



HARMONY PLACE MONTEREY

BLOCKS TO INTIMATE
RELATIONSHIPS *within*
Individuals & Couples

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DIFFERENTIATIONS | DISORDERS OF SELF

This is largely determined by the degree of emotional separation a person experiences from family of origin and multigenerational burdens.

ABILITY TO FUNCTION: People with low differentiation lack beliefs and convictions (values) of their own and adapt or react to prevailing ideology. Highly suggestive and pressured to imitate to gain acceptance (perfectionism). Some are always looking for other's approval, an over-focus on intellect and pretending.

HEALTHY DIFFERENTIATION

(BOWEN)

- Very well differentiated.
- Principle-oriented and goal-directed.
- Inner-directed, internal locus of control, self-sufficient, self-regulating, assertive.
- Not likely to be emotionally reactive.
- Not dogmatic or rigid in thinking and in action.
- Capable of listening to the viewpoints of others with an open mind.
- Can discard old beliefs in favor of new ones.
- Can listen without reacting and can communicate without antagonizing others — non-adversarial.
- Secure with self and values time in solitude.
- Functioning and self-image not affected by praise or criticism. Welcomes and values honest feedback.
- Not overly responsible for others.
- Free to enjoy relationships.
- Does not have a 'need' for others and others do not feel used.
- Respects and values differences.
- Not prone to engage in polarized debates.
- Realistic self-image.
- Not pre-occupied with his/her place in the hierarchy.
- Realistic expectations of self — understands self limitations and needs and takes them seriously.
- Expectations from others are also realistic.
- Tolerance of intense feelings, has well-developed emotional skill and literacy.
- Low to no anxiety.
- Can adapt under stressful situations without developing stress, but will avoid such situations where there is a choice.
- Peaceful. Well-developed spirituality (not necessarily religious).
- Excellent personal boundaries.

POOR DIFFERENTIATION (BOWEN)

- Lives in a feeling world — but could also be so sensitized to the point of being emotionally numb.
- High levels of chronic anxiety — difficulty in finding situations in which they can be truly comfortable.
- Difficulty maintaining long-term relationships — gives up on relationships.
- Emotionally needy and highly reactive to others. Co-dependent. No boundaries.
- Most of life energy goes into 'loving' or 'being loved' — most of the person's energy is consumed by reactivity to having failed to get love.
- Little energy left for goal-directed pursuits — trying to achieve comfort is enough.
- Functioning is almost entirely governed by emotional reactions to the environment.
- Inability to differentiate between thoughts and feelings — isn't aware of alternatives to what he/she feels.
- Responses range from automatic compliance to extreme oppositional behavior.

Avoidant Attachment – 25% of Adults

- **PART 1 – BLOCKS ‘REAL SELF’**

- Deactivation of Attachment System – inhibits emotional states
- Upon reunion at 18 months with mother, they mask negative affect as a defense strategy
- At 6 years, they remain avoidant in response to mother’s approach
- They become dismissing adults
- Can’t remember or distorts events related to distress as a child
- They are numb in response to loss, pain, sadness, lacks empathy
- They Idealize parents and/or self-information is selectively ignored, falsified, omitted

DENIAL and MINIMIZATION

“You must not be angry at your parents or see them as lacking. You must forgive them, and you are bad to criticize them.”

RESULT

- I am unlovable and deserved to be mistreated
- Dreads leaving a painful relationship
- Blames self for divorce
- Repetition – Recreation

LOVE AVOIDANTS

- WALLS INSTEAD OF BOUNDARIES
 - Wall of silence
- DISTRACTIONS
 - Keep busy, affairs
- STAY IN CONTROL
 - Control money, kids
- ADDICTIONS – CODEPENDENCE
 - Take care of partner, parents, kids, etc.
- OVERLY CRITICAL – VICTIM STANCE
 - Lose sense of self
- NUMB – EMOTIONALLY VOID
 - Override body cues (appetite, exercise)
 - Empathy and Compassion
Connectiveness
- POWER STRUGGLES
 - My way is the right way

INTERNAL WORKING MODEL

DISORGANIZED

Working models
are not coherent
or integrated.

