
Us and Them:
and after all we
are only ordinary men

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“Doubt is not a pleasant position, but certainty is an absurd one.”

Voltaire

"I am so clever that sometimes I don't understand a single word of what I am saying."

Oscar Wilde

"There is no Them. There are only facets of Us."

Agenda

- Introductions
- History of paradoxes
- Paradoxes in group life
- Paradoxes in real life
- Conclusions

1.1 Introduction

- *Are we us or are we not them?*
- *Based on “Paradoxes of Group Life”*
- *We’ll find how paradoxes are the source of all meaning. Applicable in day-to-day facilitating.*
- **Learning Objectives/Outcomes**
 - handle two types of negation
 - understand the role of conflict
 - using paradoxes as part of reality

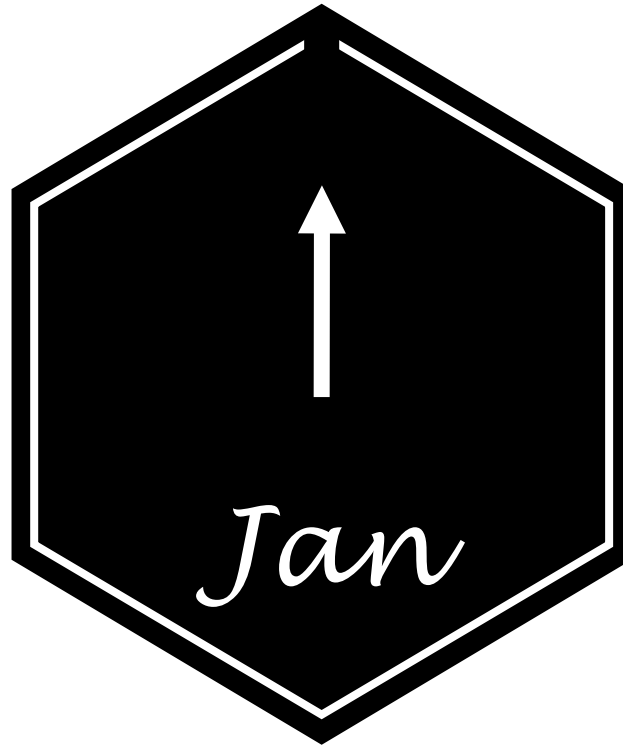
1.2 Who's he?

- Jan Lelie, facilitator mind@work
 - Drs Physics, MBa, CPIM, CPF
- Change agent using facilitative modes
- Cofounder of IAF-Benelux
- jan@mindatwork.nl
- Purpose: learning to deal with role of paradoxes for facilitators

1.3 Questions

- What questions do you have regarding paradoxes?
 - Write them down.
 - Short inventarisation.
- Please take care of your question(s)?

1.4 Write your name on a hexagon
and add a arrow as a directions



1.4 Please write (on separate cards)

1. Your name
2. Something about yourself you're willing to share here
3. Something about yourself you're not going to share here
4. Talk about 1 and 2

1.5 This is our work shop space

- This is our workshop space
- You enter here. I'm at the door, welcoming you. You walk in and choose a place for your self
- Place your card at that place, with the arrow in the direction you're facing.

1.5 Discussion

- Where tensions? What are you sensing?
 - Intuiting, awaring
- What tensions? How are you assessing?
 - Thinking, feeling
- What movements? What are we using?

