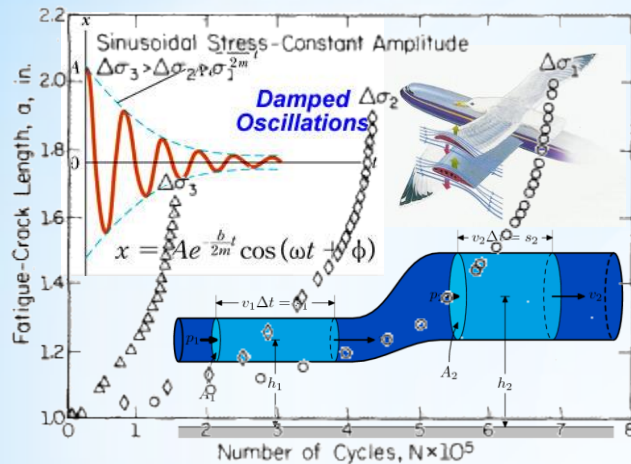




# CHILDREN PLAY AS LAWFUL INTERACTION: *modeling, analyses, skills*



# \* Prehistory of the report

In years 1994-1999 I was deeply involved into school psychology practice in MSU and Vygotskian traditions. I also got trained in Gestalt-therapy (1995-1998 & 2003-2007) and hypnosis (2006-2007; 2013-2014). Since I previously got a master's degree in Aircraft engineering (exploring & modeling a behavior of gas, liquid and solid), I used to observe any behavior as a lawful process - naturally ordered and dynamically balanced.

# \*Prehistory of the report

Lawful flow of relationships is mostly known in process-oriented psychotherapy (Gestalt-therapy, Psychodrama, Ericksonian hypnosis). It also forms the basis of Vygotskian developmental psychology. L.Vygotsky argued that child development & change on the one hand, and relationship on the other are inseparable.

Looking at Vygotsky's psychology and developing relationships with the eye of natural scientist gives many insights. Some of insights might be formulated via assumptions :

# \*Prehistory of the report: some assumptions

- Child development in relationships is governed by personal and joint *intention*
- Well-organized relationships demonstrate lawful flow as a rule (either in psychotherapy or in mother-infant, teacher-student, peer interactions, etc.);
- Lawful interactions show a predictable sequence of qualitative changes (or phases) in relationship flow

# \* Lawful interaction in scientific thought



K.Lewin (2001) stood for psychological conceptions based on lawful changes and on the notion of psychological force (Galileian way of scientific thought), instead of numerical data collection and statistical calculation (Aristotelian way of scientific thought).



# \* Lawful interaction in scientific thought



Lev Vygotsky (1984): “Exploring what the child can perform in cooperation, we determine the development of tomorrow. ...in one or another form of cooperation we offer a child the task to solve which is above the limits of his mental age” This definition of ZPD can be supplemented by motivations & needs dimension.

# \* Lawful interaction in scientific thought



Portrait of L. S. Vygotsky at age 35

Lev Vygotsky (1966): “Obviously, any shift from one age level to another is associated with abrupt change of motives and motivations for action”. ...”Needs, attractions, incentives and motives of activity” are basic for shift from one age to other. Therefore “the analyses of play should be started with the analyses of those features”

# \* Lawful interaction as way of scientific thought



Needs, attractions, incentives, motives of activity, motivations and goals are varieties of the *psychological force* conception, developed by K.Lewin. His doctoral student Bluma Zeigarnik described regulation of *needs*. She stated that *intrinsic exertion is common* for all needs (ibid. 242-252), and it reveals the *intention* (Zeigarnik, B. (2003) Kurt Lewin's theory of personality (pp. 231-309)). *Intention is a tension system which appears in a concrete situation and provides human activity and strives for discharge* (ibid. 244).

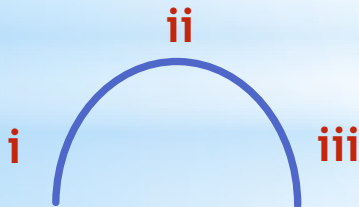


# \* Intention with qualitative changes

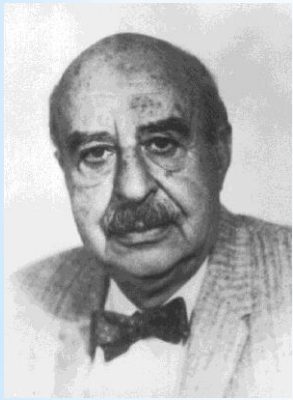


Lewin (1951) conceived the complete intentional action from the position of the external observer. It consists of three qualitative phases sequence:

