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HOLISTIC TREATMENTS IN BUSINESS -VI.

Introduction to Systems Thinking



Be careful with this message.
It contains information that
might change your life.

In the previous parts we could learn about the different elements of dancing waltz, such as its steps and the music that harmonises with it. Now we should pay attention to another aspect which is so often neglected when we try to understand the relations of the parts: TIME.

Think about it: **whatever system you look at, "time" factor is always present.** Sometimes this is absolutely obvious, and the consequences appear on the spur of the moment: when, for example, you drop a glass and it breaks as it hits the ground. You don't start to ponder about what you might have done wrong in your previous lives, do you?

Other times the causation remains hidden and unseen until things slowly accumulate and reach the tipping point, where the state often becomes irreversible.

For many years you eat junk food believing that your body tolerates it, and seemingly nothing bad happens, but one day "out of the blue" you develop symptoms of a disease.

Or perhaps you take a medicine whose side-effects appear much later. There are numerous examples for this phenomenon, just look around in the field of education, healthcare, economy, finance, etc.

When the cause-and-effect is hidden for long, so the feedback is much delayed, and/or it does not appear in the immediate environment we fail to understand the correlations and can get away "scot-free".

But perhaps we sense something wrong, and then we start to ask

questions like these: *Is it worth going on? How will this process end up? What might be the unexpected results?* etc.

However, unfortunately, **without knowing the operational mechanisms thoroughly,** these ones remain only rhetorical questions, and **the system keeps going to be seemingly chaotic, incoherent and unpredictable.** (Just think about the slimming diet after which you put up substantial weight.)



Knowing the system inside-out includes being very conscious about time-frame. You arrive home and it's very hot, so you switch on the air conditioning.

Then you engage in housework, and just when you sit down you start freezing. You rush to switch on the heater to counterbalance the cold... (And of course the same happens in the bathroom if you don't wait until the right temperature of water gets flowing.)

Time is that dimension in which the elements of the system affect each

other: they might strengthen, weaken or balance each other, and by doing so they either reinforce or change the state.

Time is also a frame in which a certain element exhibits its behaviour.

Its occurrence might be an only and accidental one, or it might show a tendency to repetition which develops into a pattern.

Speed can be measured only within time-frame: without a certain interval speed cannot be defined. Speed factor is highly significant, let's take this example: Are you rich? Don't answer, just tell me where you keep your money: under your mattress or in a cash-flow?

And if the latter one, then tell me how fast is the slowest element of this cash-flow... Because the speed of the flow of the system is limited by its slowest element; in other words: **the system is as fast as its slowest element.**

How can you apply TIME in your business? Do you have great time-investments? Do you know and do you understand the time-frames of the elements in your business?

Can you calculate how long it takes to establish certain changes? How could these changes be hasten or slowed down?

What are the long-term consequences of your actions? What about the feedback that doesn't appear at your place but somewhere far?

Answering these questions will make

