




Faith, Family & Resilience ...
Home for the Holidays

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Family Systems
Connections ...
Past is Present is Future is Past

LORD, PLEASE GIVE ME STRENGTH



**WALK AWAY PEACEFULLY BECAUSE
BOTH KNOW I DON'T HAVE THE BAIL MONEY**

Family Dynamics



Family Systems Theory

Key terms ... For families but can also be applied to organizations/systems.

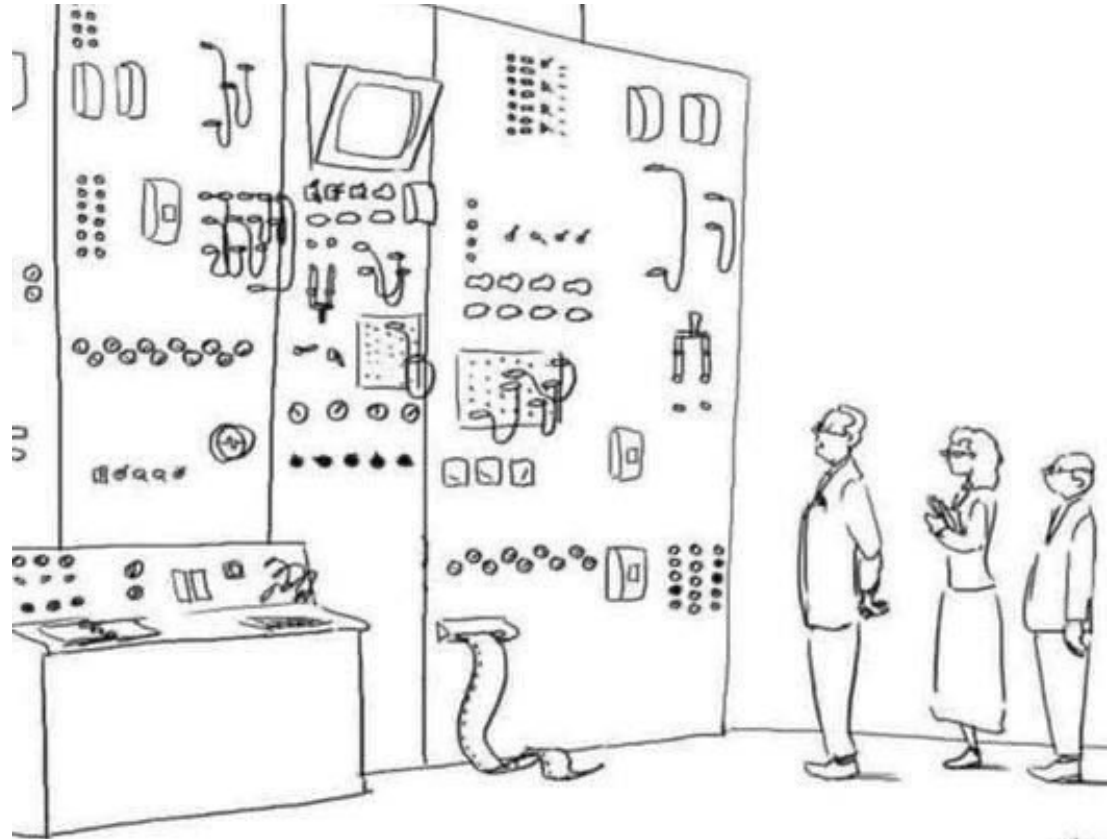
- Nuclear Family ... Family of Origin
- Invisible Loyalties
- Symptom Bearer ... Identified Patient
- Feedback and Reciprocal Causation
- Status Quo
- Secrets

Boundaries

- The line between where I stop and where someone (or something) else begins.
- These can be solid or mushy
- These can radiate out with levels of accessibility depending on trust, roles, life experiences, timing, and day-to-day energy.
- These can be reasonable or unreasonable, depending on one's point of view.
- It is the ability to have a choice in saying yes/no/maybe.



Family of Origin Patterns



*"Someday, you'll be able to hold one of these
in the palm of your hand while you poop."*

Fusion v Cutoff

Enmeshment vs Disengagement

- **Fusion** – boundaries are blurred or non-existent. Separation creates anxiety and there is strong pull to return to status quo. Return to roles, values, invisible loyalties, restrictive ways of thinking and acting.
- **Disengagement** – boundaries are rigid with little or no support or interaction among family members. Can be done by individual attempting to separate, or as punishment to pull a family member back in.
- **Relationship between the two** – Spectrum and/or mobius strip of emotional connection



Anxiety Transmission

Anxiety –

A necessary life force that can be understood as an Electrical Distribution System. It can provide healthy power and motivation, or it can overpower and “blow out” the system. Aspects of “non-anxious” presence are helpful and can “transform” the power so that it becomes useful.

