

# Loss and Acquisition of Speech

## Working with the Essence of the Spoken Word in the Lives of Children and Older Individuals<sup>1</sup>

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### The Connection between the Four Subtle Bodies and the Threefold Organism of the Human Being

The nervous system is the head of the threefold human being. The human self, or 'I', is the entity that works with the threefold human being. The 'I' is a fourth member. The threefold organism is the instrument – the gift of the Creation – that is worked through by the 'I' and that is formed by the participation of the 'I'. The 'I' is the being who makes the threefoldness, or trinity, into a unity, but which can also hold itself at a distance from this.

In regard to speech and language, Rudolf Steiner says that, before the 'I' comes to birth and come into the body, speech and language have already fully taken shape as a possibility, as lawfulness of the air element, as world wisdom. This is a very important perspective, particularly in relation to the difficult ethical issues that arise especially at the beginning and end of life, when we see a loss of autonomy in connection with the nervous system and the organism of the brain: Should a severely disabled child be carried to term? Should one not 'free' society from the burden of old people?

Elders themselves often feel that they are a burden. In view of these dramatic ethical issues concerned with the beginning and end stages of life, it is tremendously important to clearly understand that the body, the threefold organism, is only the instrument and that it is the 'I' who 'plays' this instrument, lives via this instrument experientially and thereby gains experience. The lines in the verse by Rudolf Steiner (see end of the lecture by Michaela Glöckler on *Speech Development from Spiritual-Scientific and Neurological Perspectives*) – "To one who can love language, language gives of its own power" – are true. The 'I' is pure love, is the will for freedom, is respect and the possibility of meeting – free from the misuse of power or of otherwise invasive behavior.

It is through love of speech and language that we create the connection that enables us to work with its power. It is very important that we have in mind both the bodily instrument as well as speech and language themselves – as an instrument entrusted to us, gifted to us, with which we can work and through which we express ourselves. This completely pure and modest attitude is therapeutic, and the patient or client with whom we are working senses that in therapeutic speech\* we are working first and foremost in a shared, objective wisdom-filled space that is bestowed upon us, rather than out of an acquired competence.

## I. Threefold Organism and Subtle Bodies

In regard to the threefold and fourfold human being, I would like to once more very basically refer to what Rudolf Steiner elaborates in the Second Medical Course.<sup>2</sup> This is, incidentally, also the course where the lectures for doctors took place in the morning and the in the afternoon the lectures on therapeutic eurythmy were held. This lecture cycle is called *Anthroposophical Spiritual Science and Medical Therapy*. It contains most of the indications about the mystery of substance, about the

transformation of substance, but also about the differentiated way in which the finer bodies take hold of the physical, which is necessary for an understanding of therapeutic eurythmy.

Rudolf Steiner begins with the description of the threefold human being and shows how the subtle or finer bodies build up this human being via the metabolism. Everything starts in the embryological period, with growth and with these three processes: proliferation, differentiation and integration. Steiner makes it clear how this whole takes shape, taking on a certain configuration that creates its own boundaries and maintains itself, that doesn't overflow and doesn't destroy itself by hardening, but instead remains in balance.

## The Uniqueness of the Physical Body

Rudolf Steiner calls the physical body 'spirit germ' [or 'spirit seed', spirit nucleus']. This is the mysterious member of our being that we give over to the earth at death and that we do not take into the spiritual world, and that is built uniquely for this life. The physical body represents the uniqueness of the physical, of what is especially particular to the here and now. It is prepared and conceived in the pre-birth world. This spiritual conception in the spiritual realm is followed by the drawing together of our hereditary substance, including the possibility of a severe disability. There is no coincidence in this. I would like to allude to this more explicitly.

For a profoundly impaired child with multiple disabilities who is perhaps also afflicted with epileptic seizures, is therapeutic speech the therapy of choice? In such a case, shouldn't one do eurythmy, Bobath or Vojta therapy?

I would like to briefly go into these important questions. There is a huge possibility of abandoning the body before birth. Take artificial fertilization: Only ten percent of artificially conceived children are able to come to birth. Ninety percent die in utero without coming to term. These are all healthy, in vitro embryos, of which five or six are implanted in the mother's uterus. For this reason, if the cells develop at all, there are often multiple births – triplets, quadruplets, sometimes even quintuplets.

