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INTRACOMMUNICATION WITH SELF: INSTINCT AND ANIMAL LESSONS, BODY LANGUAGE AND TACTILE COMMUNICATION

Hello everyone, so we are going to look at another very interesting segment which is one of my favorites to be very honest, which is to look at communication with ourselves. So, what we saw in section 1 was really about inter; between, so we think communication is always between 2 people, right? So, now we are going to look in this section, the intra communication because the amount we talk to ourselves, we do not really talk to anyone else.

And I had said right in the beginning, I am also training to be a Jungian analyst and one of the things that we use a lot is dreams, right? Because dreams are messengers coming from our own self, from our own psyche. And before I start, everything that you see in a dream, this is not just a glimpse of it, it is not to be taken literally, right? So, I will give a few examples of this and hopefully if you may get a little more interested and consider this aspect.

I ask athletes, especially those I work with long term to keep a tab of their dreams. You really get an idea of what is happening in their psyche, right? Because there is only so much we are conscious about, right? There is a large part of it, remember the iceberg profile that we spoke about in unit 1, a large part of it is also unconscious or something that needs to be brought to consciousness, right? So, I am going to begin with this dream which is one of my favorite dreams. So, this is an athlete who is doing very well at the world stage and in the beginning at a certain point of time he was a little laid back you know?

So, that would be one of the concerns, the coach would go on to refer a session and he is like a communication issue and then again now, this is a foreign coach and I am like okay what communication issue coach, what is happening? So, and he would be like yeah ma'am

ok and it was just a very laid back attitude and so we kept working and then one of those times when I was you know, this session we scheduled and he came in and then he said oh ma'am how are you and all that and I am like how are you doing and all and then he is like I have a problem and I said oh great great like finally, something is coming out and then you know?

And I said what happened and then he said I am having this dream and my light bulb and all started flashing and I am like ha so we are getting something out here and he said I am having this repetitive dream and before major tournaments ok and before few of the tournaments he had actually. So, I said ok tell me what is it? So, he said you know so he is a jumper and he was like I am competing and I am doing well and suddenly out of nowhere, when I am supposed to be awarded the gold right, someone overtakes me and I become second right, I become the second in charge or the person who has got the second place and then I said okay and then I said let us look at it and this is a guy I have been working for some time.

So, I kind of knew what was being said but remember it is not about how great we are and how much I have understood right but it is always about tweaking, teasing the right questions so that your athlete reflects on, they have an aha moment, right?

So, I said ok and then I said let us look into it. So, this a known opponent? He is like no I do not know who this opponent is. He is nowhere in the world stage and then slowly worked it through and then I said okay and then I said so could this be an inner figure? Do you think you know could it be an inner figure because that is what dreams are right, it is not referring to the outer but it is really referring to a quality you probably need or the inner xyz. What are they trying to say? At least this is how we look at it from a Jungian perspective. And he had this light bulb ok and then we said ok so what do you think? And he finally said oh I need to push myself right, it is probably I have the potential and that is what is being communicated here. So, I said brilliant and after that this was a dream which was repetitive.

So, when we say a dream is recurring right, you have a similar or same kind of dream coming, your psyche is really trying to get your attention. And the best part was he was so animated he was so alive he was so wanting to know and curious and he started pushing himself right and he started performing and there is really been no looking back and you know this was such a vital cue you know? Which came from his own self right, for this

athlete, right? He embedded what his psyche was trying to say and look at the results of it. So, that is the one dream.

Then I want to bring in a very common dream that we hear not just with athletes but also with others you know non sports people is I am being chased. So, this is one of the swimmers and she came during at a point where she was extremely low, lot of issues. Interpersonal issues, coaching issues and so she came in basically. She was referred for anxiousness, very stressed and anxious and I remember asking okay do you have dreams and she is like oh my god don't even ask you know I am always being chased by an animal.

And in the beginning you can't really say, you kind of go okay you first need to calm them down a little. As the sessions progressed I said what do you think, what do you really think is happening? What is your dream probably trying to say? What are you trying to run from? What am I not facing and you know of course it is we were working through her issues and empowering her, because she was very disempowered and lost as that started happening slowly I said, when you are ready whenever you are ready okay there is no force slowly pause, stay and turn around and really see what was that animal trying to say?

Because what was that animal in itself right, because she was running away and what she needed was to face that challenge and maybe and most of the time that then shifts into an inner supportive figure right, till then it was almost like a terror dream right?

