

Transform Mature Relationships with Family Constellations Yildiz Sethi

Many relationships do not endure for a whole life. Each relationship may be perfect for a particular stage of life or while we are in a particular space. Once we grow through that space and take on the growth and wisdom that comes with it, if there is not a deeper bond or other deeper issue or circumstance that keeps us bonded, then the connection may come to completion. Relationship over. We have a choice. We may choose to stay perhaps in an empty, but familiar space due to a fear of change or fear of being alone, or move on.

Often there are several meaningful relationships in our life. Our grandparents and beyond were often wedded for life and bound more strongly by social and religious conventions of duty and responsibility, with the threat of shame and guilt lurking in the background, should they go outside the norm and separate. Society did not allow for separation for the most part. Fear of shame or exclusion in those days being a legitimate threat to survival

The sexual revolution of the sixties and the introduction of contraception improved living conditions and freed up sexuality significantly. Improved living standards have led to extending the life of many of us in the West into our eighties. In previous times and currently, living into the forties or sixties was considered a long life. In previous times many women died in childbirth and few children survived beyond 5 years with even fewer reaching adulthood was the norm. These statistics are still current in third world countries now. These statistics mean that in the past, few couples would have had to live together for extended periods of time, as disease and death cut many lives short.

Now with survival and material security secured for many of us in the West, we can and often do have different expectations beyond children and the building of a sustainable life together, especially in mature relationships. In mature relationships, let's say for those from middle years onwards, expectations may be different to those in their 20's or 30's. Mature people are often not simply driven by appearances and raging hormones. In addition they may be looking for

mutual interests, harmony, growth, excitement or fun, as well as intimacy. It is a fact that for many, the partner that we have children with, may or may not be able to walk with us into a more mature stage of life without seriously compromising their own personal ethics or wishes. Hence many long-term relationships are in crisis presently and the divorce rate is higher than ever.

In mature years the couple are no longer who they were when they met in their 20's and 30's. Yet they may still remain bonded to a belief in their need to be with a life partner. They may see their partner as a soul mate and choose to stay within convention, tradition or religion regardless of the quality of the relationship. Some lucky couples are able to transit into a mature relationship with new qualities or guidelines that supply the connection and freedom they desire as individuals and as a couple. Perhaps they are able to engender openness, compassion and a resilience for each other and a unique compatibility that can mellow and mature like a rare old wine. Maybe for such couples parting at death is perfect in a life well lived.

For the rest of us there are realizations that come to our attention as we go into our mature years as we connect with that place deep inside us that drives us forward. The reason for which we are here. Our life purpose, still beckons somewhere in our awareness, often just below the surface of consciousness and that includes relationships and experiences of all kinds. These are the areas of life that we have always wanted to pursue that may be called our desires. Such desires often remain with us for life. Hence the desire to be in a loving and nurturing relationship is a core wish that is primal for most of us as is a desire for career or adventures of all kinds.

There is no doubt that maturity gives us the space to reflect and evaluate and decide how we would like to spend the rest of our time. If this can take place with sharing, caring and compassion by each of the couple, then this is likely to proceed well. If this is not shared and processed within the relationship, this may be a problem. Growth of the relationship may stagnate. Perhaps if one of the pair has not grown or developed as much as the other and hence does not see the

importance of the process of mutual growth, this can become a source of conflict and resentment leading to the relationship reaching a crisis. Alternatively many may soldier on in a relationship that is empty, but perhaps materially secure, while others may come to a point where they simply cannot tolerate it for one more day.

Personal development or growth is a path towards self-acceptance and love. This is the root of self-esteem and self worth. Personal development can help you both in coming to an acceptance and love of self and also the other. A good relationship will support personal growth. However in a couple it is often the case that one may be choosing to grow at a faster pace than the other. A good relationship will supply nurture and support. If this is not the case it may not be possible to continue in the same relationship in the same way, if it does not nurture or help to make you a better person. The relationship must change and the couple reconnect in a better way if it is to avoid becoming stagnant or toxic. It is a choice.

