



# Love and Trauma

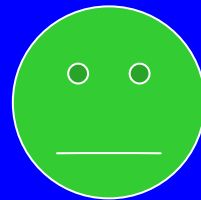
How to overcome the difficulties  
in order to love oneself

London 12th February 2010

[www.franz-ruppert.de](http://www.franz-ruppert.de)

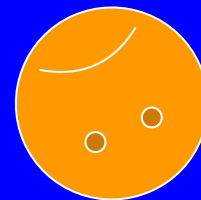
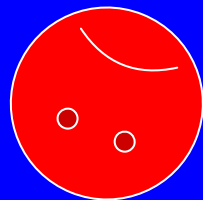
Prof. Franz Ruppert

# The wife's constellation (beginning)



husband

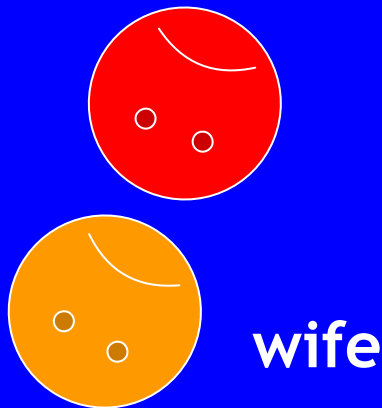
Issue: Why do I feel  
like there is a  
pane of glass  
between him and me?



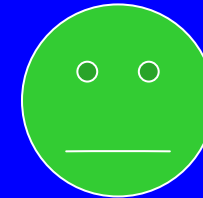
wife

# The wife's constellation (ending)

Issue: Feeling  
frightened to be  
beaten from behind



husband

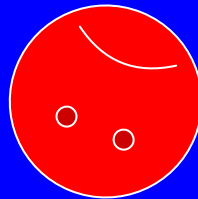
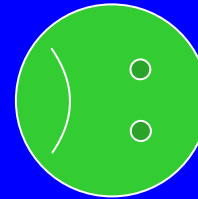


# the husband's constellation (beginning)

wife



husband

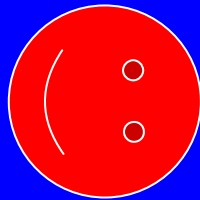


Issue: What is my part  
in making the relationship  
with her so difficult?

