

*on lifting weight / a paper project / family /
harmonious and responsibility / different speeds*

with **Elnatan Ariel**

26 april 2021 [I]

an ongoing collective exploration / learning from experiences of togetherness and uncertainty / reflecting on listening – with Elnatan Ariel, Matteo Zoccolo – 26 april 2021
matteozoccolo.net/on_listening/conversations.html

MZ: And I would really like to gather some ideas on our project of the 1+1=3 paper. Maybe more how you actually feel about it. I would really like to keep a trace of the recent developments in the change of the organization and your decision of taking more responsibilities in this project.

EA: So, now, introspectively, or in perspective of what we talked about when we talked for the first time after a while, we talked about the broader perspective, the big picture of getting the weight off of your and Bibi's shoulders. And I found myself trying to help. Right? I found myself helping in any way I can. Someone who wants to help, will. But I think that this letting go of this baby is a little hard for you, on some level. Because as much as I wanted to help with the second issue and with Kaja being around to help... It's amazing, don't get me wrong, but I didn't do anything. I didn't do anything! I wrote an email, I said, "What's up?" I said, "How are you?" So far, I didn't do much. What I did do is tell you my opinion about how I feel about the broad perspective of the group in terms of, "It should be our responsibility." It should be something that we have a say in, everyone. So, I do think that we're still in the progress. We're still at a point that by issue 5 or 6, we will know what we want, we will know what we're doing, much more than we do for issue 1, 2, 3. It will start to adjust. You start to feel like it's been a year and you already know it's happening, and it's already a cycle. It's already a moving wheel. It's already that. And then we already can see it as a wheel, as a shape, and not as this organization of, "Where are we going? Up, down, left, right?"

MZ: But wait, I don't believe that you didn't do anything.

EA: OK, I can put out what I didn't do. I organized the email, I didn't send it out. I did the things that made it possible for you, for Kaja, for Bibi, to have that weight lifted off your shoulder. That's my point. I did something, I lifted it. It's heavy. But I didn't take over. You know, I'm still Elnatan Ariel in Israel. I have my little bubble. I'm not at the top of the food chain, if you may. I know there's no food chain here because that's what we're talking about. We're just discussing it now. But that's what we discussed, that there is no food chain. It shouldn't be a food chain of Bibi and you in charge, in terms of like everything that happens within a 60 people group dynamic. 60 people! It's crazy. I was there when it was 12. And we were like, "OK, we'll see what happens." Oh, it's amazing. I'm so happy.

MZ: I get your point. And I really hope that in the future Bibi and I can really take a step back. Right now we are still in a phase in which we are still taking care of the thing. But I do think we have to reach a point in which we are really, like giving the... Like in that Olympic Game's sport in which people run and they pass each other this something...

EA: Like a Baton, it's like a stick.

MZ: Baton, Yeah. I think it will be a time in which the Baton is completely passed. Now I feel like it's still going from hand to hand, it's in the process.

EA: I feel that. At the moment, like with Kaja being here for three weeks, I know that when she takes a step back, I'm going to take a step forward. And if somebody else takes a step forward too, that's fine. It's not up to me. I'm not going to look for it. Right now, she's helping to do your and Bibi's job. And then when she goes, I'm going to be helping. But then eventually, this shift of energy is going to be, there's going to be one person in charge of this. This is issue X. One person in charge of the design of issue X. And then that kind of rotates in a way that everyone's responsible. Yes, there could be one person who's always writing the email, is always making sure there's meetings, making sure that the groups are doing what the groups want to do. But overall, I think that it should be this somewhat open, open for change, development, progressiveness. To get to the place that it runs by itself, it needs to go through a bunch of cycles, a bunch of different things happening to it, trying it out, failing. Getting there, getting to the place of, "We're doing something that is worth it." So far, I can't say that we've succeeded or failed. We're just doing. It's a good place to be, but I can tell you from a realistic point of view, we need to... We need to go up before we go down, and if we go down, we'll need to go up. There's no way to work around it.

MZ: That's where you came in. When it was very down, it was necessary that someone would say that openly and would bring it out in the open air and say, "Well, we are not doing any shit now, what's happening?" You gave your support, you cared. And personally, it gave me so many energies. Yes, it's true, I also had other issues and Bibi too, and that's why we were not concentrating on this project anymore. We were also very irresponsible because we didn't communicate it to anyone, we just disappeared for one month and a half. But for me, it's not only about issues that come from the outside. For me, it was also very hard to continue this project feeling alone, basically. Or feeling like we had to push people to do something because we wanted to bring this paper to life, but if we wouldn't have done anything, then nothing would have happened, and this is a sad realization. It could mean, indirectly, that people in the group might not be so interested in this thing. And when you called me a month ago, I found out, "Actually someone is interested in it, someone that is not an organizer, but a member of the group." Actually, someone cares about this.

