David Bohm: On Dialogue

By Dino Karabeg
When we see a “problem,” whether pollution, carbon dioxide, or whatever, we then say, “We have got to solve that problem.” But we are constantly producing that sort of problem — by the way we go on with our thought.
The problem of communication

If one considers the fact that communication is breaking down and that in the present context efforts to prevent this from happening tend to accelerate the breakdown, he may perhaps pause in his thinking, to give opportunity to ask whether the difficulty does not originate in some more subtle way that has escaped our mode of formulating what is going wrong. Is it not possible that our crude and insensitive manner of thinking about communication and talking about it is a major factor behind our inability to see what could be an intelligent action that would end the present difficulties?
The goal of dialogue

A new kind of mind thus begins to come into being which is based on the development of a common meaning that is constantly transforming in the process of the dialogue. People are no longer primarily in opposition, nor can they be said to be interacting, rather they are participating in this pool of common meaning which is capable of constant development and change.
Chapters

• On Communication
• On Dialogue
• The Nature of Collective Thought
• The Problem and the Paradox
• The Observer and the Observed
• Suspension, the Body and Proprioception
• Participatory Thought and the Unlimited
Two meanings of ‘communication’

commun + ie

• To make common certain ides
• To be making something in common
The obstacle

When we come together to talk, or otherwise to act in common, can each one of us be aware of the subtle fear and pleasure sensations that “block” his ability to listen freely?
The dialog

The picture of image that this derivation suggests is a *stream of meaning* flowing among and through us and between us.

\[ \text{dia} + \text{logos} \]

\[ \text{dis} + \text{cussion} \]
Dialogue is really aimed at going into the whole thought process and changing the way the thought process occurs collectively.
One of these difficulties is fragmentation, which originates in thought — it is thought which divides everything up.
The procedure of a dialog
Suspending assumptions

proprioception of thought

So the whole group now becomes a mirror for each person.
From necessity to freedom

- ne + cessere
- don’t yield
- convince
- persuade
From fragmentation to coherence
Beyond dialogue

there is a possibility for a transformation of the nature of consciousness, both individually and collectively, and whether this can be solved culturally and socially depends on the dialogue. That’s what we are exploring.

communion
The question is really: do you see the necessity of this process?
Ch4: The Problem and the Paradox

In essence, therefore, what is needed is to go on with life in its wholeness and entirety, but with sustained, serious, careful attention to the fact that the mind, through centuries of conditioning, tends, for the most part, to be caught in paradoxes, and to mistake the resulting difficulties for problems.
Thanks!