The last example I want to give for dreams is this golfer, young golfer around just in her 20s and the covid time I actually want to bring this to notice you know, the covid time from say 2020 to late 21 right and entering 2022 we saw, at least I saw a lot of athletes having breakdown because we didn't know what's going to happen, when it's going to happen, people didn't know what to do and also those especially were just so focused on sport had not built a life, they're probably training alone, living alone for them you know it actually got even worse.

This was a golfer who was referred like you know the parent connected and I remember she was so relieved that she had someone to actually speak to right and you know, we started and she is a psychology student herself so and I started saying I'm like can you start keeping tabs of your dreams please?

And the recurring theme would be she's at a party for example one of the dreams, she's at a party it's her birthday, she's cutting the cake and everything and then suddenly everyone

vanishes and before going everyone's so sad and she's lonely then, she was a lot into animals and then suddenly the animal she's caring for vanishes or dies in her arm, so this is the dream what was a psyche trying to say.

This is a disconnect from everything, right? In some of the discussions also we've had that you need to have a connection right, when you're disconnected from everything it's really difficult to flow through, right? So with her in particular what we had to do was start building some connections and some associations. That really was the need of the hour with this particular athlete so I hope this section on dreams gave you an idea to keep tab, right? Write it down if not you're going to forget it because if you don't you're losing a very very important connection to yourself, right?

I then want to bring in again intra communication, with one of the cricketer and he gave this really really beautiful write up and I'm gonna read this for you all because I feel what he said is so potent right and he's used every possible word and sense over there so I'm gonna read this and I want you to pay attention to what happens to you as I read it, right?

“My greatest triumphs and my most catastrophic failures have been a direct result of the state of my mind. Being in a positive emotional state simply helps one feel physically lighter, stay more present in the moment and make better decisions.

I remember a summer when I was undergoing significant emotional turmoil. I was extremely vulnerable and miserable. One day when the speed gun was brought to measure our bowling speeds. I tensed up and overthought my way to the ridiculous conclusion that this day would somehow make or break my career. I made myself so physically stiff and unstable that I behold only at 97 kilometres per hour. The nerves made a pit in my stomach, my legs felt heavy and I simply couldn't manage to get myself into my normal bowling rhythm.

I obsessed about this failure for the next two three days and made a mess of my match. I felt like my career and my life was slipping away. I asked if I asked for a session and discussed this with Dr. Sridhar. I remember the first words when I said maybe I should quit were come on you're so much stronger than. Then she went on to remind me of how I had worked my way to every sporting achievement.

In an instant from that perspective the fact that I had a few bad weeks felt minuscule in comparison to what I had already managed to get through. When she held out a mirror, I actually found my most insurmountable problems to be quite surmountable. This was where

she had a significant impact on me. She made me to be mindful and asked myself is this relevant now, whenever I had a limiting thought.

A couple of days after the session I had a practice game and had to put in a good performance. I was still slightly nervous but managed to stay calm enough. I ended up with four wickets for 17 runs in six overs. It changed everything in an instant. I went from being very quiet, avoiding eye contact and broody to being more vocal, happy and more confident. Suddenly I felt lighter and in sync with my body, the best rhythm of my life. I bowled extremely quickly and accurately and gave the batsman a hard time. When my bowling speed was checked it was 130 kilometres per hour.

There isn't a coach or a fitness trainer in the world who can have you raise your pace from 97 to 130 kilometres per hour in about a week. Even the greatest bowlers with hundreds of wickets wouldn't be able to do it yet somehow your mind can".

Just going to give you a second to pause, to take in this wonderful piece that he's written, right? And so what really happened here right, what was being communicated? So this was a young cricketer who is got into a mess and then that's what happens right, he got into a catastrophe space and what did I have to do or what did any psychologist at that point of time do was hold the mirror to what he had achieved till then and also bring back. This you know it's called the monkey mind, bring back this monkey mind to the present. It's not the end of the world.

But can't just do cognitive right and this was the person who talked a lot like as in, he would go, I almost call it gibberish because it's like you're so okay this is happening yes so hear, we hold and we need to shift, right? I can't allow an athlete to talk, let's say you know, our sessions are from 45 to 55 minutes or an hour, there's no point if he goes on talking for 55 minutes and I just hear and I've not shifted him, right?

He might feel good yes that he's vented but then the point is what has he been focusing on? So what did I need to build over here was his communication which was you know I always call this like you know, a person with a danda right? You are being a very tyrannical policeman here right, you're being extremely judgmental about yourself and what you need okay again coming back to a little bit of Jungian work is, an inner figure who's most supportive right?