Electrical Distribution System

Power is generated at a power plant and distributed by transmission lines through various distribution systems until it reaches your home or business.

1. Power plants generate energy and distribute it to substations via high-voltage transmission lines.

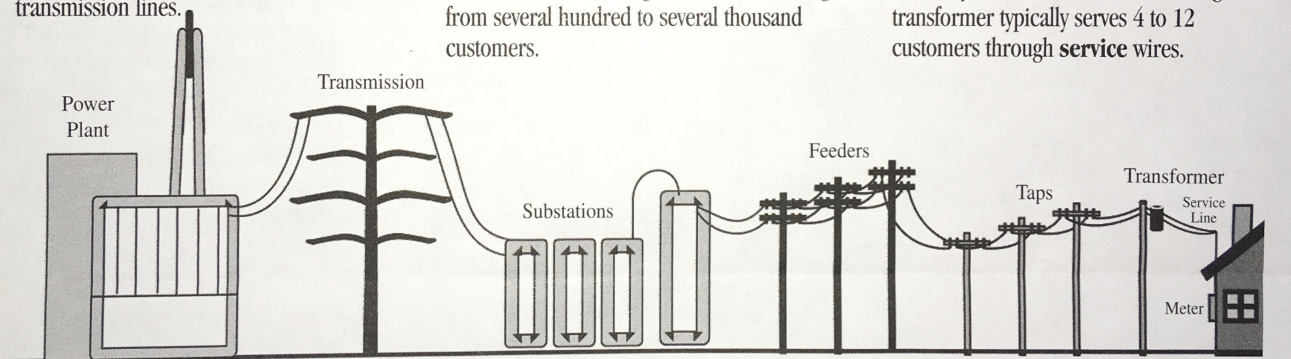
2. Transmission lines are used to distribute power to strategically located area substations that may serve one or multiple communities.

3. Substations distribute power to major power lines called feeders.

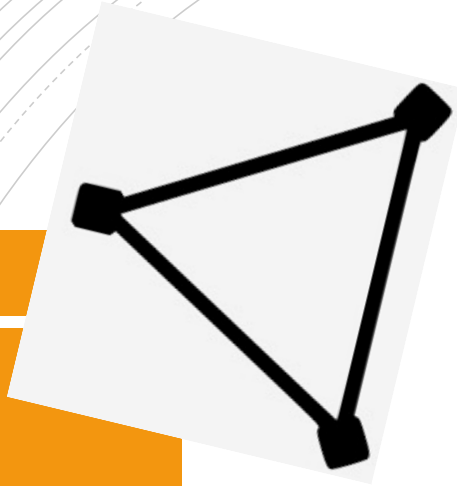
4. A feeder takes power from the substation and distributes it throughout an area, serving from several hundred to several thousand customers.

5. Taps are lines branching off feeders and typically serve 40 to 400 customers, including businesses and residential neighborhoods.

6. Transformers convert the power from high voltage to the lower voltages used in your home or business. A single transformer typically serves 4 to 12 customers through **service wires**.



Triangulation & Anxiety Shifting



Triangulation –

Normal and most stable of dynamics

- If two are getting along, then the 3rd is more on the “out” or neutral position ...like a functioning bicycle.
- If two are in conflict, then the 3rd is brought in to relieve stress, anxiety, or conflict that exists between the other two...like bent frame bicycle.
- 3rd can become focus (i.e. identified patient) or can become recipient/conduit for anxiety ... expanding the network of anxiety and conflict.
- Things can become triangulated as well (ex. alcohol, work, church, sports)



Self-Differentiation

- The ability to assume responsibility for one's own behavior, thoughts, feelings, without needing to assume responsibility for another's. A person with clear, but **flexible boundaries**.
- The ability to “stand alongside” another without becoming enmeshed or disengaged.
- Look for the person who is most self-differentiated in the system, thus who has the most capacity to transform self AND the system.

“Expectations are pre-meditated resentments.”

