

Bert Hellinger

On Consciences

Contents

Part One: Consciences

The personal conscience	1
Belonging	1
Good and Bad	2
The collective conscience	2
Completeness	2
The instinct	3
Belonging beyond death	3
Who belongs?	3
Only love resolves	4
Who else belongs to the family?	4
The balance	5
Atonement and penance	5
Revenge	5
Healing	6
The law of priority	6
The violation of the law of priority and the consequences	6
The scope of the collective conscience	7
The spiritual conscience	8

Part Two: The different consciences and their roles in family-constellations

The spiritual conscience	9
The distinctions among the different consciences	9
The spiritual family constellations	10
The personal conscience	11
The collective conscience	12
Conclusion	13

Part One: Consciences

There are three different consciences, each of which constitutes a spiritual field. The first, the personal conscience, is narrow and limited in its reach. Because it makes distinctions between “good” and “bad,” it acknowledges the right of some to belong while denying the right of others.

The second conscience, the collective, is wider in its scope, representing, as well, the interests of those who are excluded by the personal conscience. Therefore, it is often in conflict with the personal conscience. But the collective conscience also has its limitations as it encompasses only members of the groups that are governed by it.

The third conscience, the spiritual, overcomes the limitations of the other consciences, the parameters of which are created when distinctions are made between “good” and “bad” and some are seen as “belonging” while others are excluded.

The personal conscience

Belonging

We experience the personal conscience in terms of good or bad, feeling good when we are in good conscience and feeling bad when we are in bad conscience.

In tracking when we have a good conscience, and when we have a bad one, we see that bad conscience is related to thinking, feeling, and/or doing something that is not in resonance with the expectations and demands of those people and groups to which we want to belong, on which we may even depend for survival.

This means that our conscience is vigilant to ensure that we remain in close connection with these people and groups. It perceives instantly whether our thoughts, wishes, knowledge, and/or actions could endanger our connection and threaten our belonging. And when our conscience perceives that we may be moving away from the people on whom we depend, it becomes fearful that we might also be jeopardizing our belonging. This fear is felt as a bad conscience.

On the other hand, when we think, wish, and act in ways that are in alignment with the expectations and demands of those people and groups, we feel that we can be certain of our belonging. The sense of secure belonging makes us feel good and at ease. We do not have to worry that we might suddenly find ourselves cut off, and therefore, alone and unprotected. The feeling of security, to be allowed to belong, we experience as a good conscience. So, the personal conscience ties us to the people and groups who are important for our well-being and essential to our lives.

But this conscience connects us only to certain people and groups, and at the same time, it excludes others. Therefore, it is a narrow conscience.

This conscience was of overriding importance for us as children. Children do anything to be allowed to belong, for without this connection, they would be lost.

The personal conscience safeguards our survival in the groups and with the people who are important for our survival. Clearly, its utmost

importance must be acknowledged, and we can see that the personal conscience holds a primary place in our society and culture.

Good and Bad

In this connection we can observe that our concepts of good and bad are distinctions made by this personal conscience. They measure to what extent thoughts or actions safeguard our belonging or put it at risk.

We experience as good that which secures our belonging. We experience it as good through our good conscience, and so we don't feel the need to give it any further thought; for example, if we were to step out of this personal conscience to look at it from a greater distance, would we judge it as good, or might we even see it as bad for some? Given our felt sense of good conscience, these questions are moot.

Therefore, the good is just felt as good, and defended as good, quite unthinkingly. For an observer outside of this mental field, this so-called good may actually appear to be rather strange and even dangerous, but for those within it, there is no room for question.

The same applies of course with respect to the bad, except that we feel the bad more strongly than the good. You see, it is tied to our fear that we could lose our right to belong, and with it even our right to live. So, the distinction between good and bad serves the survival within our own group; it serves the survival of individuals within their groups.

