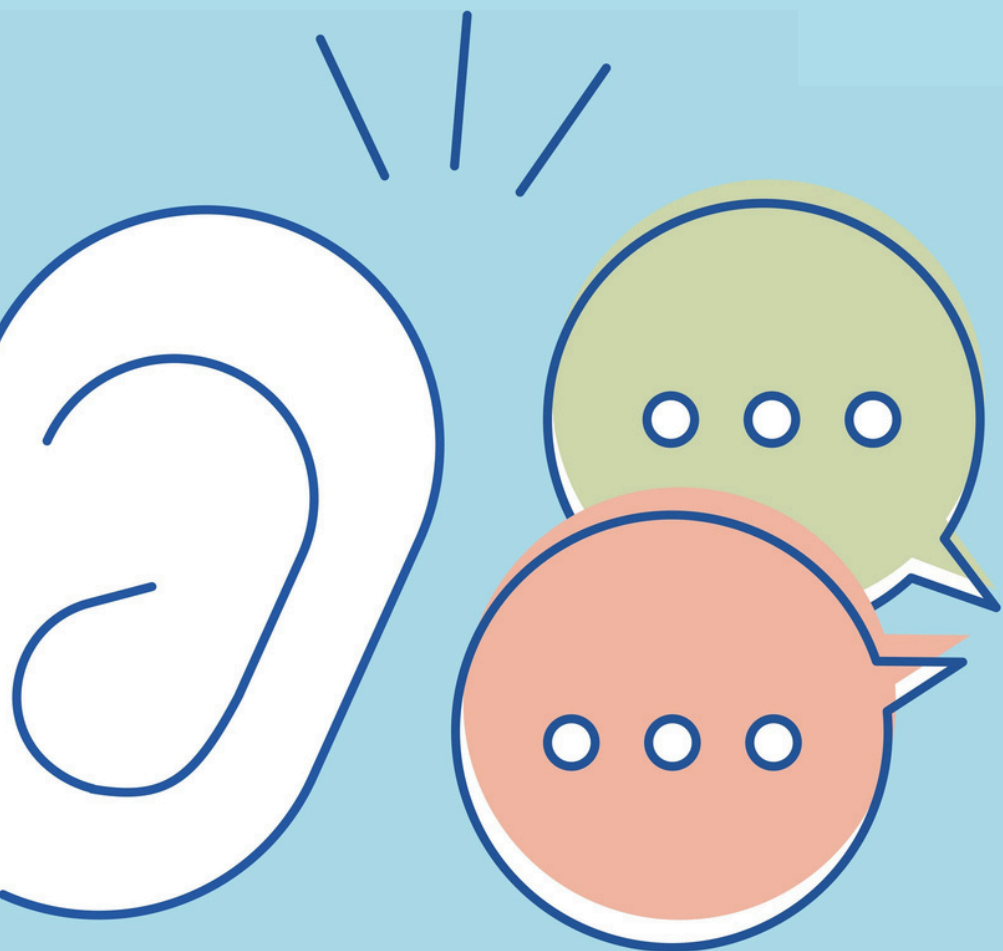


THE INTELLIGENCE OF THE BETWEEN



**What changes in relationships,
leadership and organizations when two
human beings truly meet**

Dr. Marcello de Souza

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**Between two human beings
there is a space
that belongs to neither of
them.
It is there that everything real
happens —
or does not happen.
This e-book lives in that
space.**

Dr. Marcello de Souza

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FOREWORD



This is not a book about communication.

It is a book about what happens before communication — and what determines whether it will be real or merely efficient.

In recent decades, the field of human and organizational development has invested with growing sophistication in the refinement of relational skills: active listening, structured feedback, nonviolent communication, applied emotional intelligence. Valuable tools. Consistent methodologies. And yet, something essential keeps slipping through.

People learn the tools. They apply them with competence. And they leave conversations with the feeling that something real was never touched.

This ebook is born from the refusal to accept that gap as inevitable. And from the recognition that it has a precise cause: all relational development has operated at the level of discourse — what is said, how it is said, when it is said — ignoring the only level where genuine connection actually happens: the space between two real presences.

That space is what is named, structured and applied here. The Intelligence of the Between is not a new tool. It is a change of plane — from relational management to genuine encounter. From technical competence to real presence. From conversation that happens to encounter that transforms.