We therapists and doctors can learn a lot from this situation. For it is not the body that creates the human being out of itself, it is the spirit. It is the spiritual conception that determines whether it will be a suitable fit or not. Look how often there are miscarriages in the first trimester, sometimes three to four miscarriages, before a child is on the way! Parents can comfort themselves with the thought that it is not necessarily a case of several different children being unable to come. It can be the same one again. But what is being offered isn't yet a good fit. So the child goes away again and says: This isn't suitable. – The next time, the child comes again, checks everything out, begins to take hold formatively, as we discussed, and then at the end of the second or beginning of the third month realizes: This is still not a good fit. So then another attempt is made.

Sudden infant death syndrome can be related to this, which one attempts to prevent by technical means. Yet it cannot always be prevented, because after three to five months of life the decision can still be made: this is not right for me.

Thus 'instrument' is formed

- from the **physical body**, which is our spirit germ or seed, our cosmic-universal inheritance, our spiritual-physical genotype that shows in an individualized way how we bring about the connection to the cosmos;

- from the **ether body**, which we gather up out of the cosmic ether forces so that it fits to our particular physical body, and which is therefore different for each individual in each life;
- from the **astral body**, the bearer of our destiny. It has this designation because everything that we do on earth and that consequently has its effect on us is of an astral nature. Our deeds change the world and form our destiny: Every kind word and every malicious word comes back to us again. Every word is heard, has an effect, and remains effective;
- and from our 'I', the player of this instrument. The 'I' is without sin – this is an incredible blessing. It is the member of our being that was integrated *after* the fall of man, after the separation of the sexes, after the astral body 'ran riot'. The 'I' stands under another jurisdiction. That is why – when we reflect on our 'I' – we can straighten up again and carry on after even the most difficult situation. It would be unbearable if our 'I' were our astral body. In that case, we would not be able to survive having killed someone, or, if we ourselves were the victim, we would not be able to face the other person again in another life. The 'I' can do this. Why? Because through the capacity to love, which distinguishes the 'I', it can always reestablish relationship again in a new and independent way, and engage with what is happening in the present. The 'I' can transform, forgive, reorganize; it has the ability to shape relationships in freedom.

### Imprint of the Etheric in Brain and Sense Organs

There is an organ that is physically so completely formed that the finer bodies, or higher members, can imprint themselves upon it. Then the formative forces are released from this organ, so that an abundance of etheric forces are set free for reflective thinking. The imprint in the physical is as strong as possible and the remaining life-force as little as possible. These are the nervous system – the most physical of organs – and the sense organs.

Our spiritual life is based on etheric body, astral body and I-organization becoming free of the body and only a small part of the etheric remaining in the nervous system to enliven and regenerate it. This forms the constitution of our spiritual life. The only reason we need to sleep is that we have a nervous system: The part of the ether body that was lifted out during the day for thinking, which mirrors itself in the brain and thus makes reflective thinking possible, goes back into the body, into the nervous system, so that it can be regenerated during sleep. During this time, reflective thinking is not possible. Sleep means that astral body and 'I' are outside the body and expanded into cosmic reaches because they are no longer tied to the physical body via the etheric. Rudolf Steiner depicts the major stages of development in seven-year periods: The form-giving process is rounded off with the second dentition – this is a very significant step. We think, essentially, with the etheric forces that have been released from the nerve-sensory system, but also with all of the forces that stream formatively into the other organs. When the etheric forces have fulfilled their task in their form-bestowing capacity, they become free of the body during the day. At night, however, they once again go into the organs from which they originate.

Rudolf Steiner says in *The Study of Man* [also published as *The Foundations of Human Experience*]<sup>3</sup> that children must learn to sleep in the right way. What one thinks and says during the day is of immense importance because when our body-free etheric forces, which we have used for thinking during the day, go into the body again at night, they form and regenerate the body in either a health-giving or unhealthy way, depending.

