

## Balance of Values

Karl-Heinz Bittl (Translation Petra Schachner)

The A.T.C.C.-approach uses the term VALUE as a positive orientation that is shared with other people. So, there is no individual value. The idea of values being created and shaped individually and arbitrarily relates to the concept that we could all live and work independently. That is not the case. We are dependent on each other. The values are interpreted culturally differently. This is important! So human dignity is an elementary basic value, but the exact meaning is interpreted differently due to different cultures. No better or worse – simply different.

In our understanding, the values are in a rival relation towards each other. For living together, the tensions between the values are necessary. So, we need freedom and loyalty, honor, and solidarity. Thus, we keep getting into conflicts and dilemmas. It's a good thing if we can handle it. Nonetheless, there are forces to set single values absolute and grant them absolute importance. Then the other values become almost invisible. We call that perversion of the value. If the value of health becomes absolute, it limits our freedom, dignity, equality, truth. So, if it becomes absolute, an ideal arises: Immortality. If the ideal becomes our orientation, we become masters of death. With this "grandiose" ideal, many things become possible. The ideal allows hard cuts and creates a paralyzed situation for people in key positions of a country. They act arbitrarily, manipulatively and with massive force. According to our understanding, it would be empowering to define a clear responsibility, to describe and discuss tasks, and to build trust which also allows admitting helplessness and involving civil society in the process. Thus, a dialogue is sought for and created. Here in Germany, fortunately dialogue is happening right now. We experience multiple paralyses, which is geared through an ideal. At the same time, we see power, since there are enough civil society forces that have a controlling effect on conspicuous behavior.

The A.T.C.C.-approach emphasizes 10 values as basic orientations. Further orientations can be derived from these. Here is a very brief description of the values:

### (1) Dignity

The value of dignity is linked to the need to be valued and loved as a person. Dignity is independent of our doing. We are dignified just through our being. Everyone is equal in dignity. Dignity is violated if humans become products and goods. We become products when we are "made" or "shaped". We become means of production if we merely have a specific use. Just being a good consumer or a usable and profitable workforce challenges the dignity of human beings. To live in dignity means *to be connected to the miracle of our uniqueness*.

### (2) Honor

The value of honor is related to the need for recognition for our actions and work. In "honor" we experience recognition of our work. Sometimes, honor needs a regulated competition to receive recognition as a winner. Honor is related to a certain group. People receive appreciation and honor for a community-related action. Honor is shown through appreciative feedback, in symbols or rituals. People are dishonored when their thinking, acting, and feeling become meaningless. An essential aspect was described by the philosopher Günter Anders. If people become antiquated compared to the product that they have produced, thus inferior, they lose honor. This is one of the problems that arise in today's technical development. Often, the actual work is no longer honored.

## (3) Truth

The value of truth is related to the need for orientation. We need orientation e.g. by living with other people. Truth makes us rely on what others say. Truth, like the other values, is a construction created by individuals and groups to “recognize” and “trust” each other. Truth, as such, can also be an illusion. But nevertheless, it is an important orientation for groups. However, deception is a significant characteristic in the development of new media. Worlds, relationships, yet communication are faked. Thus, many people perceive the value of truth indefinite. Only through disappointment we succeed to reach the core of truth by looking behind the deception. It seems like deceit is not the problem nowadays, rather deceptive “truths”.

## (4) Loyalty

Loyalty is related to our needs of orientation, security, and autonomy. Through the value of loyalty, we try to create reliable, stable, and independent relationships. The value of truth is aimed at our communication, but loyalty at the relationship between people, e.g. agreements or contracts that we want to rely on. Loyalty is expressed through trust. Loyalty plays an important role in our everyday life. We trust the quality of the food when we buy it. We rely on the fact that a car stops at a red traffic light, hence the driver acts loyal to the rules. We assume that a doctor is loyal to his\*her oath, etc. The problem with loyalty is the same with communication, the tendency to deceive, e.g. to maximize profit. The urge to gain wealth seduces lots of people to become disloyal to their contract partners. Another attempt to question this value is the idea of security. Instead of trusting in civic powers, state, and economic entities long for reliable systems of monitoring and want to eliminate opponents. Monitoring programs or security systems appear to make “unpredictable” loyalty superfluous through control. A dangerous development towards absolute control and abuse of power arises. Mistrust remains.

