

## Constellation Basics

*“Hellinger was always on the lookout for solutions, for possibilities that will restore love.”*

- Hunter Beaumont, *Love’s Hidden Symmetry*

*This Series of Circle events will introduce newcomers to the culture of constellations circles, while drawing, in sequence, upon the ten modules of the course: Movements of the Soul - Studies in Energy, Lineage & Embodiment.*

Constellations is not Gestalt Therapy, Drama Therapy or play-acting. It is an invitation to come together in a group, to connect with each other and the wisdom of the collective field to help restore love within ourselves and in our relationships. In this document I’ll share what’s most important to know before attending a Constellations Circle.

### **What is repping and why do I do it?**

If you follow me on Facebook, you’ve been hearing a lot from me lately about my vision for being part of something greater—a healing community where everyone’s gifts are important, and we draw on the magic of universal love to be more of who we came here to be. To support one another in moving past stuck places and really stepping forward with our unique gifts and contributions in the world.

For me, serving as a representative in a constellation is as simple as breathing and as complicated as sorting out my own emotions, beliefs, sensations, aches and pains, and even mood states from the people around me. I, like many of you, am an empath, and throughout my life, I’ve had to put forth a concerted effort to discern what, in the field around me, is actually mine, and what actually belongs to someone else. Those others might be close ones like the couple next door that just got into a big fight or a client with a splitting headache or an ancestor I’ve unconsciously identified with out of love and family loyalty.

In the past year I’ve probably repped in 75 or so constellations, for other people who bring something to the group that they would like help looking at. Each time I rep, I breathe, notice what changes when I consciously step into the representation, and look around at the other representatives, feeling if there is anything going on with me that calls my attention. Sometimes it’s not much. Sometimes I feel aches and pains. Sometimes I feel releases in tissues, muscles, viscera. Sometimes there is heat, an impulse to move, a welling up of tears. By the time the constellation is over, the tension, pain, or discord has left my body and if by chance any bit of it lingers, I shake it off as I step out of the role and return to my own business, my own personal field and my purpose for participating in this wild and beautiful collaborative practice.

At the beginning, I was terrified that I wasn’t good enough, that I wasn’t doing it right, that everybody was annoyed with me, that I was a problem. At some point all that noise quieted down, and I realized that every time I showed up, I stood in service of a greater whole. I

learned that I was enough, and that the way I sensed and experienced things was exactly that, and that it was not only valid, but that it was needed. Repping has quite literally changed my life, and it continues to do so each time I step into the field.

In traditional Systemic and Family Constellations, there are four roles being played at any particular time.

- 1) Facilitator
- 2) Representative
- 3) Client
- 4) Witness

## The Role of the Facilitator:

For Constellations Circles, I serve as your facilitator. My job is to help establish safety and to help us together set the parameters for an experience that works for everyone. We will have an activity or two designed to help us fully arrive, relax and connect with our own inner core. There will be opening and closing rounds, where everyone present can have a chance to share what is present for them, or to pass. With the remaining time, we will do a traditional family or systemic constellation.

In a constellation, my job is to *listen and look carefully, much like a body-worker, for things like breathing changes, pulse changes, skin color and other subtle movements of the body. What [I'm] trying to do is to hear the sentences that are being spoken in the soul.*

## In the Role of Rep or Reresentative:

- Gather yourself and concentrate your attention on your reactions to being in this place. Your job is to let the position affect you and to report that as clearly and concisely as you possibly can, when you are asked.
- Avoid coming to conclusions about what you think you should feel based on what you see. If you feel nothing at all, then say that.
- Say whatever you notice about how this place affects you, regardless of what it might be—especially when the feeling goes against your personal values and sense of right and wrong.
- Don't worry about whether or not the sensations are your personal reaction or a response to the situation. The facilitator will sort that out.
- Report what you feel, but guard against interpreting your feelings. Trust them as they come.
- Don't have any intentions other than to report accurately how the position affects you. This may include certain ideas or images that occur to you. With experience, you'll develop a clear sense of what needs to be said and what can be left out.

Center yourselves, collect yourselves. Forget your own problems, your intentions, your goals. Just notice the feelings and sensations that arise as you're moved to your places, and notice whatever changes in you when others are brought into the constellation.