The collective conscience

Behind the conscience that we feel there is yet another conscience at work. It is a mighty conscience. Its effects are much stronger than the personal conscience. Still, it remains mostly hidden from us. Why? According to our felt sense, the personal conscience has precedence over the collective conscience.

The collective conscience is a group conscience. While the personal conscience is felt by the individual and is in the service of the individual's belonging and the individual's survival, the collective conscience attends to the family as a whole and to the group as a whole. It is in the service of the survival of the group as a whole even if it means that individuals are being sacrificed in the name of that survival. This conscience is in service of the completeness of the group and it enforces the norms that best secure the group's existence.

When the interests of the individual are in opposition to the interests of the group, then the personal conscience may well be in opposition to the collective conscience.

Completeness

Which laws does the collective conscience serve and how does it enforce these laws?

The first law maintains that every member of the group has an equal right to belong. When a member has been excluded for any reason, a later member of the group will have to represent the excluded member.

The collective conscience is amoral. It doesn't make a distinction between good and bad or between guilt and innocence. At the same time, it

protects all members in the same way, seeking to protect everyone's right to belong, or to restore it where it has been denied.

What happens when a family member has been denied this right? The claim is restored by this conscience through another member who is compelled to represent the excluded one within the family. This family member is not conscious of his or her connection to the earlier excluded member.

How this shows up in the system is that one family member takes on the fate of the excluded one. In representing him or her, the current member thinks like the other, has similar feelings, lives in a similar way, and even dies in a similar way. Through such representation, this family member is in the service of the excluded one, giving back his or her place in the system. In a way, the current member is possessed by the excluded person, but without losing the self. When the excluded person regains a place within the family, the later family member is set free.

It is not that the excluded person wants to be represented in this way – although occasionally an excluded person has bad wishes for someone in the family -- it is primarily that the collective conscience wills the representation, including the ensuing entanglement. The goal is to restore the completeness of the group.

The instinct

It is not accurate to see this conscience as a person, to personify it and attribute it with having personal aims and pursuing them in a calculated manner. This conscience operates as a drive, a collective drive that wants only one thing: to save and restore completeness. Therefore, it is blind in the choice of its means.

Belonging beyond death

We can discern which persons are influenced and driven by the collective conscience, because we can observe who can be chosen for the representation of excluded family members and who can't. Here we have to be aware that no one loses their right or ability to belong through death. This means that the collective conscience treats the dead members of the family in the same way as the living ones. No one is separated from his or her family through death. The family system contains its dead and its living members in the same way. This conscience seeks to return even the dead members of the family if they have been excluded, yes, especially those. Through death people lose their present lives, but never forfeit their belonging to the family.

Who belongs?

Here I enumerate who belongs to the family system governed by a common collective conscience, beginning with those who are closest to us.

The following family members are subjugated to this conscience:

The children. This includes ourselves and our siblings. The sibling line contains not only those who lived but those who were stillborn or aborted, and often also the miscarried ones. Some, as we know, are of the belief that

these children should be excluded or forgotten – often in the interest of “moving on” -- but we include them. And, of course, the system must account for all those children who were kept a secret and who were given away; they too belong to the family. For the collective conscience, they all fully belong, and they are remembered and have to be brought back without considering justifications or wishes.

The level above the children. This category includes the parents and their blood siblings, those who made it and those who did not, those who were kept and those who were given away.

In addition, the former partners of the parents belong to the family. If they are rejected and excluded, they are represented by one of the children until they are remembered with love and brought back in. After all, these are the people who made room for what occurred after.

Only love resolves

I wish to say something here about how the excluded ones can be brought back. Only through love.

Which love? The felt love. It is felt when we turn to the other person just as he or she is. It is also felt as grief when we lose that person. It is felt as pain when we consider what we may have done to the other. In this love we can feel whether it reaches the other persons, whether it provides a sense of reconciliation thus allowing them to find rest, and whether the person can take the right place again and remain there. If so, our collective conscience finds rest as well.

