

# Symbiosis and Autonomy

Trans-generational trauma:  
the unconscious connection  
between bonding and  
trauma

Friday 2nd March, 2012,  
Institute of Education, London

[www.franz-ruppert.de](http://www.franz-ruppert.de)

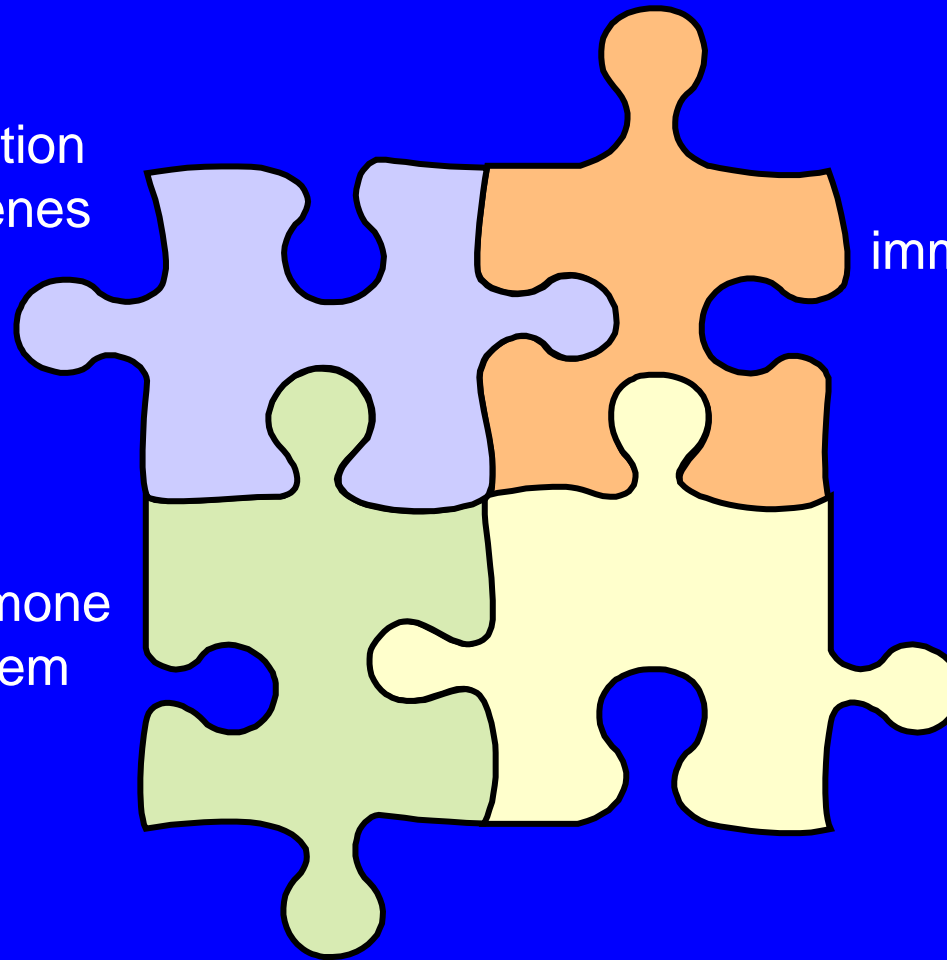
© Prof. Franz Ruppert

# Agenda

- What is the Psyche?
- Symbiosis & Autonomiy - basics for a healthy Psyche
- What is a trauma?
- The symbiotic trauma and its trans-generational effects
- Constellations of the Intention
- Case study Laura

# Psyche as a part of the psychosomatic Network

cell-to-cell-  
communication  
made by genes



immune system

hormone  
system

psychic system

- multidimensional
- selective
- adaptive
- creative

# Main functions of the “Psyche”

- Helping the living organism get access to reality
- outside the body
- within the body
- in order to survive and procreate.



# Main abilities of the Psyche

- to perceive
- to feel
- to think
- to remember
- to be conscious of oneself



“Psyche” means different software programs to process information and coordinate actions for the human body.

