

Rinke Visser Visits New Zealand

Early in 2010, MIRA NZ brought Rinke Visser to New Zealand. He is one of a handful of people who have made their living for 30 years from Biography Work. While many of us who work with biographical counselling or workshops include this work in the package of other skills we offer to the world, Rinke has determinedly held it as his focus all these years.

Along the way, he has developed enviable skills in creative writing to help people find their destiny and also discovered a remarkable process which he calls Biographical Triptychons. It is especially because of these abilities that we want to bring him here.

Rinke was born, grew up and spent most of his adult life in the Netherlands. He has been a teacher, mentor to students of the Free University, Driebergen in Holland, counsellor and advisor to adults and organisations and, in recent years, his creative writing work took him to Germany, Denmark and England. Together with his partner, Josien de Vries, he founded the Dutch Institute for Biography and, since 1995, has been a member of 3Consult. Since 2005, he has been active in Romania where he advises schools in their educational and organisational development, runs life skills courses and a two-year accreditation course to equip biographical consultants to work with children and adults. He is also a sailor and, with Josien, spends the summer sailing in the North and Baltic Seas.

Rinke describes Triptychons as follows:

In its original form, a triptychon is an altarpiece consisting of three parts and this was my inspiration. Just as such an altarpiece refers to the gospel story, a biographical triptychon refers to a story as well: the personal life.

The triptych consists of three simple images drawn by the client, each one representing a life situation. Together they form a whole which is more than the sum of its parts. These three drawings are the basis for a creative process where the qualities of imagination, intuitive awareness and inspiration play an important role.

The triptych process which has the form of a dialogue or conversation, aims to discover the invisible world which is hidden on the back of the triptych. The invisible interrelationships between the moments in life can be made visible.

I guess you can say that everyone has questions about his own life. The triptych process has been designed for people who search for a deeper understanding of that. Working with the triptych is not therapy; it is a special process of research. Based on this process, you can develop very special and deep conversations, even with yourself! It is therefore a basis for dialogue as self-reflection.

The human biography is holy ground. That means when we are in workshops, we always work respectfully with the treasures which unfold as we do this work. We never talk outside the workshop about each other's stories.

I personally have been working with Triptychons for several years and have found them to be a remarkably powerful tool which, in a very short time, bring one absolutely to the heart of the matter and enable lasting transformation. The future becomes possible. They seem always to provide an unforgettable experience.

I first met them when Rinke used them as a quick review method at the end of one of our Worldwide Biography Conferences at the Goetheanum. Within minutes, we all had the experience of overviewing the whole conference and seeing its meaning for our future work! I have used them in 1-1 biographical counselling and more recently, with great success, in conflict resolution work. I am keen to apply them to strategic planning in organisations.

In New Zealand, Rinke and Josien, who travelled with him, gave workshops in Auckland, Hawkes Bay, Wellington and Christchurch. He also gave talks in Auckland and Hawkes Bay. Their work was extremely well and gratefully received, the visit a great success. There will probably be a follow up in 2011.

Elaine Beadle