



Growing a Solid-Flexible Self

Relationship Pilates: Strengthening the Core

Thoughts from Last Week

While Living Life from Inside Your Hula-Hoop this Past Week, did any Thought, Truth or Principle Stick in your Brain from Last Week's Class?

Did Anything Cause You to See Your Life and Your Relationships Differently? Did Anything "Make a Difference in Your Life?"

Did any Paradox (Contrary to Your Normal Thinking) Stay With You? Did Anything "Matter" to You?

Did You Read any of the Resources on the Website?

Developing a Self-in-Relation

1. Differentiation is the ability to maintain your sense of self when you are emotionally and physically close to others – especially as they become increasingly important to you. True or False
2. Emotional Fusion is an invisible, tenacious, togetherness force that helps to create a wonderful positive connection in a relationship. True or False
3. Differentiation is about getting closer and more distinct – to form a positive relationship connection - rather than more distant and individuated. True or False
4. Differentiation is all about working on yourself, all by yourself, and not caring about, or connecting with your partner. True or False

Developing a Self-in-Relation

5. Differentiation allows each person to function more independently **and** interdependently; more separate **and** more connected. True or False
6. Giving up your individuality to create a relationship connection is as defeating as giving up your relationship connection to protect and maintain your individuality. Either way you end up being less of a person with less of a relationship. True or False
7. When one person reacts to another out of emotional fusion, the other person usually responds in a reasonable, loving and patient manner. True or False
8. Jealousy is a form of emotional fusion. True or False

Why Make this Shift?

3. The increased significance of personal relationships require more of a sold self, not less.

The Scale of Significance

4. Your personal growth must keep pace with the increased significance of personal relationships to keep Desire alive.

The Ski Slope of Significant Relationships

Why Make this Shift?

5. All relationships create “crucibles of growth.” You must work with the tension, not against it to produce “maturity.”

Significant Relationships Create A Pressure Cooker

You are in a relationship with “not you.”

Marriage is Dialectical: A Relationship of Opposites. Opposites Create Tension. Tension Produces Maturity to Love and Accept Someone so Opposite from You.

6. Your source of personal satisfaction is not found by getting “more out of your relationship,” (i.e. the “other person”), but by getting more out of yourself in the relationship.

Making the Shift toward Growth

1. Grow A Solid-Flexible Self
2. Manage Your Emotional System
3. Control Anxiety & Reactivity
4. Find the Value

Resulting in:

5. Increased Personal Hope & Desire

The Wonderful Benefit

The growth of a person is the progressive liberation of desire. It is the process whereby desire finds ever more deeply its subject, whereby desire comes to be in one who can say, ever more deeply and wholly, “I want.”

Sabastian Moore, *Jesus the Liberator of Desire*.

**All Desire begins by Looking for its “Object.” But
Eventually Desire Matures by Looking for its
“Subject.”**

Roller-Coaster Illustration

A New Way to Think about Relationships

Let's Shift to a Model that is:

Personal Growth Oriented

Non-Cooperation Based

Includes Freedom of Choice

Non-Binding

Matches Reality

Promotes the Correct Sequence

Our Theme: Maturity is the Goal

And we proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, that we may present every man *complete* in Christ. Col 1:28

Consider it all joy when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces *endurance*. And let *endurance* have its perfect result so that you may be *complete* and *mature*, lacking in nothing. James 1:2-4

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.

Bring “Definition” to Your Life. Define Your Life.

Separateness Determines Togetherness

Healthy togetherness is predicated on a living organism's ability to maintain it's shape, it's "separateness."

A living organism that cannot manage itself is, by nature, invasive!

If a person has difficulty maintaining their shape every time he/she gets near you, pay attention and make adjustments in how you relate/respond to him/her.

Hold Onto Yourself and Relate Well. Manage Yourself and Your Response!

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, More Defined in their Presence.

Maggie's Undifferentiated Self



Leonard Zelig: The Selfless Man



Only Two Types of “Connection”

1. Connection *with* Psychological Separateness

A Differentiated Connection or Togetherness

Or

2. Connection *without* Separateness

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

Emotional Fusion = A Tenacious Emotional Connection
without Psychological Separateness

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.

Edwin Friedman

As I began to focus on emotional process, 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.”

A Reflected Sense of Self

Borrowed Functioning and Mind Monitoring

A Reflected Sense of Self

- A Reflected Sense of Self is the first self we develop. We see ourselves through the eyes of those that are important to us. We internalize how others see us and treat us as indications (representations) of who we are.
- From infancy, our minds look to other minds to support our own self-awareness.

Baby girls are hardwired to gaze a faces.

Eye contact and mutual facial gazing will increase by 400%
in the first three months.