In the course on *Pastoral Medicine*<sup>4</sup>, Rudolf Steiner explains that people would sleep less if they knew that they could also "sleep themselves ill". For everything that we think and say during the day, that we have had in our thoughts, has an effect on our body at night. With thoughts that relate to spiritual and moral qualities, we meet the hierarchies in the spiritual world at night. If the astral body and 'I' do not

have this contact with the hierarchies but instead only with demons because the human being fell asleep with violent scenes from television, this has corresponding consequences. Given this situation over time, the human being cannot remain healthy.

## Development of Body-Free Capacities

In connection with the emancipation of soul-spiritual forces, Rudolf Steiner uses the wonderful expression “being born”: they are born, set free, put out by the threefold organism that was formed by means of these forces:

- In the first seven-year period, the ether body matures – at the time of the change of teeth the spiritual capacity of *body-free thinking* is born.
- Between 7 and 14, the astral body matures. This process is rounded off at puberty – then body-free feeling, as a soul-capacity, is born.
- Between 14 and 21, the ‘I’-organization is freed up – body-free willing, as a soul-spiritual capacity, is born.

When our astral body and our ‘I’-organization are “born” from the physical body after puberty at the age of 14 and after coming of age at 21, respectively, they are then ‘extra-somatic’, i.e. out-of-body, for our entire life. In the case of children and youth, we must look quite exactly at how things stand with their constitution in regard to their age.

The development of the body-free capacities can be assigned to the three embryonic formative gestures<sup>5</sup>:

1. Thinking is a formative, proliferating force.
2. Feeling is a differentiating force.
3. Will is an integrating force.

## Endorphins, Neurotransmitters and ‘I’-Activity [Ego-Activity]

We have seen how the configuration of the higher bodies of the nervous system is conditional upon its constitution bearing the stamp of the spirit. Because it bears the imprint of the spirit, one can find everything that relates to soul and spirit: For every thought one can find neural networking, and a neurotransmitter for every feeling. This is – and must be – the case, and we have understood only a fraction of this complex electro-chemistry that accounts for the physiological constitution of the nervous system. But this is all an outcome, not the cause. The error of materialistic thinking is to believe that it is the endorphins that create feelings of well-being. If one reflects a little and lets the research results speak for themselves, one sees how inaccurate this is. A little example: Music researchers have found out that the reason music is so healthy for children is that singing, instrumental music and artistic speaking of beautiful poems release endorphins. There are now researchers who say that singing is a drug, because it is known that drugs release endorphins. So for this reason they equate singing with being a drug. When we read something like this, we have to look at exactly what is triggered by what.

What can provide orientation in this regard?

I woke up to this theme already in my early years – at the dentist. When one gets an injection, it always contains adrenalin, which causes heart palpitations. I noticed that these artificial palpitations that don’t come from me but from the substance, from the adrenalin, let up very quickly if I breathe very calmly.

But there are also people with whom the heart palpitations continue right into the night because they are afraid and maintain this condition for themselves. This varies from person to person, and is thus not just an effect of the substance.

We impress our soul-spiritual activity, our inclinations and predilections, onto the organ.

In therapeutic speech it is particularly crucial that we work via relationship. Relationship opens all doors, everyone breathes more easily, one dares to speak, and the being of the world opens itself to the patient, who is able to create a relationship to the intrinsic nature of the world (see verse at the end of the lecture by Dr. Michaela Glöckler on October 27, 2011, i.e. the lecture preceding this one at the Therapeutic Speech Conference in Dornach). In addition, it is essential to experience the spirit of speech and language, and for it to make sense and be enjoyable. Then one is able to influence the nervous system and 'transform' it to the point that it produces endorphins: When patients feel well, this can help them to get away from medication and drugs. For precisely this reason, therapeutic speech plays a crucial role in drug detoxification, and is, in this, case preferable to drama therapy. Experiencing through language takes the place of drugs, including psychotropic drugs. It replaces them. Medications manipulate the physical only, and impede soul-spiritual activity. This is the reason why we use these as little as possible in anthroposophical medicine, and call upon the patient's own activity, the activity of the 'I'. For it is this activity that wishes to impress itself in the body.

