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## What we want

### *What a third of the population wants*

She: 'This evening, why don't we talk about our relationship for a change?'

He: 'Why? Is anything wrong?'

She: 'I didn't say that.'

He: 'So what's the matter then?'

She: 'I just wanted to talk about it.'

He: 'Aren't you happy or something?'

She: 'I wouldn't put it like that.'

He: 'How would you put it?'

She: 'Surely there's nothing wrong with talking about it for once.'

He: 'But what is it that you want?'

She: 'I have no idea yet.'

He: 'Then what's this all about?'

She: 'Oh, just forget it...'

He: 'OK. But mind you tell me when there is something wrong.'

Promise me that.'

Sound familiar, this sort of futile, going nowhere dialogue? As far as he is concerned, it doesn't matter: after all, it's about nothing. Well, at least, nothing concrete or provable. But for her, it's a different matter: it is about something, but not something she can put her

finger on immediately or gauge. It is more something from the realm of feelings, impressions and intuition.

We sometimes live on different planets, and the things that we want and desire differ according to the planet. The difference is particularly evident in men and women.

Men often come from Planet 'It', and if there is some problem, people on that planet want to know what 'it' is, what 'it' is about, what purpose 'it' serves, what 'it' produces, and most particularly, how we are going to solve 'it'. They like talking about things they can locate, things that are concrete and preferably, measurable things. It has to be something that you can grab hold of. On that planet, things are only true if you can pinpoint them and prove their existence. They have value if and only if you can measure them. Anything else is rubbish and airy-fairy speculation. This planet is the world of things, of cause and effect thinking, of logic. It is the world of 'it'. If there is a problem, 'it' must have a cause, and when you know what 'it' is, you can solve 'it'. Just tell me what the problem is and we will get to work and sort 'it' out. In this world, you have to work to achieve what you want, and preferably as hard as possible, because the harder you work the further you will get. The 'thing' that you want to achieve will probably be a thing: an appliance, a system, a structure, a procedure. In any case, something in the external world, something tangible, something whose existence is beyond doubt or otherwise has a fair degree of objectivity. On planet 'It', things are about purpose, efficiency and objectivity. Its mottos are 'measure it and know' and 'guessing gets you nowhere'. If somebody says 'This always goes wrong' then you will immediately want to know what 'this' is, how often is 'always', and in what way 'wrong' is wrong. In other words, what is 'it' about and what are the facts? It is striking that more men live on this planet than women.

This world is not a bad one. Quite the contrary, in fact: it is an excellent place that has produced much of value. Every science strives towards objectivity and measurability; without this sound basis, we would be back in the Stone Age. This world stands for soundness, pre-

dictability, control and feasibility. This world is digital: zero or one, true or not true, black or white, yes or no. It is our way of gaining control over things: we think that because things are measurable, we know where we are with them and can control the world around us better. 'Control' is the magic word. The need for control and controllability can be a powerful force for the good if our thinking has been muddled by opinions, assumptions, fantasies, impulse and colored emotions. By showing the facts as they are it can direct us towards the so-called truth and prevent us from making the wrong decisions. Gravity is a reality, and if you fall off the roof you really will hurt yourself. This is a fact that cannot be denied and is of a different order to personal beliefs and feelings. Take good care when you are clambering over a roof. Your survival may depend on it.

The inhabitants of 'It' get a real kick out of solving one problem after the other, fixing something up again or sorting it all out one more time. Achieving results brings out the best in them. They derive energy from being successful, achieving results and progressing, and it is best not to pay too much attention to those things that do not contribute directly to this. After all, where will they get you? Getting there quickly and being on target, looking at what has gone wrong and sorting it out: these are things that the inhabitants of 'It' like to do. And so they have a tendency to regard anything that cannot be measured as unimportant, and anything that cannot be controlled as threatening and best avoided. Things that are hard to gauge are consequently dismissed as superstition or as not relevant.

*The inhabitants of 'It' refer lovingly to their planet as Planet True, since objective truth is what matters to them.*

In short, on Planet 'It', people speak the 'It' language: an impersonal language which only has the distancing third person form. Results, goals, plans, systems, laws and things are what 'It' is all about. Communication is limited to monologues: a single person speaking

at others rather than with them, and so there is no interaction. This is actually quite convenient: after all, what good would it do if the apple I am dropping in order to examine the effects of gravity could talk back? I need no interaction when I am investigating something, or measuring something, or demonstrating something. I can do it all myself.

Schools and universities teach children the language of 'It': the language of figures, goals, results and so on. This is an excellent way of learning how to survive and understanding how things work. The problem is that this is the only language that young people are taught. So their means of communication is limited and they are unable to communicate with the other two planets, let alone understand them. In the universe, you have to know at least three languages to get anywhere, otherwise you are limited to forms of communication (or non-communication, actually) like those described above: things in discussion with people.

So they often make a mess of things on Planet True: how to relate to one another and give meaning to life is completely beyond them. To deal with such matters they enlist the help of the other planets, but only in the capacity of migrant workers and only when absolutely necessary. After all, they are of the opinion that 'It' is something that they know best.

### *What another third of the population wants*

There are two other planets besides Planet 'It': Planet 'We' and Planet 'I'. 'We' is visible; 'I' can only be experienced.

