

**The Fifth Province and Love:
Co-Creating a Sacred Space in Therapy Conversations**

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Good Morning

**SLIDE 1: The Fifth Province and Love: Co-Creating a Sacred Space
in Therapy Conversations**

In 1981, with two colleagues, Nollaig Byrne, Philip Kearney, I set out on a marvelous journey. It was a journey to the mythical centre of Ireland, a journey into the magical realms of conversation and a journey into the wonder of co-creation. It was an outer journey of connection and an inner journey to the deepest recesses of our selves. I could not have imagined where it would lead us at the time. Over the years we were developing the Fifth Province Approach, we were generously received internationally and through this we came to know most of the great therapeutic geniuses of our field. So, anything I say today is merely a reflection and integration of the many wisdoms we encountered with colleagues and clients. It is a product of the collective wisdom in our field. So, in that sense I will say **nothing** that you do not already know.

In the Irish context, it was two Irish Philosophers who brought the metaphor of the Fifth Province to us. One was a mystic Benedictine priest, Mark Hederman, the other a young academic, Richard Kearney. They had revived the ancient Celtic myth of the Fifth Province in Ireland and offered it to the country as a way forward into a more pluralist society. Mary Robinson, our first woman president also adopted the metaphor of the Fifth Province as a sign of plurality and social inclusion.

It is not known whether the fifth province existed or not but it certainly existed in the imagination of some of our people.

The site of this mythical province is also open to debate. Most, imagine it to have been sited in the centre of Ireland at the Hill of Uishneach. It was here that the four geographical provinces are said to have met in ancient times. At the summit of this Hill was a Druidic site where the kings and chieftains from the rest of Ireland were thought to have come for counsel. These early priests and priestesses gathered those in conflict and mediated peace without resorting to the use of violence or arms. The imagined fifth province - while standing at the meeting place of the four provinces of Ireland - was deemed to be a place that was both a part of them and apart from them. It was a place of possibilities, a place of imagination.

Our team of three took on this myth as a metaphor for conversations between those who were in conflict or with those who felt conflicts within themselves. For us, the province became a 'place' where dualisms and contradictions were accepted and held in a both/and frame. Our clients through the years, included families and professionals trying to come to terms with child sexualised abuse, violence, murder, poverty and other challenging life events.

Our journey with those we met moved from viewing them as clients to be helped, to them becoming our teachers and finally to them being our conversational partners.

As we developed our ideas and practices in interaction with our clients, we learned about power and powerlessness, justice and injustice, humour, gender, marginalisation and abuse. Not only did we learn about abuse in families but we also began to hear stories and accounts of, what I have termed, professional abuse. In these accounts, professionals had used their power in the de-

formation of client's stories and experiences. They were pathologised and exposed to the potential of ongoing intervention in the name of correction and treatment. They talked constantly of situations where professional expertise claimed more value than the lived experiences of the people it was meant to serve.

SLIDE 2: Fifth Province: Inter-Action, Inter-Viewing, Inter-Being

Through our encounters with clients who suffered abuse and/or who lived in poverty on the margins of Irish society, we learned about resilience, a wonderful, creative resilience. This resilience inspired us. You may know, that in the old Irish manuscripts much of the beautiful lettering, known as illuminations, were in the margins. These beautiful images in the margins now became important reminders for us of the pre-existing abilities, riches and resources that our clients laid at our feet. As we began to treasure these 'illuminations from the margins', we experienced first hand how the stories and lived experiences of our clients informed **our** ideas and practices as we went along together. And so, **The Fifth Province became for us a space of inter-action**

With the advent of social constructionism, there was a fit. We had actually been co-creating with our clients the fifth province approach. Its development was as much theirs as it was ours. I suppose our first realization of this kind of co-constructing was within our own team. Each emotion, each response, each idea and each practice was processed between us. From the early days of our work we would always say that the ideas were generated in the 'team mind' rather than being the product of an individual team member's mind. It was this experience that was then expanded into our conversations with clients.

When this kind of co-creative process happened, we began to see that there could be no specific, preset or desirable outcomes. We

often called this ‘being cast on the sea of unpredictability’. However, over time this apparent unpredictability seemed to have an intelligence of its own. Rather than things going awry, unimagined solutions and ways forward began to emerge. We began to trust the collective wisdom emerging within the conversational group. It was truly amazing at the time.

