

COMMUNOLOGUE – THE PERPETUAL GIFT

by [Andrea Sydow](#) M. A. Berlin, Germany

The night was slowly falling and from the conference room I was enjoying the panoramic view over the trees and buildings enveloped in soft light. On the last evening of our *Safe Conversations Leader Training* in Dallas in April 2019, **Communologue** was presented to us, and it was love at the first experience.

Communologue means having a safe dialogue with a group of people, addressing a topic while following a structure and certain norms and guidelines. The core of the norms are sharing thoughtfully, listening with all ones attention and validating unconditionally and with empathy. Not an easy task to accomplish when a group is utterly diverse, and the topic has the power to unleash wars and other acts of violence.

And this is exactly how **Communologue** came to be. It started as a contribution to peace, after the Twin Towers in New York came down one floor after the other before our very eyes while, what seems to me, the whole world was cornered by dismay and rage.

A group of people led by Allan Schiffer, who were trained and prepared to facilitate safe dialogues between two people, decided to apply the principles to create safe spaces for groups, whose members were torn apart by irreconcilable ways of looking at life and by cherishing in their hearts incompatible things.

Later the *Palestinian-Israeli Imago Project* ventured to invited Palestinians and Israelis to sit down in the same circle. They were allowed to express themselves fully while following the structure, the norms and guidelines of the **Communologue**. By listening, mirroring, validating and expressing empathy a peace project was born which is still active today. This new way of being together and communicating within a new paradigm, is neither an easy nor a smooth road to travel. Sticking to progress rather than to perfection, **Communologue** clears a pathway to each other, where every individual contributes a little piece to peace, to a new way of communicating.

One thoughtful sharing at the time, one listening at the time, one mirroring at the time, one validation at the time within the safe **Communologue** container, helps to uplift the group from conflict to genuine sharing. I experience it as a perpetual and layered process of growing. Layer by layer the **Communologue** clarifies my thoughts, helping me to understand them better and to understand the other better too.

While I had the honour to be invited by Orli Wahrman to be trained by some of the initiators of the **Communologue** my listening becomes more and more attuned to what the other is saying. In such a way, that I get better at crossing the bridge. What kind of bridge is this? A bridge that leads to the *Land Of The Other*, to the otherness, to a stranger. At my riverbank I undress my opinion dress and leave it behind. While walking over the bridge, I start tuning into what the other person is thinking, feeling, fearing and wishing. Until I reach the end of the bridge and step

into the land of the other, starting to understand that everything within this strange otherness makes sense.

How do I walk over the bridge? By listening and mirroring contained by a mindset of empathy and validation: - "You make sense. I listen to how you experience being you in this world". I get to know a glimpse of the otherness and thus our encounter can become a moment of awakening: - "I awake to the wonder of every creature in your land". The other can be my lover, a total stranger or even the so called enemy. It doesn't matter. In each person I can discover the wonder of life unfolding in its unique way.

The structure, norms and guidelines of the **Communologue** set up a process. For a moment I put my opinions aside and have only ears for what the other is sharing thoughtfully. While listening and mirroring as clearly as I'm capable, and when it's my turn, sharing in the most thoughtful way I can muster, clarity of thought and connection between me and the other can happen. Layer after layer of confusion, blaming, fear, judgement, pride, and prejudice can be peeled away. Eventually clarity of thought can shine through, illuminating the stumbling blocks on the bridge.

Communologue also invites me to share fully and honestly how I perceive a certain event, instead of allowing me to burst out bold statements of how you and you and you and yes, you too (!) should see the world.

Communologue is a process that enhances a life skill, which in turn enriches any process. I'm aware that listening fully and expressing thoughtfully is a life skill I will never master completely. I see myself as a master in perpetual practice. But this life skill is available within me all the time. I can apply it formally to a group, approaching an agreed topic or I can let it drip spontaneously into a loose professional or private setting or even talking to the crowd within myself.

Communologue establishes a compassionate space in which I can experience otherness with open eyes. Within this safety I can stretch heart and mind to explore the unique ways in which each and every one walks the Earth with me. I feel more at peace and uplifted. I feel richly gifted with layers of perpetual wonder and I feel supported unconditionally by a likeminded group. Thank you.

Andrea Sydow M. A.
Safe Conversations® Leader
Radical Forgiveness Coach
Holistic Intuitive Coach
www.sydow-coaching.de
Berlin, Germany