Planet 'We' is inhabited by people with broader interests than on Planet 'It'. So what they want is different again. The inhabitants like to talk about matters that have to do with the way that we relate to each other, with relationships: that is, with interpersonal dealings and living together. This planet is not concerned with the objective truth: it is concerned with qualitative interactions. As such, concepts such as suitability, correctness and goodness are more important than the demonstrability of things. The important thing in the interactions between the inhabitants is contact and connectedness: they determine the quality of the relationship.

Communal values are important on this planet, and its inhabitants are involved in a search for the meaning of 'suitability'. What is the best way of dealing with each other? Freedom, equality, respect and justice are some of the basic values upon which their society is based and which allow them to live together. They know that without shared values, people will simply go their own way, with misery, destruction, and even war as a result. Because they realize this, a lot of attention is focused on values.

This is not to say that everyone sees freedom, equality and justice in the same terms. Values cannot be defined in objective terms. The main issue is not finding definitive definitions, but of being engaged in a dialogue about them. Mutual adaptation and the exchange of ideas are more important than setting things in concrete. Aren't rules merely a pretext for doing this? The issue is how to relate to others and all living things in a suitable manner. The dialogue aroused by this issue keeps everyone on their toes. It revitalizes everyone and keeps them alert and happy.

*To be in a dialogue is to be in conversation with people and to try and understand them instead of talking at them and trying to convince them of your point of view (which would be a monologue).*

The inhabitants of Planet 'We' do not work on their values in the same way that the inhabitants of 'It' work on things. It is simply not possible to draw up targets, devise plans, get to work as though it were a project and thus sort out the 'issue' of values. Approaching things as one would approach a problem would not work. There is nothing to be solved: instead, there is something to discuss, to adjust to, to exchange views on, to investigate, to try out and to get to know. How suitable things are – ethics – has a language of its own: the 'We' language, a language that is based on the 'we' form. This is the native language of the inhabitants of Planet 'We', a planet that they also call Planet Good. But while they are masters in goodness, this is about as far as it goes. For supplies and technology they are highly dependent on Planet 'It'. They have no other option than to make use of 'It' for this purpose, but they do so reluctantly rather than with pleasure.

### *What the remaining third of the population wants*

As mentioned above, Planet 'I' is not visible and occupies a different dimension to Planet 'It', being in us, being part of our inner world. This world has no objective presence: it can only be experienced. To do so, its inhabitants merely have to close their eyes and focus inwardly. When they do this, they experience the richness of their inner world, a world full of impressions, feelings, ideas, fantasies and adventures. This world is real, only its reality is of a different order to that of the outer world with its objects and people.

Beauty and fulfillment are what the inhabitants of Planet 'I' are interested in. This world and its experiences is not one that can be substantiated with facts and figures. It derives its *raison d'être* from the ability of the inhabitants of Planet 'I' to discern quality from lack of quality. A thing is experienced as having value not because it costs a lot in monetary terms but because it touches people and does something to them. This sense of discernment makes it possible for them to see beauty and to experience fulfillment and give expression to it.

Beauty does not reside in the painted surfaces of the paintings they look at but in the inner world that that painting arouses, stirs and touches. They observe with all of their senses, including their intuition. They are in contact with their inner world, with their spirit. For the scientists of planet 'It', that spirit is not really relevant, since they have never been able to demonstrate or prove that that it exists, and as long as that is the case, it just does not exist, or at least not for science. That's all there is to it. But those who close their eyes and look inwardly will indeed experience an inner world. The inhabitants of Planet 'It' may think that they live on the only planet in the universe, but the fact that they are unable to see Planet 'I' with their telescopes does not mean that Planet 'I' does not exist.

The native language of Planet 'I' is all in the first person singular, the 'I' form. The language is acquired via contemplation and reflection. By looking in their mirror and reflecting on the way they have performed and acted, the natives of I discover hidden wishes, attributes and talents they have not yet called on. The motto 'Know thyself' is fre-

quently cited in this world. Its inhabitants realize that not everything can be observed objectively, since the way we view the world is colored by who we are, by our personal attributes, by the things that preoccupy us and by the way we are feeling.

***The world within is a world of endless riches and possibilities.  
It is invisible to those who are only interested  
in the outer world or in others.***

Passion, inspiration, creativity and beauty is what the inhabitants of Planet 'I' long for and strive after. This explains why they also refer to their planet as Planet Beautiful: beauty is what they love and cherish and what they derive their vitality from.

On this planet, one does not derive information via measuring things or looking for objective truths (monologue-derived information), nor via interactive processes of searching for the right way of dealing with each other (dialogue-derived information) but via intuitive processes of observing or ascertaining things (information derived via translogical means). Information of this kind is information that transcends logical and rational thought. The inhabitants of 'I' sometimes know things simply because they sense them somehow (though they can't explain how): they sense what they have to do, they sense that decision that they have to make, they have an intuitive awareness of the truth of a certain matter. Intuition is regarded as a valuable source of information and they automatically take account of what their intuition says. This is because their intuition speaks from within, from the self.

The inhabitants of Planet 'I' feel somewhat superior to those on the other two planets, though there is really no valid reason for this. They hardly shine in using their intuitive ability to relate to one another. In fact, they hardly do so: they live their own lives and have little to do with each other. Their real interest is in the experiences of their inner lives, not in all the fuss and bother of relationships. They dismiss them as unavoidable but a nuisance. It's up to the other planets to take care of matters like that.