

The heart-head-gut process

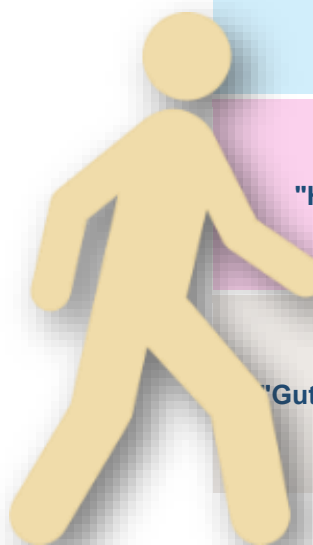
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Deep emotional processes should be handled by a professional. The doormat processes are for people who are able to playfully engage with their inner processes and not for people whose inner structure can no longer provide them with sufficient support. The use of these tools is at your own discretion and risk.

The Heart-Head-Gut Process is a practical switching process that can be easily performed on colored doormats, for example.

Our drives, thoughts, feelings and strategies do not always fit well with our goals or our well-being. We may be energetic, sensitive and intelligent, but in the end we often behave differently – as individuals and as a society. The Heart-Head-Gut Process is there to increase our control intelligence in life in a simple way.

We assume that there are three "control centers" in humans: the gut, the head and the heart. These develop in humans in exactly this order: first, the gut controls our lives as babies and toddlers; in childhood, intelligence and discernment develop; and with a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of things, our heart intelligence increasingly influences how we shape our lives. Of course, this is not about the physical stomach, the physical heart or the brain with its many neurons. The stomach, head and heart are simply meaningful names for the three control centers.



Control centre	Works with	Challenge	Meaning
"Head"	Mind cognition, reason	The intelligent creature distinguish, differentiate, combine, evaluate, understand	establish a strategic meta-level beyond the level of action.
"Heart"	Emotionality feelings, intuition, ideals, values	The spiritual human being feeling, sensitive perception, relating, acting	gaining an understanding of the essence of things from one's relationship to them
"Gut feeling"	Impulsiveness vitality, drive, liveliness	The creature mustering energy, focusing attention, reacting	survival, living life to the fullest, behaving in a life-affirming manner in the world

Depending on how we organize our lives with these three control centers, we understand ourselves, our relationship to the world and the world itself in completely different ways. Which control center dominates in the current (problem) situation? Ultimately, this is a question of developing awareness.

The process is also closely related to the three levels of the cultural level model of NVC-plus. Together, people form either a dominant (gut), functional (head) or caring culture (heart) in their respective life systems, be it their partnership, family, team, company, city, country or the global community as our great community of destiny. Which cultural level determines the system depends on how much gut, heart and head are active in controlling the system and how these three control centers interact in the individuals. This process is therefore interesting both for the individual and for their living environment.

In humans, the gut (vital control) develops first, then the head (logical control) and finally the heart (mindful control). For survival, the gut provides the drive and focus with reaction patterns, impulsiveness and instincts. The head searches

for abstract rules and strategies. The heart often only comes into play at the end of the process and evaluates the experience without being able to exert much influence. Initially, this was due to a lack of maturity, but later on, the interaction between the gut and the head had already established itself, with the head mainly acting as the advocate of the gut.

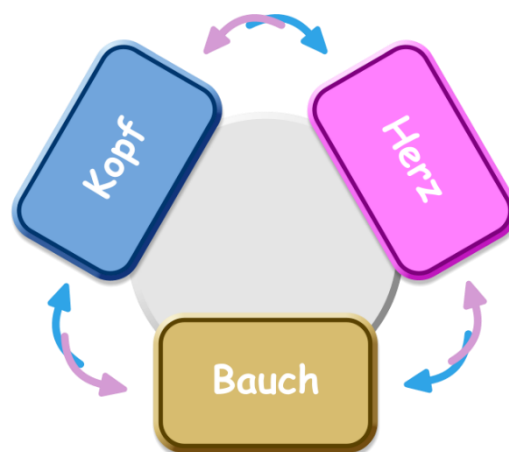
At some point in our lives, we are all faced with the task of upgrading the quality of our life management and making our heart, and thus our humanity, the center of our life decisions. Unfortunately, the head does not feel or understand the urges and emotional impulses from the gut at all. It can only think and not feel (control center "head" = intellect). This makes the gut the driving force and the head becomes its diligent "advocate", which has no vital drive to think on its own. That is why many people think continuously as a background process in autopilot mode, but when it comes to concentrated mental work, they neither like to think nor are they particularly good at it. The reasons for thinking are initially provided by the gut, i.e. the "wanting" and "not wanting" in humans. Since the gut is concerned with behavior (theme: survival, security, provision, enjoyment) and the head with the reflection of behavior and abstract concepts, the control centers operate on completely different levels. The heart could connect these levels. To do this, however, it would have to pick up on the emotional impulses of the gut before the head reacts to them and starts thinking impulsively. So we need to change the sequence from gut-head-heart to gut-heart-head. The heart understands the gut, and the head can act more intelligently, mindfully and thoughtfully through the heart. True understanding requires more than just the mind; the heart is always involved.

