

Glossary

Affiliation – The sharing of an experience together while both parties are interacting with the outside world. It differs from intimacy in that deeply personal information is not disclosed. Examples: chatting at a cocktail party, going to the movies together, exploring a new environment together or playing tennis together.

Attachment – The instinctively satisfying experience of feeling that your personal identity is valued by another. Attachment is the sense of being connected to another.

Attachment mechanism – The instinctive neurological reflex system that drives attachment. This system is shaped by early interactions with caregivers. The resulting attachment styles are secure, ambivalent, avoidant, or disorganized. The attachment mechanism, with its embedded style, is later reactivated and used in adult life to attach to others.

Autonomy – In common usage, autonomy is the ability of a person to operate independently without having to depend on others. However, this author is reframing the term to mean psychological autonomy. Psychological autonomy is an individual's dependence on one's own frame of meaning instead of the perceived approval of others. Throughout this book, the author is referring to true psychological autonomy.

Boundary – The sense of deservingness that something is your prerogative or rightful possession. In common usage, this term is often confused with the act of asserting one's rights. This author recommends defining a boundary as an intuitive feeling of deservingness, not the external assertive act itself.

Boundary intrusion – The unilateral violation of one of your boundaries. Examples: Interrupting your sentence while you're speaking, intimately touching you without permission, telling you what you are feeling without asking you, or giving you a "should" statement about a personal choice.

Catalyze – Commonly, to catalyze is to speed up a process by adding a special ingredient. The author uses this term to describe how certain dimensions of experience that can accelerate neurological growth in

the brain. (e.g. Novelty catalyzes strength of memory and social interaction catalyzes the development of conscience.)

Compulsive empathy – The internal mandate to unconditionally focus on another person’s feelings.

The compulsive aspect refers to lack of choice. A term coined by this author, compulsive empathy means that there’s no consideration of other responsibilities or concerns that might be considered more important than the other person’s feelings.

Context – A psychophysiological term that refers to your implicit understanding of the current situation.

It includes unconscious expectations about what will probably happen next in the situation.

Contract – An agreement with obligations between two people. It can be negotiated explicitly but it can also be created implicitly by repetitive routine (e.g. Both partners expect to meet every night at 6:00 to eat dinner.)

Coordinative inhibition – The fact that different motivational reflex systems will inhibit each other. This is a psychophysiological term derived from Soviet neuroscientists. It suggests that the reflexes wrestle each other for dominance, limiting each other in the process.

Core shame – The inhibition and a sense of un-deservingness that can become installed due to attachment wounds in early childhood. Core shame, a term coined by this author, is in contrast to relationship shame that can result from repetitive subtle insults during the course of an adult relationship.

Counteraction – A psychological defense that occurs when a person tries to prove that he’s the opposite of what he fears. Example: a person fears being weak as he was when abused as a child. Consequently, the individual become a bully.

Counteractive abuse - (see above) The abusive bullying that can be unconsciously motivated by counteraction, as used originally by this author.

Depersonalization - The sense of losing one’s identity or self. In psychological literature, it usually refers to a momentary psychological reaction to a specific situation. However, this author proposes that a more chronic type of depersonalization can occur in a relationship. (See relationship depersonalization)

Disenmeshment – The shifting of one’s attention away from trying to manipulate a partner’s thoughts, feelings, or behavior. This term was coined by this author.

Dissociation – A psychological defense in which some aspect of experience is “split” away from awareness. Example: the feeling of being in one’s body can be split away so that a trauma can be experienced as if it’s happening to someone else and is observed from afar. Aspects of memory can be dissociated so that a person knows something when in one emotional state but doesn’t know it when they’re in another state.

Dopamine – An important neurotransmitter in brain synapses. Dopamine releasing circuits are heavily involved when we initiate action or movement.

Enmeshment – The adopting of an enduring role of trying to manage the emotions of another.

Equifinality - The principle that a given behavior can be brought about by different experiential and emotional dynamics. Different childhood experiences and different emotional patterns can sometimes result in the same behavioral problems.

Fight – flight system - A known reflex system in the brain that readies a person to deal with a threat. It involves the release of powerful neurohormones and increased arousal via the sympathetic nervous system.

Hedonic – Involving the pursuit of pleasure and enjoyment.

Hedonic inhibition – The unconscious restriction of a person’s pleasure seeking system by their covert inhibitory system, a term invented by the current author.

Heterocentric – A mature perspective that considers multiple dimensions and values other people. A person with a heterocentric perspective is not self-absorbed.

Higher consciousness – A positive state of mind in which a person has access to one’s most mature wisdom can think creatively.

Implicit memory – Memory that can't be consciously recalled but which can still generate emotions and trigger reflexes. Conscious or explicit memory is indexed by the hippocampus part of the brain while implicit memory is not.