## (5) Beauty

Beauty is a value corresponding with the need for meaning and creativity. All aesthetics and the teaching of beauty relates to the question of something “higher”, i.e. transcendent. All religions and philosophies have developed their own expressions of beauty. Whether in the cathedrals of the Christian church, the mosques of the Muslims or in the Stalinist buildings they have always sought to create beautiful expression of their teachings. Beauty is a deeply human longing. Everyone is beautiful in his\*her own way and therefore rich in dignity. However, everyone is sensitive through experiences when beauty is evaluated in comparisons. A mechanical and technological development gave rise to the idea of a “norm” of beauty. Nature was subjected to this standardization - accordingly, also humans. It is time for us to learn to perceive our beauty in uniqueness and to defend ourselves against the “norm” of the industrialized world. Artificially created creatures which are genetic images of desire violate beauty as a value. Such idea of beauty creates “valueless” products instead of being a unique human orientation.

## (6) Equality

The value of equality derives from the need for security and autonomy. Equality refers to groups and organizations, in which everyone is equally bound by the same rules and obligations. A state based on the constitutional values is required to treat everyone equally in dignity before the law. The value of equality also describes that we should all be given the same chances to pursue our lives. Equality is the basis for integration and inclusion. Everyone has equal opportunities for development, education, and health. There must be no discrimination, i.e. discrimination based on external criteria. However, equality does not refer to equality of thought. In absolute, “ideal” societies, an attempt is

made to enforce alignment of thinking. There is a tendency to label such fundamental adjustment as “social”. But in fact, it reduces the richness of diversity.

## **(7) Justice**

Justice addresses our needs of security, recognition, and orientation. The value of justice mainly refers to the distribution of goods. Goods are meant in the broadest sense. It can be the resources of this world or the time we spend on something. A just distribution of goods would mean that everyone uses the goods that they really need. It is just if we give future generations the chance to live a good life. To be just means thinking and acting sustainably. Justice creates a foundation for peace. The value of justice is interpreted culturally differently. For one culture, justice is perceived as “everyone gets the same piece of cake”. It can also be understood as “everyone gets what he\*she needs for a good life”. This different understanding requires dialogue to recognize the differences. There is no right and wrong, only approximation.

## **(8) Health**

Health is a value that is strongly related to all needs. It includes the strive for a state of comprehensive physical, mental and social well-being. The value of health implies that everyone should gain a higher degree of self-determination regarding their health and is thereby empowered to strengthen it. Many people are forced to live in unhealthy conditions. Many people also consciously choose to endanger their own and the health of others. The image of “being healthy” consists the orientation to being in peace with all our aging processes. Death is the necessary end that we prepare for by staying healthy. The idealization of health creates the idea of being able to control death. An old and dangerous idea, that brought a great amount of misery to people.

## **(9) Solidarity**

Solidarity – Fraternity – Brotherhood. The French Revolution wanted to realize the value of “Fraternité” alongside equality and freedom. It is about the “principle of mutual help”. Solidarity is a value that derives from our needs for love, security and meaning. We are socially oriented beings and need each other to be fed, to be dressed, to be cared for and to communicate. The basis of doing business rests on the value of solidarity, even if some economic theories contradict this notion. We produce for others. By doing business together, we guarantee an abundant life. Abundance as well as scarcity arises from fear of rejection or failure and not from the need for love and recognition. Recent brain research confirms our ability to think, feel and act for the benefit of all. It only needs the inner permission to do so.

## **(10) Freedom**

Freedom is based on the need to be able to decide autonomously, i.e. independently. Freedom needs the choice to decide. Thus, it is important to foster inner options to decide freely. We need structures and laws that allow decisions. Freedom is linked closely to responsibility and not to arbitrariness. It has its framework in human rights. The longing for freedom lets us break through inner and outer prisons. Freedom is the value that does not allow us to degenerate into well-behaved consumers and adapted producers. Freedom is the source and orientation of our creative powers. The freedom to consume at the expense of people’s misery is irresponsible. We need the freedom that enables us to make decisions based on other values. Making freedom absolute means war and violence. We would accept the death of many for absolute freedom. We would be without a relationship and love.

# CAT 3

## References (in German):

Hannah Arend: Vita Activa, 2002

Ernst Bloch: Natural Law and Human Dignity, 1987

Martha C. Nussbaum: Gerechtigkeit oder Das gute Leben, 2016

Dorothee Sölle: Sympathie, 1981

Erich Fromm: Ihr werdet sein wie Gott, 1966, Gesamtausgabe 1980, S. 83 ff

Günther Anders: Die Antiquiertheit des Menschen, 1984

## Your task for the next meeting:

Choose two of the 10 values that play a particularly important role for you and write a short poem, a haiku (see: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haiku>) or a sound poem. Let your creative energy run free and recite this poem in the next session. It can also be a poem that you take from other authors. It can also be rap – the lyrics of the present time.