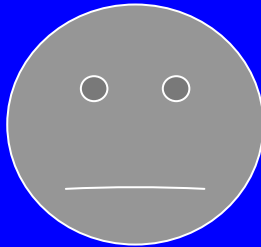
# Three main states of the Psyche

- Well being



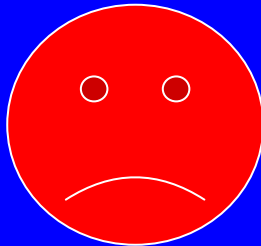
- no existential threat
- **openness to reality**

- Stress programs



- Existential threats
- **Focus on the dangerous reality**

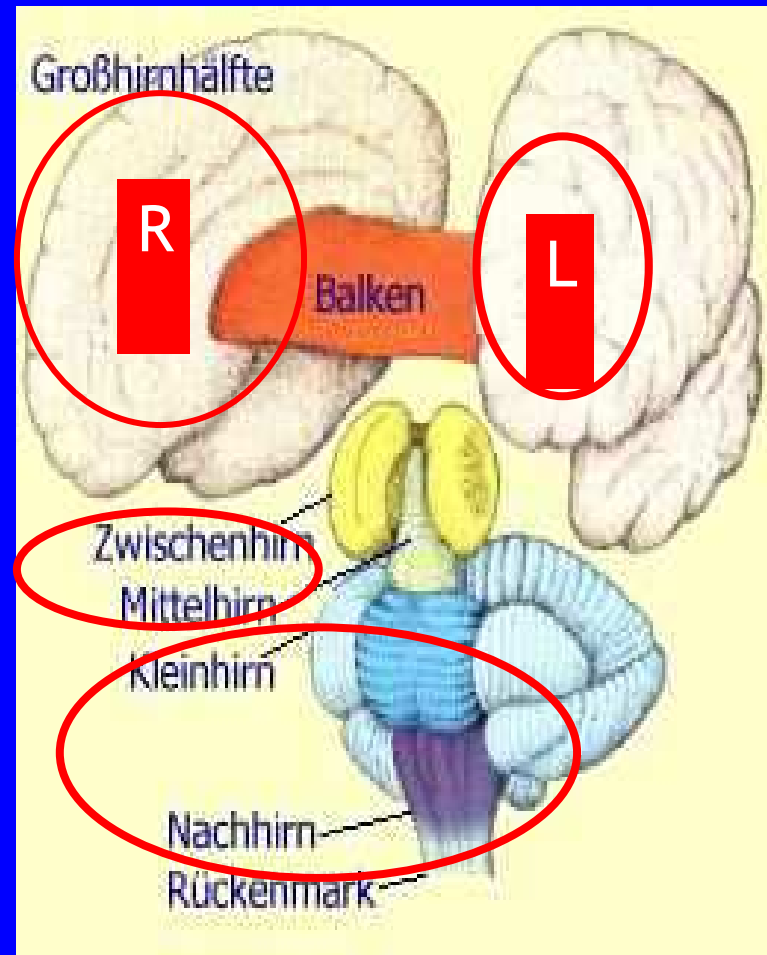
- Trauma reactions



- threats are overwhelming
- **denial of reality**

# The four human brains and their psychological programs

- **Left hemisphere:** Speak! Think rationally! Be yourself!
- **Right hemisphere:** Imagine and associate! Invent and create your own world!
- **The mammal brain:** Love your relatives! Keep close contact with your social groupings!
- **The reptile brain:** Fight or flight! Anxiety and aggression



Human development takes place between the polarities of symbiotic needs and the desire for autonomy.





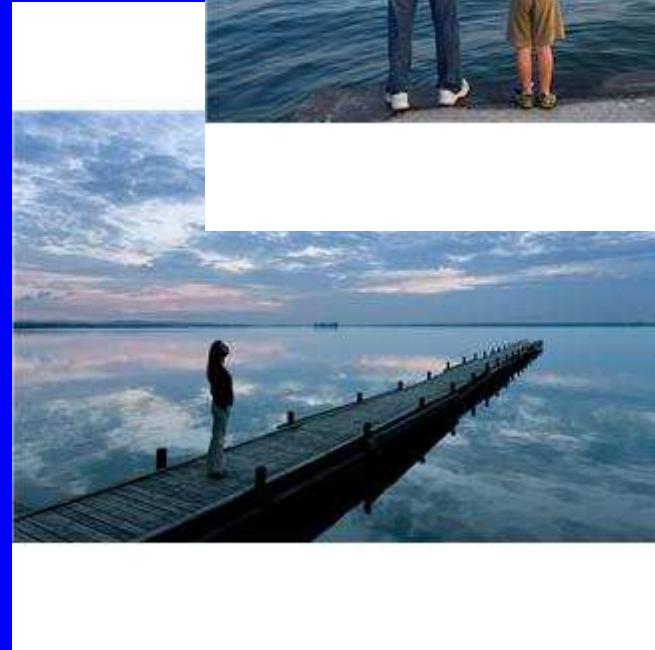
# Symbiotic necessities

- being nurtured
- being kept warm
- contact with bodies
- contact with eyes
- being understood
- being supported
- belonging exclusively to another person