# the husband's constellation (ending)

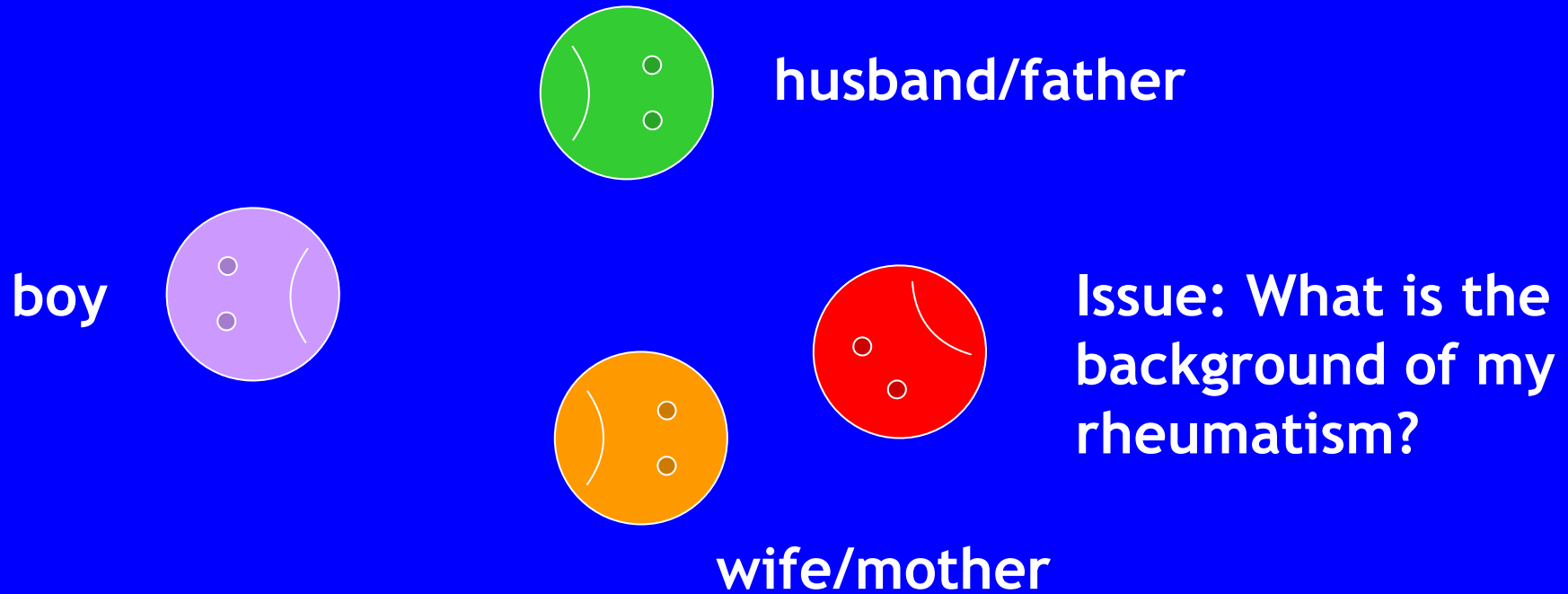


husband



Issue: How can I become independent from outside influences and get access to the other part of me?

# the child's constellation (beginning)

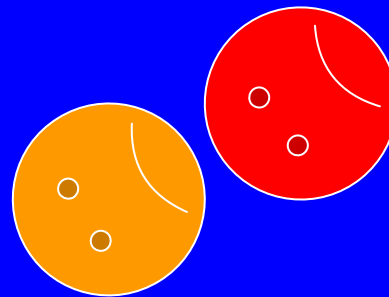


# the child's constellation (ending)

husband/father



boy



wife/mother

Issue: Feeling as a desperately sad part of the mother

# Love is

- A bodily sensation
- A very positive feeling
- A longing for another person
- A capacity
- An idea
- An attitude
- ...



# Different forms of Love

(Erich Fromm 1900- 1980)

- Love for others
- Love of a mother
- Love between couples
- Love of oneself
- Love of god

Falling in love

Being in love

# More types of Love

- mother-child
- father-child
- child-mother
- child-father
- between siblings
- Of one's family
- to one's tribe or football club
- for one's country
- of pets
- of mankind
- ...



**Love can go beyond**



**boundaries and limits.**

Prof. Franz Ruppert

**The first love experience  
of human beings  
is symbiotic.**



# What are *symbiotic* needs?

- Being hold
- Being feeded
- Kept warm
- Being supported
- Belonging to someone
- Belonging together

**Symbiotically every child is doubly bonded to her mother:**

**passively: the emotional qualities of the mother are imprinted in the child's soul**

**actively: the child tries to support the mother**



**The symbiotic love of a child towards her mother is one of the most powerful emotional forces.**

# Love

- of a child for his mother always exists.
- of mother for her child only happens, if the mother is not traumatised.

# A trauma is

- a situation (including big physical or mechanical forces, violence, death, lack of any contact ...)
- a reaction of an individual and/or a group of persons to the situation (feelings of helplessness)
- the multiplicity of short and long term consequences of the attempt to survive the situation



# General consequences of a trauma

- hyperarousal and hypervigilance
- extreme anxiety and panic
- permanent feelings of helplessness, hopelessness, sadness
- numbing of all feelings
- intrusions of the traumatic situation into the mind