In the interweave of stories, which often conflicted, we were to find that when each view was accepted, the storylines became less extreme and less conflictual. In fact, much of the time the interweaving conversations moved towards the spontaneous generation of solutions. At the time we referred to this as the ‘dissolution of problems’. Later we were to see that both were happening. Problems were being dissolved through the interweaving of perspectives and solutions were generated in the same process. There were multiple views in play. In this play there was another interesting emergence. There was no one problem-solver. The therapist was now a facilitator and a co-creator with his or her conversational partners in the play of contrasts that we called the differing views. **The Fifth Province became a space of inter-viewing**

So, we began to claim that the process we were engaged in was inherently goalless in terms of **specific** outcomes. It was a process in which the ‘collective mind’ and ‘body politic’ were centre stage in an atmosphere of acceptance and love. We called our therapeutic dis-position, a dis-position of love.

It was Humberto Maturana’s definition of love which allowed us back in the 1980’s to begin to use embrace this term in countering what we thought to be the colonizing potential of therapy. Following Maturana, ‘Love’ for us constituted

“opening a space for another in co-existence with oneself in a particular domain of interaction”.

These days Maturana defines ‘love’ a little more complexly and specifically. He now says,

Slide 3: Maturana on Love

“Love, as the relational space in which one accepts the legitimacy of all the dimensions of the intimate and relational present being lived, is the emotion that makes possible the act of reflection.”

Slide 4: Maturana on Reflection

He goes on to say,

“a reflection occurs as an act of releasing all certainties that lead the observer to look at their living, accepting the legitimacy of all the dimensions of their present, no matter which these may be.”

Love is what makes reflection possible. Reflection without love opens itself to abuses of professional power in such practices as diagnoses and expert interpretations. Reflecting with our conversational partners meant being open to those present, to their ideas, their emotions, their positions and their contexts. It was a listening with the heart in a dis-position of love.

For me then love, openness and acceptance becomes the same thing. However, this acceptance and openness does not mean that we do not have any ideas about the presented situation or how to facilitate the process we are involved in. Openness and acceptance means, that when we **have** ideas that we hold them ‘lightly’. In this way they do not get in the way of love. As I

have said before, they do not become a third party in the conversation. I also see this opening of ourselves to the other as, ‘putting ourselves and our ideas at risk’. In this we do not place our feet on the pedestal of a reified professional expertise but can dance lightly with the flow of the music of the session.

In this openness we bring our presence and flexibility. In opening to the other we become more than ourselves. Our openness expands us so that we become one with the other and with what is happening. We do not become ‘THE ONE’ who decides what happens! We are fully present in the present. When this happens, “each moment is like an eternity in itself. When you are in the moment everything else disappears”. (Sri Vasudeva, Meditation, 26th Day 2004) We are present as presence in the present. Love steps in itself as it were and grows. **The fifth province becomes a space of inter-being.**

Here a woman client, Mary describes this process of inter-being:
She said -

“I felt she engaged in my problems. I felt she became part of my problem but then in a sense I think I would have demanded that she became involved in my problems so that I could feel that she understood where I was coming from ... the knowledge of where I was at, the route I was going along and where I was at when I would meet with her at sessions allowed me to feel that she was engaging in everything I was doing. So, I knew she was committed with me. I believed she was, that was my perception of it.”

Slide 5 Hallmarks of the Fifth Province - Summary

◆ Dis-position of Love

In summary, then the fifth Province is a space of **Inter-Being**, of love, where we accept and are open to the other in the present, in a listening with the Heart. It constitutes a Dis-Position of Love

◆ Co-Creation of a Still Point

The Fifth Province also constitutes a space where all views can meet and find acceptance. This acceptance and love is the base of reflection - both self reflection and self reflexivity. In this process we are present to and witness the encountering of contrasting views within ourselves and in the conversation. It is a province of **Inter-Viewing**. It has been my experience - as I am sure it has been yours - that an accepting atmosphere calms disquiet. We have said that through acceptance a 'still point' in therapy is created.

◆ Resonant Mood - Collective Wisdom

- The fifth Province is a space of Presence, Non-Imposition and Goalless intention. There is no individual 'Doer'. It is a space of **Inter-Acting**
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◆ Co-Creative Process

The Fifth Province is a space of Both/And where mind is expanded into the social and a collective wisdom

emerges. A new sense of trust is born – not in an individual per se but in the co-creative intelligence generated by all those in relationship. Solutions emerge almost spontaneously through this collective wisdom. It is a space of **Inter-Being, Inter-Viewing and Inter-Acting.**

Slide 6 Co-Creating a Sacred Space in Therapy: Therapy as a spiritual Process

Now, I will come to a central proposal of this presentation – that Therapy is a Spiritual Process – that we co-create a sacred space in therapeutic conversations.

