



THE FAMILY PROBLEMS BASKET

The family problems basket was developed by Yveline Rey in order to give a support to family therapists in their first meetings.

The instruction is as follows :

"You see on this table a basket. We are going to call it "the family problems basket". Each of you, in turn, is going to take this object and place inside what you consider to be the most important difficulties your family is facing. This basket has a double bottom, where you can put what you do not want to say or keep secret. Whoever has the basket speaks, the others listen. If someone wants to say something, he/she asks to take the basket.

Is everything clear to you? Let's start. Who takes the basket first? ... All right, you have it on your lap, now, put in it all the problems, all the worries that have led to this session today ... Is it done? Good, I have a few questions for you :

Is it heavy ?

What is currently weighing the most in this basket ?

Are there any other things that worry you, that make you experience difficult things ?

When has this basket been the heaviest for you ? And the lightest ?

Was there ever a time when the basket was empty ?

For whom do you think it weighs the most ?

Who can make this basket lighter in the family ?

What would happen in the family's life if this basket became lighter ?

According to you, is there a double bottom in this basket ?

Now, imagine if everything in this basket today took the form of an animal, a plant, a picture, or a music... what would it be like ?

Thank you. Now, who do you hand the basket to ? ».

The use of this floating object is very effective. It creates a surprise, a new way of communicating in the family ; it gives members of the family information that they didn't have, or that they didn't know they had. It allows to explore the pain, the symptom, and who is more concerned by both. The context in which the problems occurred is discussed.

The issues of belonging and self-determination are addressed with the possibility for everyone to express themselves and the question around the double bottom. The therapist will be able to observe the analogical language, the way each member of the family carries the basket.

It introduces the issue of time and process which can be explore in a second session.

Most of all, in the analogy, the method clearly shows that the problem is the one of the family and that the work of understanding what is happening and how to deal with it will be done together, in a co-construction process.