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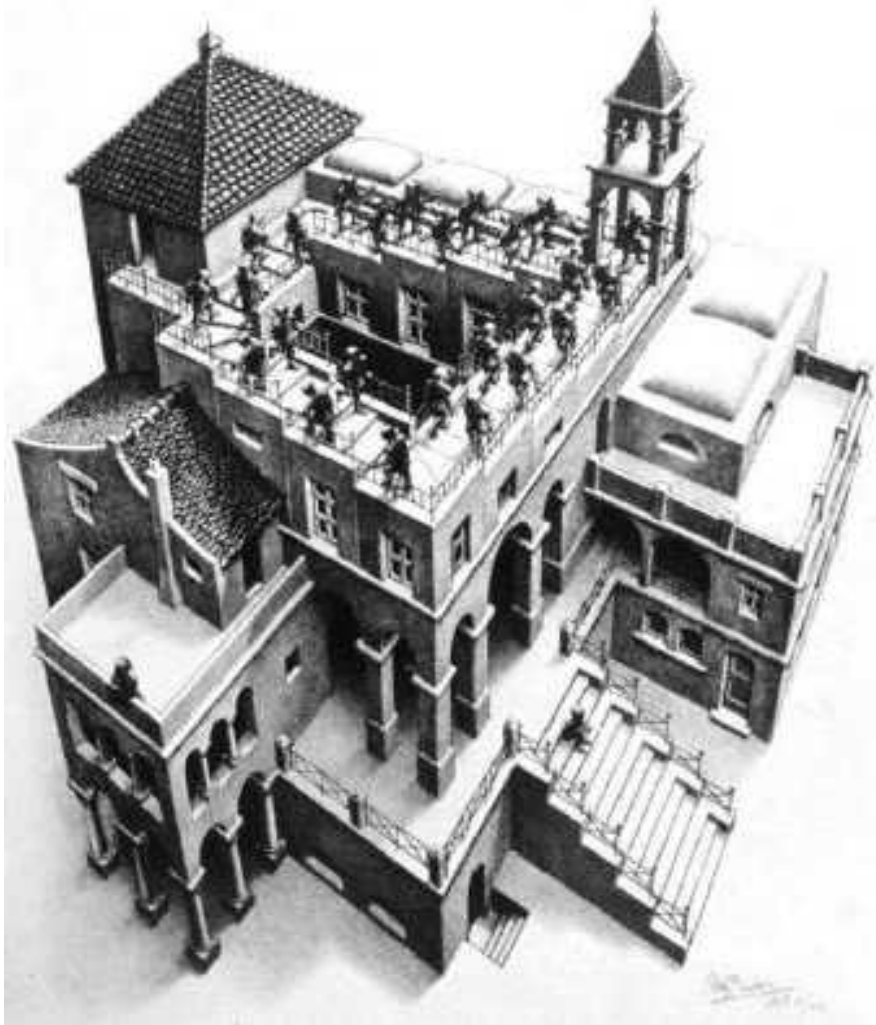
2. Paradoxes

- A set of statements that are (1) on themselves true, (2) refer to each other, (3) contradict each other and (4) trigger a vicious circle .
 - Example: Please ignore this statement
- Group life is inherently paradoxical
 - The core of any group is a (set of) paradox(es)
 - Example: “ I do not want to be part of a club that wants me as a member”

2. Examples

- Classical
 - All Dutchmen are liars. No, they are not.
- Bolzano (mathematics)
 - $S = a - a + a - a + a - a + a - a + a \dots$
- Watzlawick (communicating)
 - Interpunction (is – isn't – is – isn't -)

2. Examples (M.E.B.)



2. Short history of paradoxes

- **Tao Te Ching:** *“Those who know the tao, do not speak. Those who speak, do not know the tao”*
- Zeno, Democritus, **Heraclitus:** *panta rhei*
- Plato, **Aristoteles:** *paradoxes are unpractical and therefore wrong*
- **Pythagoras:** *world is rational and paradoxes (like $\sqrt{2}$, irrational number) are just still unexplained*
- **Augustinus:** *Truth is God and can not be paradoxical*
- **Newton:** *appearance of rationality; by-passed paradoxes*

2. Short history of paradoxes

- **Descartes:** “*I think therefore I am*”, can not doubt doubt.
- **Spinoza:** God (*Nature Naturing*) is the only thing that exists
- **Kant:** Two intrinsically alike objects must be interchangeable (→ confusing).
- **Schopenhauer:** Harm of death makes continuing to live bearable and the sufferings of life make the prospect of death bearable
- **Nietzsche:** No *eternal facts*, no absolute truths, yet fights for the truth.

2. In physics

- Velocity of light is **absolute** for observer (called: “theory of *relativity*”)
- Light behaves as particle or wave
- Energy equivalent to mass equivalent to acceleration
- Order emerges from chaos (where more chaos was expected)
- Law of the least work: systems seem to know how to behave
- Einstein: *Der Herr Gott wurfelt nicht*

2. And in mathematics

- Russell en Whitehead
 - *Principia Mathematica*,
 - Formal logic provides fixed ground
 - Paradoxes can be avoided by ‘logical types’
 - a proposition about propositions must not be confused with the propositions to which it refers
- Gödel: *every formal system is either incomplete or inconsistent*
- Spencer Brown: making a distinction

2. Paradoxes in psychology

- Freud: individual and group
- Jung: archetype “represents the irrepresentable”
- Benne: leader should support conflict that needed leadership in the first place
- Bateson: *double bind*
- Carl Rogers: “*The curious paradox is that when I accept myself just as I am, then I can change.*”

Double binds

At least two persons are in repeated communication and whose relationship is unequal (parent and child).