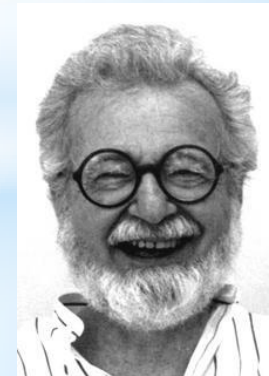
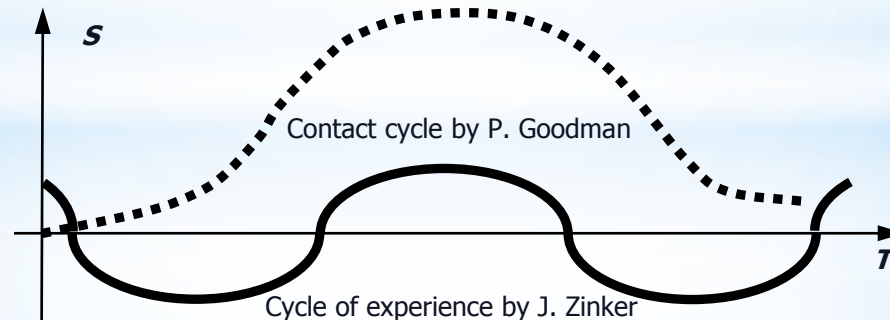
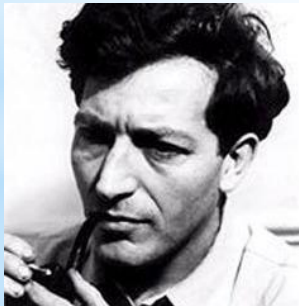
- i.** motivation process,
- ii.** act of choice or intention (“the central phenomenon of the psychology of will” by Lewin), and
- iii.** intentional (deliberate) action.



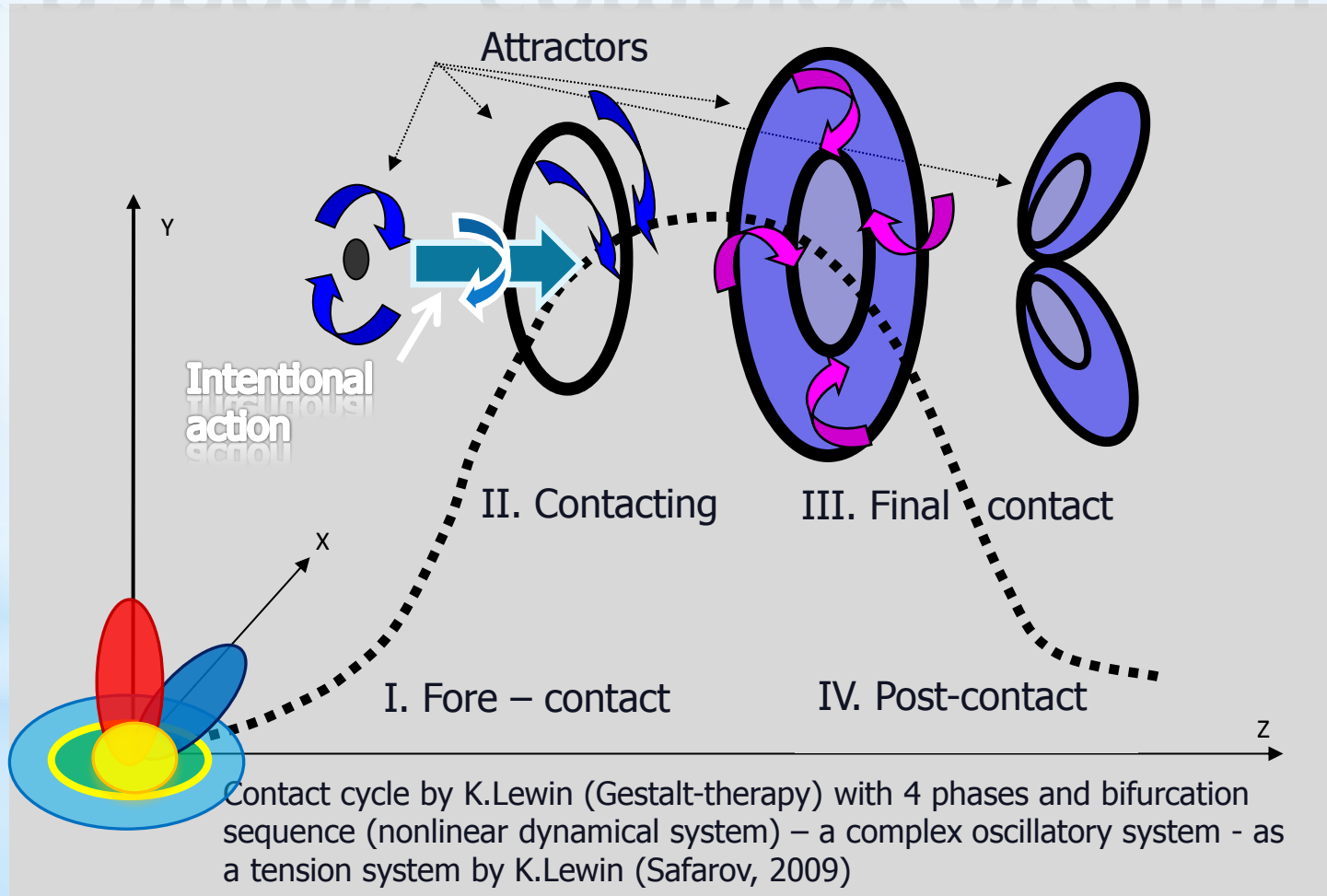
# \* “Organism-environment” lawful interactions