# Desire for Autonomy

- to gain confidence in one's own perceptions and feelings
- to develop independent thoughts and opinions
- to rely on one's own ability to act
- to become self-responsible
- to become self-sufficient



For children “safe bonding” (J. Bowlby) to their parents is fundamental for self-confidence, confidence in human relations and mental health.

All their capacities can develop in a healthy way.



**The most powerful emotional experience of every human being is their symbiotic relationship with their mother.**



Symbiotically every child is doubly bonded to their mother:

**passively:** the emotional qualities of the mother are an imprint in the child's psyche

**actively:** the child adopts to their mother and tries to support their mother



The symbiotic love of a child towards her mother is one of the most powerful emotional forces.

# A life experience becomes not only stressful but traumatic

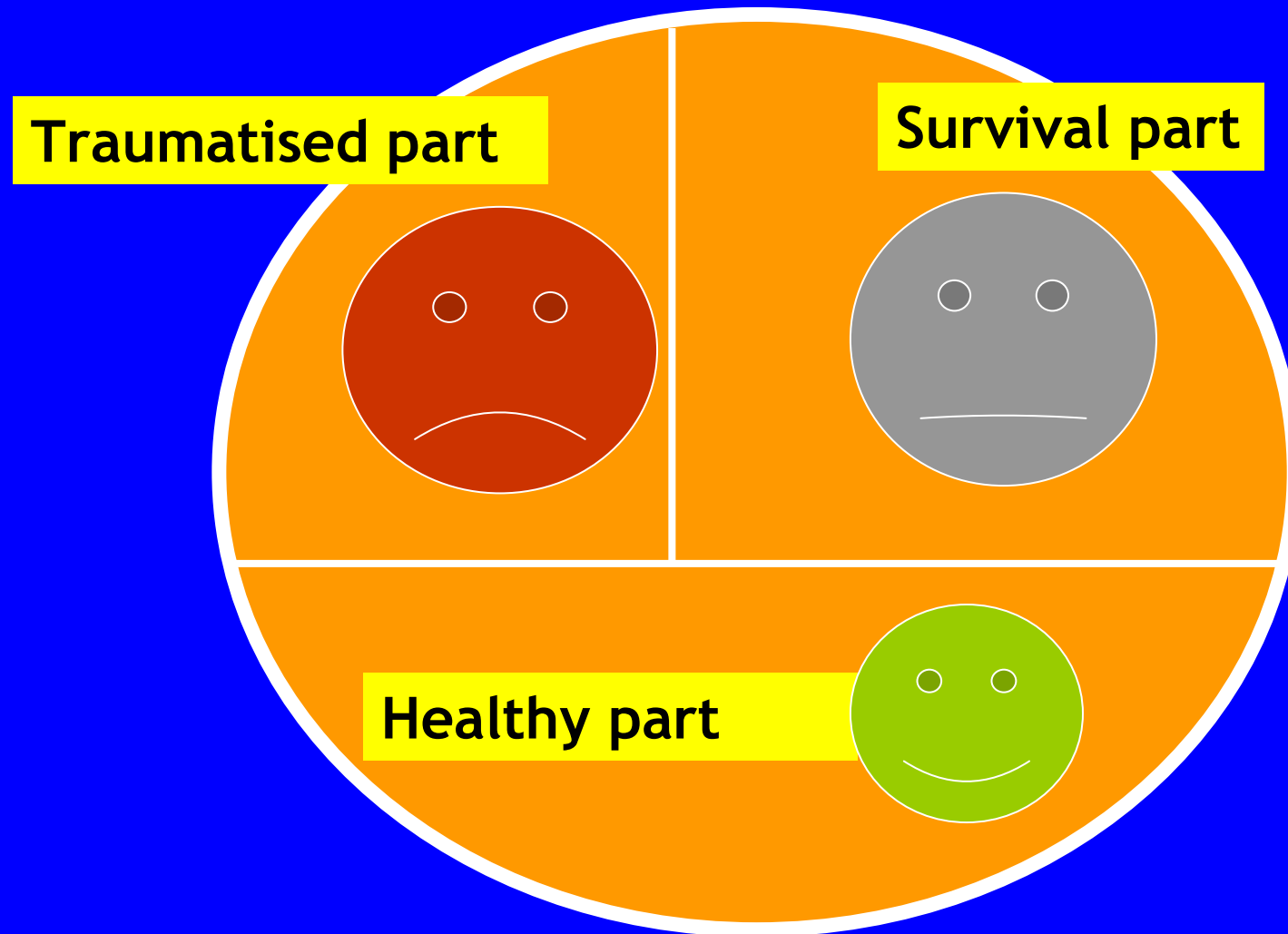
If we face a mortal risk, and are incapable of dealing with it with the help of our stress programs, therefore we end up in a state of helplessness and agony