This conscience is in the service of love -- in the service of the same love for all who belong to this family.

Who else belongs to the family?

On the level above the parent. The grandparents belong, but without their siblings, unless a sibling has had a special fate. The grandparents' former partners belong to the family as well.

Great-grandparents. One or the other of the great-grandparents may belong to this family system, but it is rare.

Up to this point, we have mentioned blood relatives and former partners of parents and grandparents. There are several other categories as well.

Those who bore the loss or reaped the benefits. Beyond the blood relatives and earlier partners, people whose loss – of life or of fortune – created an advantage for our family belong; for example, when our family inherited large sums of money or property at someone else's expense.

Victims. People who were victims of violent acts at the hands of members of our family become a part of the family, especially those who were murdered. Our family must look at these individuals as “brothers” and “sisters” with love and grief and pain.

Perpetrators. When members of our family are victims of crime, especially if they lose their lives, the murderers belong to our families too. If they are excluded or rejected, the collective conscience will ensure that they are later represented by members of our family.

Murderers are drawn to their victims, just as victims are drawn to their murderers. Both feel complete only when they have found each other and have reunited. The collective conscience does not make a distinction here either.

The balance

Allow me to say something about the laws of balance as they operate in these two consciences. The need for balancing between taking and giving and between gain and loss is also a movement of conscience.

The personal conscience, which we feel as a good conscience and as a bad conscience, and as innocence and guilt, watches over the balance of giving and taking using the feelings of innocence and guilt and of a good conscience and a bad conscience as barometers. But this kind of guilt and innocence feels different from the feeling of guilt and innocence with regard to belonging or no longer belonging.

Guilt is felt here as an obligation in having received or taken something without having returned something of equal value. Innocence is felt here as freedom from obligation. We have this feeling of innocence and freedom when we have given as well as taken, so that taking and giving are in balance.

We can achieve balance in another way as well. Instead of returning something of equal value, we can pass on something of equal value to others. This is especially salient with regard to our parents. We cannot return something of equal value to them, for what is equal in weight to life; however, we can pass this gift on to others, for example, to our children, and in this way respond in kind.

Atonement and penance

We balance taking and giving also through suffering. This is a movement of conscience as well. When we have caused suffering to someone, we also want to suffer as a form of balance. After having suffered ourselves, we may have a good feeling, a good conscience again.

This form of balance we know as atonement and penance. However, this need to do penance is self-centered: it cannot really give anything to the other person that will restore balance. Still, the other may not feel so alone.

This kind of balance has nothing or little to do with love; it is instinctual and blind.

Revenge

The feeling of needing to balance also arises when someone has harmed us. We want to harm him or her in return. This need for balance becomes a need for revenge. But revenge balances only for a moment. Once it tips, further needs for revenge are activated on all sides, and in the end revenge only causes harm to all.

Healing

Within the collective conscience, there is also a need for balance. However, the movement of this balance is largely hidden from our consciousness. Those who have to represent excluded persons do not know that they are destined to balance something that damaged the family system as a whole. Balance on this level is a movement of a greater whole, and so it balances rather impersonally, as those who are enlisted to serve this restorative movement are innocent according to the personal conscience. This form of balancing is actually aligned with a healing process. Something that has been injured is being restored under the influence of greater powers. The collective conscience wants to bring back something that has been lost, and in this way restore order for the whole family system and heal it.

The law of priority

A second law that the collective conscience serves – and that it will try to restore if it has been violated – is that everyone in the group must take the place that is appropriate according to his or her rank of belonging. This law requires that those who belonged to the system earlier take precedence over those who came later. Therefore, parents take precedence over their children, and the first child has precedence over the second. Each member of the group has a particular and proper place.

The ranking is fluid: as new children are born, the precedence shifts. Someone who was youngest and therefore last in the order of precedence gains priority as soon as someone younger comes into the birth picture. Eventually, each person will begin a family, and in this family, take first place together with the partner.

