

SELSKAB FOR 
SAMTALE OG SUPERVISION
I ALMEN PRAKSIS

Formand Jørgen Strøbechs tale holdt ved indledningen af den første **IBF BIENNIAL INTERNATIONAL BALINT GROUP LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE** i København 28-04-2011.

Dear colleagues, dear friends, welcome here to Fælleshuset, to the first IBF BIENNIAL INTERNATIONAL BALINT GROUP LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE.

I welcome you on behalf of the Danish Balint Society, for which I am the President. We are proud to arrange the Congress. It is our greatest event, in our 11 years long history.

It is nice to see so many participants, from different countries, and also to see so many from our own society.

For the disposal of the Shared house, I want to thank the collective societies for psychoanalysis and analytic psychotherapy in Denmark. And special thanks to their Secretary Naja Bonnevie and the chef Tina.

A very special welcome to you Helena. You were our president for the first 10 years, and you were working for having this congress here in Copenhagen.

Dear Helena, 1 year ago you were severely ill. And now you sit with us.

Marvelous.

I also welcome you all, to our city of Copenhagen, this spring 2011.

In this city the Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard went around in the streets, some 170 years ago. The Chinese are now printing his book "Either/or" from 1843, in I don't know how many million copies. They print it, because they want their students to learn, how we in the West are thinking.

Why do I mention Kierkegaard. It is for two reasons.

First: I will tell you about, what he called "his human bath". It is a little story from his way of living:

He was not only sitting in his study writing. No, a part of his daily life was to have, as he called it, "his human bath". In the morning and afternoon, he went out in the crowded streets of Copenhagen and talked and discussed with everybody, making relations with high and low. He was well known by almost everybody. When he came home, he was reflecting, describing and writing about his experiences.

The second reason:

I want to quote from his book "the Point of View of my Work as an Author" 1849; because in this book he, actually at that time, described conditions essential for the doctor/patient relationship.

I quote:

"But all true effort to help begins with self-humiliation: the helper/leader must first humble himself under him he would help, and therewith must understand, that to help/lead does not mean to be ambitious but to be patient, that to help/lead means to endure for the time being the imputation, that one is in the wrong and does not understand what the other understands."

Some 110 years later, in London, Michael Balint, was reflecting on the group leader's role, after the many supervisions he have had with GP's. About this I want to quote some lines from his book: "the Doctor, his Patient and the Illness" from 1957, those lines I find special important for the group process, (my translation from Swedish to English):

"Nobody can fulfill to be the correct leader, and fortunately, it is not necessary. The group leader will make his errors, but, and here it comes, he has to accept the same or even more severe critique as that, he seems his group must be able to accept".

Some pages further he writes:

"I will emphasize the factor of time. The leader must follow the doctors and help them to be aware, where they are in their development of knowing, knowing what they have achieved; - the leader must not be too far ahead. That he theoretically is ahead is not important. But if he emotionally is ahead and he shows it, it will lead to a superior/inferior - atmosphere, and the relation between the leader and the group is now a matter of teaching and not learning".

Kierkegaard would have said about the leader doing so: "Instead of benefiting the doctors, he wants to be admired of them."

If I do this, what I just have quoted, not as a group leader against my group, but in my doctor-patient relation (the parallel process), I violate my patient; which, in this audience I can admit, I do sometimes; what I do, is having

projects on my patient's behalf; what's happens if I do it: the relation evaporates!

This is wonderfully pointed out in the recently released motion picture, which is called "The Kings Speech". The relationship between King George the VI, who was stammering, and his talented therapist is described in this film.

In Görlitz in the last spring and in Oxford last autumn, Tove and I, discussed leadership, and its influence on group process. We saw in how many different ways leadership can be performed and here by having influence on the relationship between the leader and the group. We saw differences' between leaders from different countries on the one hand, and on the other, how, and this we want to emphasis, how in the same group, a new leader and his way of conducting the group, did change the groups 'group processes'.

We thought: Could describing this inspire us? Could this, changing the group process just a little, help us as supervisors to develop new skills, benefiting the outcome of the supervision?

The subject we love and find important for our task as doctors.

Now the first IBF BIENNIAL INTERNATIONAL BALINT GROUP LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE will start.

Let us reflect and describe the group leader's influence on the group processes, and vice versa.

Let us be humble to each other, not knowing for a time, be able to accept critique, not being shy and let us have a learning atmosphere under the seminar and not interpret each other too early.

Let's see what's happens. Welcome to Copenhagen! Thank you.