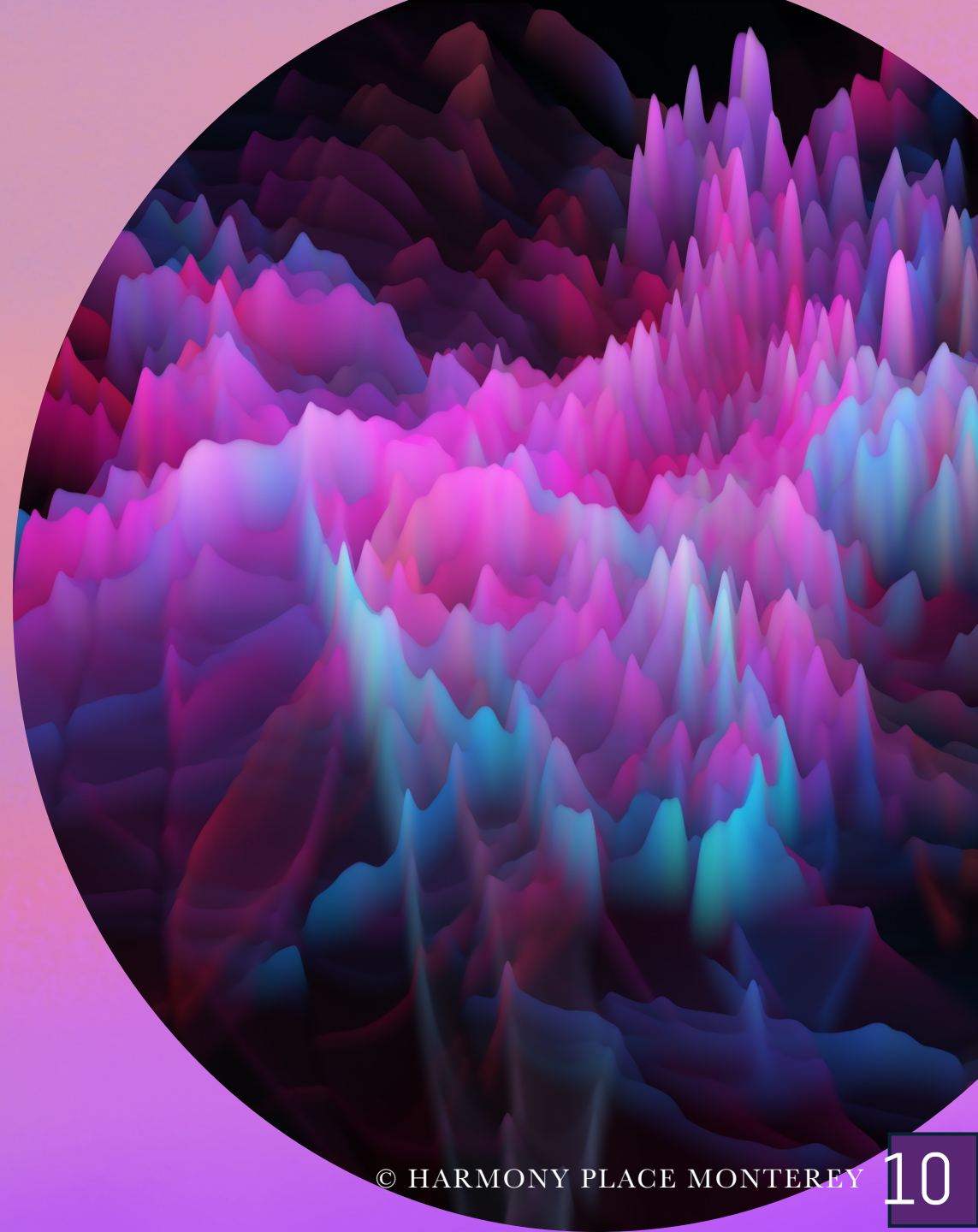
Splitting – Binary
Good me, Bad me,
Good mother, Bad
mother