*If you are a representative, it's really important to say what you are experiencing. Try to bracket out your beliefs and your preferences. You don't need to forget them. It's enough just to pay attention to what is actually going on in your body, and in your heart and in your soul while you are representing someone in a constellation.*

- Hunter Beaumont

It's important not to try to figure out how you think you should feel in this or that place based on what you see or believe. Trust your body reactions. When you feel different than expected, report that neutrally, without judgment. You may experience feelings that are taboo and that cause anxiety or embarrassment. For example, you might feel relieved when someone dies, or you might feel drawn toward an illicit or incestuous relationship. If you don't say it, then important information doesn't come into the open. It works best when you say what you experience without censoring it, without leaving anything out or elaboration on it in any way. Whatever you experience when you're representing someone has to do with that person, and not with your personal life.

**Question:** While I was in the constellation, my hands felt terribly cold. I thought it was just my anxiety at being in the role, but maybe it was part of the system.

**Hellinger:** Yes, that would be important information. You need to act as if the moment you step into the system, you're no longer yourself, but another whose feelings you feel. You mustn't apply to yourself what you feel in the role. Don't even think, "That might be an indication that there's something similar in me." You need a certain discipline.

**The Role of the Client:** First, you will have an issue that you would be willing to look at with the help of the group. It might be an interpersonal issue, a physical symptom, a desired change in a situation, or a pattern that seems to keep coming up for you. Though this may feel like a very unique or troubling issue for you, it generally happens that the theme that comes up serves as an incredible gift to everyone present, as we are not as isolated and unique as we imagine. As your facilitator, I listen, ask questions and help you to select representatives for the various aspects of your issue.

When instructed you take each representative by the shoulders and put them in their places in relation to one another. You do this with the feeling of being completely collected. The constellation will emerge all by itself as you begin to move the representatives.

**The Role of the Witness:** In the role of the witness, you are asked to be a neutral witness, to notice your own responses to what is happening in the constellation, and to respond if asked to serve as an additional representative if necessary. You might set a silent intention to represent a wise and loving ancestor, one who is healed and whole and strong enough to look with compassion at whatever has happened without judgment. But you may also just want to observe. There is so much to learn just by observing with an open mind and heart.

Witnesses distract from the experience if they develop side conversations. If you notice that you have a strong urge to express yourself, it could be that you are having feelings. Breathe and be

present with yourself, and step away from the circle if necessary. A place will be designated for people if they need to excuse themselves from the circle to deal with whatever is coming up.

## Meaning in Constellations

The representatives' feelings reveal a partial truth, but they don't necessarily tell us what actually happened in the past. They help to identify forces operating in the system that are unconscious. And they help to find a resolution. That's all that the constellations do.

## After the Constellation

### **Did the constellation really change anything?**

Curiosity is destructive when we want to know more than is necessary for effective action. If the client were to answer the question, he'd have to distance himself from his experience and switch into his rational mind to formulate an answer, and the effect of the work would be interrupted. You can't even inquire about the long-term results without diminishing the effect of the work.

*It's more useful not to think about what to do next after a constellation, but rather just to feel and to appreciate the complexity of the inner workings of [the client's] system. I believe the best thing we can do is to entrust them into the care of their own souls. Sometimes after constellations like this, things just take surprising turns in unexpected directions.*

- Hunter Beaumont

*The other thing is, it's no use to try to remember what happened in the constellation. The soul knows it. Most people forget completely what happened, and that's a sign of the quality of the work. Really helpful work is beyond thinking.*

- Bert Hellinger

## Legend

Much of this material of this document is taken directly from other sources, which I have been using to integrate the ideas of the facilitator certification program I recently completed. You can see which sources the material comes from by using the list below.

Standard Margin, Black Times New Roman 12 pt – Editorial comments (This is me, Toni, paraphrasing and adding context when necessary for clarification and flow)

Standard Margin Black Ariel 11 pt – **Love’s Hidden Symmetry: What Makes Love Work in Relationships** (Bert Hellinger, unless otherwise stated)

Standard Margin Blue Arial Narrow 12 pt – Svagito Liebermeister **When Life Stops: Trauma, Bonding and Family Constellation**

Standard Margin Dark Red Comic Sans 11 pt - **Acknowledging What Is: Conversations with Bert Hellinger**

(One tab over) Red Ariel 11 pt – Bertold Ulsamer, **The Art and Practice of Family Constellations**

(Two tabs over) Green Ariel 11 pt – **Touching Love Volume 2**

## Bibliography

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Gunthard Weber & Hunter Beaumont

Acknowledging What is: Conversations with Bert Hellinger, by Bert Hellinger and Gabriele ten  
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Even If It Costs Me My Life, by Stephan Hausner

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