So how do we reverse the order of gut-head-heart and bring the heart between the gut and the head? Quite simply: we lay 3 mats for the 3 control centers in a circle and first go in one direction (gut-head-heart) and then in the other direction (gut-heart-head). As we do so, we will discuss the case that concerns us or the client.

The emotional impulses of the belly are the fastest. Animals have to rely on them. They are faster than any thought or conscious feeling. With these energetic impulses, our system also provides the necessary vitality for important processes. Since we are more than animals, we have two additional control centers that are not so much focused on behavior. This opens up two possible paths for us: Do we start thinking impulsively first, or do we start feeling mindfully and then think on the basis of our sensitive perception?

Head reflection abstraction

distinguish,
differentiate,
combine
evaluate,
understand



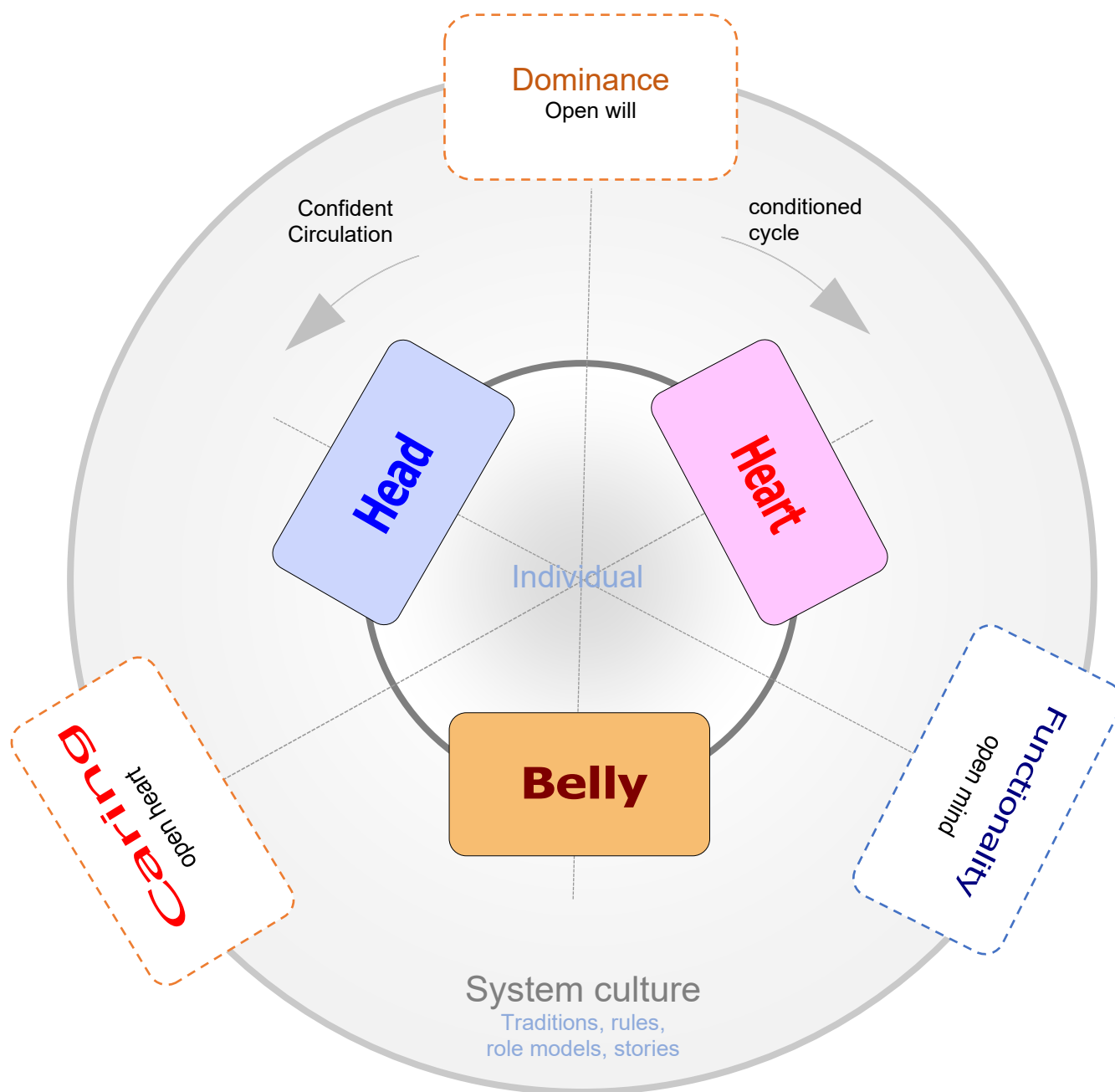
heart relationship fulfilment

pleasant - unpleasant
escaping pain or accepting
pain

Gut behavior satisfaction

Abundance - Lack
Calmness - Restlessness
Forward - Backward

The individual, with his three control centers – stomach, head and heart – should always be regarded as part of a social system. The quality of the social system depends on the quality of the individuals and vice versa.



We are used to thinking in terms of linear cause-and-effect relationships. Is the feeling the cause or the effect? Let's take the example of buying a Porsche. Does the feeling of happiness lead to the Porsche or does the Porsche lead to the feeling of happiness? Another example: do your own loving openness and happiness in life lead to a good partnership or, conversely, does a good partnership lead to loving openness and happiness for both people?

If you could start the process from two sides, which start would you have more confidence in: do you want to make the relationship happy through a logical concept, or do you want to bring happiness into the relationship through your sensitivity and warmth?

Path 1: Gut-Head-Heart

1. An emotional impulse (gut) ...