### Threefolding, Configuration of the Subtle Bodies, and Activity of the 'I'

- Our *nervous system* is the most faithful imprint in the physical of our soul-spiritual activity, and serves at the same time as a reflecting organ for all soul-spiritual activity.
- In the *rhythmic system*, our physical-etheric constitution is fully incarnated. The astral body is half within and half outside; this goes along with the breath. After the age of 14, the ego-organization is entirely body-free, and makes compassion and empathy possible – an independent, freely synchronized feeling-life.
- In the case of the *metabolic-limb system*, each of the two areas needs to be considered separately:
  - In the metabolic system, all four bodies or sheaths are incarnated and working together lifelong, so long as one is healthy.
  - In the limb system, the ego organization, or 'I'-organization, emancipates itself in the course of one's life, and is half within and half outside.

All human cultural development goes back to the emancipation of the 'I' from the limb system: The freer the 'I' becomes – the greater the determination with which even the smallest action is carried out – the greater will be the step in cultural progress. In this regard we are pretty much at the beginning. Freedom is only achieved by working at it, and has to develop. This is not given to us by nature – it is not an achievement of nature – otherwise we would all have it at our disposition.

Rudolf Steiner says that it is the task of eurythmy to bring it about that human beings become capable of dealing with free will. In eurythmy, we practice freeing the ego organization from the limbs, because in doing eurythmy we place ourselves with our 'I' into the etheric world and not into the physical world.

What both systems have in common is the orientation from the periphery toward the center, as the arms and legs are formed from out of the periphery.

## II. Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis: an example

What presents itself in the case of a severely neurodegenerative disease such as amyotrophic lateral sclerosis?

This illness is a metabolic disturbance. The metabolism of the nerve cells does not have to do with the imprint quality that makes its mark in the wonderful neural networking, but is instead a part of the cell that is always working – on a small flame, to be sure, because it is, in the etheric sense, the “half dead” organ – the nervous system – and not the vital metabolic system.

In the case of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis there is, on the part of the metabolic-limb system, an attack on the ‘motor’ nerve cells, which gradually perish. In order to grasp these connections, it is important that we understand the motoric and sensory nervous systems well, and not fall into the mistake of thinking that the motoric cortex ‘does’ will-actions and the sensory cortex ‘does’ perception. Instead, we have two ego-centers or ‘I’-centers (see III. The Nervous System – an Organ of Perception), the unconscious peripheral will-organization and the conscious central nerve-organization, between which the nervous system functions as an organ that brings them into relationship with each other. The peripheral destiny-‘I’, or will-‘I’, guides the metabolic-limb activity in a manner that is unconscious to us.

In amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, there is a decision of the peripheral destiny-will-‘I’ to slowly remove itself and to no longer maintain the will part of the nervous system. It dies sooner, while the central consciousness-‘I’ remains fully intact. Thus there is a dissociation of the threefold aspect. Medically speaking, the rhythmic system is not strong enough to sufficiently hold together the will-‘I’ and the nerve-sense-‘I’, and to karmically work through why something is torn asunder here in the center, and why the one part can more or less drift away while the other part experiences everything that much more consciously. This is quite a particular constellation.

What is presenting itself biographically has to be researched individually in each case if the patient wishes to work on it. My experience with these patients is that one is often dealing with patients who are spiritually very differentiated, with whom one has to be very careful when entering this sanctuary.

How can one approach a clinical situation of this kind with therapeutic speech?

For the pathway of therapeutic speech, it is essential that one make clear to oneself that speech has its home in the middle sphere of the human being, where the two worlds come together and connect in a free space. The will-‘I’ works via the metabolism into the blood. The conscious nerve-sense-‘I’ works via the breath and meets the blood in the rhythmic system. Between the two, where feeling has its home – between will and thinking, and with regard to the rhythmic system – a wonderful free space arises that makes it possible for me to begin to really hear, to weigh up whether I want to speak, or whether I am going to accept something or reject it. This is the actual space of speech formation [also known as ‘creative speech’, ‘the art of speech’, ‘the art of the spoken word’]. For a patient with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis to experience this sacred middle as a realm of freedom for two to three years before his death would surely be something wonderful. Sometimes the illness draws out longer than this.