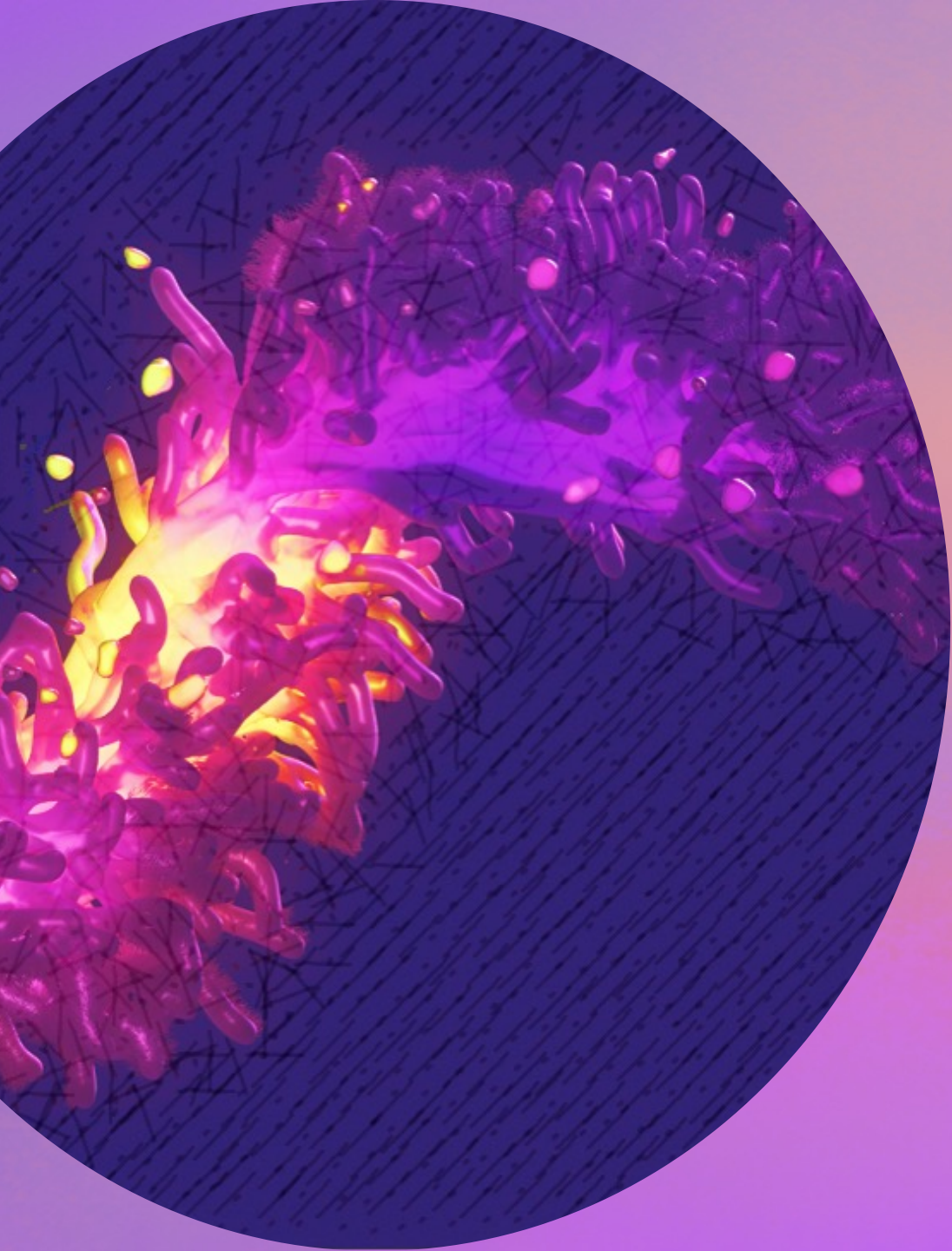
Come to
accept &
expect

Fighting
Criticism
Abandonment
Double Binds

DISORGANIZED ATTACHMENT

Drawing close to the other is thus accompanied by the expectation of re-experiencing the anxiety of unpredictable availability, and a fear that allowing oneself to ask for and obtain care may mean giving up one's identity and independence.