Inhibitory system - A reflex system that retards certain behaviors that might otherwise be destructive. For example, a mother's stern admonition "NO!" can inhibit a small child about to run across a busy street. After sufficient training, the child may show hesitation when coming to a street corner. However, over-training or misdirected training may result in someone who inhibits certain needs for the rest of their life.

Integrity – The ability to base one's actions on an internally consistent framework of principles. However, this author is also including the ability to maintain one's separate identity, not just manage consistent behavior. Therefore, personal integrity involves attaching to one's own personal values and also maintaining one's sense of separate self.

Intimacy – A personal sharing between two people about what is experienced to be most important in their lives. They communicate their frame of meaning for their own experiences.

Introjection – The process whereby a child learns to replicate an attitude or behavior modeled by a parent. Recent studies strongly support the existence of mirror neurons in the child's brain that can replicate activation patterns in the brain of the parent being observed. It is an unconscious intuitive process that can absorb whole patterns of information called schemas. (See mirror neurons)

Level of consciousness – The level of sophistication and maturity in a person's implicit frame of meaning about what is important. It develops over a person's lifetime, can fluctuate somewhat from situation to situation, and can also be measured.

Limit – An individual's refusal to allow another to take advantage of him. Example: To say "No!" As used by this author, it is useful to distinguish between setting external limits versus feeling internal boundaries. The latter is an internal felt sense.

Metacognition – A type of cognitive process that involves very flexible decision making. Metacognition allows a person to override conditioned reflexes and habitual behavior. It involves a person observing one's own cognitions and then voluntarily modifying them. Imaging research of the brain has shown metacognition to involve activation of the upper anterior cingulate cortex and certain parts of the prefrontal cortex.

Micro-correction – A person's immediate response to a boundary intrusion by another in order to repair the damage. Coined by this author, Micro-correction is characterized by limited emotional intensity and, where possible, a request to "re-do" the interaction in a constructive way.

Mirror neurons – Neurons that activate in an observer while perceiving another person engaged in a behavior. The mirror neurons in the observer replicate some of the areas of brain activity of the person being observed. Because of these mirror neurons, the observer can empathically sense what the other person is experiencing.

Nurturance – The providing of pleasing care to another.

Paratelic – The state of being in-the-moment, not worried about the past or future. It involves enjoying the current experience for its own sake and for no other reason.

Reactance – In social psychology, the tendency for people shift their attitudes when they lose freedom. For example, coercion will often induce a person to have a more favorable attitude toward the choice that was denied. Similarly, a heavy handed attempt to influence a person will often cause their attitude to shift in the exact opposite direction.

Reaction formation – A habitual defense of behaving a certain way so as to prove that one is NOT what one fears. For example, someone rages for fear that they will be otherwise victimized like they were as a child.

Relationship depersonalization – The frequent experience of "losing oneself" in a relationship (example: "I don't know who I am anymore"). Coined by the author, it refers to a more chronic and subtle sense of depersonalization than the acute depersonalization states described by psychiatric patients.

Relationship shame - Covert inhibition that gradually accumulates from repetitive subtle insults over the course of a relationship. Also coined by this author, relationship shame is in contrast to core shame that may be installed during a person's childhood.

Resource – In therapy, a memory that generates a sense of empowerment to a patient. The memory can be thought of as activating more advanced parts of a patient's personality. The current author proposes that such resource memories can activate important dopamine circuits in the brain leading to higher level of consciousness.

Shame - The humiliating feeling that one are not the way one should be. Some psychologists define shame as an unpleasant emotional reaction that is generated when a need is in the process of being expressed but is suddenly disrupted. The author of this work proposes that shame is the mere conscious "tip" of a much larger inhibitory system that operates to prevent certain behaviors and even reflexes. It might be described that unconscious inhibition prevents the person from thinking about engaging in a taboo behavior so that they won't have to later feel conscious shame.

Spirituality – The current author refers to "spirituality" as being essentially the same as high level of consciousness. It pertains to feeling connected to various dimensions of the world beyond one's insular self. It also pertains to feeling attached to abstract principles such as truth, beauty, generosity, creation, contribution, etc. It is not limited to mere beliefs about God or organized religion.

Telic – In reversal theory, a term describing a state in which one's attention is not focused on enjoying present experience but instead on reaching some future goal. Most work involves a telic state. Spontaneous play does not.

Temporal Integration – A person's ability to consider consequences that extend well into the future. A person with temporal integration doesn't merely react to a situation for immediate gratification or immediate relief but has foresight and behaves accordingly.

Transference – In psychoanalysis, feelings that are unconsciously generated from past memories. A current relationship may bear some resemblance to an old relationship. The resemblance may thereby trigger unconscious associations that generate powerful emotions. The person often doesn't understand the origin of their powerful feelings because they're only looking at the current relationship.