Slide 7 Defining Spirituality

Firstly, I would like to define what I mean by spirituality. For me, spirituality does not imply religion but rather, spirituality is *any* process, which connects us to an expanded sense of who we are - an expanded awareness. It can happen anytime - when we are in love, when we are involved in sports, at play, in the garden, playing or listening to music and so on. It can also happen during religious practices but is not confined to them.

In my experience it happens frequently in therapy only we have rarely referred to it as spiritual.

In this presentation I am suggesting that the practices we have nurtured in our field - and, those I have outlined - **can** actually facilitate experiences of expanded awareness. But, generally we have not been professionally prepared to recognize this as spiritual.

Over the past few years I have facilitated conversations at conferences around this issue. Most therapists have numerous

examples of experiencing deep connections with their clients through which spontaneous problem resolution and solution generation occurs. However, when asked how they think this happened nearly all say that they have no idea, that the experiences stand out for them and their clients, that you cannot predict them and you cannot do anything to bring them about. While I agree in part with this last statement, I believe that we **can** engage in practices, which make it more possible for these experiences to emerge. I suggest here, that we do it all the time but we have not been enabled to see it in this way. In one sense, we as individuals do not have absolute control in creating these experiences but we can do a lot in co-creating a context in which they are more likely to occur.

How did I come to this understanding of therapy as a spiritual process?

Well, that happened in the early summer of 1999. I went to a meditation morning in Dublin and met a man who was to become my meditation teacher. His name is Sri Vasudeva and he comes from a Hindu-Christian background. He was brought up in a mixed Hindu-Christian family together with attending and teaching in Catholic Schools. For a year I was under his personal guidance as he taught me to meditate. During this time, I was continuously struck by the similarities between what he said and did and the thinking, speaking and practice in the fields of the systemic therapies. Some months after meeting him I visited his holistic centre in Trinidad, (West Indies). Here I experienced what a whole environment suffused with love could bring forth in those who lived there and who visited. Since that time I have visited twice a year. Alongside my meditation practice I also began to talk with colleagues about my experiences and today, family therapists in Denmark, Sweden, England and Ireland have invited him to run workshops on meditation, spirituality and therapy. He and I are now doing a book on meditation for therapists.

The more I worked with him the more I saw that what we were doing in therapy was actually spiritual. It was spiritual in that we were connecting with contexts and clients in ways, which were providing opportunities for all involved to experience an expansion of awareness, consciousness and being.

After the workshops with family therapists, we began a small training program in spiritually based systemic therapy and counseling at the centre in Trinidad. This is in its second year and they have begun to provide a free community service.

Building this program together with Sri Vasudeva and the group in Trinidad immersed me in the wisdoms of spiritual practices and experiences. I realized that the fifth province approach was actually a doorway to the spiritual for me. We had always recognized the spiritual in our work but had never really articulated it clearly.

Now I could see that our Dis-Position of Love, was also a foundation premise and practice of all the major spiritual and religious traditions.

Slide 8 Sri Vasudeva on Love

Sri Vasudeva himself has said that whenever you get into a state of love you are really entering the spiritual domain. And if, we were to accept that we are spiritual beings in a human experience then, to paraphrase Bate son, we could say that, 'we cannot not be spiritual'.

Slide 9 Carl Jung

Carl Jung known for his interest in spirituality had a well-known phrase over the door to his treatment room, which read, 'Bidden or

not God is present'. Now I know that introducing the word, 'God' brings up complex responses. For my part, I understand the word, 'God' to mean whatever Principle people use to live their lives according to – this principle could also be known in the following ways – the Universe, the Higher Self, the Higher Power, the Source, the Divine, Christ, Allah, Yahweh, Krishna and so on.

Most research on spirituality in the mental health field today is showing that somewhere between 90 – 98% of clients researched believe in some kind of Higher Power in their lives. It would seem timely then that we in the therapy professions have been including this dimension for some time. Ken Gergen, has some wonderful words to say about the sacred in social constructionism.

Slide 10 The Realm of the Sacred 1

“A sophisticated constructionism will take away the distinction between the sacred and the secular and open new possibilities for the sacralisation (the making sacred) of everyday life.

