
Objet : Re: [AEDP] Transformance Journal/Listserve discussion: Gil Tunnelø's article,
Facilitating Transformance for Couples
De : Florian Wschiansky (drfwschiansky@yahoo.fr)

Date : Vendredi 18 septembre 2015 12h10

Dear Carrie, dear Gil, dear Diana, dear all,

Thank you very much Carrie to open a formal discussion about Gil Tunnelø's article, *Facilitating Transformance for Couples: A Comparison between Structural Family Therapy and AEDP*. Thanks again very much to you Gil for your article, that I find very interesting.

Dear Gil,

Thank you very much for your article « A Comparison between Structural Family Therapy and AEDP », in transformance journal 2015, mars.

I was particularly interested by the part under the subtitle « The Importance of Attachment Bonds for Couples: Connection and Autonomy ». In this part of your article you write :

« *ō Murray Bowen's (1966) concept of differentiation emphasizes both: the ability to stay connected without losing oneself; the ability to be autonomous while staying connected. Without using attachment language, Bowen's concept of differentiation is actually a definition of secure attachment. The problem faced by many couples is often one person has trouble being separate (for fear of losing the connection), and the other has trouble being connected (for fear of losing the self). Minuchin (Nichols & Minuchin, 1999) also implicitly recognized the connection/autonomy dichotomy in that the couple must find ways to regulate closeness and distance, to accommodate both individuals' dual needs to be separate/autonomous (without becoming disengaged) as well as the need to connect (without becoming enmeshed)ō*
ō Although Johnson's EFT and Solomon's couple therapies focus on helping the couple become more emotionally connected, both Minuchin and Bowen have pointed out that other couples need help being more autonomous and separate.ō
*ō As a male couple therapist practicing AEDP, I try to privilege **both needs for autonomy and connection.** »*

I have the impression that the needs of autonomy, (or similar/close needs) have been also described by Leslie Greenberg and Rhonda Goldman in their book on EFT couple therapy and in their article « Working with Identity and Self-soothing in Emotion-Focused Therapy for Couples » (see attachment) . They write in their article in the part called « IDENTITY MAINTENANCE: INFLUENCE, DOMINANCE, AND CONTROL »:

« *ō Our intimate relationships are important in influencing how we see and feel about ourselves. In this section, we elaborate an emotion-focused perspective on how to work with threats to identity, and the dominance struggles that result from partners' efforts to ensure a sense of worth. Hierarchy and issues of dominance and control in the maintenance of self have long been recognized as significant issues in couples and family functioning. Partner inequality undermines relationship success while equality promotes it (Freson & Williams, 2003; Goldman & Greenberg, 2008; Knudson-Martin & Mahoney, 2009)ō*

When identity is threatened, people act and interact to protect their identities. Shame, fear, and anger are the resulting emotions. People attempt to exert influence and control to regulate their affect, that is, to not feel the shame of diminishment and the fear of loss of control or to feel the pride of recognition and the joy of efficacy. We thus work toward helping people reveal and subsequently soothe the emotions of shame and fear that underlie dominance and the anger and control that ensues from threats to identity....%

And I have the impression that the needs of autonomy, (or similar/close needs) have also been described by Cornelis B. Bakker and Marianne K. Bakker-Rabdau in their book %*No Trespassing !, Explorations in Human Territoriality+(see attachement)* . They write in the Chapter called %*BASIC CHARACTERISTICS OF HUMAN TERRITORIALITY*÷ ò

ò *Thus, it is possible to deduce the existence of territoriality by noting a person's territorial behaviors. Similarly, one cannot decide whether any area-concrete or abstract-is, indeed, claimed as a territory until an individual demonstrates territorial behavior relative to it. The key, then, to an understanding of territoriality lies in territorial behavior, of which there are four main types:'*

- 1. Marking of an area to indicate ownership.*
- 2. Warning displays to let intruders know they are trespassing.*
- 3. Defense, by whatever means, of the area claimed.*
- 4. Active attempts to acquire new areas or expand old ones.*