AVOIDANCE

- Maintains autonomy and achieve distance
- Distrusts partners' good will
- Believes partner will be available when needed
- Compulsive reliance on self
- Negative views of others
- Ruminates about partner's faults and future behavior
- Avoids self-disclosure
- Needs control

DISSOCIATION

(LIOATTA, 2000)

- Early dyadic processes lead to a “primary breakdown” or lack of integration of a coherent sense of self, i.e. Unintegrated internal working models.
- Disorganized attachment is the initial step in the developmental trajectory that leaves an individual vulnerable to developing dissociation in response to trauma.

FIND ROMANTIC PARTNER and a "New Self is Formed

- Revives infantilized desires and disappointments
- Picks partners that are abusive, unavailable, unregulated, jealous and who reactivates the Anxious-attachment

or...

- Picks a secure partner who encourages self-differentiation, nurturance, and healthy boundaries

FUSION

- Two minimally differential individuals form a close emotional relationship. One personality is in the process of devouring or being devoured by the other (FAIRBAIN).
- Partner sees other as essential for their survival. A blurring of boundaries of individual responsibilities – happiness, pain, faults, failures, life decision – *No need to grow up!*
- Outside the fusion, they are lonely.

DEACTIVATING STRATEGIES

for Avoidance

- Focus on imperfections
- Ex-girlfriends
- Flirting
- Pulls away when all good
- Attracted to what's not available
- Secrets
- Physical Distance
- Overdoes self-reliance
- Minimizes self-disclosure
- Ignores partner's needs
- Thinks more than feels
- Fantasizes about others
- Overvalues Independence
- Devalues partner
- Denial of Needs
- Maximizes distance (emotional or physical)
- "Independent"
- Sexually Inhibited
- Detaches when partner is needy

Conclusions: TARGETS IN THERAPY

1. Idealization
2. Affect
3. Internal Working Models
4. Body & Mindfulness
5. Pleasure
6. Problem Identification & Solving
7. Anger
8. Connection with Self
9. Self Differentiation
10. Emotional Regulation & Impulsivity
11. Nurturing & emotional connection
12. Sexuality with emotions
13. Coherency
14. Connection with others

LOVE MAPS

TEMPLATES

SELF

ESTEEM

AGENCY

LOVE

ROMANCE – DAN BROWN, Ph.D.

- Imagine that as you desire to get close, your partner wants to get close too.
- You find it very easy getting close to (him or her).
- Imagine a scene about the kind of balance or closeness and freedom your relationship gives you.
- Imagine just the right kind of relationship in which you are totally secure, so that it's really okay when (he or she) isn't around. and when around, (he or she) protects your solitude and quiet time and the things you need to do for yourself.
- Picture yourself able to ask for advice or help and (he or she) doesn't mind at all.
- Imagine a scene in which you are able to run to (him or her) in times of need.
- More and more you're finding that this person is someone you can really depend on, in a good, healthy way.
- You can feel what it's like to know that this partner is there for you, as you need.
- Imagine that you actually find some comfort in relying on (him or her).
- Imagine a partner with whom you have the conviction that (he or she) cares about you as much as you care about (him or her).
- You can really know that this partner has strong feelings for you as you do for (him or her).
- Imagine this is the kind of partner that is easy to discuss problems and upsets with.
- Imagine just the right kind of relationship where you are comfortable expressing a wide range of emotions, and (he or she) is quite fine with that.
- Imagine this is the kind of partner with whom you really don't have to do anything to be loved.
- Imagine a relationship in which you can just be yourself and are loved and appreciated simply for who you are.

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