

Pesso-therapy workshop **Father in Fairytales**

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Synopsis

The basic father figure in fairytales sets his youthful child a task that will need to be fulfilled for the next step in life. The next step in life is (often) the conclusion of the tale: Prince and Princess marry and become the next generation King and Queen. To come closer to the role of father, however, we need to note that each fairytale poses particular (even though implicit) questions. The questions can be for example: How does *this* father set his child *this* task? What is the task? How does *this* child carry and fulfill the task? And at each turn, the answer comes specifically from out of the fairytale.

We explore one Fairytale (Iron Hans, #136 in Grimm) to get a feel, for what a Fairytale will help us to understand, concerning the role of father. We will not emerge with a simple understanding of the role of father, because, the special value of fairytales is the ability to speak of complex interactions. We gain thereby not a simple explanation, "the father was ...", but we have through a fairytale the additional, "the attitude towards father was ..." (which may be more determining for the future than "what the father was").

After working with Iron Hans (which is a feeling into the situations and developments) an overview can be proposed as follows. The King has lost contact with an important element/function, which we might call "the attractor." Iron Hans (the attractor) becomes the 2nd father for the Prince. But only after the King has brought "the attractor" into his and his son's proximity. The task that is set for the Prince is to further integrate (put to use) "the attractor". The Prince shows the correct attitude towards "the attractor," therefore, at the end of the tale when the Prince marries the Princess, Iron Hans is redeemed. We see that the son has fostered (released) a potent/fruitful father (the 2nd father, Iron Hans).