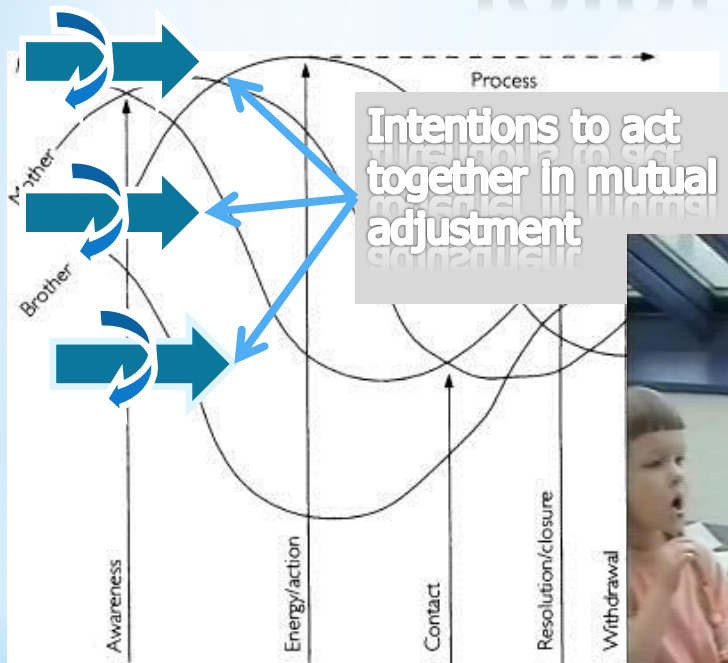
In Gestalt-therapy, lawful interaction between a human and environment or other people is a **multidimensional experience of relationship flow**. It is seen as intentionally directed process with balanced oscillations. It is depicted as a curve with 4-phases named “contact cycle” (In: Perls et al, 1951, 1980) or 5-phase “cycle of experience” (J.Zinker, 1977).