It is quite a particular initiation through life when one dies in regard to an active life of movement, when the will of destiny says “stop”, when karma seems to stop and no longer allows outer action. Motor activity is increasingly excluded, but the patient remains fully conscious in this process. The task is to concentrate on perception, internalizing, meeting. Every illness helps the human being to focus on something that he would not otherwise take up by choice. Rudolf Steiner designates illness as a “*gift of*

*the Father God for the adjusting [balancing out] of karma” – one could not say this more beautifully. We therapists must in fact live in these images and ask ourselves: What is the nature of the gift in this case?*

One cannot speak about this, but one may divine – have a sense of – this gift, this destiny-learning. When we go to a patient of this ‘school’, we should be ensouled with this feeling: If I would only manage to bring to experience this sacred freedom, to stimulate in every encounter of every session this free play of the middle in speaking and hearing, in forming, creating, fashioning, configuring, so that the patient becomes really quite aware of how precious this balancing middle is! This mind-set should resonate in the way in which one seeks and finds what one is going to work with, and in the way one practices with the patient. One will then find what is right for each individual patient.

Faced with this incurable and terminal illness, one cannot have the goal of healing in the usual sense. This would be too limited in our understanding. But the goal could be to offer to this incredibly strong consciousness – which the will-person lacks – something that brings this person as strongly as possible into the middle: something that he enjoys, with which he can enter into relationship, with which he can fully engage with his consciousness, and experience himself as a breathing, speaking, living, active person. The medicinal remedies will then work better and his life will last longer. When one accompanies this illness in a human way, it becomes quite a particular path on which every day that one lives is worth it, as is every step that one takes together.

### III. Therapeutic Speech, the Subtle Bodies, and Threefoldness

Our soul life consists of thinking, feeling and will. The will is differentiated into free, voluntary will that comes from the limbs, and our unconscious will that is impulse-driven, and comes from the blood and metabolism.

In regard to the sheaths or subtle bodies, we should distinguish the following in therapeutic speech:

1. Do I want to appeal more to thinking, to bring health to the etheric imprint, by working via the meaning of language – or
2. Do I want to have an effect, via hearing, on the capacity to differentiate?

#### Effect on the Physical via Movement and Activity of the Senses

This is what we are after in the case of disorders involving the ability to distinguish speech sounds in early childhood or when there is a motoric speech disability such as an articulatory disorder. Here we have to work strongly with hearing, with movement, with differentiating, with the qualities that pave the way for speech development, and not primarily with substantive meaning.

#### Effect on the Etheric via Thinking and Meaning

By way of the meaning of language one can reach the etheric and work in a way that furthers ‘imprinting’, so that there is a healing effect during the night, because every good thought, every true word, becomes an effectively healing force via the etheric body that has assimilated it. When we do an exercise of this kind five times, the ether body rejoices. Why? Because it lives wholly in repetition. ‘Only once is not at all’ is the rule of the etheric. Anything that we do only once cannot reach the etheric body. Only what is done repeatedly imprints itself and can have a healing effect.

## Effect on the Astral Body via the Rhythmic System

When it is a question of the prevention or healing of neurogenic and/or degenerative illnesses, the nervous system needs the assistance of the metabolism. The best prevention in regard to Alzheimer's and neuro-degenerative illnesses is to activate the weakened will that no longer sufficiently penetrates the nerve cells, and that no longer adequately supports them metabolically. In this way, we need to bring this will aspect of the human being to delight in life, relationship, the spoken word, and movement. We must help the metabolism to connect more strongly with the rhythmic system and the world of feeling. By means of the spoken word, one can come into an intensive relationship with a person by appealing to his feeling life and by choosing a beautiful text to work with. Children, for example, love the language of Dr. Seuss: simple, linguistically rich verses that are playful and sound funny. An example in German: the *Bli-Bla-Blu* verses<sup>6</sup> by Alfred Baur. The text one chooses can be beautiful, joyous, funny, but also sad, meaningful, profound and serious. One can appeal to the rhythmic system by way of the full gamut of feelings, and can influence it already in how one chooses therapeutic material.