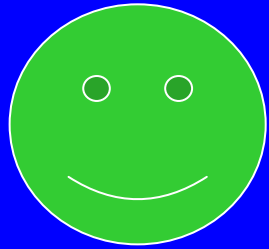


**When traumatised we are torn by the contradictions of our stress reactions, and so we freeze, dissociate, and in the end split the whole personality in order to survive.**

# Splits in the personality and identity structure after a traumatic experience

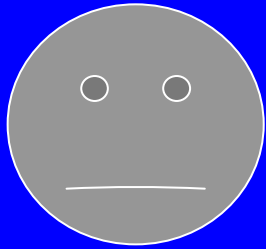






## Characteristics of the healthy parts of an adult personality

- clear realistic perception
- capable of regulating all one's feelings
- good contact with oneself
- ability to make safe bonds and to dissolve bonds if necessary
- capable of true self-reflection
- self-responsibility
- love of truth
- optimism and basic confidence
- true autonomy
- strong enough to confront even traumatic experiences



## Characteristics of the survival parts of the personality

- constructing and guarding the splits in the psyche
- denying the trauma experience
- suppressing the traumatised parts
- avoiding memories
- controlling oneself and others
- looking for compensations
- creating illusions
- producing new splits





## Characteristics of the traumatised parts

- store the **memory** of the trauma
- are always the **same age** as they were when the trauma occurred
- are still **engaged** with the traumatic experience
- can unpredictably and suddenly be **triggered**
- they want to be **released**



# Trauma and parental love & care

- Traumatic experiences destroy the capacity of parents to love, care and be emotionally supportive to their children
- Because of their survival mechanisms, traumatised parents avoid deep emotional contact with their child.



# Traumatised mothers

- are emotionally unavailable
- carry a high emotional stress within them
- are emotionally needy
- cannot respect boundaries
- act unpredictably
- act aggressively
- carry splits in their psyche



For a child, his relationship to his mother can become a symbiotic trauma.

The child is helpless and incapable of establishing a safe, holding relationship with a mother who is traumatised (by loss of a baby, violence, wars, or sexual abuse).





## Healthy structures within a child

- His own life force and energy
- His own strong will to live
- Healthy basic needs
- Joy of movement and exercising the body
- Joy of playing
- Joy of learning and solving problems



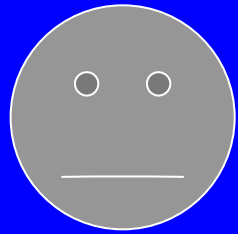


## Characteristics of the traumatised part in a symbiotic trauma

- Despair that there is no love from the mother
- Deep loneliness
- Fear of dying
- Intense, but suppressed anger
- Intense, but suppressed sadness