The four texts that compose this ebook form a single argument in four movements. The first opens the wound: it shows that the conversation we believe we master operates on a substrate we have never touched. The second names the territory: it inaugurates the concept, gives it philosophical and scientific structure. The third lands it: it brings the concept into organizations, leaderships and professional life. The fourth elevates: it asks what each human being needs to become from within for the Between to be genuinely possible.

Read in sequence, they do not offer ready answers. They offer something rarer: the right questions — those that, once installed, reorganize the way one sees every relationship, every conversation, every encounter.

Marcello de Souza



DO YOU REALLY KNOW HOW TO TALK?

What no one tells you about the conversation that happens before the words

Think of the last time you walked into a room and felt — without anyone having said a single word — that something was wrong. Or think of the opposite: the person whose presence, before even saying hello, already warmed the air around them. You did not read minds. You used no special skill. What happened was something far older and far more sophisticated than any communication technique you have ever been taught.

There is a conversation that precedes all conversations. It has no words. It has no conscious intention. And that is precisely why it rarely lies.

For decades, we have focused our attention on what we say, on how we say it, on timing, on word choice, on active listening, on constructive feedback — as if communication were a matter of technique, of method, of mastering tools. We learned to articulate better, to structure arguments, to control our tone of voice. And yet, we leave so many conversations with the feeling that something essential was never touched. That we spoke — and still did not meet.

**The greatest illusion about human communication is believing it
begins when we open our mouths.**

What separates us — and what unites us — operates long before that. It operates at the level of what the entire body perceives, processes and transmits before the conscious mind forms a single sentence. Every human being carries a system for reading the world that is faster, more encompassing, and infinitely more honest than any carefully prepared speech.

This system does not distinguish between what you want to convey and what you are actually being in that moment. It simply reads. And the other person reads the same — even without knowing how to name what they have read.

That is why there are people who master every communication technique and still leave everyone slightly uncomfortable. And there are people who have never read a book on the subject who, the moment they speak, seem to have instantly created a safe territory around them.

THE CONVERSATION THAT PRECEDES

What your silence already said before you spoke

Imagine two colleagues who need to resolve a conflict. They sit down at the table, both with declared goodwill, both determined to have a mature conversation. But the first carries in his body a tension from three sleepless nights and a diffuse sense of threat to his place on the team. The second, without consciously noticing, has already detected that tension before hearing the first word. And automatically, in fractions of a second, has adjusted his own internal state toward a more defensive mode.

The ‘real’ conversation — the one they think they are having — begins already compromised. Not because anyone did something wrong. But because the other conversation, the invisible one, had already established the field before any word was spoken.

This is not poetry. It is biology. The human nervous system was sculpted by millions of years of group life, in environments where detecting another’s internal state was a matter of survival. Long before any symbolic language, human beings were already communicating and reading internal states with impressive precision. Verbal language came much later. And, by all indications, the older system was never switched off.

What does this mean in practice? It means that every conversation has two simultaneous planes. The verbal plane — conscious, intentional, subject to all kinds of construction and editing. And the non-verbal plane — not just the classical body language we were taught to control, but something deeper: the real physiological state of the organism, manifesting in microexpressions, subtle variations in the rhythm of breathing, in the quality of eye contact, in the way the body occupies space.

You can rehearse what you will say. You cannot rehearse what you are being.

And that is precisely where the great illusion of traditional communication approaches lies: they focus almost exclusively on what can be controlled and taught — the words, the structures, the techniques — and ignore the substrate on which every conversation actually rests: the internal state of the one who speaks.

THE ROOT OF DISCONNECTION

Why we talk so much and meet so rarely

There is a reason why two people can talk for hours and each leave more alone than they arrived. And there is a reason why two strangers can exchange a glance in silence and feel that something real has passed between them.

The difference is not in the words. It is in the degree of real presence that each person brings to the encounter.

Presence, here, is not a self-help word. It is a concrete physiological and psychological state: the degree to which a human being is genuinely available — without the armor of their narratives about themselves, without the protective distance of their interpretations of the other, without the agenda of what they need to prove or hide. When that presence is real, something happens in the space between people that cannot be fabricated by any technique.

Think of a time when you were going through something difficult and someone sat beside you without saying anything particularly special — perhaps just “I’m here” — and that was enough. It was not what they said. It was what they were in that moment: entirely available, unhurried, unjudging, with no need to fix or explain.