Many in a mature relationship may ask themselves if it is it really OK when duties of parenthood and establishing a material security are complete, to follow an innate desire or dream that they have always wanted to pursue. They may wonder if they really deserve or are allowed this amount of pleasure, freedom or adventure in their lives. Alternatively many find it challenging to give themselves the permission to follow their dream for the rest of their lives into old age? Many are caught up in the traditional conventions of duty and responsibility and doing what is expected of them, rather than what their heart desires.

So what do people require in a mature relationship? After the hurley-burley of family life and the ups and downs of a long term relationship and reaching a new crossroad in life, many may be looking for companionship, shared interests and possibly romance and intimacy too. However in the background, we all carry history, both positive and negative. Unresolved drama, hurt and sometimes trauma as well as continuing attachments of anger and frustration with previous partners that are often lurking in the psyche at some level. The longer we live the

longer the potential history. There is no doubt that much of this has the potential to get in the way of forming healthy new relationships, unless we can resolve or come to peace with the past. In addition, there is also the fact that many of us in later years are more set in our ways. Less likely to compromise on living arrangements or lifestyle or less willing to renegotiate the simple routines of daily living. Hence finding and maintaining relationships remains a challenge, particularly in later years, even though this remains the deepest desire in the heart of most human beings, in longing to share their life with a significant other. The need for connection, sharing and love remains high for most of us.

Many people embrace self-help books and courses in becoming aware and resilient and more conscious human beings. Hence personal development is very popular in helping us to develop confidence and empowerment. This may involve the wish to discover and be who we really are in accepting ourselves ultimately. This is indeed very helpful in finding a way to become empowered, gaining more personal peace and hence with others too. We all seek connection.

Many join community groups and clubs and gain the connection and companionship they require, while many others embrace the idea of moving into meaningful and loving relationships. This requires courage. To do it well in mature relationships there is a need to let go of the past in a good way, so that that the experiences may be transformed into the gifts of wisdom that may be carried into the present as treasure. This is where a process called Family Constellations a personal development process may be invaluable.

“I am in gratitude to Bert Hellinger the innovator of Family Constellations. Family Constellations is a spiritual, energetic and experiential process with elements of Shamanism that touch every level of our humanity and connect us to our ancestral energies. This is a process that allows the greater system of the ancestral family field to unravel, unfold and find a healing or resolution, in such a way that it flows in ripples through the mind, body and

soul and that of the greater family soul in a healing way, because we are so deeply connected within our family system.”

Pg 123 (2014) *Stardust on the Spiritual Path* Yildiz Sethi.

We are all born into family systems. We often carry family dynamics from our family of origin into our relationships. Resolving these and what is left over from our past relationships is a very good starting point to being really ready to attract and maintain a mature and more appropriate relationship now.

“Making peace with yourself and your family is a first step in facing relational and personal challenges and starting healthy maturation”.

Pg 131 (2014) Yildiz Sethi

Family Constellations is the brief, experiential, systemic approach that is taking the world by storm. It is very popular in Germany and much of Europe, South America and USA and is also becoming popular in Asia and available in Australia. It is revolutionary in being very different to any other psychotherapeutic approach, in that it quickly reveals the underlying dynamic and also possible solutions, so that the person concerned can move on with more strength and resilience relatively quickly. In being able to quickly reveal the underlying dynamics that we are each involved in from our family of origin or former relationships and also unveiling possible solutions, the process is very helpful in resolving love relationship patterns. The process paves the way for a new internal pattern to take root that has a healthier structure. Through a constellation process it is possible to make internal and hence external changes. The process provides a safe forum to restore emotional and relational order and reinstate healthier resolutions, often in one session only. This may take place in confidential seminars or private sessions in person or by Skype.

In a Family Constellation seminar, a group of people sit in a confidential circle with a trained facilitator of the process and take it in turns to do constellations

on a personal or relational issue, using those of the group to represent the people of their issue. Little information is given other than largely factual information and the representatives are set up in spatial relationship to each other according to the inner image of the person concerned. Once in place, the representatives start to feel something and the constellation is in progress. The facilitator guides the process by assisting the representatives to express their feelings or awareness until the system has returned to a healthier Order. The client normally observes the process from the holding circle, thereby taking in a new perspective and feelings and a new visual or auditory imprint. From this point onwards it is possible to make perceptions or choices or relate in a different way. Hence a new inner pattern is formed.

Emergence of Epigenetics in showing the effects of genetics and environment on relationships.