2. causes the head to seek solutions without being able to feel, assess or process the emotional impulse. An alcoholic, for example, cleverly organizes their alcohol and cleverly hides their addiction. But the addiction itself is not clever, it is only compulsively driven. The head can know that too.
3. The result feels pleasant or unpleasant in the heart.
4. This then changes the emotional impulses in the gut.



Path 2: Gut-Heart-Head

1. The emotional impulse (gut) has ...
2. ... a sensitive conscious experience (heart) as its cause, ...
3. ...which is recognized in its significance (head), leading to certain strategies for the future.
4. This leads to a change in emotional impulsivity (gut).



The most dangerous heart diseases are still hatred, envy and avarice.
Pearl S. Buck

Only those who have a heart for others have a heart.
Christian Friedrich Hebbel

*The mind can tell us what we should refrain from doing,
but the heart can tell us what we must do.*
Joseph Joubert

*The atomic bomb is not the problem of our century,
but the human heart.*
Albert Einstein

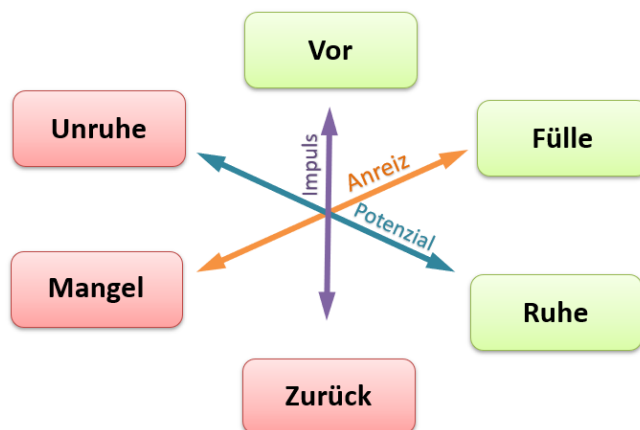
The coordination of the three control centers

In order to begin the Heart-Head-Gut Process to resolve an everyday conflict, we distinguish between gut experience (drive), heart experience (emotions, feelings) and head experience (thoughts, cognition). In our theory, there is no particularly good interaction between these three control centers. Therefore, we will attempt below to bring these centers into better alignment with the help of our consciousness.

The gut and its dual basic orientations

The gut has two basic states. It knows how to distinguish between scarcity and abundance and is therefore either in a state of unrest or calm. The dynamic resulting from unrest has an orientation; it points either forwards or backwards.

Forward lie the efforts to fulfil (inspiration), while the avoidance movements (dissatisfaction) from a certain point onwards only follow the need for security (escape). We cannot actually speak of a pronounced need at first, but rather of an instinctive impulse for security, which only expands into a need through our conscious experience.