So this is where we shift from yeah so you know what I would have done is shift him to yeah okay this happened tell me you know a day when you had a decent practice right and then slowly go to what brings you to your best state right?

So you have to slowly shift and once the athlete has calmed down then you kind of go, now let's relook at it okay? What do we do now? That becomes very very essential and then of course, if you look at his you know this is totally what he's actually written. I didn't change because I really thought this was a great piece to bring out because he talks about how your stomach gets so weak, your legs get so heavy, you just aren't in that rhythm right, so again the body is giving you cues and then you can also use the body to come back right?

And also most importantly you have to change perspective you cannot go in that so this is where if someone's there to support brilliant but most of the time when it's happening let's say it's have you know, something happens and an athlete goes off into a negative frame of mind they're alone at that point in time right?

So we have to empower them to know how to communicate with themselves right that's very very paramount.

So I come to another favorite section of mine and I'd said right in the beginning, I also work with elephants. I work with elephant welfare and if you look at this image right, we talk of body because we are with sports right, but how often is the body really used?

A best performance in flow state, It's embodied. It's not like the mind and head are separate but it's not the same when an athlete is in stress. And especially when they don't recognize the mind has gone off right? So if you look at this right, so this was you know I was visiting and of course I've known these elephants a little and if you look at it, I was trying to befriend the elephant who I was you know look who with whom. I'm looking at right and she's someone who takes time.

So that's why you'll notice, I'm obviously not standing close you know. Her caretaker is right there and and I'm trying to look at her. I'm trying to talk of course you know? I'd given something to eat in the interim. Like you know some fruit to build a connection, and also going okay what's your comfort, you know? You don't want me to come close, that's fine but you know, it was very interesting because in the picture also what's beautiful is, if you see the other elephant right, on the right hand side, she's extremely friendly and I'm trying to talk

to this other elephant and look at the elephant one, I'll call elephant one. Her trunk is coming out right, she's like and that's how they reach out.

So she's like talk to me so, when I saw this I'm like this is such a beautiful picture right and and I think that's what it is you know, what I'm trying to explain is, it's really about picking up the body language right?

It's really about picking up the cues and especially when we talk about communication, does this person want you to come close? Want you to talk or not? And I think this is something animals in particular teach us, kids actually teach us. I've of course put up this because I thought it was a brilliant example to explain and also since you know I am involved with them.

So now we will be seeing this little video by Dr. Sreedhar who's a wildlife biologist on how elephants communicate. There's so many modes in which they communicate right.

“Elephants as we all know are complex social animals and display a wide array of communication. Today I'm here to talk about some aspects of communication in Asian elephants and the various modes in which they communicate with each other. The different types of communication I mean they use all kinds of senses they're hearing, they smell, the vision and tactile and there are studies on African elephants that even show that elephants communicate through seismic frequencies you know? That they're able to detect vibrations, the most commonly observed for instance are the acoustic communication, tactile communication.

Where people can see elephants producing different kinds of sounds and each of these sounds are different in different contexts and they mean various things and this for instance in African elephants there's a comprehensive call library which talks about different kinds of calls and different common what each call and call mean and in what context those calls communicate. What features of their behavior and so on.

Coming back to the aspect of tactile communication you know, each elephant touches each other there's different kinds of signaling that happens. There's a wide repertoire of tactile signals that elephants use to communicate within each other. Say for instance elephants putting trunk in each other's mouth means reassurance or elephant entwining trunk with another means social interactions in different contexts, it might be sparring, it might be

greeting. Elephant putting a trunk over another one's body for instance means something completely different and there's a lot of communication that happens through tactile signals.

For instance there are also other visual signals like for instance there are different postures must for example, must is a phenomenon in male Asian and African elephants which is characterized by heightened concentrations of the testosterone hormone and is associated with reproductive behavior in the male elephants and in must for instance there's a characteristic, must walk where the elephants walking with raised head signaling dominance to other individuals and simultaneously in the reproductive behavior of females, they also display the e-stress walk for when they are cycling.

So there are a lot of these visual signals as well and even without any tactile communication there could be signaling between individuals when a dominant bull is approaching for instance, the submissive bull tends to retreat different calls mean different things in different”.

Share this case vignette of you know, this young elephant. I call her the little one. I'm always teased for calling her the little one, she's over six feet tall but she took to me like anything so this is our first interaction.

