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CRISIS ECONÓMICA Y LA SALUD MENTAL, RECOMENDACIONES”, ETAPA I

SAPTEL

Sistema Nacional de Apoyo, Consejo Psicológico e Intervención en Crisis por Teléfono

- Introduction, CoCoCha Pro (Constructive Constant Challenging Process).
- The Concept of Crises

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<http://www.saptel.org.mx/biblioteca.html>

Ψ SAPTEL is a mental health program in Mexico which was originated in UNAM (National Autonomous University of Mexico) as a joint response to the pain of those affected by the earthquakes in Mexico City in September 1985.

Ψ Since October 12 1992 and thanks to the confidence and support of the Mexican Red Cross, SAPTEL provides continuous support services, counseling and psychological crisis intervention by telephone the first inhabitants of the metropolitan area of Mexico City, and for over seven years to the rest of the entire Mexican Republic.

Ψ SAPTEL is a professional service carried out by trained and supervised psychologists that operates 24 hours every day. It is free and opened to everybody: There is no discrimination in SAPTEL.

Ψ Over a year ago, that both directors and members of the academic SAPTEL, anticipated the advent of a world crisis like the current one. We think that the process is not difficult to understand if the following factors are taken into account:

- Poverty. It is established as the axis and backdrop of the rest of the factors. The condition of poverty is at the root of all other social problems: health, education, food and the rest of the basic conditions for welfare.
- Overpopulation. The world population doubled in 44 years: in 1965 we were 3,500 million people; now add about 7 billion approximately. The population in Mexico has doubled in 35 years: in 1974 there were 55 million, today the country encompasses about 110 millions.
- Infrastructure. The world today is at least 30 years behind in terms of living resources (food, water, jobs, schools, hospitals, etc.) to address adequately the entire population.
- Modernity. Paradoxically, in the context of an excellent, impressive and rapid evolving technology, whose knowledge and usage require special mechanisms of adaptation, in which only very few succeed, technology advancements often replaces labour, displacing the person himself and leading to a rising unemployment, with which poverty is further increased.
- Deterioration of mental health. The fact demonstrated by the Harvard study<sup>1</sup> is that psychological and emotional suffering at all latitudes for Earth is rising, not controlled and even less eradicated.

<sup>1</sup> Desjarlais, Eisenberg, Good and Kleinman (1995). World Mental Health. Problems and Priorities in Low-Income Countries. Harvard University. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press.

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Ψ As a result of our commitment and love for Mexico, who have also collaborated with SAPTEL developed in the field of mental health various educational materials that are provided free of charge, including:

- Workshop: “Psychological aspects of accidents and trauma in disasters”. DVD, 2003. Reprint, 2007.
- Workshop: “Depression”. DVD, 2004.
- Workshop: “The relation between physical health and mental health: concurrent disorders”. DVD and CD, 2005.
- Workshop: “Suicide” DVD and CD, 2006.
- Book: Telehealth and telemedicine systems: SAPTEL and YES MEDICA-TEL”. It includes in CD format the book: “Therapeutic adherence, Implications for Mexico”. Year 2007.

Forthcoming:

- Book: “XXI century: Planning and Negotiation. Basic skills for achieving happiness, functionality and adequacy: A manual to ensure physical and emotional well-being. In Spanish and English versions, 2010.

### **‘CoCoChaPro’ ‘CoCuCo’**

#### **Constructive Constant Challenging Process: CoCoChaPro (Constante Cuestionamiento Constructivo:CoCuCo)**

The Academic Board, as well as some directors of SAPTEL have done an extra effort to do our bit to help Mexicans, women and men, to go ahead with the current economic crisis that although affects the entire world, naturally it affects Mexico in a particular way.

The invitation is for everyone to implement its CoCuCo as a healthy and necessary process. The CoCuCo is a persistent and constructive challenge to all the information that we get every day from others or ourselves (opinions, ideas, criticisms, etc.) and the call is, of course, extended to us in SAPTEL.

The ideas that will be presented next are built on a foundation of the information theories, regarding to the fact that in order to overcome and solve life problems, information is required. The general approach is that it is good to those who best manage quality information.

Progress and prosperity in Europe from 1950 (the postwar) up to the current time are based on these theories which ultimately produced the socio-economic-political system of the European Community and the creation of its own currency-the Euro- which is today the strongest one in the market.

One of the prerequisites demanded by the theories of information is the need to identify the reality, giving priority to determine whether the individual fails totally or partially in that recognition. Thus, the first task to do when researching for information is to identify the objective reality –reality it is just not necessarily what we like or what we would like it to be, unfortunately, in some cases, not even what it should be. However, reality is what it is, is all that is. Otherwise reality becomes subjective.

Regarding information and reality, it is important to recognize that making mistakes by subjectivity today costs a lot, and sometimes it costs everything. Studies show that in Mexico making the same five mistakes has different consequences or impact depending on the circumstances that come together at the time when they are committed. For instance, the

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impact of making 5 mistakes in 1965 was almost imperceptible—four units—no problem, nothing happened; fifteen years later, in 1980, the consequences had increased almost four times—fifteen units—we were affected by them a little. In 1994, something shocking happened; the impact was almost fatal—155 units—and from 1995, the magnitude of the impact is called supra-logarithmic—more than 155 units and almost nobody lives to tell the tale. As a consequence, being careful has gone from being a good habit to a need and now, a vital necessity.