Slide 11 The Realm of the Sacred 2

“As we become sensitive to the sacred dimension of relatedness we glimpse the possibility that God is not separate, but is immanent in a process from which we cannot be separated. In this sense, God is the reality “in which we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17: 28)

Slide 12 The Realm of the Sacred 3

“We are with God, participants in the divine. The sacred lives within the flowing of relatedness, when we move from the singularity of self to co-construction.”

In this way the Principle is both a transcendent and an immanent Principle. We exist in It and It exists in us.

So, when I say that therapy is spiritual these are the understandings that I bring with me into therapy conversations.

Slide 13 Problems arise when something gets in the way of love

So, how can we see the advent of problem generation in people's lives from this point of view. Here again I am drawn back to Maturana. He has said that problems arise when something gets in the way of love (also Mia Anderson). If that has any merit, then, therapy is basically about reconnecting to 'love' – love of self, love of other. It is a reconnection to Spirit. In this reconnection there is liberation. And, more and more in my work I am coming to see that the Spirit is not touched by the problems of life. When people reconnect they feel free. I believe that therapy is about that, whether we call it that or not.

Being spiritual beings in a human existence also implies also that we are multi-dimensional beings. Again in the field we have recognized that – with our attention constantly directed towards environmental, discursive and relational contexts. However, apart from the work of Kurt Ludwig, Humberto Maturana and his associates and Tom Andersen and a few others there has been little attention to the Body-Mind axis in the systemic field.

As we move into this new Millenium the World Health Organization has redefined health as the optimal integration of physical, mental, emotional and social well-being.

I think we are all familiar with Mind-Body links – we have only to think of the whole range of systemic, social constructionist and

collaborative practices of positive connotation, complimenting, solution talk, resistance talk and so on to realize that we are familiar with **how** this kind of thinking and talking effects us physically and mentally. Here I am including emotion as a quality of mind. Mindsets change and our clients and our selves **feel** better.

Slide 14 Mind-Body relationship

A popular writer in the area of Body Mind and Spirit, Deepak Chopra says,

“Changes of mind can be instant and while mind also has no material form it never the less triggers changes in our physiology and we feel better or worse accordingly.”

Recently, one of my clients talked of the happiness she was experiencing when she began to see things in a different way. When she arrived at one of our sessions she was tearful and in her own words, ‘in an upset emotional state’. In the preceding two weeks she had separated from her husband because of an addiction he was unable to bring under control. She began by listing all the times when ‘insecurities’ had dogged her life in ways that she “hated”. However, she accepted the invitation to review the ways in which she had always managed her life very well. The following is what Meg later had to say about the Mind-Body process in therapy.

“(therapist) asked me what my thoughts are when I am in my darker moments - bereavement, loneliness, fear of no money, not knowing what will be going on in six months time. Then I talked of growing up and the problems with money particularly on

Fridays. When I talked of the future, (however) I also said that I would be OK and able to handle it. Then (the therapist) said you have talked about insecurities in the past, present and future and yet you also see your own strength. This discordance between the two would suggest that the insecurities are thoughts. They are not YOU. You have the strength, observe these thoughts but don't feel you have to see them as you. These thoughts, when not seen for what they are can generate the historic emotions which are associated with them.

I felt a sudden clarity and freedom when she said this. I felt my eyes had been closed and now weren't and I could observe all around me. I was able to stand outside the 'hate' and observe. The hate shifted. I came into myself. I was refocused. Historic emotions, the notion of it, helped me reframe how I could view myself at any one time. Is this me now or a historic emotion? It was both a physical and emotional experience. I was unlocked."

Slide 15 Mind-Body- Environment

We know from our own studies and the experiences of clients, such as Meg, that a thought taken and made into the structure of a model or ideology can bring about changes in our physical, mental and emotional being which can enhance or damage our social worlds. We know this – whether we are discussing Solution Talk, Resistance Talk, Externalising, Dominant Discourses and so on. We know the effect of discourses and dominant ideologies on the

fabric of our social worlds and of the ensuing devastation, which can occur in our inner world.

Over the past few years I have been working with the social work students on our programs in Ireland on how they might take care of themselves. We have looked at the energetics of practice wherein social workers constantly meet with clients whose energies are depleted due to the social and relational conditions in which they live. It has been wonderful to see how they have learned relaxation and meditation practices and begun to use them in their lives, in the classes and in their practice placements. As part of this program we have also looked at the different ideas and practices in the field to explore which ones help them as professionals to feel better and which ones are more visibly beneficial with clients. What emerges constantly, is that negative ideas bring forth more negative ideas while positive ideas and practices bring forth resilience, strength and creativity in both workers and clients.