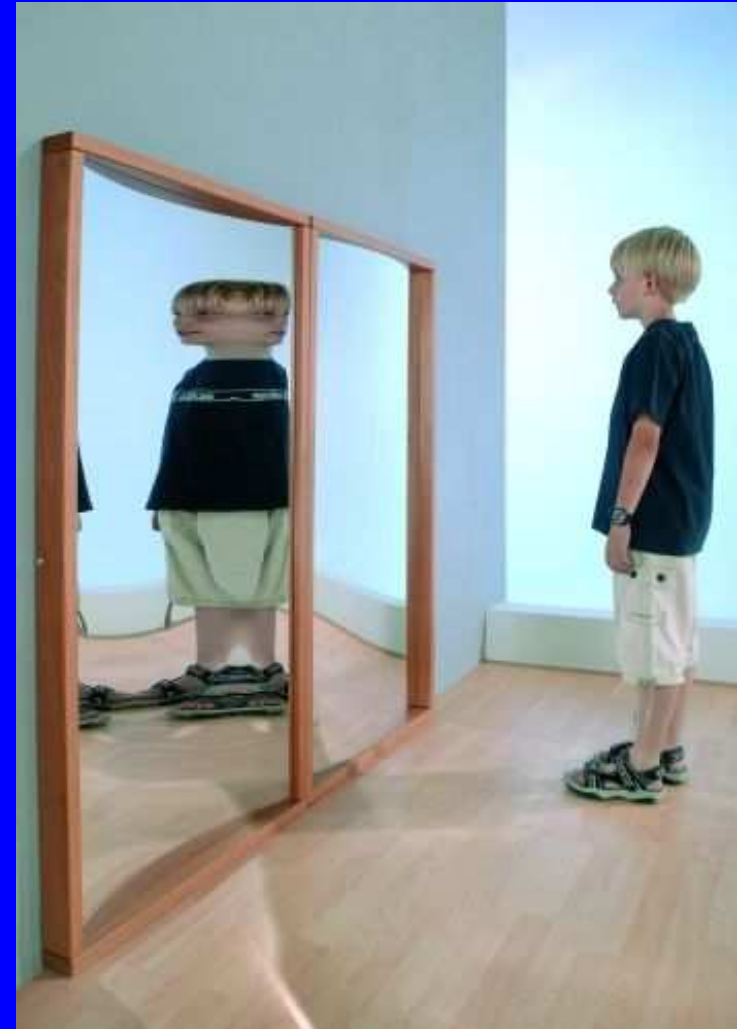
# Characteristics of the survival parts in a symbiotic trauma

- Constant fighting and arguing to get into contact with the parents
- Idealising the mother or the father
- Identifying with the survival mechanisms of the mother/father
- Feeling responsible for the parents
- Identifying and resonating with the traumatised parts of the mother/father or grandparents
- Repressing and denying one's own trauma



# Consequences of a symbiotic trauma for a child

- No ability to distinguish between own feelings and those of the (grand)mother
- Not living one's own identity
- Lifelong symbiotic entanglement in relationships
- Mental illnesses like hyperactivity, depression, psychotic states



# Four steps to healing trauma

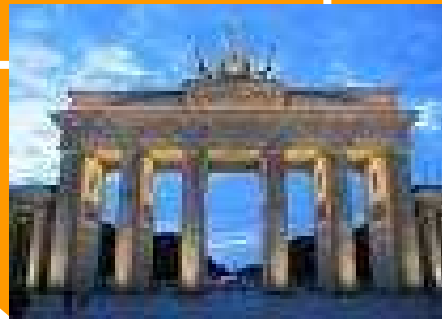
breaking through the  
gates of fear and pain



passing through the  
gates of illusions



using the gates  
to freedom



developing the  
healthy parts



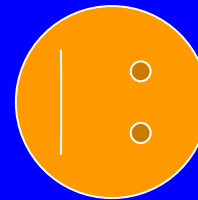
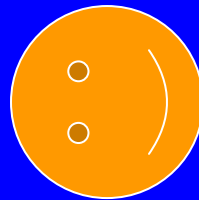
# “Constellation of the Intention”

- ❖ shows the amount of symbiotic entanglement and survival strategies caused by trauma
- ❖ minimises the risk of retraumatisation
- ❖ strengthens the development of the healthy structures of the psyche
- ❖ supports the integration of the traumatised parts of the psyche

# Starting Position for Laura's constellation

intention

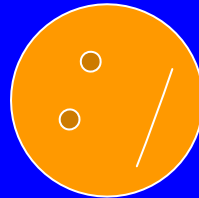
Laura



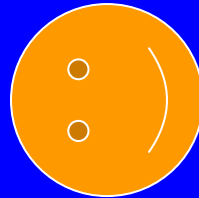
“How can I find  
a good relationship  
with a man”