Now think of the opposite: someone who says all the right things — “you can count on me”, “I understand completely” — but whose body says something else. Whose eyes are already calculating the next sentence. Whose listening is, in truth, merely waiting for their own turn to speak. You noticed that. The problem was never the word. It was the absence of real presence.

THE PARADOX OF TECHNIQUE

When learning to communicate better pushes you further from the other

There is a silent paradox that no one usually names: the more someone focuses on learning communication techniques, the more they may drift from genuine communication.

This happens because attention shifts to performance — to how I am being perceived, to the correct application of the tool, to the evaluation of my own results — and leaves the only place where real connection originates: the other human being, in front of you, at this moment, with everything they carry.

Parents who apply nonviolent communication to their children mechanically, and children who feel managed, not loved. Leaders who master the language of feedback and teams who feel evaluated, not seen. Couples who have learned every tool of healthy relationships and still wake up feeling they are lying beside a stranger. The technique was there. The presence was not.



The greatest relational competence is not knowing what to say. It is having the courage to truly be there.

THE FIELD BETWEEN US

What really happens when two human beings genuinely meet

When two human beings are genuinely present for one another — not managing the impression they make, not calculating the next move, not protecting their image — something changes in the space between them. That space, which seemed empty, becomes dense with information. Information that does not pass through the filter of discourse, that cannot be edited or fabricated.

Real change — the kind that lasts — almost always begins in a moment of genuine encounter. Not in a winning argument. Not in a well-applied technique. In an instant when a human being felt, at the most primitive and most reliable level of their system, that the other was truly there — without agenda, without performance, without the need to come out of that encounter having won something.

THE CONVERSATION WITH YOURSELF

Why every relationship begins where no one else can enter

There is a conversation that precedes all others and determines the quality of everything that follows: the conversation you have with yourself.

Not the conversation you narrate to yourself about who you are — that is often partially a well-constructed fiction.

But the conversation that happens at the level of what you truly believe about your worth, about what you deserve, about what others will do with your vulnerability, about whether the world is a place where it is worth showing up whole.

The person who carries the conviction that their genuine presence is dangerous — because it has been used against them, because it has been ridiculed, because they learned that showing up whole means becoming vulnerable in an unbearable way — that person will develop, over time, a mastery of appearing present while maintaining distance.

This is not cynicism. It is adaptation. It is the nervous system doing what it was designed to do: protect the organism based on what it has learned is dangerous. The problem is that this protection, so necessary at certain moments in one's history, tends to become permanent — operating even when the real danger no longer exists.

Before learning to communicate better with the other, one needs the courage to stop lying to oneself.

WHAT REALLY TRANSFORMS

Beyond techniques: what separates encounters that change from conversations that merely happen

There is a fundamental distinction that rarely appears in discussions about communication: the difference between conversations that happen and encounters that transform.

Transformative encounters are rare. And when they happen, we rarely forget them. Not because they contained extraordinary truths, but because they touched something that is usually kept protected — the core of who we really are, beneath everything we have built to navigate the world with safety.

What makes such an encounter possible is not technical skill. It is courage. The courage to show up without the full armor. The courage not to know what will happen. The courage to allow the other to matter more, for a moment, than your own management of impressions.

Because in the end, what the other perceives — before your words, beyond your words, despite your words — is who you are being in that moment. And that is not learned. It is become.



THE INTELLIGENCE OF THE BETWEEN

The missing concept for understanding what really happens when two human beings genuinely meet

There is a territory that the entire tradition of thinking about communication, human relationships and development has systematically left out. Not through negligence. But because this territory resists the tools we normally use to name things: it cannot be observed from outside, measured by questionnaire, or captured by any taxonomy of behaviors. And precisely for that reason, it is the territory where everything real in human relationships actually happens.

Let us call that territory by the only name that does it justice: the Between.

The Between is not you. It is not the other. It is not the sum of both. It is the space that comes into being when two human beings genuinely meet — and that has properties belonging to neither of them individually. It is the field where one person's real presence meets another's, and where something happens that could not happen anywhere else.

This concept is not poetic metaphor. It is a precise ontological distinction — and its absence from contemporary thinking about human relationships is the reason why so many approaches to communication, leadership and development produce competence without depth, apparent connection without real encounter.

