



## History of Systemic Constellation Work

Systemic Constellation Work was discovered over 25 years ago in Germany by [Dr. Bert Hellinger](#). Dr. Hellinger grew up in Nazi Germany, became a Catholic Priest and worked for twenty years with the Zulu Tribes of Africa. After twenty years, he felt moved to leave the priesthood and become a psychologist. As a psychologist, he began healing families using the leading edge therapies at the time which were Family Sculpting and Gestalt Therapy. While he was using Family Sculpting, something surprising began to occur. The people who were posing as family members began to express information that was characteristic of the actual person being represented, even though no such information had been shared.

Dr. Hellinger observed what was happening without judgment, taking what he called a phenomenological approach. Eventually he began to experiment with the placement of family members and found that certain placements created tension and other placements created relief. For instance, it became very clear that in a family system, everyone felt better when the wife stood to the left of her husband. Dr. Hellinger did not have any explanation for this or any judgment of it—he simply observed it over and over and saw the exact same result each and every time.

Over time more and more of the underlying dynamics of the system began to reveal themselves. These dynamics are now called the Orders of Love and form the basis of Constellation Work worldwide. The Orders of Love are similar to the laws of any natural force like gravity or light or water. Love is an energetic force that can be experienced by our senses in many different ways. It is real and has properties of ease, joy, harmony and flow. When love is constricted, we feel tense, heavy, conflicted and stuck. Systemic Constellations focus on the flow of love through the system.

Although Systemic Constellation Work has attracted many highly trained professionals, it is not an intellectual process. It is very much a guided process by an energy field that has come to be known as The Knowing Field. This field of energy reveals the places in the system where the flow of love has been

interrupted. When the facilitator tunes in, amazing information comes to light in completely natural ways. Using this information, the facilitator can then initiate changes that create resolution and restore the natural flow.

Over time, the changes that happen in a constellation also happen in the actual system. Family members begin to communicate better, dysfunctional behaviors decrease, and a general sense of ease and joy begin to replace chronic tensions and conflicts.

The benefits of constellations go beyond the client and their resolution. Witnessing a constellation is powerful and healing. Experiencing the wisdom and awareness of this process has a visceral effect on everyone in the room. People feel expanded in their awareness of the world and their place within it.

Representing in a constellation is personally transforming. Often people are chosen for roles that have a personal connection with their own difficulties in life—"central casting" all the way. Representatives feel from the inside of these roles the harm that comes from judging others without truly understanding all that is going on for that individual in the system dynamics.

Constellations have spread across Europe into Asia, South and Central America and into the Baltic. Their growth in the US has been slow but has taken off more and more each year. Many US practitioners have designed innovative ways of setting constellations and these new ideas are spreading fast as well. It is almost as if we in the "New World" had to find our own way with this amazing process.

At the 2011 US Conference in San Francisco, practitioners presented the use of constellations across five healing modalities including both physical and mental health while others show cased the use of constellations in corporate settings. The range of uses for this work continues to expand into creative arts projects, shamanic rituals, and past life revelations. The best part is that it feels we've only scratched the surface of all the many possible applications for this process.

For more information, visit my website:  
<http://www.innatemovementsofthesoul.com>.

Barbara Eggenberger, MFT

Barbara is a licensed Marriage Family Therapist in California and Oregon and a certified Facilitator of Systemic Constellation Work.