A primary negative injunction with a threat of punishment, (e.g. the parent tells the child, “Do not do x or else ...”)

A secondary injunction (often implicit) which conflicts with the primary one (e.g. “I shouldn’t have to make a threat or punish you when you do x.”)

A tertiary injunction that prohibits the persons from critically articulating the conflict of the primary and secondary (e.g. “such is life” or “this is normal”)

2. Remarkable

- Revolutions and shifts in science replace an 'old logic' of paradoxes by a 'new logic' of paradoxes with the aim to rule out paradoxes
 - Rationality gives imaginary numbers
 - Socialism leads to capitalisms
 - European union stresses differences
 - Authorities to regulate free markets
 - ...

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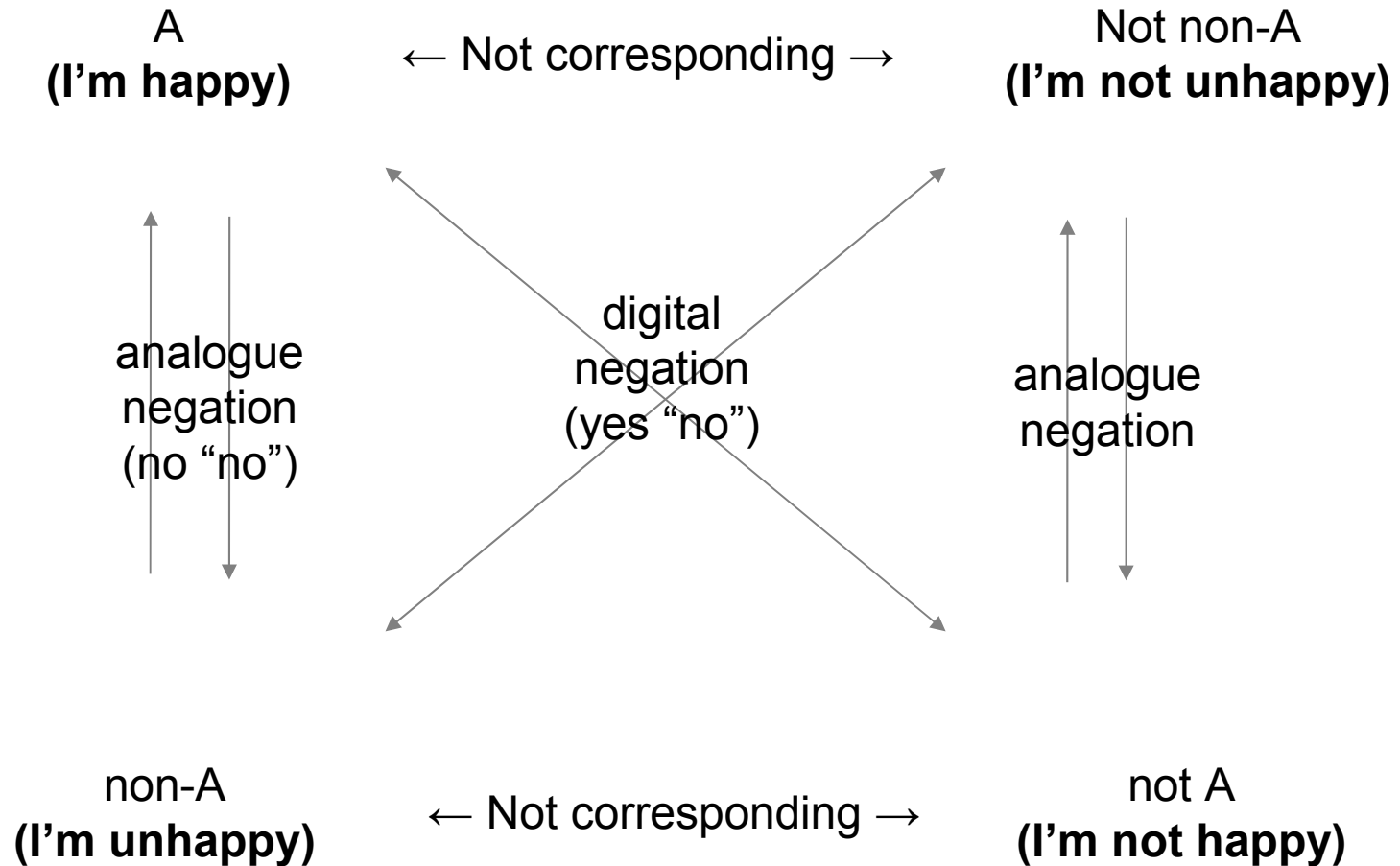
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3. Not “no”

Understanding paradoxes requires to understand two kinds of negating

- Digital: YES $\leftarrow \rightarrow$ NO
- Analogue: more $\leftarrow \rightarrow$ less

3. Semantic square



3. Us and them

In group life paradoxes arise by two types of negating too.