# \* Intention and qualitative changes: complex oscillator



# \* Intention - individual and joint: how to analyze

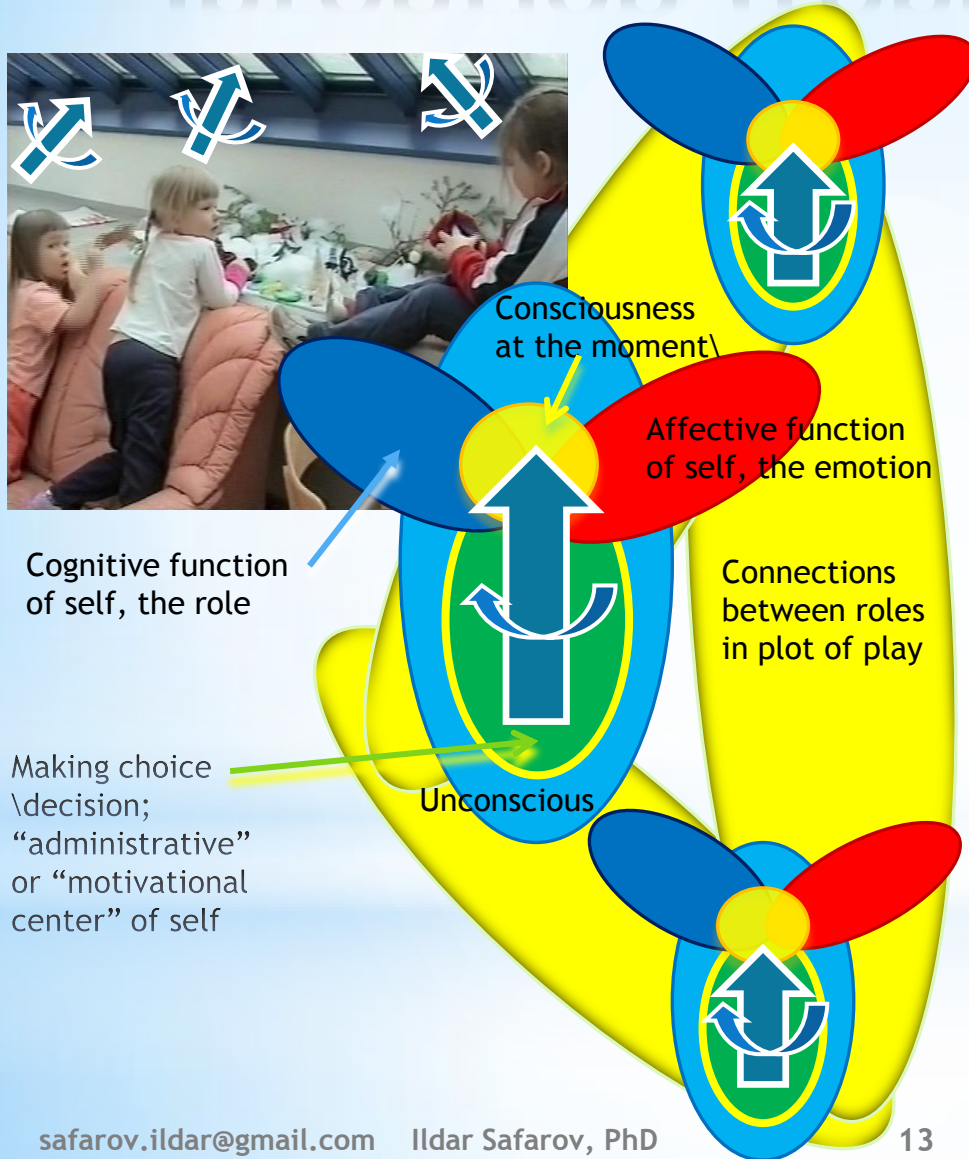


J.Zinker (1994)





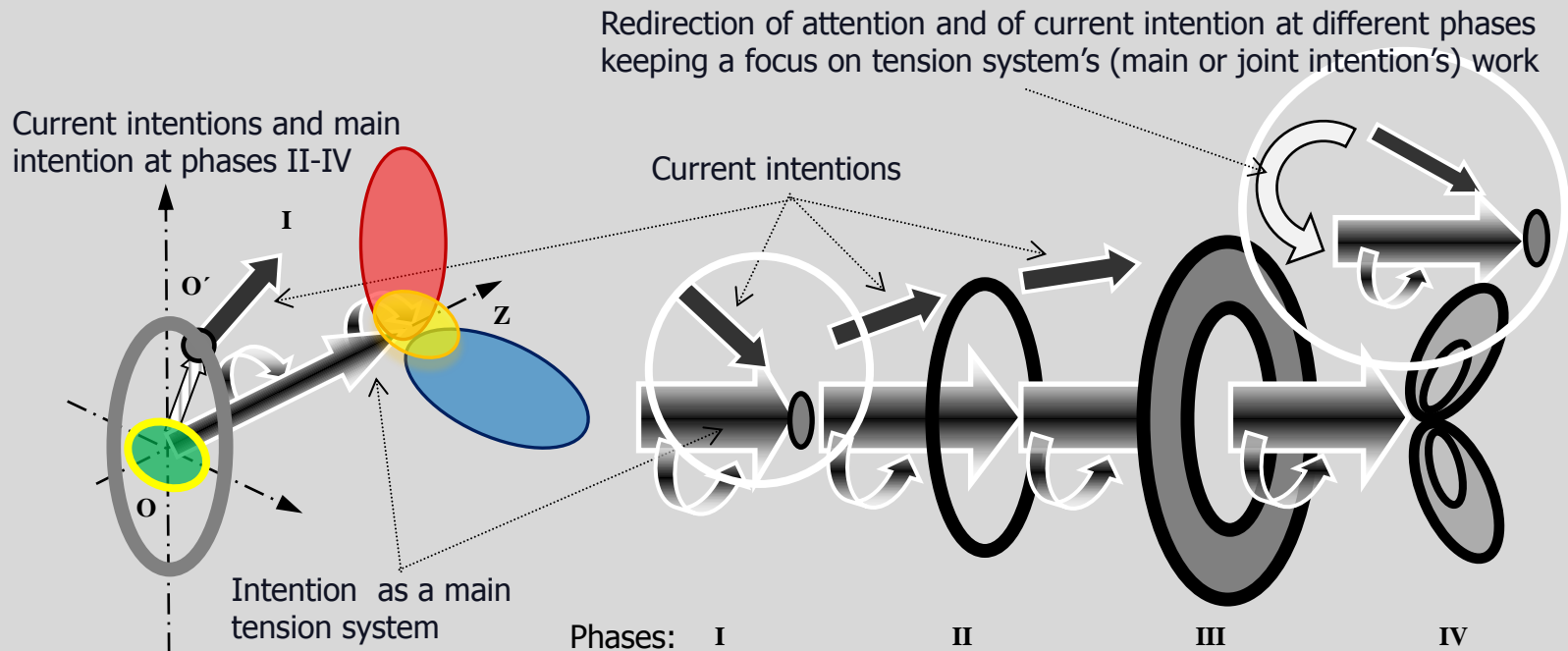
# \* Intention (tension system): constituents