The importance of territoriality in the life of Homo sapiens is no less impressive than it is in the animal kingdom, although it has not received more than passing attention until recently. Perhaps it is the very ubiquity of the phenomenon which has led to its being ignored, for frequently it is the obvious that is overlooked.÷ò

÷An individual's territory consists of those areas in which he has special expertise, shows initiative, and takes responsibility-in other words, where he has control. The plural areas is used because man's sense of territory is not limited to physical space alone, but extends to many other aspects of his social and intellectual life. Daily he is confronted with many territorial conflicts, some trifling, some serious, some simple, some of great complexity, and in order to handle these effectively he needs first to identify precisely which area is under dispute÷ .÷

ò *The separation of man's total area of possession into four different realms-privacy retreat, personal space, psychological space, and action territory-is intended to serve one purpose only: to aid the individual in recognizing which area is involved in a territorial conflict.÷ò*

ò *Man's territorial sense pervades every aspect of his existence. He constantly divides all things into categories of possession: mine and yours, his and hers, ours and theirs. This territorial index helps him measure himself in relation to others and serves as a map to refer to in case of conflict÷ .*

ò *Although man's whole life is permeated by his territoriality, there are three aspects of his existence which it influences in such a fundamental way that we have singled them out for more detailed discussion: identity, security, and freedom÷ ÷*

And in the chapter called %*Sharing Territory with Others, Groups of Two+* :

ò *÷For a constructive marital relationship, therefore, it is necessary for both partners to defend their own territorial needs but to do so by fighting fairly, by direct assertive confrontation concerning the specic area under dispute and without using the privileged information obtained in moments of trusting intimacy.÷ò*

And in the part TRUST AND LOVE:ò

%We have already implied that trust refers to a state of affairs in which a person believes that the other will respect and, if needed, protect his territorial integrity.÷ò

Identity (what's me) and territoriality (what's mine) are close/overlapping things/concepts. So Greenberg and coll and Bakker and Bakker-Rabdau describe identity and territorial needs, which are related to aspects like integrity, control, power, status, hierarchy, and that

are in my present understanding of things very similar to the needs of autonomy you described in your article, Gil. Obviously, those autonomy/identity/territorial needs seem to be different from attachment needs; some simple examples in every day life of territorial/identity needs: this is my tooth brush, this is my idea, this is your opinion, this is my money, this is your car, this is my feeling, etc. Those autonomy/identity/territorial needs seem to be quite old+phylogenetically, as birds already display them (see JOSE ORATHINKAL & ALFONS VANSTEENWEGEN's article "Couples' conflicts: A territorial perspective" (see attachment)).

But just as attachment needs, autonomy/identity/territorial needs are important in human relationships and are an important motivation system+(Greenberg and coll), at the origin of strong emotions, that deserve to be heard, acknowledged and understood. Attached, a power point presentation of a colleague (Catalina Woldarsky Meneses, who worked for years with Greenberg) about those two basic needs (attachment and identity/territoriality) in couple relationships.

In AEDP literature I did not see/read many explicit things about these autonomy/identity/territorial needs, so I appreciate very much that you, Gil, draw our attention to this aspect of human relationships. I believe it can be fruitful to have a closer look, unfold, see, understand and integrate what is useful/makes sense there.

For example I find in clinical practice the identity/territorial perspective very useful, especially for fragile/~bdl/traumatized pts, whose physical territories (sexual abuse), or whose psychological territories (psychological abuse and/or neglect) have not been respected, etc. For the time being, I have the impression identity/territoriality has more to do with respect, recognition, and that attachment has more to do with closeness, accessibility, care, affection/love etc. But obviously, there are interactions and dialectics and overlaps (?) between identity/territorial needs and attachment needs etc.

Looking forward to read your reactions, thoughts, and comments.

