too “ real “ so as not to provoke embarrassment or resistance. The meaning of the story has to “ strike home ” but in peculiar indirect way. It is necessary for the metaphor to contain some vagueness, “ haziness” , the message inside has to be indirect in order to provoke a certain difficulty, inner research, discovery of personal meaning and relation for the listener.

It is important to realize that the use of the metaphor as a manner of effect is not a priority only of the professional therapists. It could be an accessible means for every teacher, parent, grandparent...Its popularity in the family therapy increases more and more (V.Satir, A.Cornhaber, M. Wiglsuort) .

“When children are tight you are this adult who is capable to define limits, to call to order, to remove the tension with the help of humor and knowledge and to reveal a space of new possibilities. It is exactly what you have to embody in your metaphoric stories.

The family therapy's partisan uses the word “therapeutic” in wider meaning – using it they just designate “ change” or “ learning”. M. Wiglsuort differs “ therapeutic” from “ therapy” – the latter we usually refer to the relation “ broken – repaired” or “ ill – remedial” . She points that many of the crises that children survive refer more to the need of the development than to some frustration, requiring a professional help. The stories propose a perfect opportunity for the parents to do something in such case.

The media couldn't, in any way replace telling stories, especially definite for “our” child. When we talk about the hero's mischieves of our story, hence he is very peculiar character, because we have created him, only we know him. This originates feeling of mutuality between an adult and a

child, a bigger closeness arises, the relationships become deeper. But he of something unique, which we share with one child, does not hide only in the character, but in the representation the magic.

Everybody could learn the art of creating and telling metaphorical stories and it will transform into a source of pleasure for both adults and children. Wiglsuort proposes to start with something very ordinary – to tell the known story of the own experience, a favorite fairy – tale of our childhood, gradually to involve the child in a dialogue in order to fabricate together, to draw after the told story, to dramatize with dolls...

As a conclusion, I would like to underline that it is not necessary after each told story to look for evidences of its effects on the child, as a behavior change. Instead of that we have to be interested in that if the child likes the story, if it makes him happy, if it creates a feeling of confidence and closeness. If it is so, we could be sure that the stories as a particular type of a verbal communication will play their role to “describe, explain, predict, give information, amuse” and at the same time to create a better I – image inside the child.