Emerging of joint intention in play via coherence of intentions to act

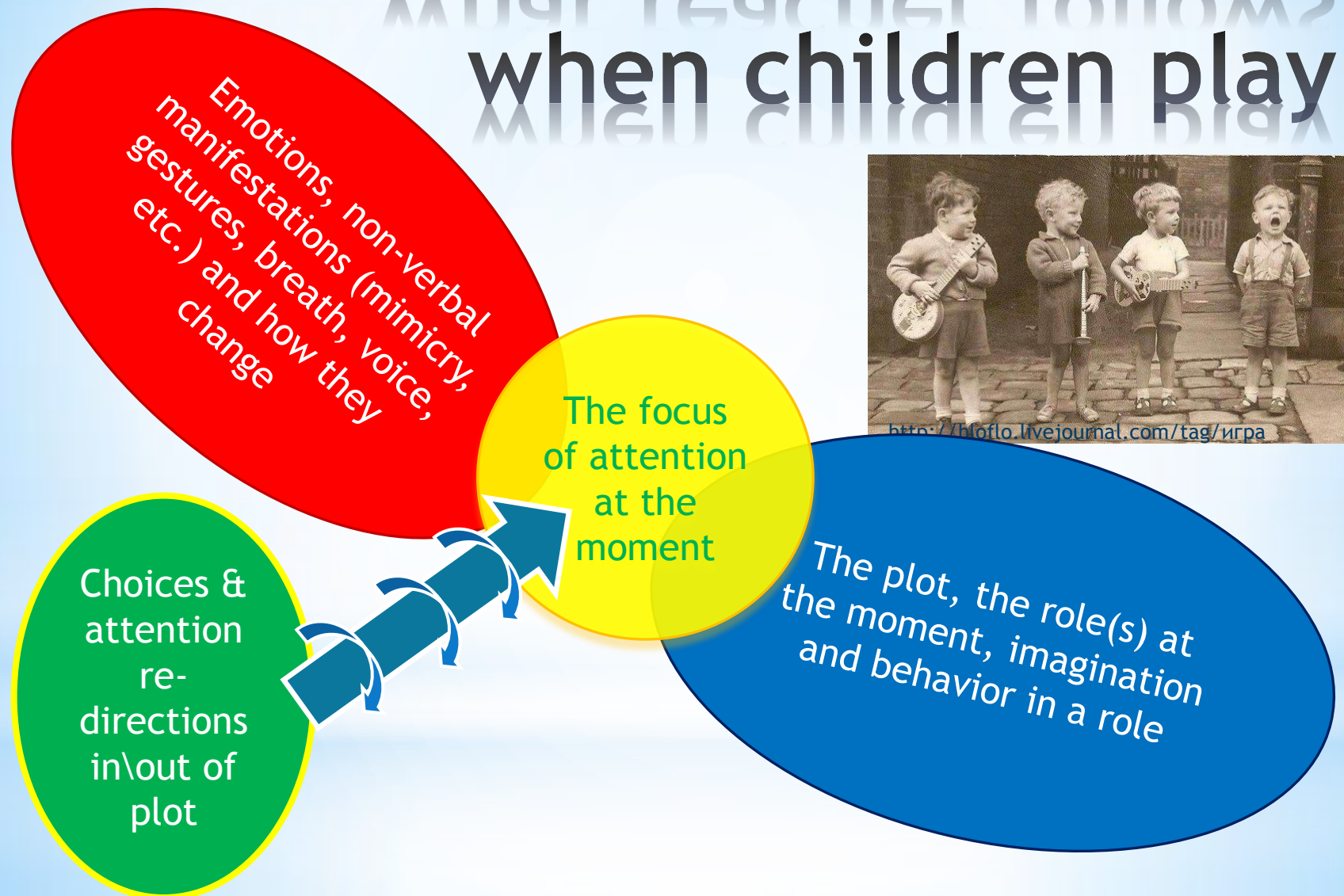


# \* Intention and attention redirection



Main (also joint) intention (tension system) and current intentions at work at different phases