# General consequences of a trauma

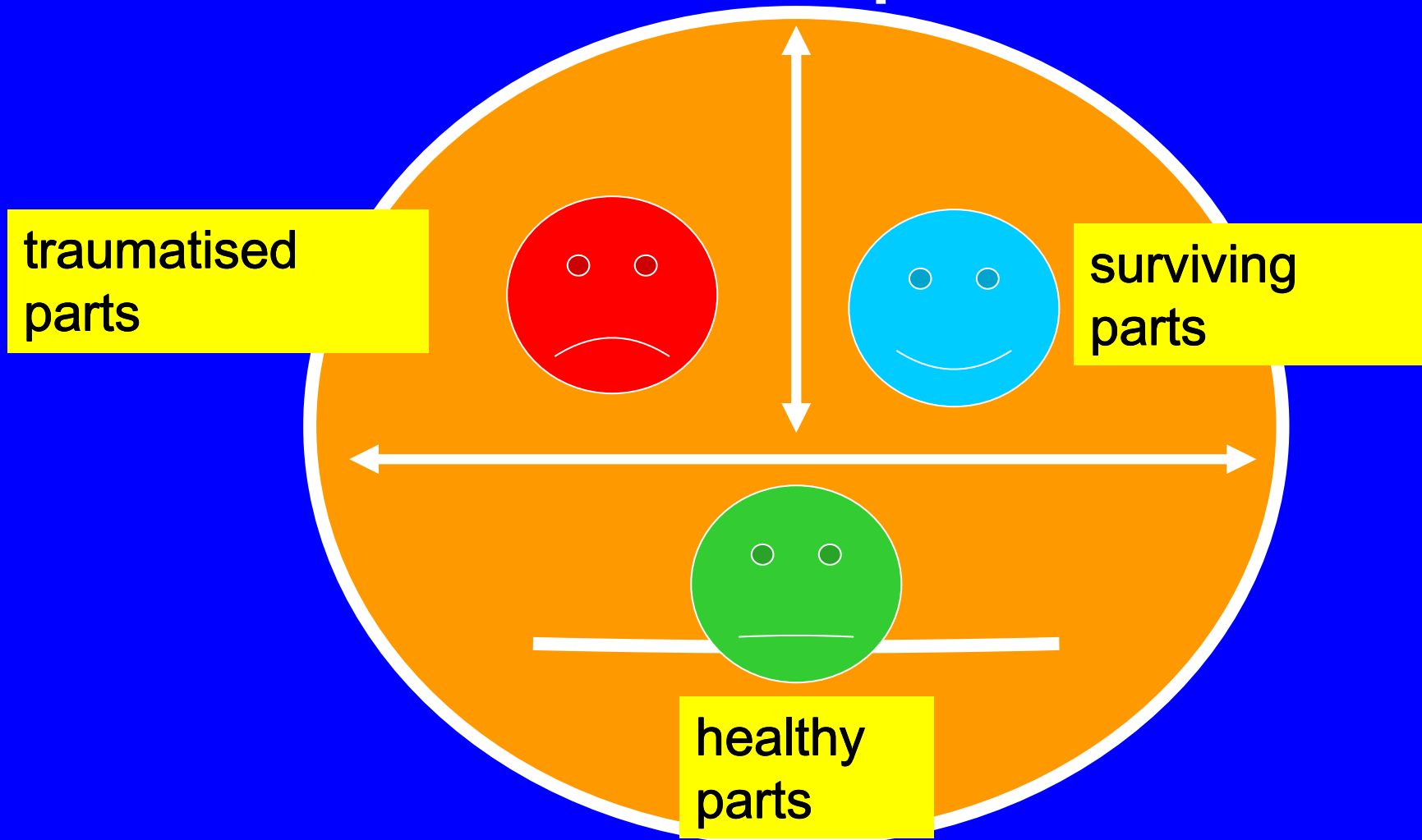


- Avoidance behaviour
- Feelings of unreality
- Depersonalisation
- Dissociation
- Somatization
- Hallucinations
- Aggressions or submission