Interestingly the study of a new area of scientific research called Epigenetic is adding to our knowledge of human systems. Epigenetic is showing that genes may not be as 'hard-wired' and pre-determined as we once thought. Studies are showing that emotions are a strong factor in regulating genetic DNA expression. This means that how you feel has a big effect on which genes are switched on or off. Genes may be switched on by emotions, trauma or stress. In addition your environment also has an affect on how each of our body cells function and hence our genes. So our emotions and also our environment are significant factors in our health. This is great news in letting us know that much can be changed. Systemic Family Constellations is a practical use of the work being researched in Epigenetics at present, where it has been found that we are not simply hard wired by inherited genes. The DNA of genetics has been found to be highly influenced or switched on or off by social, emotional or relational factors.

Systemic Family Constellations is a practical use of the work that is being researched in Epigenetics (2014) at present. This indicates that we are not simply controlled by inherited genes alone. DNA has been found to be highly influenced, switched on or off by social, emotional or relational factors, rather than by the

chemistry of pure DNA alone. Social, relational and emotional factors are a large pre-determinant factor as to whether problematic genes become active or not. This knowledge means that processes such as Family Constellations and others that attempt to resolve emotional trauma and systemic entanglements with family or partners has a legitimate place in achieving and maintaining well being. As human beings, relationships are an important part of wellbeing.

Family Constellations show the underlying dynamics of your situation and your possible solutions, so that you may move on in your life once you are ready for change.

The power of working systemically with a process such as Family Constellations is that this approach works both with the individual and also the family system simultaneously. It is a fact that many of us are born into systemic family energy such as sadness, anger, guilt, shame or any dysfunctional relationship pattern that we may find playing out in our lives, until it is put to rest in a healthy and respectful way. In addition, many of us are affected by systemic family energy that involves rejection or exclusion. Our ancestors due to the social and religious norms of their time were often rejected, alienated or excluded if they broke the moral codes of the period. This often caused powerful emotions or even trauma that could not be resolved into the life of the individual. Such unexpressed systemic energies are often felt by our children or grandchildren and so this too can leave a difficult family pattern, until it is acknowledged and dealt with appropriately in a family system.

Example of a constellation in a seminar. (Names and details have been changed to protect confidentiality.)

Janet a 54 year old divorcee of several years was finding it hard to find another appropriate relationship as she repeatedly attracted angry men into her life. She had left her husband due to his control and anger. In the interview Jane revealed that her father was also a controlling and angry man. Jane was invited to set up her family of origin using representatives from the group. In the constellation

Jane's father's father (her grandfather) was also added and a resolution was found when the two men were able to express their pent up feelings. Jane's grandfather was able to acknowledge his own mistreatment from his own father showing that there appeared to be a difficult pattern coming down her father's line and into the present.

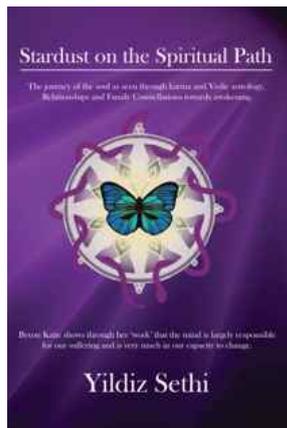
The representative for Jane was eventually able to look at the representative for her father and he was able to express his grief in being much like his own father in his treatment of her. Jane's representative was able to receive his apology and his sadness and connect with the underlying love between them with tears in her eyes.

With her representative father behind her a representative for her ex husband was brought into the constellation. The representative for Jane became agitated and extremely angry and was assisted in expressing her rage at being treated so poorly within the marriage. Eventually she was able to acknowledge that their time together had not all been bad and that their children were a blessing to them both. From this point on a process called a 'Spiritual divorce' took place and Jane's representative was able to let her ex husband go with an easier heart as she turned to face the future feeling free and at peace with her past.

Jane has since met a new partner who is quite different to those she has attracted in the past.

For more information of Family Constellations seminars Brisbane and Sydney or private sessions see www.familyconstellations.com.au

For further reading of the dynamics of relationships and Family Constellations see *Stardust on the Spiritual Path* Yildiz Sethi Amazon.com or www.yildizsethi.com



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