The Between is not learned. It is inhabited. And inhabiting it demands something no technique can supply: the courage to show up whole.

I. WHAT THE BETWEEN IS NOT

Why all previous approaches fell short

To understand what the Between is, we must first name precisely what it is not — because the confusion begins exactly at the boundary between what seems similar and what is radically different.

The Between is not empathy. Empathy, as it is taught and practiced, is a cognitive and affective operation that happens inside one individual. It is an individual skill. Valuable — but individual. The Between begins where empathy ends: in the space that neither person controls.

The Between is not rapport. Rapport is a relational condition intentionally produced — through mirroring, language alignment, rhythmic synchronization. It is, at its core, a technique of approximation. It works. But it is always a surface construction. The Between is not built. It emerges — or it does not.

The Between is not nonviolent communication, not active listening, not structured feedback. All of these are practices that operate at the level of visible behavior. But the Between operates at a prior level — the level where who you are being reaches the other before what you are saying.

II. THE STRUCTURE OF THE BETWEEN

Three dimensions of a singular territory

The Between has structure. Not the mechanical structure of a process — but the organic structure of a field that organizes itself according to its own laws. Those laws operate in three simultaneous and inseparable dimensions.

The first dimension is the Substrate. Before any word, before any intentional gesture, there is an internal state that the organism carries and transmits.

That state is not chosen — it is the accumulated result of everything the nervous system has learned about what is safe, about whether it is worth showing up whole in this encounter. The Substrate is what the other perceives first.

The second dimension is the Field. When two human beings are genuinely present, something constitutes itself in the space between them that did not exist before and belongs to neither. This field has detectable properties: the other relaxes or tenses, opens or closes, advances or withdraws.

The third dimension is Responsibility. When you are genuinely present for another human being, you are assuming a responsibility that precedes any conscious choice: the responsibility of not reducing that other person to an object of your competence, your agenda, your interpretive system.

The ethics of relationships does not begin when we decide to be ethical. It begins when we stop treating the other as a problem to be solved.

III. THE PHILOSOPHICAL ROOT

What the most rigorous thought already knew — and human development still ignores

The Between is not an invention of this text. It is a discovery that the most rigorous philosophical thought had already made — and that the field of human development, in its drive for applicable methodology, systematically left aside.

There is a fundamental distinction between two radically different modes of existing in relation. The first is the mode in which the other is, at bottom, an object — of experience, of analysis, of utility, however benevolent. This is the mode of relational management.

The second mode is radically different: it is the mode of genuine encounter. In it, the other is not the object of anything. They are presence. When this mode installs itself, the space between people transforms. That is the Between.

There is also a philosophical tradition that argues the relation with the other does not begin in my interest in them — it begins in the demand the other makes of me before I decide anything. The face of the other — their concrete presence, their vulnerability, their irreducible mystery — is already, before any choice, a summons. It demands response. And that demand is the origin of all real ethics.

IV. WHAT NEUROSCIENCE CONFIRMS

When biology meets philosophy at the same point

The human organism possesses systems for detecting the other's internal state that operate below the threshold of consciousness, with speed and precision that no conscious cognitive processing can match. These systems do not read intention — they read reality. They detect the coherence or incoherence between what the other's organism transmits at the physiological level and what they declare at the verbal level.

The field between two human beings is constantly fed by information of the highest resolution, circulating below discourse. And that information determines, to a large extent, what is possible in that encounter — what can be said, what can be heard, what can be transformed.

When the organism detects that the other is truly there – without agenda, without performance, without the need to come out winning – something shifts that no argument can shift.



V. WHY THIS MATTERS NOW

The relational crisis of our time and what the Between offers

We live a historical paradox: we have never had more communication tools, more models of healthy relationship, more methodologies for interpersonal development — and yet people have never reported such loneliness, such disconnection, such a pervasive sense of being seen without being truly encountered.

The Between is not an additional concept to add to the repertoire. It is a change of plane: moving from the question ‘how can I communicate better’ to the question ‘what is real between us right now’ — and having the sophistication to perceive the difference between the two.

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WHEN THE BETWEEN WALKS THROUGH THE COMPANY DOOR

What the Intelligence of the Between reveals about leadership, culture and what really happens in your Monday meetings

Think of the last team meeting you led or attended. There was an agenda. There was time allocated. There were, in all likelihood, good intentions on all sides. And yet, at the end, the feeling was that something essential had not been touched. Decisions were made. Alignments were done. But something — that no one can name precisely — was left out.