A Reflected Sense of Self

Girls are interested in emotional expressions, which tell them about themselves. They have a greater ability to read faces and distinguish emotional tones in voices.

Connection helps to create a “successful self.”

Girls do “mommy checks” for approval more than boys.

Girls have a greater capacity for “empathy.”

The Problem with Boys



A Reflected Sense of Self

- Later, when we get into a relationship, we “borrow” our sense of self from the person we are attracted to and them to us. Our sense of self is like a balloon the other person inflates. When inflated, we look and act better. But sooner or later, both the donor and the borrow grow weary!
- A Reflected Sense of Self and Borrowed Functioning are natural to all human beings. The challenge is for us to not become 100% dependent upon them!

Be Mindful of “Mind-Monitoring”

Fusion: An Over-Connection

But unhappiness comes in, because the love which 'dominates' them is not a love of each for the other as that other really is. They love one another, but each loves the other *from the standpoint of self and not from the other's standpoint*. Their unhappiness thus originates in a false reciprocity, which disguises a twin narcissism. So much is this so that at times there pierces through their excessive passion a kind of hatred of the beloved.

Denis de Rougemont, *Love in the Western World*

Mind Monitoring

- Mind monitoring means understanding another person's thoughts, feelings and motivations by studying their reactions and behaviors.
- A Reflected Sense of Self requires the ability to read and monitor other people's minds. You have to know what they are thinking to make sure you look good in their eyes to get their approval.
- If you depend upon a Reflected Sense of Self, you are constantly monitoring the other person, manipulating the other person's mind through interactions to get the positive sense of self that you want (and require)!

Mind Monitoring

- When you rely on someone for a positive reflected sense of self, you will invariably try to influence and control him or her to gain the positive validation that you believe you need.
- The more the Reflected Sense of Self drives you, the more you look to others for validation, and the more others will feel oppressed and controlled. The more you try to regulate yourself through you another person, the more you trigger their refusal to submit to your tyranny. They push back. This is natural.

A Reflected Sense of Self

- Unconditional positive reinforcement will not result in a Solid Self. Inexhaustible praise will not result in a Solid Self. This is because both of these approaches rely on being dependent upon others to feel okay about one's self.

A Solid Sense of Self develops from confronting yourself, challenging yourself to do what's right, anchoring to your higher values and earning your own self-respect. It develops from inside you, rather than internalizing what's around you. It comes from making a courageous leap of faith!

A Reflected Sense of Self

The Natural Cycle:

The more your Reflected Sense of Self drives you, and the more you look to others to feel okay about yourself, the more others feel constricted, controlled and bound up..

The more controlled a person feels, the more they will push back and refuse to submit to tyranny.

This is why approaches that advocate compromise, negotiation and consideration usually fail.

Growth Requires a Shift

We bring our Reflected Sense of Self into significant relationships because it got us there. Significant Relationships, especially Marriage, are an ecosystem (a pressure cooker) designed to help us become adults, by making our Reflected Sense of Self incredibly vulnerable, unsustainable, and finally untenable.

Time to Re-Calibrate

Time to Get Your Eggs and Poker Chips Back!

Some Questions to Ask Yourself

1. What is the Gravitational Pull that pulls you into the orbit of another person's Hula-Hoop? The Pull to please them? The Pull to pump up your Reflected Sense of Self?
2. What types or kinds of people do you experience this from? What is it about the "importance" of that person is difficult for you to manage? Impress them because they are important? Make a private list. Identify these people and what you tend to do when you are around them.
3. What begins to happen to you when you experience this? How are you "altered?" What do you experience and how do you behave? What do you tend to do?

Some Questions to Ask Yourself

4. Giving up your self is an exchange between you and the other person. What are you “giving up” or “giving to them” and in order to get something “from them?” Evaluate: Is the exchange worth it?
5. Trying to get love the most from a person least willing or unable to give it will “bind you to them.” This gravitational pull will “pull you into their orbit.” Why are you trying so hard to get this? If this person won’t give love freely, out of their own choice, your efforts will most likely be an investment in a fantasy.
6. How much time do you spend Mind-Monitoring people who are significant to you so you can determine your response to them?

Some Questions to Ask Yourself

7. How much time and energy do you spend thinking something like, “I’ve got to first and foremost think about what I think you might be thinking about so I can predict what you might think or do, so that I can decided what I’m going to do or say before I do or say it.”
8. Evaluate this: How much of the time is the “starting point” for your thoughts or behaviors “outside” of your Hula-Hoop versus “inside” your Hula-Hoop. How much “other-dependent” are you? How much do you think of “them” first versus, “what do I think” as your stating point for your interactions.

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 in Others

Accepting Responsibility. Defining What you Will Do and Won't Do

Embracing Humility