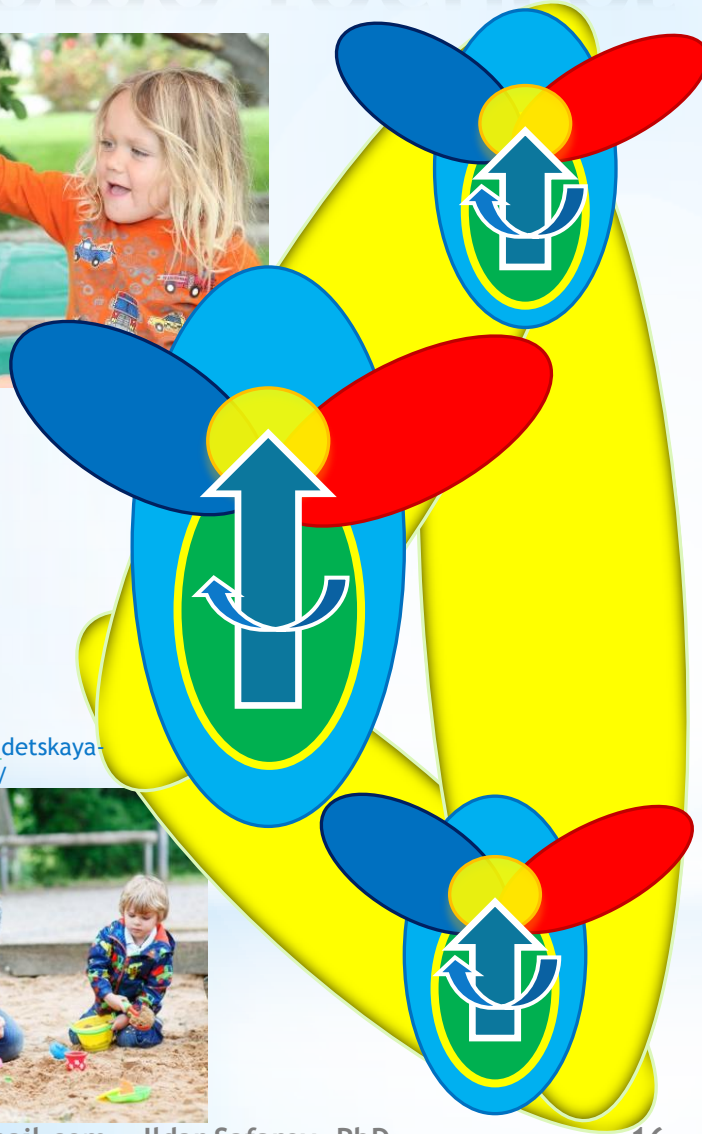
# \*What teacher follows when children play