That something has a name: it is the Between.

And its absence in contemporary organizations is not an accident. It is the predictable result of decades of relational competence development that operates exclusively at the level of visible behavior, structured discourse, applicable technique — and that never descended to the only level where relationships are really constituted or destroyed.

An organizational culture is not what is written in the values statement. It is what happens in the space between people when no one is watching – and when everyone is.

I. THE SYMPTOM NO ONE DIAGNOSES

Why the right tools produce the wrong results

When the Between is absent — when relationships operate in the mode of mutual management, performance of openness, administered connection — no instrument produces the effect it promises. Feedback is given technically and received as evaluation, not as care. Recognition is delivered with the right words and felt as protocol, not as genuine recognition. Listening happens formally and the other feels heard but not met.

The reason is precise: the instruments operate at the level of discourse. The Between operates at the level of what is real. And when what is real contradicts the discourse, the other's organism reads what is real, not what was said.

II. THE LEADER AND THE BETWEEN

The difference between leading people and meeting them

There are two kinds of leaders every organization knows. The first masters the competencies. They are technically impeccable. And their team will say they are a good leader. But the real problems never reach them. There is competence. There is no encounter.

The second type may not master all the tools. But when in a conversation with someone on the team, something different happens: the person feels truly seen. They can bring the problem before having the solution. They will not be managed — they will be met.

The difference between the two does not lie in their skills. It lies in the Between. The first leads from the mode of management. The second leads from the mode of encounter.

A leader who genuinely meets their team does not need to motivate it. They only need not to destroy what real presence naturally produces.

III. CULTURE IS WHAT THE BETWEEN PERMITS

What is being built when no one is looking at culture

Culture is, at its most fundamental level, the pattern of Between that characterizes the relationships within an organization. It is the set of responses that the nervous systems of the people working there have learned to give to the implicit question every organizational relationship poses constantly: is it safe to show up whole here?

When the accumulated answer is yes, the Between installs itself as pattern. What emerges in that environment is what no culture program can produce directly: the willingness to bring the best of oneself, not merely the safest version.

When the answer is perhaps — which is the most exhausting answer of all — people learn to operate in performance mode. They do what is expected, say what is safe, show what is valued. And keep the rest. That permanent containment manifests in turnover, in burnout, in innovation that never happens.

IV. THE BETWEEN IN DEVELOPMENT PROCESSES

Why coaching often produces insight without transformation

Real transformation — the kind that reorganizes something at the level of the substrate, not only at the level of understanding — happens when the professional is genuinely present to what is real in that particular client, in that particular moment, in that irreducible specificity — and not to the model they learned about that type of situation.

A transformação real não acontece porque alguém aplicou a ferramenta certa. Acontece porque alguém esteve realmente lá enquanto a aplicava.

V. CULTIVATING THE BETWEEN

The distinction that separates real development from one more layer of technique

What cannot be cultivated directly: the state of genuine presence at the moment of encounter. What can be cultivated: the conditions that make that state more probable.

At the individual level: recognizing the protective patterns that operate automatically, noticing when the management mode is replacing the encounter mode. At the organizational level: creating contexts where showing up whole costs less than self-protecting, where genuine disagreement is treated as valuable information rather than a threat to cohesion.

This is the work of the Intelligence of the Between. It is not simple. But it is the only work that produces what every organization truly wants — and rarely achieves: relationships where something real happens, people who feel truly met, cultures where the best of each human being has the conditions to emerge.

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EMOTIONAL MATURITY IS NOT WHAT YOU THINK

The step beyond — and why the market sold a domesticated version of what real human development demands

If you have made it this far, you already know there is a conversation before the words. You already know there is a space between two human beings that belongs to neither of them and that determines, before any discourse, whether something real will happen in that encounter. You already know that no technique produces that space — that it emerges, when it emerges, from something at the level of what each person is being, not what they are doing.

What remains to be said is the most difficult question of all: what does one need to become so that the Between is possible consistently — not as an occasional flash, but as a mode of existing in relation?

The answer the market offers is quick, reassuring and profoundly insufficient: emotional intelligence. Recognize your emotions. Manage your reactions. Develop empathy. Learn to regulate what you feel before responding. It is not wrong. It is incomplete in a way that matters enormously.

