



Relationship Matters

Growing a Solid-Flexible Self

Intro/Brief Review

We're Making a Shift

Away from: Trying to Influence, Teach, Correct, Change, Confront Others; Listen, Accept, Understand; Using the Relationship as Your Soothing Mechanism.

Why Make this Shift?

The Nature of Increased Significant Relationships Require it; The Nature of Life Requires it.

Why Make this Shift?

Making this Shift Changes the Narrative from:

Victim to Victor

Reactor to Responder

Anxiety to Adventure

Powerless to Empowered

Hopeless to Hopeful

The More Solid Your Relationship Core:

The More You Can:

Tolerate Differences

Love Somebody that is Different than You

Accept Others /Reality for Who They Are vs a Need/Protest to
Change them for How You Wish Them to Be

Find Positive Value in Why You Do What You Do

Be More Active and Less Passive

Have Greater Confidence and Self-Esteem

What are We Shifting To?

1. Grow:
2. Manage:
3. Control:
4. Find:
5. Increase:

Growing a Solid-Flexible Self

The Concept

Solid-Flexible Self: The Concept

Differentiation

Cellular Biology

“Separateness” and “Distinction” provide the Foundation for “Connection” and “Togetherness.” The Result is “Interdependence.”

“Separateness” and “Distinction” refer to Physical, Emotional, Psychological and Spiritual Separateness.

Solid-Flexible Self: The Concept

The Ability to Stay in Connection with a Person of Significance without being Consumed by that Person, i.e. without the Loss of Self.

What Does a Person Mean when they Say, “I gave up too much of myself!”

The Ability to Stay Rooted and Grounded in One’s Identity, One’s Sense of Self.

Differentiation is About Getting Closer and More Distinct.

Only Two Types of “Connection”

Connection *with* Psychological Separateness

A Differentiated Connection or Togetherness

Or

Connection *without* Separateness

**Single Cell, Uni-Polar, Emotional Fusion, Co-
Dependency, Enmeshment**

Emotional Fusion = A Tenacious Emotional Connection
without Psychological Separateness

Only Two Types of “Connection”

The More “Important” or “Significant” a Person is to You (the more they “matter” to you), the More Challenging it is to your Sense of Self and Personal Boundaries!

Scale of Significance

100



0

Your Personal Boundaries will Tend to Collapse!

Edwin Friedman

It eventually became obvious to me that the universal problem for all partnerships, marital or otherwise, is not one of getting closer. Rather, it is preserving self while in a close relationship, something that no one made of flesh and blood seems to do very well.

I eventually came to define my marriage counseling as trying to help people separate, so they would not have to “separate.”

Edwin Friedman

It is my perception that the togetherness force is more blind to the separateness force than separateness is to togetherness. By this I mean that the movement toward togetherness seems to be more “natural.” And precisely because of this, the force for separateness must be more vigilant!

Coming together seems to be a “natural process.” There appears to be nothing in life itself that checks the togetherness force from snuffing out the separate force except the vigilance of separateness to protect itself.

Roberta Gilbert

Healthy Togetherness is Predicated on a Living Organism's
Ability to Maintain it's Shape, it's "Separateness."

When a Person says, "I lost myself in that relationship,"
What do They Mean?

**Couples Who say they are *Disconnected* are usually *Overly
Connected*.**

Emotional Fusion Creates "Love / Hate." "Master / Slave"

Leonard Zelig: The Selfless Man



Maggie's Undifferentiated Self



Growing a Solid-Flexible Self

The Challenge!

Challenges to Growing a Solid-Flexible Self

1. The Challenge of a “Reflected Sense of Self”

Anxiety Reduction and “Positive Self-Esteem” Occur *Through* the Responses of Others

The Responses of Significant Others “Tell” us Who We Are.

We Become Aware of Ourselves *Through* the Responses of Others.

We Naturally Become Very “Other-Focused” in Order to Be O.K. With Ourselves

Challenges to Growing a Solid-Flexible Self

2. Dependency upon Other-Validation

“I want (need) you to affirm and validate what I’m saying so that I know I’m not crazy!”

When two people are constantly fighting over “reality,” each are probably dependent upon other-validation. The argument is really about whose “reality” will become the dominant reality and whose anxiety and insecurity will prevail.

Challenges to Growing a Solid-Flexible Self

3. Over-Personalizing the Actions, Behaviors or Words of Others.

Take this Perspective: If the other person's behavior is something that you *should* personalize, that is, their behavior really is about you, then take responsibility and own it and correct the part that is about you.

If the other person's behavior is something that is not about you, but in truth about them, why are you personalizing it?

Challenges to Growing a Solid-Flexible Self

4. Always Having an Underlying Goal to Correct, Influence or Change the Other Person (your spouse).
5. Focusing on the Other Person as the Solution to your Own Problems. (You Hold the “Key” to My Well-Being)
6. Over-Personalizing the Actions, Behaviors or Words of Others.
7. Having an Intensely Negative Focus on the Other Person: Resentment, Lack of Forgiveness.

Challenges to Growing a Solid-Flexible Self

8. Over-Caring / Helping / Rescuing Others
9. Viewing One's own Life through the Eyes of Others:
“What will ‘He or She’ think of me?”
10. Living to “Please” Others.

A Solid-Self

Less Altering of Self to be Accepted

Less Living Your Life Through the Eyes of Others

An Honest, Accurate View of Yourself

An Honest Appraisal of your Non-Negotiable Values

A Refusal to Get your Worth from Others

Less Over-Investment

Accepting Responsibility

Embracing Humility