Bw,
Florian

Objet : RE: [AEDP] Transformance Journal/Listserve discussion: Gil Tunnell's article, Facilitating Transformance for Couples

De : **Gil Tunnell**

Date : **Samedi 19 septembre 2015 15h59**

Thanks Carrie and Florian for launching the discussion of my article in TRANSFORMANCE.

Florian, yes, there is much in common with how I view autonomy/separateness and the concept of territoriality. Some couples may not mind using the other's toothbrush, but many would. In my current work with a gay male couple, one still has resentment from years ago when his partner joined the volleyball league, which he had considered "his."

Carrie, the "breakthrough moment" with my couple didn't come out of thin air.... we had been on the cusp of it many times, but this time the wife was able to "take in" her husband's love and compassion. It helped that I stayed with that moment for quite a while, much like Eileen Russell's concept of "pressuring with empathy."

Carrie, as for your question: Do couple therapists ever concede that the autonomy/intimacy conflict is so traumatizing that the relationship can't last..... I don't believe I have never told a couple that, but many couples have concluded that on their own!

Gil

Objet : Re: [AEDP] Transformance Journal/Listserve discussion: Gil Tunnelø's article,
Facilitating Transformance for Couples

De : **Diana Fosha**

Date : Dimanche 20 septembre 2015 6h17

dear Gil, Carrie, Florian, Jacquie, all,

a story to tell: early on, prior to the publication of my book, i and been working on dyadic affect regulation, and the application of tronick's work to psychotherapy, esp. AEDP, especially the re-coordination of mental states post repair of the disruption. at the time (especially being female) i was emphasizing the restoration of closeness. then either in reading the chapters on attachment in David Greenan & Gil Tunnell's book on couple therapy and/or listening to Gil speak one day, a light went on, i had a major revelation, a moment of quantum change: a dyad needs to regulate not only closeness, but also separateness, for separateness in the context of a dyad also has to be coordinated, or co-regulated. (it also helped me a great deal with some of the men in my life, and not only. also one of my daughters.)

since that revelation, i almost always make it a point of emphasizing that it isn't only closeness that needs to be regulated in dyads, be they baby and caregiver, patient and therapist, or romantic partners.

it is amazing that in beginning the discussion of Gil's article on working with couples in AEDP, Florian starts us off with this extremely interesting rich detailed discussion of the need for the balance between closeness and separateness, between togetherness and autonomy, between intimacy and identity.

(you were right florian, i am very interested in this issue) -- and its history and antecedents in the field of family therapy

and then Jacquie shares her own reflections and poignant and somewhat painful history trying to address this issue -- somewhat more resonant --as a rule, but by no means only -- for men.

dear Gil -- it seems very fitting that this contribution, ONE OF MANY, i MIGHT ADD -- is now being discussed in depth in our community. the power of ideas is not to be underestimated

a very exciting beginning of Gil's ideas and contributions in his article in Transformance

can't wait for what further unfolds

diana

ps one last kudos: carrie ruggieri: your gift of essence and recognition again make themselves known and felt. truly awe-inspiring, thank you for being our brilliant moderator for this brilliant series of articles!

Objet : Re: [AEDP] About Closeness and separateness/Listserve discussion: Gil Tunnelø
article, Facilitating Transformance for Couples
De : **Jerry Lamagna**

Date : Dimanche 20 septembre 2015 17h54

Dear Diana, Gil, Florian, Jacquie, and all

I haven't sent any posts to the list in quite some time ("crazy busy . . .") but I feel so compelled to write back, it is as if the discussion itself caused my passion on this topic to manifest.

First --- I LOVE the story of how Gil and or Gil/David's book inspired Diana's recognition of separation as an aspect of the phenomenon of relating.

It makes so much sense that Gil would introduce this important insight not only because of Bowen's work on differentiation as Florian mentioned earlier but also because of very important influence of Sal Minuchin on Gil's earlier training. It was his Structural family therapy that centered on is the establishment of separateness/boundaries between family members in order to paradoxically create room for genuine closeness. Bravo, Gil for transmitting this important insight to Diana and all of us!! And brava to you Diana for being open to allowing ideas outside of your earlier attachment based emphasis on closeness to enrich your thinking going forward! This operationalizes what Louis Sander described as "moving towards greater inclusiveness" and it serves us AEDPers quite well.