Two types splitting

- Symmetrical: two wholes
- Complementary: two to make a whole

Examples

Symmetrical

Identical parts

- Different countries
- Different schools
- Different religions
- Competitors
- Divisions of multinationals
- ...

Complementary

Differences make whole

- Mountains and valleys
- Master apprentice
- Rich and poor
- Suppliers and buyers
- Marketing & Sales and Production
-

3. Symptoms of paradoxes

- Stagnation (complementary split or heresy, quarrel)
- Escalation (symmetrical split or schism's, divorces)

Symptoms symmetrical

Escalation (split → schism's)

- Denial of alternative solutions
- Blaming people in other groups
- Repetition of adversarial moves
- Examples
 - No alternatives: reorganisation, lay-offs;
 - Other groups: the competitors, the market;
 - Repetition of moves: arms race, me-too

Symptoms complementary

Stagnation (split → heresies)

- Recurring dilemma's
- Unsolvable problems
- Blaming others (same group)
- Repetition of same moves
- Examples:
 - Line versus staff versus project,...
 - Marketing vs sales vs production vs service ...
 - Problems: integration of others; the “youth problems”
 - Repetitive same moves:
 - centralisation and then decentralisation
 - almost every staff meeting

3. Splitting

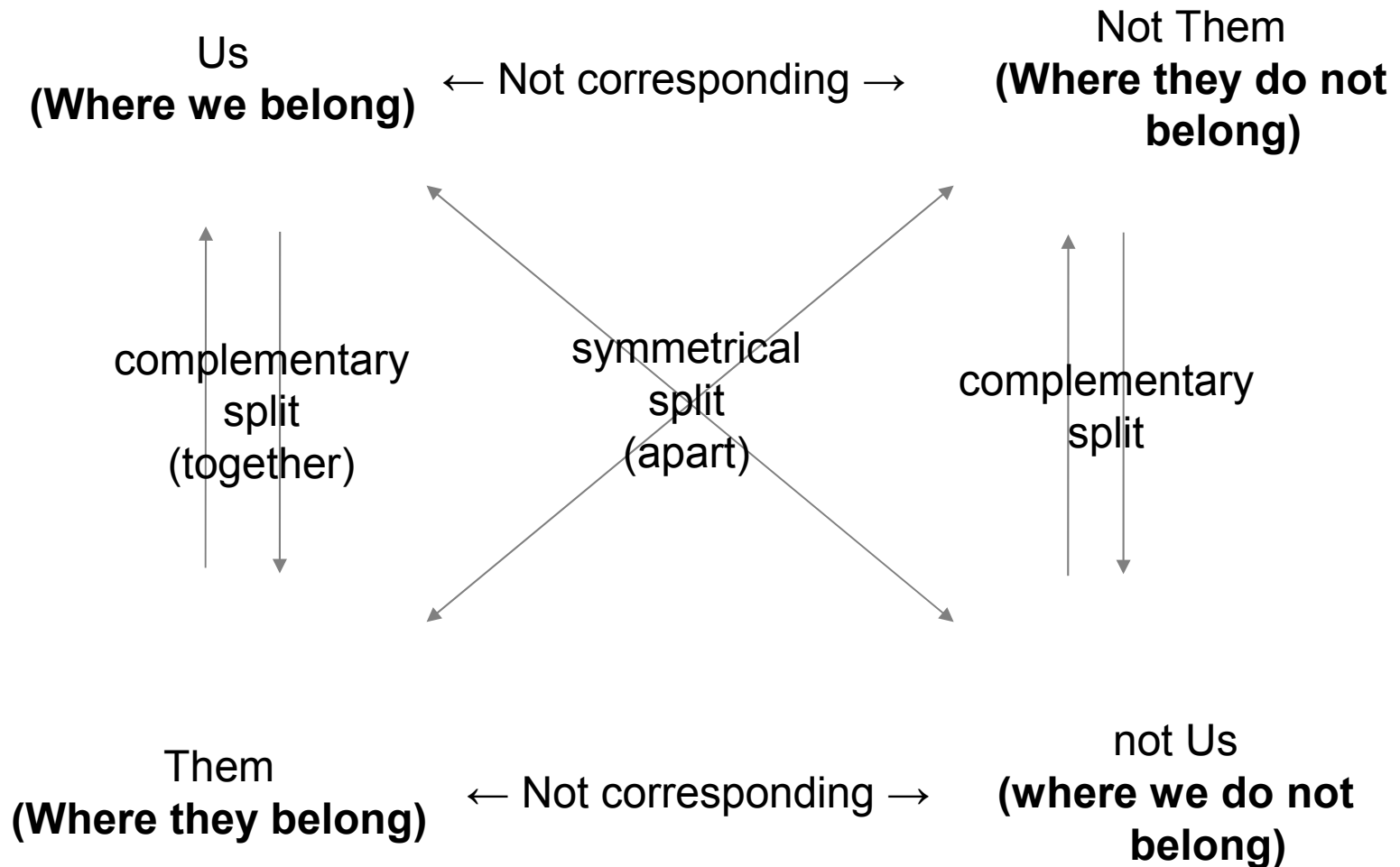
- Splitting in two parts
 - Environment \leftrightarrow individual (in environment)
 - Attributes \leftrightarrow distinctive properties
 - Relating $\leftarrow \rightarrow$ attributing properties to environment
- *splitting*
 - Projecting (I'm not ok \rightarrow you're to blame)
 - Introjecting (I'm not ok \rightarrow I'm to blame)
 - Projective identification (role development)