# After 1<sup>st</sup> intervention

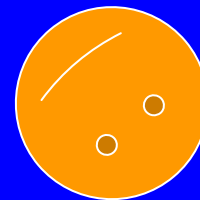
Laura



intention



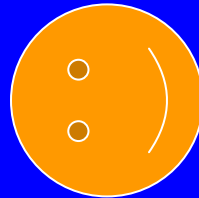
“How can I find  
a good relationship  
with a man”



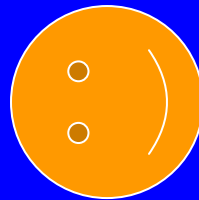
Impulse to  
run away

# After 2<sup>nd</sup> intervention

Laura

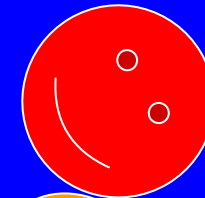


intention

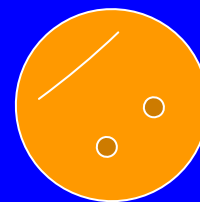


“How can I find  
a good relationship  
with a man”

mother




Laura as  
a baby



Impulse to  
run away

# After 3<sup>rd</sup> intervention

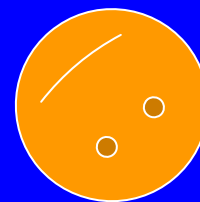
 Laura's  
dead sister

Laura 

intention 

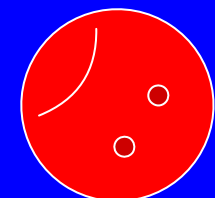
 Laura as  
a baby

“How can I find  
a good relationship  
with a man”




Impulse to  
run away

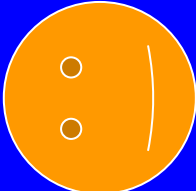
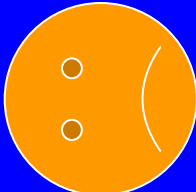

mother



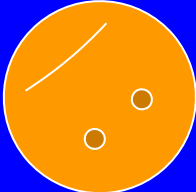


# After 4<sup>th</sup> intervention

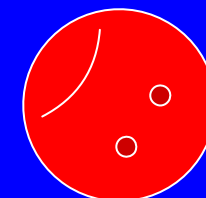
 Laura's  
dead sister

intention  Laura   Laura as  
a baby

“How can I find  
a good relationship  
with a man”

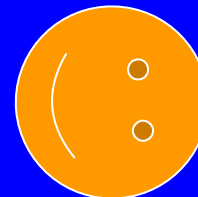
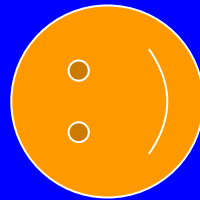
 Impulse to  
run away

mother



# Final picture

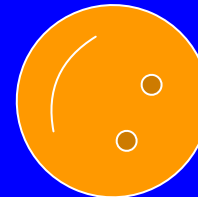
Impulse to  
run away



Laura



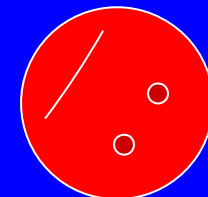
Laura as  
a baby



intention

“How can I find  
a good relationship  
with a man”

