

This piece by James Woodeson illustrates a consulting/coaching/supervising application of ROG to Self and organisational clients in Switzerland. The key theory maps are Self/Other/Situation (SOS) with a focus on Self as instrument.

James Woodeson: How ROG has impacted my work.

As I hover over my keyboard, I close my eyes and scan my whole self to see what I notice. I'm thinking of what to write and this fades as I notice a tension around my shoulders. I take a deep breath and realise I am happy! I'm smiling with curiosity as I hadn't noticed that. I relax as I recall that I woke at 04:30 due to some family stress, had my first call at 08:00, the second at 08:30 and then a whole team coaching session between 09:00 to 12:30. I then rushed to get the train. As I breathe into that I feel tired and calm.

I choose to take my hands away from my keyboard and enjoy a minute of stillness. In that moment, in the quite typical paradoxical rush of energy, excitement and spontaneity ... I know exactly what I would like to say about how ROG has impacted my life and work.

If I was to sum this up in one word it would be "completely", or in one sentence, perhaps "in ways I am discovering with excited delight when I'm least expecting it" and suddenly I feel I could write a book to honour Marie-Anne Chidiac and Sally Denham-Vaughan! Ha! Now that would be fun.

This can be captured quite simply by the experience of the past 48 hours. Getting ready ahead of our second session with a leadership team, I discovered with great surprise a strange sensation when my co-coach challenged us to be "less facilitators" and "more coaches". I was quite annoyed! I paused for reflection, inviting myself to sit with this annoyance. I even heard my inner-supervisor say "be more annoyed... what do you notice now?" and what emerged was a fantastic piece of personal awareness. There was a part of me still relating as 'student' to their experience. I took myself back fondly to my first ever piece of team coaching and how the same co-coach had supported me to develop my skills and repertoire. Their gentle challenge now, inviting me to step into the space and "coach", seems so simple and yet it was so powerful. The student had quite literally become the equal and in some ways, the teacher. We were now in our own, mutually beneficial dance together of respect and learning together.

In the co-creation of the planning, we noticed how our energy had felt flat and dull from our first encounter with the team. That we had been overly prescriptive and tied to our agenda and our approach. It was noticing this energy which led to us bringing clarity to our own process. We wanted to amplify our coach-ness rather than our facilitator-ness.

We realised with great delight how energetic we felt to "not have an agenda", to "let go of the facilitation notes". This is something I believe I do with great skill in my 1:1 work, so what was it about my learning edge in the team work? As I reflected on this, I noticed my courage, strength and power colliding in a rush. I had been ready for this for longer than I gave myself credit.

The experience with the team today was just so... so.... Yes! Real. Spontaneous. In-the-moment work. I can see so much of the value of the process adopted on the ROG program. The co-emergent process writ large. Hugely complimented by my completion of the

Relational Supervision program also offered by Relational Change. New depths of personal awareness around embodied presence, phenomenological enquiry and a simultaneous triple lens encompassing self, other and situation (SOS).

It sounds simple, SOS. This is why it's so powerful. I have no doubt that I could spend a lifetime appreciating only one of the three elements! What I've come to appreciate and love and engage with is the space and the dance between the three. That they are all, always in play. To enjoy and to fully experience the tension in the work, where the learning edges are.

To bring more of myself in as *the* intervention of greatest potency.

This has been greatly supported and inspired through the appreciation of Gestalt as a philosophy for life, as a modality and as a school of psychology. Clarifying and considering the skills required and experiencing them in both small and large groups. The parallel process of learning the theory and learning about myself in the ROG program is where the work comes most alive. I noticed this so suddenly in an experience of being triggered into a shame response on one module. Having the awareness and desire to un-pack this in Supervision, and then to bring my experience back to the group in a creative and spontaneous demonstration of intimate dialogue between two people. This work can be beautiful. Challenging. Frustrating! Ultimately, enormously fulfilling. So often it reflects what is going on in the teams we are working with. Experiencing these tensions for ourselves is so vital for working with others grappling with similar challenges.

Experiencing the process alongside other highly skilled practitioners, guided skilfully by *the* practitioners in the field (Sally and Marie-Anne), has been incredibly enriching. I feel this so deeply. So strongly. Why? As it has become part of my way of being in the world, and for this I am very grateful for the privilege to be able to participate.

It's a stance and a dance. An opportunity to bring a deeply relational approach, contact-full in so many ways, in a time where it seems the world is ready and demanding more awareness of what *is*, such that we might become more of who we are and can become. Shifting to a more present, compassionate and intimate caring of ourselves, others and the environments where we live, love and work.

James Woodson



A relational Gestalt practitioner, James brings an extensive range, creative spontaneity and deep compassion for being all of who we are and can become to his work. His clients span a variety of industries and geographies. He is also a certified, relational Supervisor of independent coaches and in-house coach pools.

James lives in Zurich with his wife and two daughters, where he loves running trails, skiing and the great outdoors.

You can contact James at james@organisational-coaching.com