Developing countries, including Mexico, have been characterized as their governments and systems do not provide the population with useful information to address problems and move forward. These seminars are aimed at closing the information gap between developed and poor countries.

Nowadays, success in life has something to do but little, with good intentions or goodwill. So, what does that matter? It is about the person having tools and skills, etc. and knowledge to use them. *No single person in the world can change a tire on a car unless he or she has a jack and a cross wrench.* Getting ahead in life today is only possible if you have adequate information and you know how to use it: Most of the population in the world does not know this. If the theories of information are correct—we think so—anyone who lacks tools and skills is positioned to lose, then unfortunately that person is going to go wrong.

On the positive side—we say ‘in a nice way’ (en forma ‘bonita’)—we people have to think, meditate, reflect, analyze and identify, how we are, where we are, what we feel, what we have and what we lack.

Coping and Resolution: Coping means to look straight, to look people in the face, to have eye contact, not to slouch, do not be submissive, and not submit, not just to anyone, but especially to any situation. In order to achieve that, people need training and qualifications to be strong. Usually, education in Mexico is not intended to teach people to be strong, and it is no wonder that a lot of people are educated to be afraid. To resolve—as we mentioned—people need tools and skills: Those which serve to plan and serve to negotiate.

With regard to planning, one must have clear both, the starting point as the point of arrival—the goal—and this requires having done the task, in this case, an objective analysis or study about where I am, to where I am going and what I need to do so. We insist good will or good intentions are not enough: as the saying goes “The road to hell is paved with good intentions”. If we want to avoid frustration, sadness and anger we have to do the task, there is no choice.

65% of the lives of people in the world depends on what produces the planning, everyone needs to be clear about the actions to be undertaken and the ways of handling time, the latter being increasingly important since failure to do things on time can ruin everything, it does not matter how good things can be done. To do this, you need to be constantly reviewing the results of your actions continuing along the same path if the sequel indicates, or re-route if reality or consequences of my actions so indicate.

### **CRISIS** **What is a Crisis?**

In the Spanish Royal Academy dictionary<sup>2</sup> the word crisis is defined as:

- An abrupt change in the course of a disease either to improve or to worsen the patient.
- Important mutation in the development of other processes physical, historical and spiritual either.
- State of an issue or process when in doubt its continuation, modification or termination.
- A turning point of a serious business of important consequences.
- Trial made of something after having carefully examined.
- Shortage, scarcity.
- Difficult or complicated situation.

<sup>2</sup> Real Academia Española, Diccionario de la Lengua Española. Vigésima segunda edición, disponible en [www.rae.es](http://www.rae.es) January 5th 2009.

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Slaikau<sup>3</sup> defines crisis as:

[...] a temporary state of disorder and disorganization characterized chiefly by an individual's inability to handle situations using customary methods for solving problems, and the potential for a radically positive or negative result.

[...] A semantic analysis of the word crisis reveals concepts which are rich in psychological meaning. In Chinese the word for crisis (weiji) is composed of two ideograms that mean danger and opportunity competing at the same time (Wilhelm, 1967). The English word is based on the Greek Krinein that means deciding. The leads from the Greek word indicates that the crisis is both a decision, discernment and also a crucial time during which there will be a change for better or worse (Lidell and Scout, 1968). (p.16)

Ψ another aspect of the crisis is related to separation, breaking-off with fragmentation of something existing and loss of what it was. It is as if a bridge falls down or when a landslide occurs in a road or tunnel and the roads we were accustomed to cease to exist leaving no choice but to seek to find other paths.

Ψ Crises are characterized by the presence of two elements

- a) Lose. A loss is always present and it is more emotionally charged when it comes to something valuable, important and dear to the person. An example of our time: work.
- b) Threat or danger. Beyond what is lost the change is often experienced as malignant admonition both by the uncertainty of things to come as the threat to identity represented by the fact of change itself. One example is found in the fears, with foundation, of being a victim of violence or crime.

These two conditions are present on all social and economic crises.

Ψ Losing something important in our life always creates sadness, melancholy and depression.

Ψ Threat or danger always produces uncertainty, anxiety and stress.

Ψ If the person does not have the tools and skills to cope and resolve, will be destined to live in depression and anxiety. That is, if you cannot plan and negotiate, sooner or later you will develop anger which deteriorates to become chronic and the person leads to wreck all efforts to be happy.

Ψ Under those conditions, when the person becomes angry it is right, because he or she feels like a victim of injustice, feels that no one provided the information or tools needed to tackle and resolve to succeed. Although this may be true, getting angry does not resolve, but complicates. In Mexico, we say "Anyone who gets angry has a lot to lose". Because of that, it is common sense to look for serenity, tranquility, going for a walk, breathing deeply, moving your arms, and if you feel you need it, mourn and pray. However, do not forget that ultimately the solution lies in one we should not forget that, at the end of the day, the solution is inside ourselves, and as the saying goes: "God helps those who help themselves". Nobody will do what belongs to one. We all have to do our duty and a little more to get ahead, demanding a bonus or, popularly, await the return of the Mexican "pílon"(a plus or extra).

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<sup>3</sup> Slaikau, Kart A. (1996) Intervención en Crisis. Manual para Práctica e Investigación. México, D.F.: El Manual Moderno.

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