# \*Some focuses of attention of a teacher

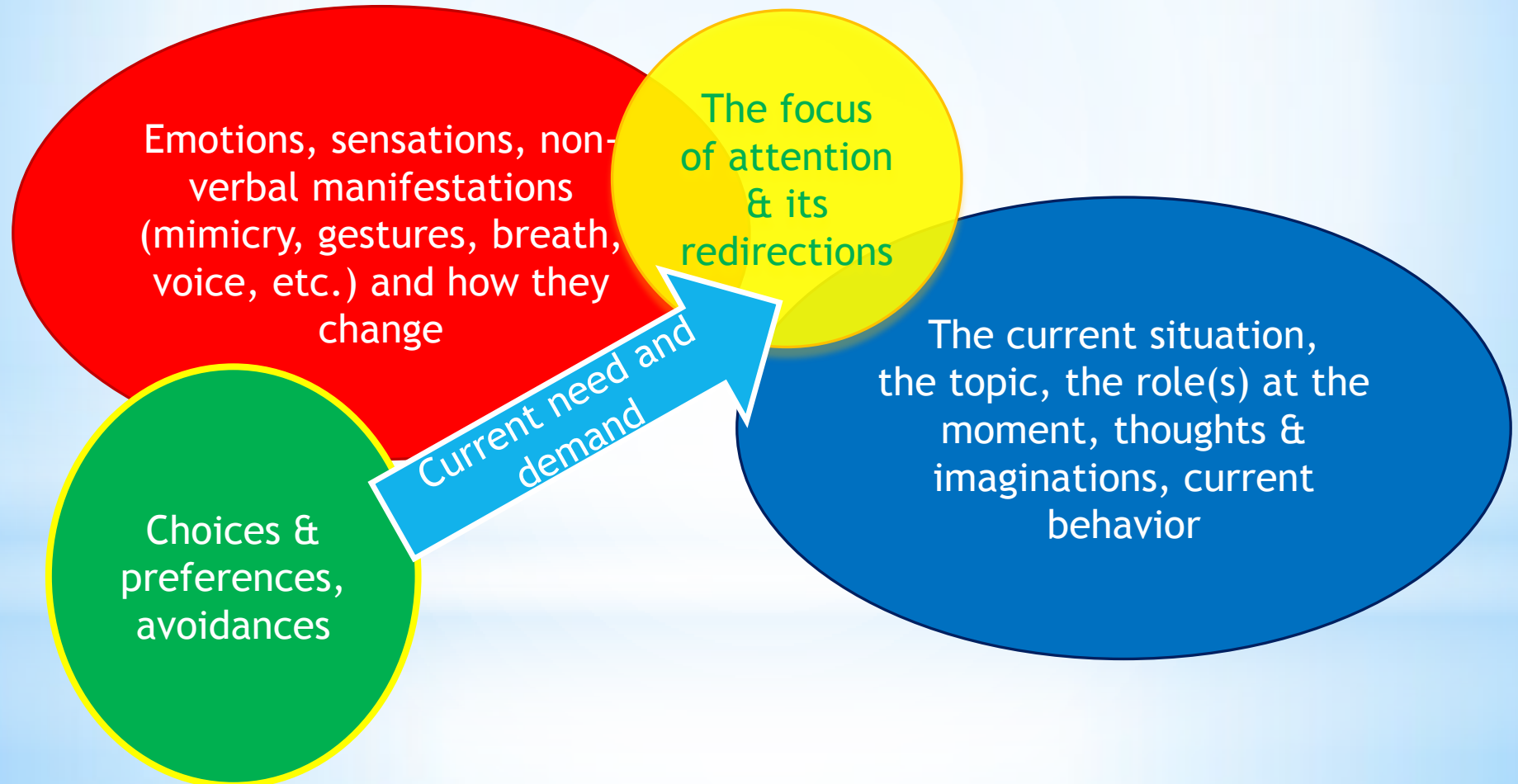


<http://olgasobyanina.ru/detskaya-ploshhadka-byit-nacheku/>



- Intention to play together
- Common plot of play and play environment (resources, etc.)
- Choices of roles and renewal of agreements-in-roles
- Alternations of roles, emotions in one plot of play
- Mutual adjustment in play
- Storytelling and fantasizing
- Normal and current emotions
- Creative adjustment of intentions & roles through play
- Gaps between different roles of one child in play (etc.)

# \*Teachers skills. Self-awareness and change in:



# \*Teachers skills. Helping communication



<http://detskiy-psycholog.ru/category/psixologicheskaya-pomoshh/>

Adjusting own nonverbal expressions to each child  
Asking open questions on feelings  
Easy offering of possible feelings (do not insist!) for current role

Describing the plot, the situation and the role from the child's position  
Matching with role(s) in narratives & playful actions



# \*Teachers skills. Helping communication

<http://detskiy-psycholog.ru/category/psixologicheskaya-pomoshh/>

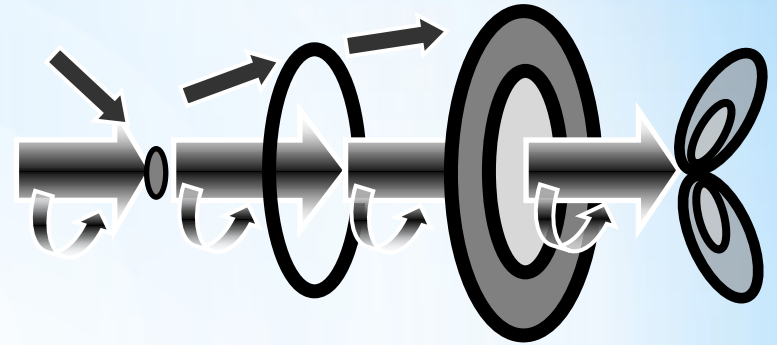
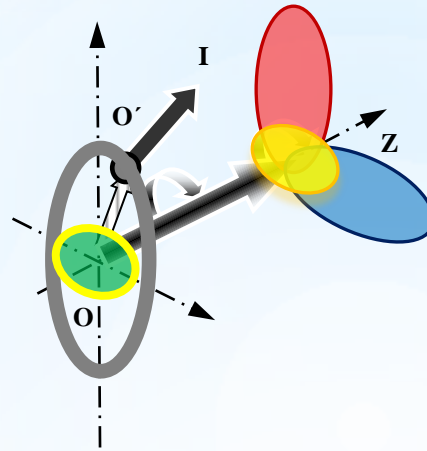


