

DIFFERENTIATION

- ❖ Clear sense of self in *close proximity to important partner.*
- ❖ Self-regulate anxiety & self-soothe hurts.
- ❖ Non-reactivity to partner's anxieties.
- ❖ Tolerate discomfort for growth.

Glossary of Terms

Borrowed functioning—an exchange of “self” that enhances one partner’s functioning at the expense of the other. Often confused with mutuality.

Critical mass—the anxiety and pressure required for fundamental change to occur. Inversely proportional to level of differentiation.

Differentiation—distinguishing and balancing self-regulation and emotional attachment, by going through relationship struggles that teach you the difference between the two. “Self-development” controlling how we function with others and by ourselves.

Emotional fusion—emotional attachment

without separateness.

Intimacy—self confrontation and self disclosure in the presence of partner.

Other-validated intimacy—partner accepts and validates your disclosure, making you feel good about yourself.

Self-validated intimacy—you validate your own disclosures when partner does not (or tries to invalidate you). Self-validated intimacy requires and increases differentiation.

Gridlock—interlocking binds that immobilize partners from discussing and resolving conflictual issues. Gridlocking arises from dependence on other-validation and anxiety regulation through accommodation.

Leap of faith—holding onto the best in you and going forward when gridlocked, frightened, or challenged.

Non-pathological approach—An approach focusing on natural growth processes rather than on what’s “wrong,” “wounded,” “defective,” or “blocked” to explain relationships and why people act as they do.

Self-soothing & self-regulation—Anxiety management which facilitates individual functioning and relationship stability, mutuality, and loving.

Self-presentation—deliberately withholding, overemphasizing, or “shading” information to insure positive response from your partner. The opposite of self disclosure—the unvarnished truth—which is necessary for intimacy.

Sociobiology—the study of the intertwined evolution of physiology and society.

Systemic approach—An approach that understands (and uses) a relationship as a whole with rules of it’s own (like world ecology) that’s not reducible to feelings, unconscious motives, gender differences or replays from childhood.

Triune brain—a model which breaks the human brain (and emotional functioning) into 3 levels: reptile, mammal, and human (neocortical).

Two-choice dilemmas—forced-choice problems inherent in relationships.

Tyranny of lowest common denominator—Undue partiality given to people’s limitations in poorly differentiated relationships.