Disorders of the rhythmic system are related to the so-called neurotransmitter-metabolism and to electro-chemistry. Everything that is conducted via the nerves on hormonal or electrical pathways can be reached directly via feeling, because feeling regulates neurotransmitters and modifies them, in the sense that one can free a person from a gloomy mood by saying: "Come on, we're going! Leave everything as is – we're going to do something else now!" Why does he feel different after a while? Because within half an hour the neurotransmitters have been completely 're-educated' by feeling. If one would check the levels, one would see a measurable difference.

## Effect on the 'I' via the Limbs

When one addresses the 'I' directly through drama, movement, gymnastic exercises or the six basic gestures (used also in therapeutic speech), one reaches the limb organism of the human being, and can connect it more strongly to the rhythmic system.

## Effect of Meditation on the Threefold Human Being

Meditation is so healthy because we thereby retune ourselves. We can pull ourselves out of everyday life three times a day. These three times do us good because this has an influence on all three members of our soul:

- the first time, it takes hold of thinking
- the second time it has already become a rhythm
- the third time one has to make an effort because one says to oneself: I've already done it twice. This challenges the will.

In this way one has taken hold of the threefold human being. In the morning, we are more accessible intellectually; at midday we are more disposed to sleepiness and to our feeling life, and in the evening more artistically disposed: we're in the mood for doing something, and go out even when we're tired.

In this way one can align the meditative work in accordance with the threefold organism:

- The review in the evening is a will activity.
- At midday, feeling and the sense of life can be addressed through beauty, through what one treasures most, such as one's nicest memories.
- In the morning, one should concern oneself with a meaningful, essential thought.

However one configures this, it becomes a health-giving force at night.



## The Role of the 'I' in Shaping the Threefold Organism

I hope that it has become clear that we accompany this threefold formative process with our 'I'. During childhood, up to the 14<sup>th</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> year, building up the constitution on the physical-etheric-astral level has to take place. For this is what brings the 'I' into balance and harmonizes it as an integrating force between the ages of 14 and 21. At the age of 14, 15, 16, we reach 'earthly maturity', sexual maturity. If we were animals, we would all begin to procreate at this time. The human being is the only being whose individual development – individuation – is just beginning at the age of sexual maturity. The body matures further until the age of 20 or 21. It is only from this point on that we become responsible 'I' beings. Thus we can optimally imagine that the 'I' merely accompanies this body-forming process up until the time of earthly maturity, when the human being has the capacity to reproduce. When this has taken place, and thinking and feeling – these strong formative forces of the etheric and astral sheaths – have been freed from the body, only then, in the third seven-year period, can the ego-organization or 'I'-organization carefully complete the forming of the body and finally withdraw from the body as free will. Thus the body is the threefold instrument upon which the 'I' plays. The 'I' has the last word, but not the first, and not in regard to what forms the constitution.

It is the 'I' that makes the body into a human body in the first, second and third years of life: through attaining uprightness, the acquisition of language, and learning to think by oneself. This cultural triad takes place thanks to sheer 'I'-activity. According to genetics to date, the ability to walk, speak and think is not inherited. This can be acquired only through imitation. All 'I'-culture, all human culture that is based on walking, speaking, and thinking, is an individual accomplishment of the 'I', a melody played upon the threefold organism. This threefold organism, however, does not stem from the 'I' but from the wisdom of creation.

Since one always works via the 'I' in anthroposophic therapeutic speech, we can see that speech is the instrument that is closest to the 'I'. Through speech and language one can always reach the 'I' of another individual, and can always give patients the possibility to engage via one of the aspects of the threefold organism, regardless of their illness.