EA: I feel you.

MZ: And this happened also with Kaja. It's very special that you two called me almost at the same time, without

speaking to each other.

EA: We have energy, that's what works.

MZ: Yes. And you can bring those energies to everyone. It's very, very good that this thing happened because this can open the possibility to everyone in the group, to say, at a certain point, "OK, I want to take responsibility now. I want to put my energy into it." And this was not an option before. Before it was Bibi's and my project.

EA: I really don't take this lightly because I mean this is the best way. I, without ever standing foot in Europe, while Covid is happening, have built a family. I know you people, even though I haven't physically met any of you except for one, that is you. Basically, everyone in the group has become a surrounding energy for me. We're all in this together. You guys are as much in Israel with me as I am with you in Europe, and therefore you're not alone. I don't feel alone because I know that I have this group that holds my back. You know, even though I am not the person in charge, I know that whatever I put in the magazine, this group will hold my back. Yeah, so I want you to know that what you did was to start this thing, but Kaja and I were to show you, "Hey, it's working! And you made it." You are in Holland, you're in Linz, but you're also in Jerusalem. You're everywhere, your back is being held up really, really firmly. And that's what someone told me, that it's OK, everything is really super, super good. Because if you look at it like this, I think it's great, you see it a little more openly.

MZ: That's great. I needed it. I needed this realization to be able to actually find positive energies again, to work on this project. Because I really started to lose them. I was a bit in a depressive state saying, "Fuck, this doesn't work." We imagined a group in which everyone is...you know, is putting energies.

EA: Were you thinking there would be more talking in the group? Like more communicating, a lot more communicating in the Zoom meetings.

MZ: You mean what Bibi and I were expecting?

EA: Yeah. Originally you were like, "Oh, a Zoom place for 20 people or however many. Enjoying just to talk together." And now what happens is that we're all in a Zoom meeting and we're all listening very, very patiently.

MZ: I mean, you need to speak and to listen. What we always try to avoid since the beginning is to have this kind of guided conversation, in which there is a moderator who asks, one by one, for a contribution. This is what we did in the first two or three meetings back in October.

EA: Right, right.

MZ: And we found out that it's not really working.

EA: It's a little bit... school.

MZ: Yeah. It's putting pressures. It's making people think they are not able to decide on their own when they want to talk and when they want to shut up.

EA: Fair point.

MZ: And definitely, it's still about responsibility and freedom. We want to leave this freedom to people, so that everybody feels we are in a horizontal group, the communication is fair, there is no one who prevails, in a way there is no force involved.

EA: Right, it's very fair. The terms and conditions are very fair, very obvious.

MZ: And it's very smooth. Everything happens, everything can happen, everything can be decided on the spot by anyone who wants. The flow of the conversation is very organic. It goes from topic to topic and it follows the personal interests of the people. And whoever wants to join later can join later. Whoever wants to leave, says, "Bye, I go to sleep," and everybody else says, "Good night." and the flow starts again. I think it's very smooth.

EA: I think it's very harmonious. What was the other word you used? Harmonious and... I forgot!

MZ: Responsibility! I remember once you were speaking about this project as a sort of living organism on its own.

EA: Right. When a group gathers, all that energy put together becomes one. This new one organism that we have become, lives on. Not any one of us can control how it grows or where it grows to. We all get a saying, but as a group, the organism will grow. So this thing has become the organism already, in my point of view, because, on a very subconscious level, all the people who are showing up, who are working, wanting to put their name in the magazine, all those 33 people of the issue 2, are very dedicated to making this organism alive, a living thing of its own. It takes a village to build an organism, the same way it takes a village to raise a child.

MZ: A village?

EA: I think it's an American saying, "It takes a village to raise a child" like it doesn't take one person or two parents to raise a child because the kid goes out and meets the whole village and everyone influences him. So, the village is how he's influenced. It takes a village to raise a person. It takes a village to make an organism, and in this case, we are the group, the group is all over the world and this is the village, the village is the world. We can, from all around

us, build this organism. And it works more or less the same everywhere.