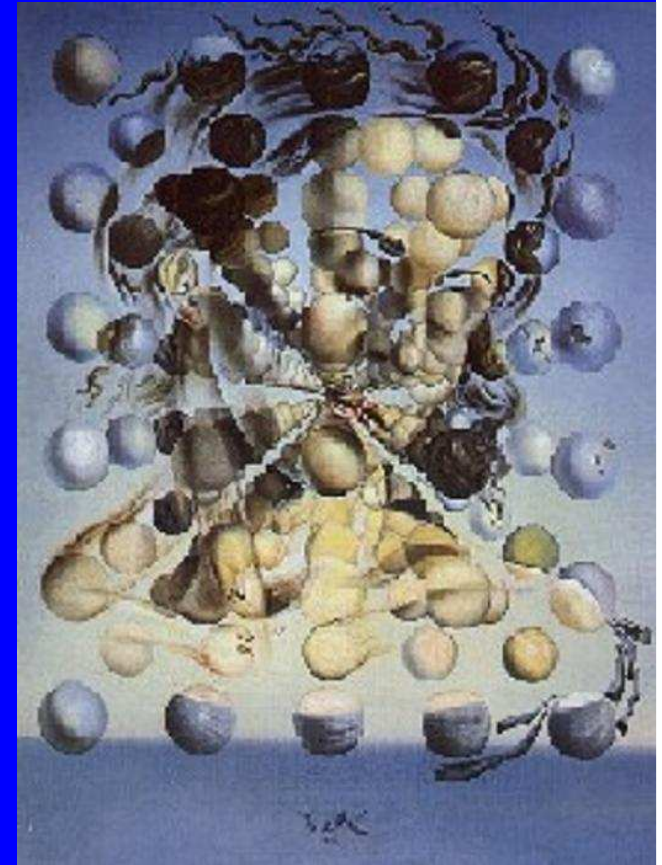
**When traumatised  
we freeze,  
dissociate  
and split the  
personality in  
order to survive.**

# Splits in the personality structure after a traumatic experience



# Trauma and parental love

- Traumatic experiences destroy the capability of parents to love,
- because their surviving mechanisms avoid deeper emotional contact with the child.



# “Symbiotic trauma”

A child is continuously frustrated in his attempts to get a stable and safe emotional contact with his mother.



## Characteristics of the traumatised part in a symbiotic trauma

- deep loneliness
- fear of dying
- suppressed anger
- suppressed sadness
- despair that there is no love from the mother





## Characteristics of the surviving parts in symbiotic trauma

- idealising the mother (the “good mother”)
- repressing and denying one’s own symbiotic trauma (“something is wrong with me”)
- identification with the surviving mechanisms of the mother (“I am her sunshine!”)
- melding with the traumatised parts within the mother



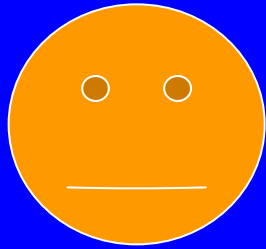
# Consequences of a symbiotic trauma for a child

- no capacity to distinguish between own feelings and those of the mother
- not living one's own identity
- mental illnesses like hyperactivity, depressions, psychotic states
- repeating symbiotic entanglement in other relationships



# Characteristics of a symbiotic entanglement

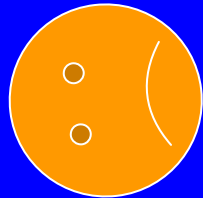
- clinging and adhering
- not respecting the boundaries of others
- anger, hate and violence in relationships
- no real self esteem, feelings of worthlessness
- always looking to others
- trying to rescue others
- hiding one's own vulnerability love illusions and love delusions



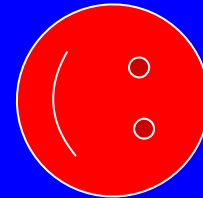
## Characteristics of love in healthy parts of the personality

- knowing that love can be developed by oneself
- clearly saying “Yes” or “No” in relationships
- respecting boundaries and limits
- taking responsibility only as far as necessary
- supporting the autonomy of the other
- ability to distinguish between reality and illusions
- willingness to free oneself from symbiotic entanglements
- no sex without love
- no sex with children
- no lying
- loving oneself

# Ultimate trauma constellation



client



Issue: to love oneself



Prof. Franz Ruppert

# Literature

- Erich Fromm (1956). *The Art of Loving*.
- Franz Ruppert (2008). *Trauma, Bonding & Family Constellations. Understanding and Healing Injuries of the Soul*. Frome/UK: Green Balloon Publishing.