In this transition, another law of priority asserts itself, a norm of priority between families, for example, between the family of origin and newly founded family. Here the new family takes precedence over the old one.

This law also applies when one parent starts another relationship during the marriage, and a child is born from the relationship. With this, a new family has been founded, and it takes precedence over the earlier one, without question.

The violation of the law of priority and the consequences

The law of priority is violated when someone who joined a system later wants to assume a rank higher than is appropriate. This violation of the norm of priority is known as the pride that goes before the fall.

Often, violations of this law are attributed to children, who when they place themselves above their parents and act accordingly, violate the norm of priority without love.

More often, however, this law of priority is violated when the child wants to take something on for the parents. This child desires to carry something so the parent doesn't have to, for example, to become sick or to die in the parent's place. In this case, the law of priority is being violated with love. Even so, this love does not protect the child from the consequences of the violation.

The tragedy in this is that the child violates the law of priority with a good conscience. This means that under the influence of personal conscience, the child, through this transgression, feels particularly innocent and big. Through this violation, the child experiences in a special way that he or she has the right to belong.

In this scenario, the two consciences oppose each other. The law of priority, which the collective conscience imposes and safeguards, is violated under the influence of and in harmony with the personal conscience. In this sense, the violation comes from a good personal conscience. The personal conscience is thus pushing someone to violate this law and to bear the consequences of the action.

What are the consequences of this violation? The first consequence is failure. Those who want to rise above their parents, with or without love, fail. We can observe that this law and the consequences of its violation do not only apply in the family, but also in other groups as well, such as in organizations.

Many organizations fail because of internal conflicts, in which a lower ranking person or department attempt to rise above an older and therefore higher ranking one.

The essential failure and consequence of the violation of the law of priority is death. The tragic hero wanted to take upon himself something for those who had priority in the system. In this bargain, he not only fails, he dies.

Something similar we see with children who carry something for their parents and want to take it on themselves for them. They are then saying: "Rather me than you." What exactly does this imply? In the end it means: "I will die in your place." Of course, this is an even greater tragedy for the parent on whose behalf the child acts than his or her own death could ever be.

The law of priority is an order of peace. It is in the service of peace in the family and in a group. In the final analysis, it is in the service of love and life everywhere.

The scope of the collective conscience

How far back does the collective conscience reach? Is it only concerned with the dead we know? Or does this conscience also want to bring back the excluded ones from earlier generations? May be even us, as we were in an earlier life? Perhaps the collective conscience is even in the service of a cosmic movement, to which nothing that has been must ever be lost.

Do we violate this norm of priority also through our belief in progress, as if we were better than our ancestors?

What effect does it have on us when we take our proper position in the whole, quite humbly in the last place? What effect does it have on us when we take all those who were excluded, for whatever reasons, and those who had to die before their full time, into our hearts here and now? We accept them with all that they may still miss -- and perhaps complete the circle, including what was lost, together with them.

The spiritual conscience

To what does the spiritual conscience respond? It responds to a movement of the spirit, this spirit that moves everything exactly in the way it moves. This spirit moves everything in a creative manner. Everything is subject to this movement, whether we want it or not, whether we submit to it or we try to resist it.

We have to ask ourselves whether we perceive ourselves in harmony with this movement, whether we willingly surrender and knowingly remain in tune with it. If we remain in tune with this conscience, we move and think and feel and act only as far as we perceive ourselves to be guided and carried by it.

What happens when we stay in harmony with this movement? What happens for us when we try to pull away from this movement, perhaps because its demands on us seem too big, too frightening? Here we experience something about our spiritual conscience that we can compare to our personal conscience.

When we experience ourselves as in harmony with the movements of spirit, we feel good. Most of all, we feel calm and without concern. We know our next steps and have the strength to make them. This feeling, this "knowing," could be called the good spiritual conscience. As with our personal conscience, here, too, we are immediately aware whether or not we are in tune. The difference here is that the knowledge is spiritual. The good spiritual conscience is felt here as a willingness to surrender to a spiritual movement.