MZ: I like this concept.

EA: I will jump the subject. Things are working, in different parts of the world, with different speeds. There are different attitudes that things work in in different parts of the world. But we found a middle ground where you work at a European speed, I work at an Israeli speed. You live in a European mentality. I live in an Israeli mentality. But we're working together on this organism, which is a united force. It's not that you are living at a European speed. It's that we're communicating at two different speeds. And we're able to understand each other, to transcribe it, to work together. And this organism, this group, is all together making this thing live on a strong, strong level, because there's all these different powers, different energies that are put in, from different speeds and different influences, different cultures to make it work so perfectly all over the world. Or at least, we'll hope to see it happen in front of us. But I think so, so far.

MZ: Do you think that the Israeli speed is higher than the European one?

EA: Well, when you say high or low, I don't like to consider it up or down. I would like to consider the mentality of the people. So, in terms of Israel, there is obviously a non-stop war happening. In that case, we're always working to be safe and have a safety net and feel like we can be safe here in this country. In America I can say for a fact that the speed there is that you work for the things that you want to have in your life. You work at a speed that you make money so you can live. And if you don't make enough money, the government comes and helps you. So, there's this slower speed in America than there is here where there's not a lot of help. And you have to save your own ass. About Europe... I don't know! I haven't lived there, so I don't really know what the speed and mentality is. I've seen glimpses and I've been there. But I like the speed that everyone works at. When I was in Swiss for a week, it felt to me like everyone was... This is completely my opinion: everyone was heads down and on their way to being on time. So, like, "Nothing around me will bother me, but I'm going to get to where I need to get to, on time." It's very Swiss, you have to be sharp, on point. What I meant when I said the European speed, is that there's a culture of acceptance that has been through a lot. Right? There's a lot that you've been through. And now that you've passed it, there's a lot of... Well, "One person talks at a time, until he's done talking, we'll all sit calmly, we listen." And then if there's a problem, we will respond in terms of, "I won't say anything harmful." I will find a polite way to say, "Nice, but maybe it won't work." Something like that. So, in terms of speed in Israel, we'd say, "OK, try it. It doesn't work? We'll try something else." And in my opinion, you

fail more. In Israel, we fail a lot. There's a lot of failure here in every home and every organization or corporation in Israel. But eventually, I hope at least, that that will lead to some form of understanding and success. Israel's a very small country. It's a very young country. And therefore, there's still a lot to be learned. And in terms of even, like learning to live with our neighbors in Israel, we have a lot to go.

MZ: I agree.

EA: And in terms of understanding or learning that this country is a gift that we got because we were able to... First of all, forget the Bible, we were gifted it from God. But, in reality, we were gifted the opportunity to come here for whatever right or wrong reason, and therefore we should be thankful that we're here, even though that wasn't so correct. So, the speed in Israel is fast because we need to be aware. The speed in America is different to the speed in Israel because they've already been through different things to get to where they've gotten to. In Europe it is the same. You've been through things, and that's the speed now, which you guys live in, it's good, it works. And when I say we're all talking at different speeds and different personality traits, it's not bad because all put together, we've all been through life. All of our countries have been through war and all of our countries have been through chaos. And we're all still learning to live together and work together. I think that what we're doing here, going back to Gandhi for a second, is basically giving a general awakening, a general cause. And we have this continuous format for putting out information. If it catches off and then people are able to take a message from the paper, even from these 80 copies that I'm putting out in Israel, if people get a message from it or get a good feeling or learn something about the overall, all around the world perspective, then we did our part to the place of pushing peace, pushing love, pushing acceptance, pushing understanding, pushing listening, pushing reading, pushing... Just to be in a now which isn't the reality that surrounds you every day and do something that is very different. Every meeting we don't know what's going to happen, and we feel energized afterwards, I want to say, at least I do. I feel energized after meetings that we have because there is this, "Wow, I learned about this speed and this energy and about these topics and how you look at these topics and how I feel about these topics." It comes from a different perspective and a different speed, which is amazing. It's not a bad thing, it's just a matter of the world being a dynamic, moving thing. Different places in the world move at different dynamic speeds because different things happened in those places.

MZ: Wow.

EA: Thank you for giving me a stage to stand on and speak, giving me the opportunity to be in this magazine and project, where I can learn cooperation and

responsibility. Cooperation and responsibility...

MZ: Harmonious and responsibility too.

EA: Harmonious... It's a beautiful word. Harmonious and togetherness...