



A little while ago I was approached by a school social worker who had attended a workshop in NA that I had given at the University of curative pedagogy in Zurich. He told me about a teacher who asked him for advice regarding an 11 year old boy with challenging behavioral issues. He asked the teacher if she already had included the parents in her efforts to change the boy's behavior. She confirmed that she had had many meetings with the mother and that the mother is quite cooperative, but it hadn't helped so far to change the difficult situations in and outside the classroom.

I suggested to the school social worker that he should try to involve also other relatives together with the teacher – most of all the father. The teacher – although the boy was already attending a second year in her class – didn't know if the father was around or even existent in the life of the boy.

The school social worker asked the mother if the father could join the next meeting, too. The mother responded quite ashamed that the father didn't speak German and that is why he never appeared at school. The social worker and the teacher invited him nevertheless suggesting that they would somehow be able to communicate with the mother's help and gestures.

The teacher and social worker managed to create an atmosphere in which the father felt very welcomed. In that meeting no consequences were discussed, it was foremost a first step towards getting to know each other and to express common concerns. After that meeting the behavior of the boy changed significantly for the better.

I really like this example because it shows how change can happen with a bit of presence. Naturally, not all cases end so happily, but sometimes a bit of common effort can do a lot.