The market sold emotional maturity as the art of controlling what one feels. The problem is that control is not presence – it is its most sophisticated antithesis.

THE DOMESTICATED VERSION

Why emotional intelligence became synonymous with self-control — and what was lost in that translation

There is a fundamental confusion running through decades of leadership formation and personal development: the confusion between emotional maturity and emotional regulation.

Emotional regulation is a skill. It is learned. Trained. And it is genuinely useful — not as an end, but as a means. The problem begins when it becomes the goal itself: when emotional development is reduced to the capacity not to be affected, to maintain composure, to smile under pressure, to deliver difficult feedback with a calm voice and open posture.

That ideal — the emotionally regulated leader who never loses control, who always seems centered regardless of what they are experiencing — is not emotional maturity. It is its domesticated version. The version that serves the system, that is safe for the corporate environment, that generates no discomfort and that, for precisely that reason, produces no real encounter. Because real encounter requires exactly what perfect regulation eliminates: the possibility of being genuinely affected by the other.

WHAT REGULATION HIDES

The emotion that does not appear has not disappeared — it has merely changed address

There is a dangerous illusion that emotional intelligence training frequently installs: that well-regulated emotions are overcome emotions. That the leader who shows no anger is not angry. That the person who maintains composure in a conflict is not in conflict.

The nervous system does not work that way. The emotion that is not expressed does not disappear — it migrates. It migrates to the substrate that the body transmits before any word. To the microexpression that lasts less than a second and that the other's organism captures with millimetric precision. To the quality of silence, to the rhythm of breathing, to the imperceptible distance the body maintains even when the arms are open.

In other words: the suppressed emotion does not vanish from the Between. It contaminates it — now with the aggravating factor that the discourse says one thing and the substrate says another. And when there is incoherence between the two, the other's nervous system does not hesitate: it believes the substrate.

The result is the opposite of what regulation promises. Instead of a present leader, we have a technically impeccable and relationally opaque one. Instead of safety, we have the diffuse feeling — that no one can name — that something there does not add up. That it is better not to take the risk.

**The emotion that does not appear on the face appears in the
Between. And the Between never lies.**

REAL EMOTIONAL MATURITY

Being moved without being lost — the distinction the market never made

Genuine emotional maturity is not the capacity not to be affected. It is the capacity to be deeply affected — and not to fragment.

It is the difference between the ocean and a boat in a storm. The boat resists because it closes itself. The ocean holds the storm because it has enough depth to contain it without being destroyed by it. One is control. The other is capacity.

Translated into what matters: the emotionally mature person is not the one who feels no fear in a difficult conversation. It is the one who feels the fear, recognizes that they are feeling it, and is still able to be genuinely present for the other without the fear governing the field. Not because they suppressed the fear — but because they have enough internal structure to carry it without needing to hide it or be governed by it.

This structure is not technique. It is the result of a long and frequently uncomfortable process of honest relationship with one's own inner world: with the narratives we carry about who we are, with the protective patterns that were necessary at other times and that today limit real presence, with the fear — specific, nameable — that showing up whole might be dangerous.

As long as that work does not happen, the person learns to regulate. And to regulate well. But the Between detects what lies beneath the regulation. And the other feels — before any word — that something is being contained. That the presence is partial. That real encounter is not being offered.

THE STEP BEYOND

Why emotional maturity is the internal condition that makes the Between genuinely habitable

There is a precise relationship between emotional maturity and the Intelligence of the Between: real emotional maturity is the internal condition that makes the Between genuinely habitable — consistently, not just accidentally. Without it, the Between happens by accident. With it, the Between ceases to be a flash and becomes a mode.

The leader with real emotional maturity does not need a perfect environment to be present. They can be genuine in a difficult conversation without turning it into a performance of openness. They can receive criticism without closing the field while processing it. They can make a mistake — in public, in front of the team — without ego destroying what competence built.

And consequently, the Between that leader produces has a different quality. Not because they applied the tool better. But because what they transmit before any word is coherent with what they say afterward. The substrate and the discourse say the same thing.

And when that happens, the other's nervous system rests. And in that rest, something that was closed begins, slowly, to open.

Emotional maturity is not not feeling. It is feeling everything – and still being able to be there. Wholly. For the other.