What is the essence of this spiritual movement? It is a loving movement of spirit toward everything as it is. This spiritual conscience perceives itself at one with the spirit that gives the same loving attention to everything as it is.

How then do we experience a bad *spiritual* conscience? We sense it as restlessness, as a spiritual blockage, the manifestation of which is that we no longer know our way, that we don't know what to do, and that we feel devoid of strength.

When do we experience a bad spiritual conscience? Immediately, the answer comes: When we have deviated from the love of the spirit. One example would be when we have excluded someone from our loving attention and from our goodwill. In this moment, we lose the harmony with the movement of the spirit, and we are thrown back onto ourselves, left with our bad spiritual conscience.

But just as with the bad personal conscience, the bad spiritual conscience also works in the service of the good conscience. Through its effects, it guides us back into harmony with the movements of the spirit, until we become calm and at one again with its loving attention and love for everything and everyone as they are.

Part Two: The different consciences and their roles in family-constellations

When people want to understand and resolve a personal problem with the help of family constellations, or when they want to understand and resolve a problem with a partner, or in the family, or with a child, we see immediately which conscience is most involved in creating and maintaining the problem. From there we understand what this problem demands of the individual and of the family in order to come to resolution.

In this way we must see the interconnectedness of the consciences because they all operate in the service of our relationships. They work together one after the other and they complement each other, so that we must see that a problem and its resolution are related to a couple of consciences and, in the end, to all of them.

Just as we can see what consciences are at the fore when a client states an issue, when a helper has a problem with a client, the helper can reflect on which consciences are involved as he or she works with this person, and what they offer him or her in terms of a resolution.

The spiritual conscience

Here we look at family constellations from the far side of the road; we move toward the perspective of the spiritual conscience. And looking back over the path traveled thus far, we can clearly understand the importance of the personal and collective consciences. We also perceive where they reach their limitations. The spiritual conscience leads us beyond these boundaries.

The distinctions among the different consciences

What are the essential distinguishing features among the different consciences? What are their respective limitations? The distinctions and the limitations lie in the scope of their love.

The personal conscience serves our belonging to a limited group. It excludes others who do not belong to this group. In this way, it not only connects, it also separates. It does not only love, it also rejects.

The collective conscience goes beyond the personal conscience for it loves also those within a family or other closed group those who were rejected and excluded. The collective conscience wants to bring back the excluded ones so that they are allowed to belong again to their families and groups. Therefore, its love reaches further.

The collective conscience is not so much concerned with the well-being of the individual. If it were, it would not be able to force innocent persons - who had no part in the exclusion - to represent the excluded ones, sometimes at a great personal cost. The distinction between the personal and collective consciences is clear here: the collective is mainly concerned with the completeness of a given group and with maintaining fundamental laws within that group.

The movements of the spirit, by contrast, are equally concerned with all. When we have come into harmony with the movements of the spirit, we cannot help but be concerned with all equally, with benevolence and love, whatever their fates.

This love knows no boundaries: it overcomes the distinctions between “better” and “worse,” between “good” and “bad.” Therefore, this conscience transcends the boundaries, both of the personal conscience and of the collective conscience. The spiritual conscience turns to everyone equally. The spiritual conscience watches over this universal love, so that we feel its sting when we have deviated from this farthest reaching love.

The spiritual family constellations

How does the spiritual conscience affect family constellations? How does its love show in family constellations?

The movements of the spirit reveal themselves in family constellations in impressive ways. We can experience the movements of the spirit and see them in action in a family constellation in the representatives and also in those who observe them. The movements of the spirit are first perceived by the representatives, and then, through the representatives, also by those who observe these movements, and who are perhaps even drawn and taken in by them. Therefore, the procedure in spiritual family constellations is different from the one that many people associate with family constellations.

