

Evaluation in the Light of Eros

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The dictionary defines Evaluation in the following ways: 1) determine or fix the value of, 2) to examine and judge. Our job in evaluation is to evaluate and judge the knowledge and competency and judgement of the candidate while honoring the relationship and respecting the candidate at the same time.

The dictionary defines Support in the following ways: 1) to endure bravely or quietly: to bear, 2) to defend or uphold as valid or right: advocate, 3) to promote the interest or cause of, 4) to argue or vote for, 5) to pay the costs of: maintain, 6) to champion.

It is not our job to evaluate and judge the candidate's personality or a nebulous subjective view of maturity or to analyze their analysis. (Giegerich takes care of that!)

We should check that they have met the objective requirements for the evaluation. We don't decide subjective readiness to take the exam.

In terms of support, our job is to support dignity and self-esteem and self worth (and that's a lot). Our job is not to support their ego position or point of view (necessarily) or their beliefs, complexes, infantile wishes, magical thinking, or narcissistic expectations.

Our job as an evaluator is not to be a cheerleader or necessarily to be their friend.

We should be able to both evaluate and be supportive. I don't see them as mutually exclusive. There is an inherent tension. Our job is not parental. There can be

projections both ways. There is the temptation of the analyst to rescue or save the candidate (that role here is inappropriate). Of course, we should not try to drown them either.

We must be on our guard to being both overly positive or negative in our counter-transference. We should also try to be as conscious as possible of how the transference is influencing positively or negatively the evaluation process.

We must be able to withstand negative as well as positive transference by the candidates especially when constellated by their terrible disappointment in failing an exam or an interview (Martin Luther King said: "There cannot be a great disappointment without great love."). There is no absolutely objective view by analysts that is right, but we can strive to be as objective and fair as possible. We should always refrain from abusing our power.

It will always be an imperfect process but we can try to stay as conscious as possible. It is always valuable to ask where the shadow anima/animus, persona and Self are in the room during the evaluation. We should honor the process in the exam.

We should exempt ourselves when one of these phenomena is clearly overwhelmingly distorting our objectivity and judgement. We may need to tell each other when this is happening (not an easy thing to point out to a fellow analyst when they are convinced they are right and can't see their unconsciousness). We should ask the candidate or applicant to step out when we do this. It takes courage, but it is the right thing to do.

If we get into a complex we can't work through we should step away from the process in the best interest of the person being evaluated and their process. We should always treat persons being evaluated with dignity and respect.

Evaluate but keep Eros alive! This person may one day be your analyst colleague.