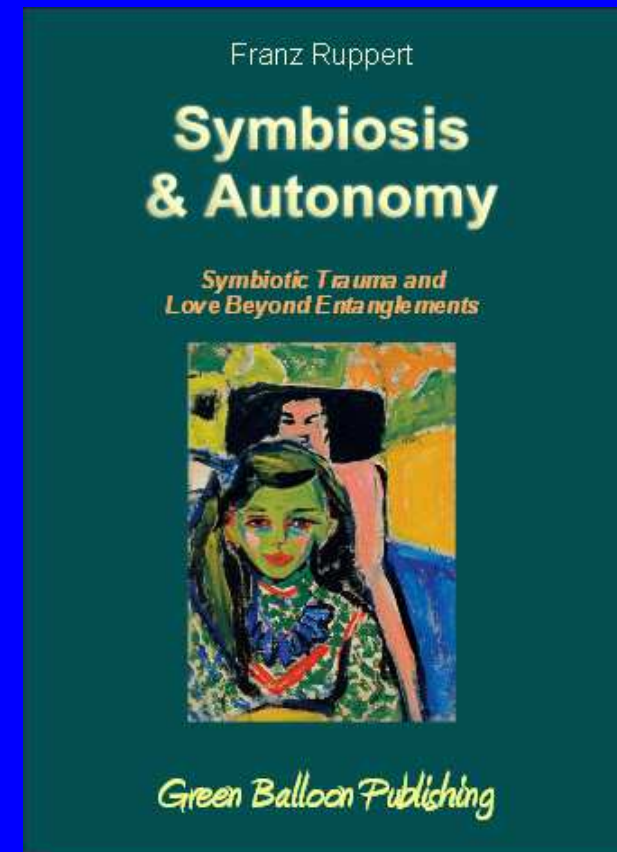
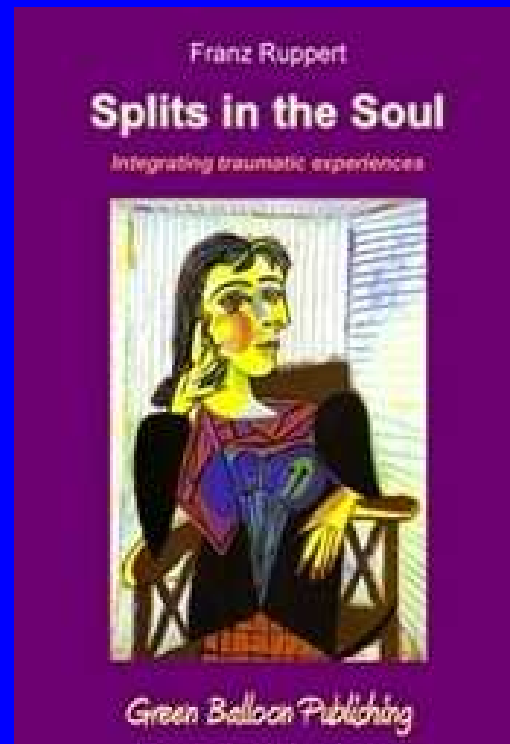
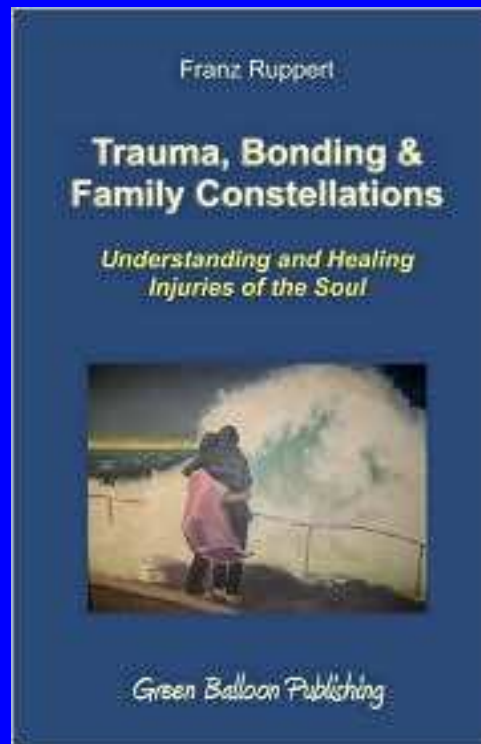
mother



Laura's dead  
sister

# Conclusions

- Laura's mother is traumatized by the death of Laura's sister
- The separation from her mother was a trauma for Laura as a baby
- The traumatised baby is still split off in Laura's psyche
- Close relationships are triggers for Laura's separation anxieties
- First, Laura has to integrate her splits, then she can make good relationships with others



- New book 2012



# Literature

- Franz Ruppert (2008). *Trauma, Bonding & Family Constellations: Understanding and Healing Injuries of the Soul*. Frome/UK: Green Balloon Publishing.
- Franz Ruppert (2011). *Splits in the Soul. Integrating traumatic experiences*. Steyning/UK: Green Balloon Publishing.
- Franz Ruppert (2012). *Symbiosis & Autonomy: Symbiotic Trauma and Love Beyond Entanglements*. Steyning, UK, Green Balloon Publishing. Due for publication late Spring 2012.

# 1st International Conference Symbiosis and Trauma

- Constellation work based on Bonding and Trauma
- 26th to 28th of October 2012 in Munich
  - [www.healthy-autonomy.de](http://www.healthy-autonomy.de)



© Prof. Franz Ruppert