Here, a family is no longer positioned according to the traditional procedure in which someone chooses from the group representatives for family members and then places them in spatial relationship to each other. In spiritual family constellations, the setup is very minimal. One or two people may participate, perhaps the client or a representative for the client and then one other person, perhaps the partner, for example. The two people may be asked to stand at some distance from one another, not positioned per se, but simply standing opposite each other. No instructions are given and no intentions pursued. The client or the client’s representative and the other person are simply placed.

They are allowed their time, and all of a sudden, they may be drawn by a movement, as if it came from outside, without their being able to direct this movement or to resist it. This movement comes from outside, even though it is sensed inside, as coming from within. In this way, they experience being in tune with an outside force that initiates a movement through them. But this only happens if they remain collected, without intentions of their own, and without fear of what might show up.

As soon as intentions come into play, for example, the intention to help, or to attempt to control what might come to light, the connection with the movements of the spirit is lost. The collectedness of the spectators also gets lost. They may become restless, for example.

After a while, it becomes clear from the movements from the representatives, whether or not another person needs to be placed. When someone is looking to the ground, it may mean that he is looking at a dead person, for example. Someone will then be asked to lie down in front of this representative where he looks. Or when a representative’s gaze is fixed in one direction, someone is asked to stand in front of the representative where she looks.

The movements of the representatives are very slow. When someone moves fast, it is indicative of being moved by an intention and that person is no longer in tune with the movements of the spirit. The person is no longer collected and reliable and so needs to be replaced by another representative.

Most important, the leader of the constellation must refrain from personal views and interpretations. Facilitator, too, surrender to the

movements of the spirit, which means that they act only when they clearly sense that they are being moved to a next step or to a sentence, which they either say or ask a representative to say. Moreover, from the movements of the representatives facilitators continuously receive hints as to what is going on inside them and where their movements are leading to and must lead to.

For instance, when a representative shrinks back or wants to turn away from a dead person who lies in front of her, the leader intervenes after some time and brings her back. The representatives tell through their movements but they do not determine the piece. Like them, facilitators are in the service of the movements of the spirit. They follow them, often irresistibly, by intervening in a certain way or saying something.

Where are these movements of the spirit taking us in the end? They bring together what had been separated before. They are always movements of love.

These movements don't always have to be brought to completion. It is enough if it becomes clear where they are leading to. Therefore, these constellations often remain open. We can trust that what has been set into motion will continue in the souls of those concerned. These are deep movements that do not simply show a solution to a specific problem; they are decisive steps in the process of healing, and they need their time to unfold.

Family constellations in harmony with the movements of the spirit require foremost that the leader of the constellation also remains in harmony with these movements. This person, therefore, must remain beyond making any distinction between good and bad and be equally turned to everybody with the same love. This can only be achieved if he or she has learned to keep in harmony with a movement of spirit inside, so that that any deviation from love will be sensed immediately.

A facilitator, for example, who is drawn to blame someone for a certain event or to pity someone for having to suffer is deviating from the distant, steady love of the spiritual conscience. We, of course, experience this type of deviation again and again in ourselves. But when we have learned to be mindful of the movements of the spiritual conscience, and to submit to its discipline, we can be brought back into harmony with its movement of love for all as it is.

The personal conscience

The tightest boundaries around love are drawn by the personal conscience, for our common distinction between the right of belonging and the denial of belonging are created and reinforced by this conscience. And it is evident that this distinction is essential to our survival. Within a certain context, it cannot be replaced by anything else.

This conscience establishes these boundaries first of all for the children. A child's survival depends on compliance with the thinking and behavior that is demanded by this conscience. This conscience requires children to be suspicious of those who belong to other groups and therefore who follow a different personal conscience. In good personal conscience, one group is suspicious of the other, often even rejecting and fighting the other, which, of course, is also in good personal conscience.

The good personal conscience makes survival possible on one hand, but on the other hand, this conscience endangers survival because it

inevitably leads to conflicts with other groups, sometimes with deadly consequences.