## Speech Therapy as Future-Therapy

The therapeutic principle of the art of the spoken word is joy in speaking and love of language. Speech is the instrument by which we build up our own identity and bring it to expression, and enliven our 'I'. If we ask ourselves what is most important in life, the replies would end up being meager if we could only have thoughts about this, but no words. We want to put into words what is essential, so that it has meaning for us. When we have words for something, we have a human connection to it. Thinking is universal; speaking is individual. Rudolf Steiner gives us 'truth-wrought' verses, or words conveying truth, for our relationship to truth. He also gives us processes, methods and means of practice, such as eurythmy and the art of speech [or creative speech, speech formation], so that we can build a loving relationship to these words and learn to discover our humanity in them.

Seen in this way, therapeutic speech is future-therapy. If in the next ten years we continue to thoroughly cultivate and work through what we have in therapeutic speech, and learn to teach it in a qualified and professional way, it will be discovered anew, also in terms of its possibilities that lead into the future. This can't be otherwise. We should be well-prepared for this.

## Speech Therapy for Neurological Problems in Elders

In view of neurological problems that often arise toward the end of life, the question arises: Where should one begin? Should one bring elder individuals into activity? Should one not rather allow them more of their own space?

There are very different feelings and experiences in this regard. The question 'What can I do with this older person?' asks of us, to begin with, that we perceive – intensively perceive – the person, and, in perceiving, that we bring about a relationship to him by means of the question 'What would you like me to do for you?'

### 1. Becoming total awareness:

The first step in every good therapeutic speech endeavor is to become totally ear, fully perception for the other. When one sees that an aged person is sitting there entirely absorbed in himself, perhaps because he is suffering from an involution depression or an advanced stage of Alzheimer's, talking does nothing. In such a case, it is important to sense that the person is already completely in his own world. One simply approaches, perceives, and hears.

We make our way into the first stage of speech development: getting a sense of what's what, finding uprightness via all of the senses, experiencing the space in which we are, i.e. I try to experience the other. I try to find out whether he likes proximity. This is something I have to sense. Many people like when one sits down very close to them and is quiet to begin with. Or that one touches the person's hand, touches the back of the hand, takes the person's hand. It is about really sensing the reaction, and whether one is of benefit to the other – and always out of the attitude: Not my will, but Thy will be done. For with this attitude, we bring about a contact on the level of the will, from metabolism to metabolism: What does your peripheral 'I' want? I am an offering, a space, readiness, without taking up space myself. I create space. Through the intuitive connection, I can be inspired by the other: He lets me know instantly what he wants. But we often don't notice it because we're 'so bent out of shape'. If we're open, we know intuitively what the next step is, and can completely rely on our intuition.

Steiner wanted a teacher to be well-prepared for a lesson, but to forget everything when arriving at the door and to first just perceive the students, and to shape the lesson out of this perception.

This applies to therapy as well. Sometimes a therapeutic speech session is also about standing at the window together and looking at what's outside. The first step is awareness and perception, and only then can the spoken word convey and mediate.

### 2. The spoken word as communicator:

Is the contact already good enough that one can begin to speak, that one can meet each other, that the spoken word can convey something? What can we communicate to each other? We can tell each other something, we can ask, answer, hear.

### 3. Forming the spoken word together:

What can we form together? Something can be formed out of the impulse to communicate. Everything that builds up the nervous system has a beneficial effect in therapy. The nervous system is built up when it is used well, i.e. when one observes well, hears well, fully concentrates on something. When something is repeated and deepened and something is experienced in the process, the nerve endings 'sprout'.

These three phases need to be well differentiated, and are valid at every stage of life.

## IV. Speech Therapy in Cases of Loss of Autonomy and in Palliative Care

Why is it that a person who is ill often cannot help himself by doing these exercises on his own? This is a developmental mystery of the 'I'. We know from physiology that children and youth need the proximity and presence of other people: they need someone to be there, to come into conversation with them, to be a point of orientation for them. Until the age of 19 or 20, the human being needs other people until he has grown and become autonomous in all areas. In the case of someone who is ill, this autonomy is always affected. Whenever autonomy – the 'I' – is affected in this way, the law of development comes into play again. In the areas in which there is a deficit of autonomy, the presence and nearness of another person becomes necessary, until the individual becomes totally autonomous again and can do everything himself. Yet one should only be of assistance and help until the individual can take things in hand again. It is usually not very helpful to say to the patient: Do observation exercises! Or: Meditate this verse. A suggestion of this kind is seldom taken up right away.