I want you to take a look at the picture right and of course it's you know, the whole elephant is not really shown so just to maintain the identity of elephants just like we maintain the identity of players right?

What do you feel? Of course she's reached out her trunk, that's the way they reach out to you, when they connect to you. That's the way they communicate with each other as well and I'm holding a trunk. I want you to hold this and I'm just going to take you through how we connected right, so the day one and just that part of it.

So this is an elephant who's been in captivity unfortunately from young and I remember, I went in and I said oh is this your name right, I'm going to call her Ellie okay and she gave out a rumble and low rumble and then started vocalizing which is something you see only in captive elephants.

So they try to mimic you right and then the most interesting thing was I'd gone with a friend of mine which she was not at all interested in my friend and I was trying to talk to her caretaker as well and she kept vocalizing louder, so that it's just me so that she wanted, what

was she trying to communicate talk to me now, this is you know tall even for an elephant six feet tall, um you know in the prime of her age. She's very young. I'm meeting her for the first time so you know, don't be foolhardy and just go and say okay just because I work with elephants you go close but she kept talking.

She's vocalizing she kept giving me her trunk and um and then slowly I took to her trunk okay and slowly and then at one point I said oh you know I it was it's um strange but I'd hurt my metatarsal of my right leg and I just recovered so I was also being very mindful that even just a little push just very friendly even if with the trunk, I can get hurt but I sat down. There was this little space and I saw, sat down on top of her tank and I said oh I've got hurt here so you know it's like the metatarsal is where you put the you accelerate right like in a car and she started bringing her trunk to that exact space.

So she'd come like this and then it would just get so gentle right so she understood something there right? And she did this through our whole time together and so long story short and then of course, finally she was rescued and all that but it was a bit of a challenge but she was so stressed when I saw her in that space but the minute I said Ellie right, her name again she responded right, so what did we establish and of course in that interim between the first and her rescue I had seen her but only about let's say five six times because she stayed, she was in an institution at the outskirts of Bangalore but it's, you built so you know, with especially animal work, it's your prosody, it's your tone.

And also I think what she picked up was oh this is not just someone who wants to feed me, this is not just someone who wants a photo. Again communication right and look at the tactile now it's like she wants me to hold her be close to her.

She gets a little jealous of course. It's like if I don't spend time with her. So communication is so vital right, whether you're communicating to a human being, a player, an elephant, a dog what they're seeing is.

So if I had gone with hey maybe if my pitch was long or if I just bombarded and went close right which we see a lot of people do, then what happens they're gonna get defensive.

Because elephants in itself have a huge personal space so what are we doing? First thing is respect for anyone and also see is this person in that same or is this being in that same space and wants to communicate and I even with those of us who work with elephants, people are like I don't believe this, this is your first time with her because she really took but I think she

really took because I mean, that's what I've said it's like what did she sense, what did this being sense oh you know I probably work with elephants but I think more than that, this person wants to relate to me, this person wants or this being wants to connect to me.

I feel safe with the way she's talking, she's approaching the way you know, we built it right and I think I really wanted to bring this in because the section we're looking at is communication right?

So it's so much about even verbal, your tone, my posture, my facial expression and that proceeding. Am I making this person safe, happy, connected or am I so loud. am I not attuning to what's needed in this space right?

So I thought this was you know I really wanted to bring this and just bring in a different perspective and I want us, what I want to bring in is as we've looked at both these sections is to really go, how do I empower myself right?

What have you been listening to what you've been listening to right? How do I really empower myself because if I am not in my power or empowered what the other person says may trigger me and if I'm in that place where let's say I'm leading a discussion I'm not going to empower the other right?

So first it's always about us because this section is really about me my communication to myself and that doesn't mean we beat ourselves up when things don't go well okay, because every time it's not really going to be possible to be in that exact state but you recognize okay. how's my tone, how's my, let's say someone's saying something and I'm like I have this expression of I don't even want to listen to you right like sometimes, we see this in meetings and stuff which happens right and how does it affect you?

So going okay doesn't matter, maybe this person is zoned out but let me come in. Maybe I focus on something else and I continue right and also to really ask myself what's my impact? What is the impact?

Jane Goodall, she's a well-known conservationist. I'm sure a lot of you all would have heard about her. She always says we're all influencing another. What we need to see is, is it a positive influence right?

And I think that's a beautiful note to bring this section to a close. I'm going to play this little video for you all which talks a little of verbal and non-verbal.

So that's a beautiful note to end this section on right. I hope you all enjoyed this, thank you.