Groups of paradoxes

Smith and Berg:

-)Paradoxes of *belonging* (membership)
 - Identity, involvement, individuality, boundaries
- Paradoxen van *engaging* (participation)
 - Disclosure, trust, intimacy, regression
-)Paradoxen of expression (*speaking*)
 - Authority, dependency, creativity, courage

3. Framing square



Ordinary men

- Paradoxes are not the exception
- Paradoxes create tension
- Tension has to be resolved
- Solving paradoxes generates the energy to create bigger paradoxes

Break

- After the break
- Paradoxes in real life
- Exercise

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Paradoxal solutions

"paradox is not necessarily resolved at the level of the contradictions it holds within it, but rather via the lateral shift in thinking it invites when one is prepared to hold the paradox".

Dr. Blake Poland

So far

- Paradoxes make our day
- Paradoxes are square
- We cannot solve paradoxes, but we can facilitate change in emotional load

Next

- Work in small groups on a case
- Disecting your case using semantical squares
- Creating awariness of underlying paradoxes

4. Example: EU

COMMENT S'UNIR
SANS ÊTRE
ENSEMBLE?



4. Bring your case

- Examples to exercise?
 - Your situation
 - Development of EU: Turkey
 - ...

Procedure (1/5)

1. Write down your issue (stuckness, escalation, reiterating problems, dilemma)
2. Write down about 5 to 7 major elements in your issue, on (green) cards

Procedure (2/5)

1. Place them in the workspace, using distance and arrows to show
2. Together: where are tensions? What are you sensing?
 - Intuiting, awaring?

Procedure (3/5)

1. Add elements from the environment of the issue, on (blue) cards
2. Look for fault lines. Are there elements are on a fault line?
 - What tensions? How are you assessing?
 - Thinking, feeling

Procedure (4/5)

1. Add attributes to elements, write them on (red) cards
2. Add relationships to elements, write them on (yellow) cards
 - What movements? What are we using?

Procedure (5/5)

1. Formulate 3 to 6 semantic squares, using 2 times 2 opposites/complements
2. Search for links with the lay-out.
3. Formulate the paradoxical situation
 - Where tensions? What are you sensing?
 - Intuiting, awaring
 - What tensions? How are you assessing?
 - Thinking, feeling
 - What movements? What are we using?

4. Discussion

- Replace nouns by verbs
- Three aspects:
 - Environment
 - Distinctive attributes
 - Relationships
- Paradoxical opposites

5. Dealing with paradoxes

- *Dealing with paradox does not mean trying to think things through and force a resolution into being through action, but rather it means to hold the opposites within one's being until a path forward comes into being, emerging from its own nature. Dealing with paradox therefore means a kind of "not action".*

<http://21stcenturyparadoxes.blogspot.com/>

Summary

- Living paradoxes has both annoying and stimulating sides.
- Paradoxes provide energy, both as tensions and as drivers for changes.
- It is not the paradoxes that bother us, but the opinions – feelings, thoughts - we have about them
- Using semantic squares offers a tool