As therapists working with therapeutic speech, we must accompany the patient attentively, and do observation exercises with him that strengthen him for finding his way back to autonomy. Observation exercises are exercises that prepare for speaking. In doing them, we discover and experience, we come into relationship, we name, think, and identify. Movement, speech and meaning slowly lead to developing identity again through the world and for the world. The instrument for this is the nervous system.

*But what about when this access via the nervous system is no longer intact, as in the case of a patient in a coma, for example?*

I see a tremendous future for speech therapy in hospice work, in accompanying the dying process, and in palliative medicine for bed-ridden intensive-care patients, for example those in a so-called artificial coma. In this case, the astral body and 'I' have been driven out of the body by medication; they have been drawn out of the nervous system and cannot approach. Anesthetics always alter the bio-chemistry of the nervous system, so that the etheric body cannot be reflected by it because the nerve-metabolism has been changed by the anesthetic. When, in addition, blood pressure medications have been given, the 'I' is far away also in regard to the rhythmic system, and the astral body doesn't have the possibility to maintain the blood's own pulse and rhythm. All in all, this is a situation that is quite removed from the 'I'.

When someone is in a natural coma due to damage to the nervous system but the person's vital signs are strong, one has to assume that he is present.

When one knows the spiritual interests the patient had, what he was involved in in life, one can quietly read related material as one would read to someone who has died: very slowly, calmly, meaningfully, yet also full of experience, as one learns to do in the art of speech – as well and as beautifully as one can. This can be a tremendous experience for the patient, a spiritual medicine, an experience of being taken seriously on a spiritual level, for he is lingering between two worlds. Sometimes a person who is already no longer present can seem to come in again for a short time.

Given what is today sometimes a drawn-out process of dying, we are in a situation in which people in our materialistic age may live into the spiritual world slowly, while a number of friends and family members are able to experience this and to learn how to accompany this in a right way. We have a big task in this area. Also here, on this side, a lot of encounter and meeting each other should still take place on the human level and, wherever possible, also on the spiritual level. Encounters of this kind can best be shaped by means of dealing consciously with the spoken word.

With regard to therapeutic speech, it is necessary to be conscious of the wholeness of the surroundings out of which speech arises:

- How speech is formed in childhood out of movement, out of structuring, out of the relationship to the world, out of the need to react and to name.
- How words – through thinking – become carriers of meaning.
- How the need arises to communicate via meaning.
- How – out of the human being's need to develop, to form, to become healthy – the word becomes a bridge into the spiritual world: the meditative and ritualistic word; the word that summons spiritual essence and being.

The roll of sense perception in the acquisition of speech – particularly the sense of hearing – , the role played by motor activity in speech development, and the role played by the nervous system – the brain and its significance for reflective thinking: these three – hearing, practicing and thinking – mirror the three core motifs of our Rosicrucian culture:

1. The sense world is our world given by the Father God.
2. The world of practice, of movement, of experience and feeling is our world of the Son.
3. The world that gives meaning and perspective is the Resurrection-world, into which we awaken in the spirit to what the word carries, and to what incarnates in the Word.

\* As one of the artistic therapies founded in anthroposophy, ***anthroposophic therapeutic speech*** engages the activity of the individual, specifically with the life and qualities of the spoken word. In this way, the artistic components of the art of the spoken word can work therapeutically in the life of an individual dealing with illness, constitutional issues, or developmental challenges, some of which may or may not also manifest as a speech disorder, whereas traditional speech therapy addresses speech challenges *per se*.

<sup>1</sup>This is the second of two lectures held at the Conference for Therapeutic Speech on October 27, 2011 at the Goetheanum, Dornach

<sup>2</sup> First lecture (April 11, 1921) in *Anthroposophical Spiritual Science and Medical Therapy*. Mercury Press, 1991. German bibliography no. 313

<sup>3</sup> German bibliography no. 293

<sup>4</sup> German bibliography no. 318

<sup>5</sup> See preceding lecture by Michaela Glöckler

<sup>6</sup> Published by Mellinger; in German only.

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