Thus, we have marked the area of self-preservation:

- Food, sexual partners and territory are "incorporated".
- When danger arises, we retreat.
- In an intermediate state, we are dissatisfied.
- In addition, with all the unrest, we need reassurance and sleep in order to maintain a reasonably stable and balanced state.

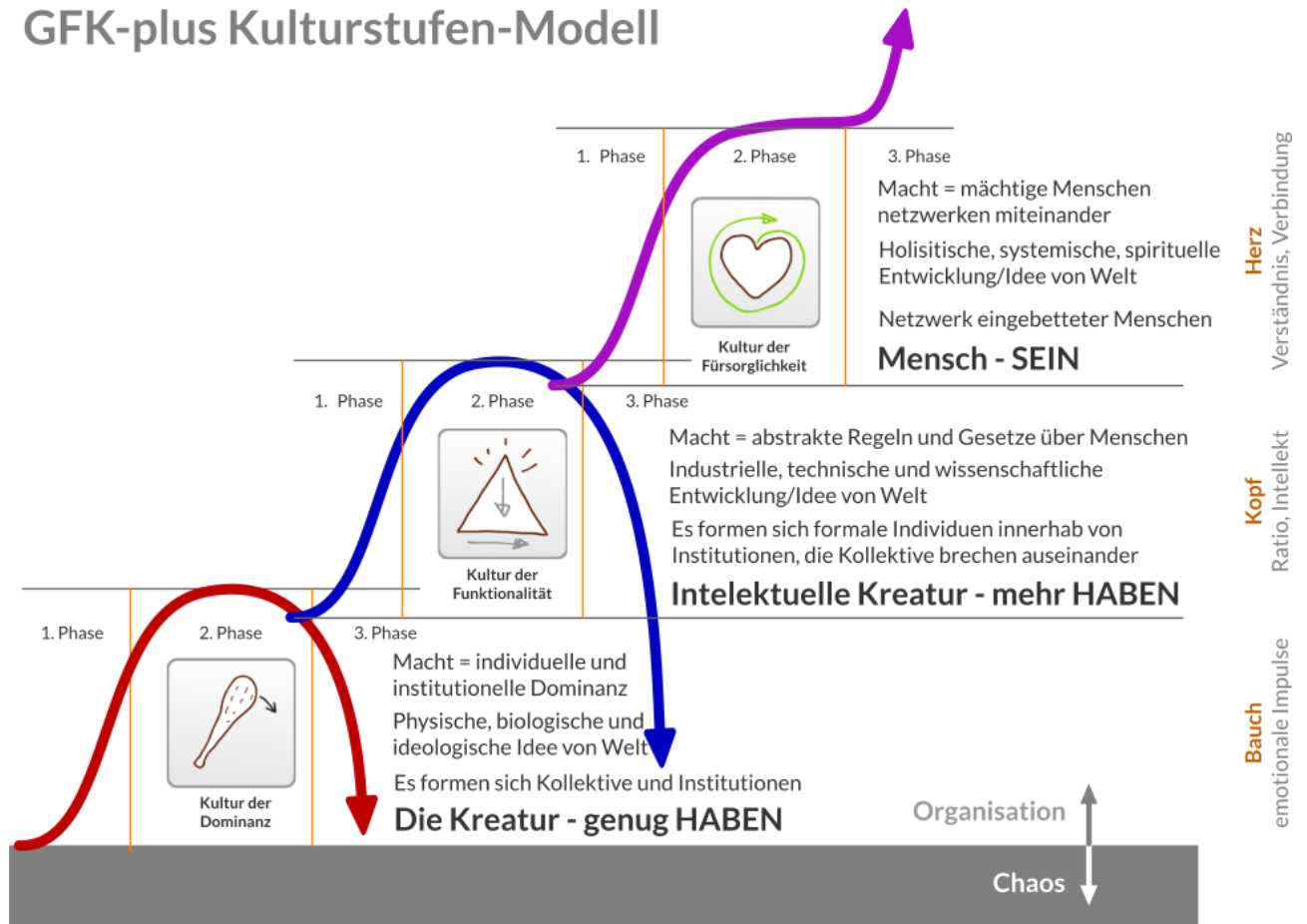
Video: [The human creature](https://youtu.be/cU3prxlGTds) <https://youtu.be/cU3prxlGTds>

The natural, vital connection to life that comes from the belly is even demonstrated in the womb by the umbilical cord. The navel of the world is the vital center of our world. I also refer to this center as the inner epicenter, the place where the energetic connection to life is expressed through the dynamics that arise within. As we have seen, this inner dynamic consists of two components that constitute the fundamental difference in human sensibility: calm and restlessness. When we say that strength lies in calmness, there is nevertheless a great deal of dynamic energy in restlessness. This gives rise to different connections with our environment. We can even divide people into calm and restless types.