THE QUESTIONS THAT REMAIN

Not as evaluation — as compass

TO CARRY WITH YOU

Question 1 — For yourself

When I am in a difficult conversation, what am I really doing with what I feel? Am I regulating — containing, managing, administering the impression I make? Or am I present — carrying what I feel without needing to hide it or be governed by it? How do I know the difference in my body, not in my discourse?

Question 2 — For your development

Which is the emotion I regulate the most — that I contain the most, that I manage before allowing it to appear? And what would be the cost, in the Between, if that emotion could be carried with honesty rather than suppressed with competence?

These questions have no right answer. They have only the honesty of whoever decides to look at them without the protection of self-control. And it is precisely that honesty — that movement of stopping the regulation and beginning to encounter oneself — that produces the only development the Between recognizes as real.

Not the development that makes a person more competent at emotional management. The development that makes a person more capable of genuine presence. More whole. More available for real encounter — which is, at bottom, the only place where human transformation has always happened and will always happen.

The step beyond is not controlling better what one feels. It is having enough structure to feel everything – and still show up whole for the other. That is emotional maturity. That is what the Between asks of each of us.

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EPILOGUE

What you do with the Between now

This ebook ends here. But the question it has installed — if it was read with the attention it deserves — does not end.

Because the Intelligence of the Between is not a concept to be understood and filed away. It is a lens that, once placed, changes what you see in every conversation, every meeting, every relationship from this moment on. And that change of perception is, at the same time, a gift and a demand.

The gift: you begin to perceive, with a precision you did not have before, when a genuine encounter is happening — and when it is merely being simulated. When a conversation is touching what is real — and when it is circulating elegantly along the surface.

The demand: you can no longer pretend you do not know. Once the Between is named, it becomes impossible to keep attributing to external factors what is, to a large extent, the result of the degree of presence you yourself bring to each encounter.

The question that remains is not what the Between is. It is another, more difficult and more fertile one: in which encounters of your life are you truly there — and in which are you, with growing sophistication, merely managing the distance?

That question has no right answer. It has only the honesty of whoever decides to look at it — and what that honesty opens.

A real encounter does not begin when the other appears. It begins when you decide to stop managing yourself.

The rest is your work.

RECOMMENDED READING

If this ebook opened something in you — a question that will not leave, a restlessness about the way you exist in relation, a desire to go deeper than any tool has taken you — the books below are invitations, not prescriptions. They are not cited sources. They are territories worth inhabiting.

The order is not hierarchical. It is a suggested path — from encounter with the other, through the biology of presence, arriving at what one needs to become from within for the Between to be real.

ENCOUNTER AND THE ETHICS OF RELATION

I and Thou — Martin Buber

The text that inaugurated the distinction between existing-in-relation and existing-in-function. Buber does not teach a technique — he names two radically different modes of being human. Read slowly. Every page is a mirror.

Totality and Infinity — Emmanuel Lévinas

Lévinas argues that ethics does not begin when we decide to be good. It begins before — in the face of the other that already demands of us before any choice. A dense and transformative book about what it truly means to be responsible for someone.

Otherwise Than Being — Emmanuel Lévinas

Where Totality and Infinity inaugurates, this book deepens. Lévinas moves beyond the phenomenology of encounter and arrives at the most radical structure of responsibility. For those who want to go all the way.

The Way of Man — Martin Buber

The most accessible Buber — and no less profound. A reflection on what it means to become who one truly is, without fleeing into the universal or surrendering to the social role. An invitation to singularity as the condition of real encounter.

THE BIOLOGY OF PRESENCE

Descartes' Error — Antonio Damasio

Damasio demonstrates with scientific rigor what philosophy had long intuited: reason and emotion are not opposites — they are inseparable partners. The body decides before the conscious mind. This is the biological foundation of the Substrate the Between addresses.

The Feeling of What Happens — Antonio Damasio

A map of consciousness and how the organism constructs, at every instant, the experience of being oneself and standing before the other. Essential for understanding why presence is physiological before it is intentional.

The Body Keeps the Score — Bessel van der Kolk

Each person's history lives in the body, not only in verbal memory. Van der Kolk shows why the Substrate is so determinant — and why real transformation requires far more than intellectual insight.