The need for balance is a movement of personal conscience. We have a good conscience when we give back something of equal value to what was given to us. That reflects a balance between giving and taking. We experience the same good conscience in situations where we cannot return something of equal value. Here, instead of returning something to the person who gave to us, we pass on something of equal value to others.

Accordingly, we have a bad conscience when we take something from others without giving back something of equal value, or when we demand something from others that is not appropriate.

This need for balance makes our relationships possible. In this way, our personal conscience serves our relationships. This need for balance also serves our survival, yet only within certain boundaries.

The personal conscience serves life and survival, both in its attention to balance as well as in its role of keeping a group together. On the other side, as soon as a certain boundary has been overstepped, our personal conscience leads to something else, sometimes even to death.

To the extent that our personal conscience connects us to our group, it demands from us that we stay away from other groups. These demands of our personal conscience often lead to severe conflicts, including war.

Our personal conscience sometimes oversteps the boundaries that serve life when the need for balance is extended and distorted to include revenge; meaning, repaying harm received by creating harm in return.

The need for penance is similar in a way. In order to balance the suffering and harm that we have caused others, we now impose suffering and harm onto ourselves. Sometimes we even suffer in the place of others.

In family constellations we can often see that a child does penance for the parents, perhaps by becoming ill or even dying. Sometimes we see a mother or a father who expects a child to do penance in her or his place. This is a largely unconscious process on both sides, as the collective conscience plays a role as well, but this kind of balance opposes life, sometimes even destroying it -- with a good conscience and the feeling of innocence.

What do we really have to be mindful of in family constellations, so that we keep within those boundaries of our personal conscience that serve life? We must have left behind us the distinction of good and bad. If we remain within the spell of our personal conscience -- for example if we reject other people, perhaps together with the client -- then we serve life in a limited way. We serve it in the same way as the personal conscience. In one way, we serve life; in another, we serve death.

The collective conscience

What do we have to observe in family constellations concerning the collective conscience?

First, in our role of helping others in a family constellation, we do not exclude anyone from the family, not in ours and not in the client's. We look for the excluded ones, in our own family and in the client's family. We look at them with love and take them close to us with love. We can do this only if we have left behind the distinction between good and bad and if we are also looking at the unborn children, painful as that may be for us. This takes courage as well as clarity.

Second, we must respect the law of priority. When we use family constellations to help others, we temporarily become a member of the client's family. But we join the family as the last member; meaning that our place is last.

What happens when a helper takes the first place, above the client and the client's parents? That helper fails. It is the same as when the client violates the law of priority by taking something upon herself in the place of her parents. The implicit message is often: "I in your place." In this, the client fails as well.

For the helper the violation of the law of priority can also be dangerous. A kind of chain reaction sometimes occurs: a helper takes something upon himself that belongs to the client, and thereby puts himself above the client, perhaps just as the client put himself above his parents, and as the helper perhaps did as a child toward his own parents. Most of all when the helper assumes that he can change the client's fate or protect the client from it, the well-intentioned presumption saps everyone involved of possibility. Only within the boundaries of the law of priority can the helper keep her strength, and can the client be able to find his way to the appropriate solution.

In family constellations we work in accordance with the collective conscience and its laws. In this way we stay within its boundaries. These boundaries are wide and open. We keep these boundaries if we submit to its two basic laws: the law that all members have the same right to belong, and the law of priority that assigns to all members their respective places.

Conclusion

The spiritual conscience guides us beyond the boundaries of the personal conscience through its love for all. It also protects us from disregarding the laws of the collective conscience for it is turned to everyone in the same measure. It honors the law of priority in a special way, because in going with the movements of the spirit we know ourselves connected with all people, in the same way, feet on the ground like everyone else.

In spiritual family constellations we always remain in the love for everyone and everything as it is. Only spiritual family constellations are always and everywhere in the service of life ... of love ... and of peace.