We could also talk about resonance and dissonance. Resonance is energetic calm and connection with an environment that vibrates at the same frequency. From this calm, a powerful peace can subsequently arise in interaction with the heart and head. Dissonance, on the other hand, is like a call to change something between us and our environment, which simultaneously means difference and separation. Through play, pursuit or flight, insight, learning and value creation take place (in interaction with the control centers of the mind and heart).

In addition to what is active in the gut, two paths emerge that could not be more different. There is a clear difference between whether the reactive impulsiveness of the gut first serves the analytical mind or the active heart. Then it either goes from the mind to the heart or vice versa.

GFK-plus Kulturstufen-Modell



The cultural level model of NVC-plus

The cultural level model of NVC-plus shows the connection between interpersonal cultures and the individual control centers of the gut, head and heart. The best way to recognize the development of consciousness in a system (family, company, organization, country, etc.) is to see whether the system is organized in a dominant, functional or caring way. Unfortunately, in this cultural evolution, the heart also comes last, as we have already seen with individuals. Perhaps we ate the fruit from the tree of knowledge too early after all...

The path from the gut to the head

If external demands or pressure to perform are too strong, people rush and do not have time to develop a heart feeling that is better attuned to the outside world. These demands for quick, hectic reactions can also be internalized. One is then no longer driven from the outside, but from within. The head directly takes over the emotional impulses of the gut and considers behavioral concepts and strategies for solving problems and meeting demands. Especially when this happens in early childhood and under high tension and stress, the behavioral concepts become second nature and form subconscious drivers. It is significant that the emotional impulses and the resulting drivers are never questioned or corrected by the head. The head is not the commander it would like to be, but only the assistant and possibly critic of the gut. Without a sense of self, there is no basis for becoming aware of the impulses that move us, and the head has no intuition, only thoughts at its disposal. This is where the heart should come into play.

Instead, we recognize the echo of the duality of the gut in the mind. It begins to think in dualistic terms itself. Friends and enemies determine the good or evil world, full of subordination and dominance, of right and wrong, of must and must not.

If it then continues from here to the heart, the chaos is complete. The temporal orientation of thoughts towards the past and future, as well as the fundamental self-contradiction of the head, driven by the duality of the belly impulses, leads to an ambivalence of the heart. Disappointments and fulfilments from the past, as well as hopes and fears for the future, capture the heart and deprive it of the grounding of living presence. Thus, the stable inner center as the firm basis of

inner balance has been lost. The heart, which should be a stable anchor for the doubting mind, has itself lost its footing and drifts through life on the waves of driven thoughts, helplessly exposed to the winds of fate like a rudderless ship.

The better way: belly-heart-head

When the emotional impulses of the gut are received directly by the heart, the dual orientation of the gut becomes a living diversity in the heart. Duality transforms into polarity. Why is this so significant?

If animals ever had roots, that time is long gone. As soon as a vital accumulation of cells separates from the nourishing soil and forms an independent living being, it needs other means of feeding than roots and thus also, for example, a musculoskeletal system and suitable senses to be able to search for food. For the beginning of this development, the simple logic of the "gut" control center may be entirely sufficient. Calm and excitement control an instinctive back and forth movement to turn a deficiency into abundance.

However, the more the consciousness of this being matures, the more diverse and subtle the differentiation will have to be. The gut is driven by scarcity and abundance. So we need another control center that can translate a dual drive impulse into a colorful polarity. This also results in a greater conscious closeness to the surrounding life, because life is never dual black and white, but always colorful and diverse.

Human beings cannot be concerned solely with securing their existence. Not only the satisfaction of needs, but also the fulfilment of meaning becomes possible. Resonances and dissonances provide an emotional capacity for experience. And yet, completely absorbed in one's own experience (especially in resonance), the distance to things is missing. For it is only through dissonance that the duality of things becomes apparent. And it is precisely this sense of contradiction that is the prerequisite for the next step in development.