Slide 16 The power of positive and negative ideas

Whether it is in our personal, professional, social or political lives, we have just to think of the impact of negative and positive ideas. If we think of the idea of 'Love' and the consequences of loving actions then on the greater political landscape we have no difficulty in bringing to mind the legacies of Gandhi in India and Mandela in South Africa

Now if we contrast these legacies with the practices of hate or indifference in our lives, we can see the tragedy lived out on our television screens daily. When we think of ideas fashioned into political ideologies we immediately bring to mind people like Hitler and Stalin and the consequence of their actions in our world.

It may seem like an overstatement to liken what sometimes passes

as therapy to the latter statements on negativity. But I am struck again and again by the accounts of clients of their experiences of professional encounters that **they** did not perceive as therapeutic or co-creative.

Here is Deirdre, a young single mother living in poverty, talking about her own ideas of therapy based on past experiences and that of a Fifth Province collaborative therapy.

Slide 17 Deirdre 1

She said:

“Counselling to me was talking to someone about your problems. I had lots of problems in my teens and I ended up in a psychiatrist’s office. The first thing I noticed was a big long desk and he had a big file beside him, I couldn’t get anything out. I was suicidal and what I needed was help.

So, as the appointment approached (with Fifth Province Associates) I wanted to back out of it because of the shame, fear and of feeling inferior to people ... but I was so wrong.

I arrived to warm sympathetic smiles. Glad I’d gotten there.”

Slide 18 Deirdre 2

“Something wonderful happened to me in this place (Fifth Province)

I was in fact reintroduced to myself.

Taking each situation separately, I Would learn to see how ingenious I was to be able to juggle so many problems and still have my sanity.”

This re-introduction to herself **was** in her own words, a ‘recognising’ of herself accompanied by a sense of feeling ‘normal’ again. She recognized herself and re-recognised herself through the interaction and felt physically, mentally and emotionally better. As a result of this recognition, Deirdre became a spokesperson for other women in poverty on a national television program on educational inequality.

As therapists we witness these miracles frequently as part of our practice. We can put them down to technique and have pragmatic explanations for all that is happening. But all research now seems to point not to pragmatics but to the more elusive ingredient of ‘relationship’. When the processes of relating are observed closely it is here, as Gergen has said, that we see the potential for seeing therapy as spiritual. We see it as spiritual in the accounts of our clients in relation to the presence of the therapist, love, empowerment, compassion, understanding and so on.

Trying to create simple models to show this process often misses the point but here is my attempt to show the flow of this multi-dimensional process including Body, Mind Spirit and Environment.

Slide 19 Holistic Model of Interaction

The diagram attempts to depict all processes arising in Spirit. This comes from my acceptance that we are primarily spiritual beings in a human experience. So what emerges is

a manifestation of spirit in a play of interaction. Like any cycle we can begin anywhere - but, for our purposes we can begin by saying that interactions trigger certain emotions within us - which trigger thoughts which we may or may not fashion into sets of ideas or mindsets - which give rise to certain responses at a physical level and - which manifest as different kinds of talk and other actions - which we then introduce into our interactions.

As systemic social constructionists we may be well aware of these kinds of cycles but we may not see them as manifestations of Spirit. When we add our awareness and undivided attention within this scenario possibilities are facilitated for the co-creation of the extraordinary from the ordinary.

This occurs when the therapist is attentive to and an observer of the relational processes emerging **and** the processes, which arise within themselves in the interaction. When the therapist can remain in a proactive open, accepting and loving attentiveness they open possibilities for the co-creation of collective wisdom to emerge. When this happens it is not unusual to see problematic mindsets dissolve and emotional arousals calm. In our accepting we conserve while opening space.

Slide 20: Maturana – cosmic dynamics and systemic laws

Maturana addresses this seeming paradox when he talks about what he calls cosmic dynamics and systemic laws!:

“Whenever, in a collection of elements a configuration of relations begins to be conserved, a space is opened for every thing to change around the configuration of relations being

conserved.”