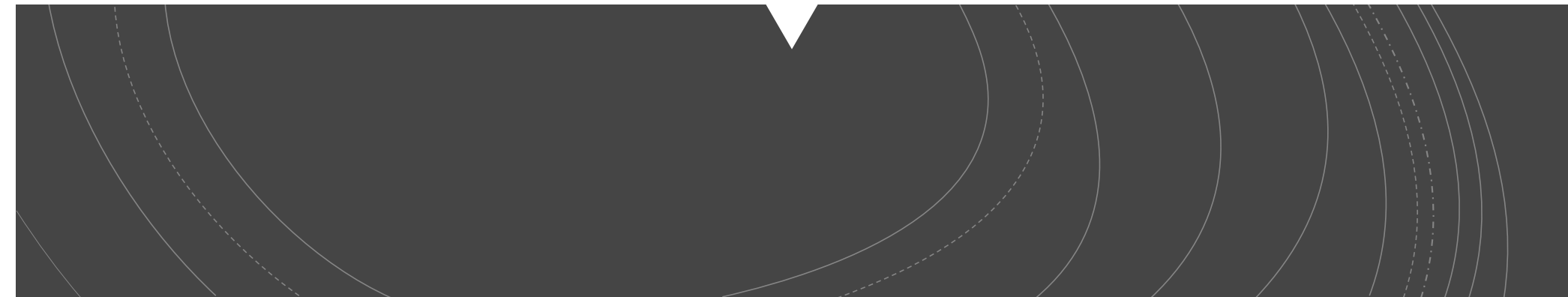
This is needed....



What are your holiday expectations?
What resentments have resulted?

- * Grief & Loss
- * Trauma and After effects
- * Chronic vs Acute Experiences
- * Personal ... Familial ... Societal

Setting Boundaries



What are Personal Boundaries?

Personal boundaries are the limits and rules we set for ourselves within relationships. A person with healthy boundaries can say “no” to others when they want to, but they are also comfortable opening themselves up to intimacy and close relationships.

A person who always keeps others at a distance (whether emotionally, physically, or otherwise) is said to have *rigid boundaries*. Alternatively, someone who tends to get too involved with others has *porous boundaries*.

Common traits of rigid, porous, and healthy boundaries.		
Rigid Boundaries	Porous Boundaries	Healthy Boundaries
Avoids intimacy and close relationships.	Overshares personal information.	Values own opinions.
Unlikely to ask for help.	Difficulty saying “no” to the requests of others.	Doesn’t compromise values for others.
Has few close relationships.	Overinvolved with others’ problems.	Shares personal information in an appropriate way (does not over or under share).
Very protective of personal information.	Dependent on the opinions of others.	Knows personal wants and needs, and can communicate them.
May seem detached, even with romantic partners.	Accepting of abuse or disrespect.	Accepting when others say “no” to them.
Keeps others at a distance to avoid the possibility of rejection.	Fears rejection if they do not comply with others.	

Boundary Exploration

Think about a person, or a group of people, with whom you struggle to set healthy boundaries. This could mean that your boundaries are too rigid (you keep this person at a distance), too porous (you open up too much), or there's some other problem that isn't so easily labeled.

Who do you struggle to set healthy boundaries with? (e.g. "my husband" or "coworkers")

In your relationship with the person you listed above, how are your boundaries in each of the following categories? Add a check in the appropriate column for each boundary category.

Boundary Category	Porous	Rigid	Healthy	Other
Physical Boundaries				
Intellectual Boundaries				
Emotional Boundaries				
Sexual Boundaries				
Material Boundaries				
Time Boundaries				

Maintaining Boundaries



Coping Strategies

- Silence is always an option, or you can engage if feeling grounded
- Observer Location: self-aware & slightly removed
 - “isn’t that interesting” place of curiosity
- Be a “transformer” in the electrical anxiety grid – converting the power so that it becomes useable
- Be aware of unhealthy triangulation that places you in position to “fix” or “hold information” about something that’s not yours
- “Not my circus, not my monkey” – you don’t have to be in charge or fix it
- Identify in advance how you want to show up with your family and/or friends – wear a pin or bring a token in your pocket as a physical reminder.
- Identify in advance your own & others’ expectations of what “should” happen, thus what sets you up for resentment & hurt. Adjust your expectations.
- Be aware of spoken as well as unspoken losses, grief, past traumas or secrets.
- Know your boundaries, and what is your healthiest boundary to hold.
- Devise an “exit strategy” ahead of time – drive own car, step outside, limit time
- Remember to breathe ... deeply. 4-count breathing exercise (In-hold-Out-hold)
- Breath Prayer – practice a lot before you go so your body has muscle memory.
 - 1. Breathe in saying your name for the Holy - (Spirit, Jesus, Light, Holy One, God)
 - 2. Breathe out with a 2-word prayer “ _____ me” (Guide me, nurture me)



Things that can be equally true:

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You are resilient	and	need a break
You gave your all	and	need to back out
You are independent	and	still need others
You were sure	and	things changed
You are kind	and	have boundaries
Others have it worse	and	your pain is valid
You did your best	and	now you know more

@findyourshinetherapy

Thank you!

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