Subliminal — Leonard Mlodinow

An accessible and rigorous exploration of everything the nervous system processes below consciousness. Shows how most of what governs our relationships happens before any conscious decision.

THE TIME WE LIVE IN

The Burnout Society — Byung-Chul Han

Han diagnoses with surgical precision the era we inhabit: the age of performance and the disappearance of the other as real presence. The cultural context that makes the Intelligence of the Between urgent — and difficult.

The Agony of Eros — Byung-Chul Han

How the logic of performance erodes the capacity for genuine encounter. Han shows what is lost when the other is reduced to an object of consumption, evaluation or utility.

In the Swarm — Byung-Chul Han

The digitalization of relationships and the impoverishment of real encounter. A book about what is lost when everything moves too fast to have depth.

EMOTIONAL MATURITY AND INTERNAL STRUCTURE

The Seasons of a Man's Life — Daniel Levinson

An investigation into the transitions that build — or destroy — real maturity across a lifetime. Levinson shows that growing emotionally is not accumulating experience — it is integrating it.

The Ego and the Id — Sigmund Freud

Not as dogma — as map. Freud inaugurates the idea that what is not conscious governs more than what is. Understanding the structure of the inner world is the first step toward not being governed by it without knowing.

Psychology and Religion: West and East — Carl Gustav Jung

Jung on what the human being needs to integrate — not repress — to become whole. For those who want to understand why self-regulation is always a partial solution.

The Six Pillars of Self-Esteem — Nathaniel Branden

Not a self-help book — a phenomenology of the relationship with oneself. Branden investigates the internal conditions that make it possible to show up whole in the world without the protection of performance.

Presencing (Theory U) — C. Otto Scharmer

One of the few approaches in the organizational field that takes seriously the quality of the field between people. Scharmer investigates the different levels of presence in leadership and change processes.

THE BETWEEN IN ORGANIZATIONS AND TEAMS

Daring Greatly — Brené Brown

Brown spent years researching what separates people who live with real presence from those who operate in permanent protection mode. The conclusion is provocative: vulnerability is not weakness — it is the condition of encounter.

The Fearless Organization — Amy Edmondson

Edmondson mapped with scientific rigor what psychological safety produces — and what its absence destroys. Essential reading for understanding the organizational dimension of the Between in depth.

Teaming — Amy Edmondson

How the quality of relationships determines the quality of results. A solid argument for those who need to translate the Between into the language of organizations.

The Five Dysfunctions of a Team — Patrick Lencioni

A map of the patterns that destroy trust and genuine encounter within teams. Useful as a diagnosis of the symptoms the absence of the Between produces in the daily life of organizations.

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About the Author

Marcello de Souza began where few would expect to find a thinker of human development: leading teams and complex projects in the world of IT and Telecom. He was good at what he did. He mastered the logic of exact sciences, understood systems, delivered results. And it was precisely there — inside technically competent teams that still could not find each other — that the question which would define his entire trajectory began to take shape.

It was not a crisis. It was a perception that could not be ignored: efficiency without humanism is incomplete. Systems function. People need something more — and that something more has no protocol, no metric, no solution in the form of one more well-designed tool. It lives in what happens between people, before any technical decision, before any well-structured process.

The transition to the field of human development was not a career change. It was the inevitable consequence of a restlessness that systems could never answer. More than 28 years later — with a doctorate in Social Psychology, five postgraduate degrees, international certifications, and the creation of the DCC and DCCO methodologies, which integrate neuroscience, social and behavioral psychology, philosophy and psychoanalysis — Marcello still carries the same founding question, now with name and method: why do intelligent, well-intentioned and technically competent people still fail to find each other?

The answer he has built over these decades — with leaders, teams, organizations and individuals in real transformation processes in Brazil and abroad — is what runs through every text in this ebook. Not as theory. As accumulated experience from someone who has spent a lifetime observing what happens in the space between people — before words, beyond techniques, this side of any easy promise.

Anti self-help. Anti formula. In favor of what is real, deep and lasting – because it is the only development the Between recognizes as true.

Author of *The Secret of Coaching* and *The Map Is Not the Territory, the Territory Is You*, Marcello publishes regularly at marcellodesouza.com.br, where human development is treated with the density it demands — and the language it deserves.

The Intelligence of the Between is, to date, the most precise expression of what he understands by real transformation: not what is learned. What one becomes.



DR. MARCELLO DE SOUZA