

Abstract for:

PCE Symposium 'Moments of Movement' - May 2019
Copernicus Science Centre
Warsaw, Poland

Profile:

Waldl Robert, Mag., Dr., counseling and coaching for family businesses 1958, person-centered psychotherapist and supervisor, lecturer in psychotherapeutic propaedeutics, psychotherapy trainer and trainer for group psychotherapy in the Forum / APG, systemic coach, management consultant
www.waldl.com, office@waldl.com, 1010 Vienna

Title:

**Life Between Autonomy and Adaptation:
The Person in Business Families and in the Family Business**

Presentation

Families who run a business live under special conditions. In their communication and decision-making, they have to deal with two value systems that influence each other: The world of business and the world of family. In difficult economic times, a family business can mean security and autonomy for family members. However, the price is often a high pressure to adapt for the individual. The lecture will present theoretical foundations and case vignettes on psychotherapeutic and counseling work with families and family businesses.

Couples and families who run a family business live and work under special conditions. They have to cope with different value systems in their daily communication and decision-making. They experience the dynamic influence of two contradictory social systems: The world of business and that of the family. For the people involved, this means that they are challenged in their respective dual roles as company founder and mother, company owner and father, child and successor. In each of these identities, emotions, belonging, orientation, justice, purpose and profit are experienced differently and are assigned different meanings. In many situations in everyday life, it is unclear in which role the person opposite sees, communicates and acts.

The coupling of company and family can mean autonomy and opportunities in material terms for individual members, as well as a positive impetus for development and advancement. However, belonging to different social systems at the same time often creates a specific potential for conflict. The relationships are often characterized by incongruence, vulnerability and insecurity in relation to the respective dual role. The people involved are under great pressure to adapt. Expectations from the family and the standardization pressure of the Society to interpersonal and intrapsychic conflicts.

When a family member of a business family seeks support in psychotherapy or counseling, it is advantageous to understand the interrelationship between family dynamics and business dynamics. The person-centred approach can be used to work on different levels: the level of the individual, the interpersonal level and the organizational level. Working on self-perception and perception of others, practising communication in dual roles enables people to develop more congruence. This gives them greater freedom in switching between their role in the family and their function in the company. This makes it easier for them to develop new perspectives both within the family and within the company.

The socio-political significance of the topic of family businesses results from their prevalence: more than seventy-five percent of companies in the western world are majority-owned by families. The situation of these families and companies is increasingly becoming the subject of research. The fact that growing up in a business family represents a certain risk factor, i.e. that the probability of developing psychological problems is higher here than on average, has been repeatedly established.

The lecture will present theoretical principles and case vignettes on psychotherapeutic and counseling work with business families and their companies.