I am particularly inspired by your comment:

"i had a major revelation, a moment of quantum change: a dyad needs to regulate not only closeness, but also separateness, for separateness in the context of a dyad also has to be coordinated, or co-regulated. . . . since that revelation, i almost always make it a point of emphasizing that it isn't only closeness that needs to be regulated in dyads, be they baby and caregiver, patient and therapist, or romantic partners."

To my own clinical thinking about AEDP and the process of change, I would add that this process of regulation and co-ordination of closeness and separateness is crucial not only in the dyads you mentioned but /*within the individual as well.*/ For example, an inability to regulate separateness/closeness to one's own painful feelings can lead to pathogenic affects, narcissism, over-identification with past ways of being or other configurations of "self-at -worst". As Jacob Moreno (creator of psychodrama) and later IFS, buddhist psychology and I-R AEDP have noted, feelings*/towards/* ones own feelings, thoughts and actions are as critical to process as the painful feelings/memories themselves. We cannot reflect on our inner experience without some degree of separateness from them (I'm not speaking here about a numb or otherwise disembodied separateness associated with dissociation). And as our own Eileen Russell has written:

"Resilience is the Self's differentiation from that which is aversive to it"

Positive, open states of acceptance and empathy/compassion also require some regulation of separateness/closeness.

Ed Tronick wrote: "Empathy (is) . . . a state that contains an awareness of the other's state, and a paradoxical awareness of the differentiation between one's state and the state of the other."

Diana wrote:

"it is amazing that in beginning the discussion of Gil's article on working with couples in AEDP, Florian starts us off with this extremely interesting rich detailed discussion of the need for the balance between closeness and separateness, between togetherness and autonomy, between intimacy and identity."

Thanks Florian for this. I am reminded of the work of Alan Watts, the British Asian scholar credited as making eastern thought accessible to the west in the 1950's and 60's. He says that closeness and separateness are not two separate things. They are two sides of the same phenomena and thus can not exist apart from the other.

Importantly Watt's work has also reminded me that in the west we tend to see tangible "objects" as being what is important to attend to without recognizing that the /*space between objects*/ (i.e. the relational or intra-relational field) are an elemental aspect of objects themselves. Can you imagine having planets in a solar system as "separate entities" without the space between them? :-)

Anyway . . . Having blurted out my ideas on extending the discussed perspective of closeness/separateness to the intra-psychic realm, it is my wish that we return to the prior discussion about AEDP couples work and Gil's article.

With an article coming out in a future Transformance article, there will be plenty of time to return to this particular thread in the coming months.

Warm regards,

Jerry

Objet : Re: [AEDP] Transformance Journal/Listserve discussion: Gil Tunnel's article, Facilitating Transformance for Couples

De : hans welling

Date : Mardi 22 septembre 2015 8h08

Hi Florian,

I don't feel that I have something to add to the discussion, but just wanted to say that I appreciated immensely your contribution.

warm regards
hans

Objet : Re: [AEDP] About Closeness and separateness/Listserve discussion: Gil Tunnelø
article, Facilitating Transformance for Couples
De : Florian Wschiansky (drfwschiansky@yahoo.fr)

Date : Mardi 22 septembre 2015 8h33

Dear Gil, dear Diana, dear Jerry and dear Hans,

Thank you very much for your reactions, feedbacks and comments to the mail I sent to Gil and the aedp listserve about your article, Gil, and about attachment and autonomy/identity/territoriality. They mean a lot to me. I appreciate A LOT the respect, the openness and the dialogue that I find with you and in the AEDP community.

(Gil, I'm looking forward to read the rest of your article, that seems to be also interesting, but I can be a slow reader...)

Warm regards,
Florian