

How does one fit the Market?

Matthias Scharer, Innsbruck-Austria

One of my encounters with Ruth Cohn took place during one of the yearly meetings in which TCI facilitators regularly come together. We were talking about the “marketability” of TCI in the booming market for psychological, organizational and educational techniques. In a heated debate, some colleagues suggested that TCI could be better “marketed,” and they made appropriate suggestions how this might be done. At first Ruth only listened to this debate and kept silent, but she obviously became increasingly nervous. Then she said: “I have never considered the question of how TCI should be fit for the market. My question has always been, how can the market be fit to people?” This intuitive shift of the theme toward what is essential shows a typical ability of Ruth to get to the point and reveals a focal point for understanding her approach.

Ruth Cohn was never interested in setting up a system of rules and methods for group leadership. Neither did she intend to develop a pedagogical technique to communicate painlessly the dry and difficult information to students. Admittedly, TCI has often been misused in this way or so misrepresented in the literature. Her intuitive transformation of the question, “how can we make TCI fit the market?” into the question “how do we fit the market to people?” explodes the prevailing logic of success and gives an example of how focusing the theme, one’s personal commitment and methodological-communicative ability are bound together in her approach.

This transformation of the theme reflects the way in which Ruth has shifted the therapeutic point of view away from individual repression mechanisms to focus on social repression mechanisms, in particular the repression of human exploitation and ecological destruction.