Sense of play  
Orientation in  
plot  
Widening of  
choices  
Helping (not  
insisting) a child  
to make choices  
Gap between  
roles

Expectations, avoidances;  
intention to explore, to act  
hear-and-know

Object of  
attention &  
contact  
Rhythm of  
contacting (and  
of attention  
focusing-  
unfocusing)

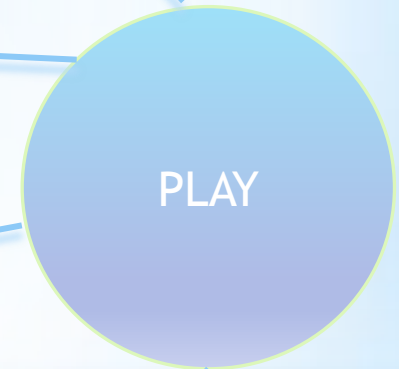
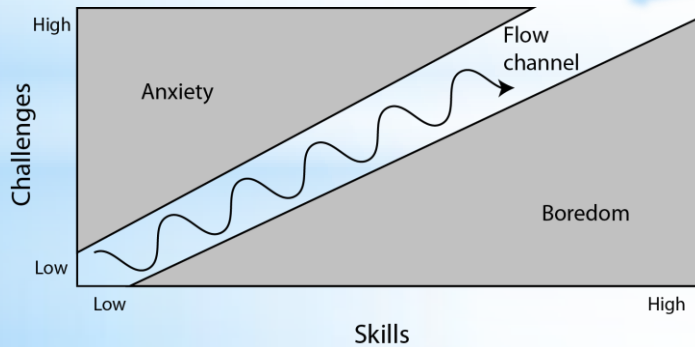
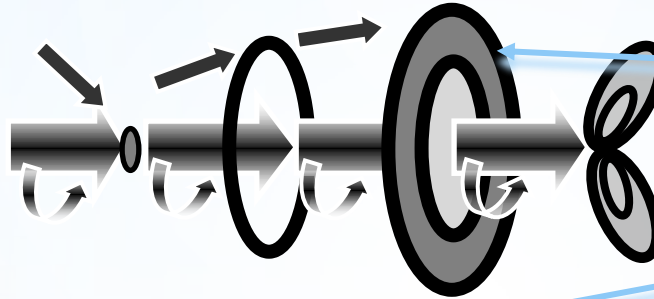
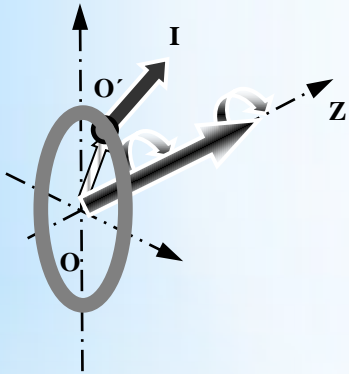
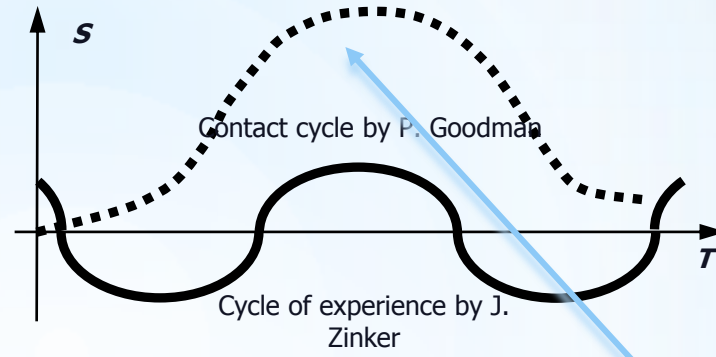
# \*What for?



For:

- Holistic *conceptual* perception of child (children, teacher-children connectivity) at every moment of play
- Clear *methodological difference* between external observer's knowledge (laboratory science) and aware experiential evidence from "the first person singular" (F.Perls)
- Widening of possibilities to analyze in detail and to make influence on play flow through relationships
- Development of inner psychological culture - increasing awareness of wide range of subjective phenomena (meaning, values; affective, cognitive, intentional, behavioral constituents; witness (observer); making choices; etc.)
- Discrimination between playful activity and reality, for example, via movement of reference frame of child from actor to observer and vice versa
- Getting structural basis for adult's co-regulation with children

# \* Discussions



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