John

Here is John a young man in his thirties who was encountering many life difficulties in his marriage, in his family of origin, in his educational life and in his work. He complained of lethargy and depression and said he felt like killing himself at times. Therapy was initiated when John was about to be fired from his job. He told me in the first session that he had “a worm in his soul” and could never be happy. When I asked what prevented him being happy, he said, “the voices of fear” within him. “I don’t like John” he would say. The dominant ideas in his life were outlined by him as, “I have to live up to others’ expectations of me but I will be damned if I will” and “I must be happy with my lot but I won’t be”. He could see that his map for his life was highly contradictory and self-defeating but he had no belief that he could change it. He said his heart was already dead and his life felt like it was over.

Joining him around this theme of ‘death’ and lack of future possibilities, I invited him to imagine that he was at the end of his life and that he was reviewing it. John accepted, saying it felt like that anyway. I then asked him what he would ideally like to say about his life as he reviewed it. Without missing a beat he responded, “That I was happy and enjoyed life - which I don’t.” The next questions wondered what it was that would have contributed to him having this imagined happy and enjoyable life”. When the concept of ‘imagination’ was added he then began to list things such as, being with his wife and son, sex, being with his extended family, thinking deeply and having inner conversations, to be able to say, I did it my way, talking with others, appreciating myself and having a pint’.

In naming these imagined past situations of happiness, he suddenly smiled and said in a surprised way, “I **do** these things **now**, you know, I never saw that before”. He returned to the next session, which was quite some time after due to flus on both our parts, beaming. He looked at me and said he had never been happier in his life than he was during the last few weeks. His work was going better, his relationships at home were good, he had good week ends with his family of origin, he was managing his course work better and was on time for work every day. He had also been elected a union representative at work as he had spoken out at an important union meeting and received much appreciation for it. Most of all he said that what had happened around him was just a reflection of what he felt inside. He pointed to his heart as his eyes gleamed and said, I cannot tell you how happy I feel in here, this feeling is bursting out of me”.

On asking him what he attributed this bursting happiness to - he answered that it was the acceptance of how he was feeling and then seeing himself on his deathbed, imagining a different life and realizing that he already had a lot of it. Then his old ideas just fell away. Now he said, “I just don’t listen to them, they don’t control me anymore”. John maintained his new sense of self and eventually left his job for a better one.

Here once again we see the consequences on all levels of being, body, mind, spirit and environment of powerful and negative stories moulded into mindsets for living. Spirit, in the guise of happiness, was already there but was hidden behind his presented mindsets much like the sun behind clouds. Accepting the mindset conserved his identity for the moment while he had a chance to begin to observe it from a

distance (his future deathbed). Once seen, the “worm in the soul” and the “voices of fear” disappeared very quickly. The clouds disappeared to reveal the sun that was always there.

Slide 21: Meg

Meg, whom I introduced to you a little while ago, also speaks of finding her core when she referred to her experiencing of spirit amidst the crisis of separation in her life. Talking of the therapy process, which she spontaneously referred to as a “spiritual therapy” she said

“Our interaction was like a mirror in which I could see the deep core of my Spirit.

I feel so happy within myself I could sing. This is a spiritual therapy”

Slide 22: V- Model: Body Mind Spirit Environment Model

I hope that through this presentation, using the Fifth Province Approach as a stepping stone that, I have shown how I experience therapy as a spiritual process in which multi-dimensionality is honoured. Borrowing what we call, ‘the V-Model’ from my spiritual teacher, Sri Vasudeva, I want to simply illustrate how in a therapy conversation we touch all of our humanity as we co-construct on all levels of our being.

You will all know many of the ways in which you each connect at the physical level - from organizing our settings to be welcoming - to observing the physical changes in clients and ourselves as talk together. We are aware of the environmental factors which impact on all of our lives – the natural ecology and physical environment which surround us,

the ideologies, discourses and social structures which constitute us and so on. We are aware of how we address these in our own ways and how they impact on body and mind. We know about physical and emotional resonancing, we know about a meeting of minds.

What we have paid little attention to is our meetings in Spirit or in “communion” as my colleague Nollaig has called it. In this state of communion, this fifth province, the magic of therapy happens and solutions emerge in and through the interactions. The apparent ground out of which these solutions emerge is the collective wisdom that is generated by all of us in Spirit. In this spiritual process the therapist is mindfully present and in service to a larger wisdom. We are no longer the principal doers.

Slide 23 Inter-Being in the Fifth Province

Rather, we are present as presence in the present. The apparent diversity of subject, object and process becomes simultaneously unified in Spirit.

We co-create the Divine, with the Divine in the Divine.

Through a Dis-Position of Love, We inter-are in the Fifth Province.

Thank you