

The Unbearable Intensity of Emotions and the Power of Conditioning.

Are you familiar with intense discomfort, that you may not be able to define precisely, and yet you want to run very far away from it ... as fast as possible?

Have you even felt burning anger that seems to find no easy way out, that couples with intense frustration, and may leave you with a flood of sharp words ... or without words?

Do you notice that whenever something becomes in any way emotional for you, it seems to couple with a sense of flooding or unstoppable force?

Perhaps you have experienced the unbearable intensity of emotions ... and you want to do "whatever" to avoid it.

Perhaps you have asked yourself many times: Why???

Sometimes we underestimate our capacity for learning and surviving. "Conditioning" is another word for "learning".

Along our lives we are exposed to many circumstances, from which we learned and which we overcame in any shape or form; we survived.

Now, what we learned then may not serve us so well today, partly because we have grown up; we probably have more knowledge, skills, more access to resources, supports, etc. Funnily enough, it is possible that we have not registered those changes.

For example, you may have learned as a child that if somebody relevant to you ignores you, hurts you in any way or neglects you, the risk to your wellbeing is very high. In those circumstances you may have learned to "scream louder" or to "become smaller, mould yourself chameleon style", whichever was more accessible to your abilities at that time and afforded you better survival results most of the times.

We could say you were "conditioned" to respond in such ways.

Present time: You are now an adult that has developed sensitive antennae for those signs that required your learned response to them. You could call yourself a "sensitive master" of those signs. They were linked with risks of hurt and danger, so it was wise of you to learn deep and fast.

Your whole body keeps registering and sensing, informing you via sensations of what is the environment like. The whole body is intending of sustaining life. The fact that we do not pay much attention to the sensations does not mean they do not happen, but it may mean that the sensations intensify to evoke the survival learned response.

At this point we cannot keep ignoring those "alerting" sensations. Wow, when did they grow so much? when did they become so loud, so overflowing?

If we manage to do something to "avoid" them and succeed ... short term ... we may even go to the next level and become "sensitized" to them. Second conditioning phase, probably as adults or adolescents. In this case, the mere sight or slight reminder of the type of sensations associated with the discomfort can trigger a "run away" response.

Now we may be at a point of limiting our choices, if they have the potential of evoking those sensations associated with discomfort. These may evolve to a limiting way of life where fear of discomfort wins over a sense of wellbeing. It may be also damaging our relationships.

How can therapy support and help you to change that?

The backbone of therapy is to create a safe and supportive environment, where you can focus on exploring what are the patterns of response you have learned, how they have served you and whether they are relevant now.

Therapy offers a wide variety of techniques to resolve the "sensitisation" and modify the conditioning. It can also support you in learning to befriend, listen and get all the benefit from the signs and sensations in your whole body. These include the thoughts and feelings!

All these provide a sense of empowerment and wellbeing that tilts the balance from fear and discomfort to engagement, curiosity and aliveness.

By Integrative Biodynamics