From the heart to the head. Now human beings acquire the capacity for fundamental self-contradiction, which they need in order to understand abstract principles and aspects. Only here do they become inquiring time-space beings. They comprehend and grasp things not only in their nature, but also in their possibilities and potentials. Where once there was only earth, they see the possibility of firing jugs and cups from this earth. The meadow becomes a field. Tools arise in the mind's eye of the new human being, who is suddenly able to bear the epithet "sapiens". And yet they still carry the title too heavily. Wisdom is a big word, and it is a long way from being a cunning, crafty or clever person who is always only concerned with their own project to being a truly understanding person with a big heart and a caring connection to their surroundings. Only when there is a harmonious triad between the heart, head and gut, and a genuine connection with life outside one's own sphere of desire, is the basis for wisdom established.

Is humanity on the right track?

Values in the heart-head-gut process

If we only examine the control center of the gut (the human creature) and the dominant cultural space for ethical values, then we will instead only find non-negotiable necessities of life, person-centered desires, flight reflexes and conditioned motivational concepts. Ideologies also form over time and ensure collective coexistence.

But what happens to desires when we shift into second and third gear? When an emotional impulse travels from the gut control center to the heart control center, the unconscious desire is transformed into a conscious need. The need is palpable, thus becoming conscious, and the powers of consciousness contribute to the search for a solution. In addition, feeling creates a basis for a reflective process in which general values also play a role. We experience ourselves as people who are moved internally and externally by a need. We can now draw on the control center in our head and develop a philosophical ethic of self-, which frames, guides and expands our actions of fulfilment or escape and accompanies us in the process of becoming ourselves. True individualization means that I am not only aware of myself, but also of my environment, the needs of the people around me and the requirements of the processes in which we are all involved. An ethic derived from a naïve, self-enclosed pursuit of fulfilment would be no ethic at all.

It is equally clear that a completely different ethic awaits us when the emotional gut impulse chooses a different direction and first goes to the control center in the head. The impulsive driving forces in our desires are processed there into demands or projections that seek cunning, self-centered fulfillment and, in the presence of other people, also seek suitable justifications. The justifications will now always carry within them the naive self-centeredness of the gut and will seem logical, especially to the people who express them.

Desires cannot mature further in the control center of the head and, although they stimulate thoughts, there is insufficient basis for deeper understanding and self-awareness. This makes it difficult to control more complex interaction systems well. Any close relationship or even a company that is supposed to work in a performance-optimized manner is already a complex system. In the interaction between people, a feeling for others is needed. The head replaces this feeling with rules and concepts.

If humans want to evolve beyond the creature stage, they will have to transcend dominance behavior, gestures of submission, courtship behavior, hunting instincts, territorial claims and prey assertion. The head forms two apparent ethical values from this, such as justice, duty fulfillment, balance, respect, etc. However, these concepts are not enough for the heart to do justice to another person and to manage more complex interactions. The heart finds the solution to the dilemma, but only if it is directly connected to the control center in the gut and is not confused by the clouding thoughts of the control center in the head.

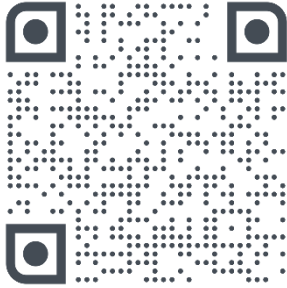
Instead of justice, the heart seeks righteousness; instead of respect, mindfulness; instead of recognition, connection; and instead of duty, destiny. This is a completely different ethical basis. Not doing what the other person does, but doing what one has recognized as right. The right thing, determined less by a philosophical concept than by the inner nature of the beings who encounter each other. Doing right by myself and my counterpart in an interaction is not a question of justice. The control center in the head would only ask this question of justice if it were directly served by the self-centered control center in the gut. Then a differentiation occurs before a connection could be made via the heart.

The developer of non-violent communication distinguishes between three states: egocentric, selfless and self-fulfilling. If the head lacks the strength of the heart, the person appears egocentric; if the heart lacks the strength of the head, the person appears absent in their selflessness. Negotiations then become impossible because the negotiator cannot assign themselves in a sensitive and differentiated way. In the egoistic state, when it goes from the head (entitlement) to the heart, there is an impulse of justification that is supported by the head. However, justification cannot create balance in the interaction. This means that there is no social self-organization, and such systems attempt to regulate themselves "artificially" through the threat of punishment and a plethora of rules, regulations and laws.

Julius Kuhl's behavior control model in NVC-plus

Unfortunately, without a deeper emotional connection to a thought, meaning and understanding are also lacking, because meaning is always felt, sensed and thus brought to life. Sensitivity provides the connection (relationship, essence), while thoughts create logical orders, structures and references.

Download worksheet



<https://t1p.de/umw2o>