

Commemorative words to Jesper.

Jesper Juul died on the 25th of July. His son Nicolai asked me to say some words for Jesper at the funeral. I was grateful and honoured to do that and want to share the commemorative words.

The last 7 years of Jesper life were marked by pain and suffering. A neurological disease left him with no possibility to walk away when things were too meaningless or too boring to him, and in long periods also without the possibility to speak – to give a feed back in his clear and direct way.

Since I have known Jesper for many years I know, that **This** exactly was important to him – the possibility to walk and to talk. With this in mind we can try to imagine how it must have been – sitting without the possibility to do what he loved the most ...

But he took the challenge, and found ways to survive with an indomitable power to get something meaningful out of his life. He wrote and teached on skype and facetime. He met the people from here or from abroad, who found their way to Odder, Skanderborg, Århus and Norsminde to enjoy his always clear and at the same time cordial feed back.

It was only when he, because of the comprehensive pain, he suffered the last 2 years, could not think any more, that he was really challenged – it was – as if he could manage to live without the possibility to move and to speak – but when he lost the opportunity to work – to write and teach – and when he realized that there was no medical help left to reduce his pain – he lost his strength.

Remembering Jesper how he was most time of his life, is a memory of a man who was outstanding authentic, creative and innovative. An observer of life who was able to transform his observations into relevant actions in relationship with other people.

And also able to put them into words – “I see myself as an observer and servant for the average person” he said in an interview with the “Süddeutsche Zeitung” and being that he didn’t care if he was scientifically or scholarly correct.

His way of seeing people and their relationship is so simple and so clear, and for me – as for many others – it has been a tremendous help in the work with families and professionals. I remember my very first personal meeting with Jesper when I was a student at the Kempler Institute of Scandinavia, which Jesper founded in 1979 and did lead until 2004. I had a therapy with a client and afterwards I said about the client, “she is really out of contact with herself,” – and Jesper just turned around on his way out of the door saying to me, “And so were you.” I got really angry, but it brought me into thinking about my own being and doing in a way, that never left me again. And this is just one example of Jesper’s ability to give clear feedback, without moralizing or judging, without any other wish than to give his honest feedback and observation.

When Jesper needed a word, that was none existing he just invented it – which from time to time made the translation into other languages difficult. Personal Language, equal dignity, self-esteem – just to mention a few of them. And few days ago I just realized, that the book “Your Competent

Child” were translated into Russian with the title “The children from HYGGE land” ! – dear Jesper – I don’t think that you would appreciate that!

Most of the time our being together was centered around our professional life, and it has always been very rewarding to me.

But it was also always clear, that Jesper’s little close family meant a lot to him. His way of talking about his son and grandsons were always with respect and profound love and acknowledgement – not trying to define them but always interested in their life and being.

I want to finish with the words that I wrote together with two colleagues from the former Kempler Institute of Scandinavia, (now: The Danish Institute for Familytherapy, DFTI), Ruth Hansen and Peter Mortensen, who are now the directors of DFTI:

Dear Jesper, thank you for sharing your wisdom with us and thousands of other people. What you said and did have made an impact, which in its authenticity and clearness will last long after you have left us.

Thanks for our friendship and all our dinners with good dialogues and very good wine. Dear Jesper – we already miss you!

Helle Jensen, July 2019