

Bowen's Concept of "I" Positions

"I" Position: the ability to take a thoughtful stand, whether or not important others agree. It is to set clear, calm, consistent boundaries.

HOW to take "I" Positions:

1. **Review the situation**, asking: "What are the facts I know about this issue, my feelings, opinions, values, and beliefs? How does it affect my relationships? How can I be true to myself and true to my relationships?"
2. **Plan your communication:** Bowen recommended often communicating one-to-one, to each relevant person, so all are informed.
3. **Facts are calming.** It helps to share facts first.
4. **Share your response** to the facts, using step 1 above.
5. **Share your best thinking** about your strategy for getting your needs met/goals accomplished.
6. **Invite the input** of the other(s). Listen with empathy. Reflect and appreciate their taking the time to share.
7. If you are still dedicated to your position, hold to it and **be prepared for common messages of rejection:**
 - a. "You're wrong."
 - b. "Change back."
 - c. "Or, there will be consequences."
8. **Continue practicing Maturity-Building Patterns (MBP)** as others practice Automatic Protective Patterns (APP), as much as you are able. If you catch yourself in the APPs, shift to MBPs as soon as possible.
9. **Eventually, rejection will turn to respect.** Put the Bowen theory to the test and you will see for yourself.
10. **In time, you may find you have become a leader**, as people trust your example and turn to you for advice.

iBE: How EMDR Can Help Relationships

EMDR Therapy is a breakthrough psychotherapy approach proven by research to help people resolve painful or stressful events. In 2013 the World Health Organization recommended EMDR for PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder).

The Anxiety-Binding Mechanisms (ABM) can create stress, trauma or even PTSD (In extreme examples of such as violence, suicide, gossip or bullying or affairs, and consequences of addiction). Milder forms of the ABM can cause what we might call small "t" trauma – also helped by EMDR.

The fact that ABMs are a part of life makes it useful to gain neutrality with them. EMDR can desensitize our reaction to the use of ABMs by important "others" in our lives. And, if we over-use our own ABMs, EMDR addiction protocols can help.

EMDR can enhance our "performance" when facing a difficult situation in which one or more intense ABMs are at play. EMDR therapy can help us strengthen our ability to practice calm understanding, connection, one-to-one relationships and balance/equality. Valuably, it can help in the challenge of taking and maintaining an "I" position of integrity.

This educational brochure is a public service of



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Please visit our website, which gives information about EMDR therapy and EMDRIA-Certified EMDR Therapists.

"I feel good about me. I've never felt so positive about therapy before this." 30 year old female, iBE client

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iBE: Integrated Bowen & EMDR Therapy

Introduction

Murray Bowen created Bowen Family Systems Theory through research in the 1950s, seeking a true science of psychology based on observation of human beings in their families. Bowen Family Systems Theory is a practical help for any motivated person who wants better relationships and a better support system, AND is willing to patiently work toward that goal with the focus on changing oneself rather than hoping to change others. The right column headings are the author's contribution and the text comes primarily from Bowen's informal research of the more differentiated people he'd known over a long period of time. In this brochure we interchange the term "emotional maturity" with differentiation of self, because they have similar meanings, the former being more common.

Though Bowen Theory is a Family Therapy, it can work with one motivated person. This makes it extremely practical when a spouse or other family members do not want to join counseling.

On the next page you will find a chart that shows 12 basic kinds of choices we have in relationships. The left column comes from Bowen's original research, a list of what he called "Anxiety-Binding Mechanisms" humans often use automatically when they are stressed. The right column headings are the author's contribution and the text comes primarily from Bowen's informal research of the more differentiated people he'd known over a long period of time. He asked them, "How would you handle it if someone was behaving with you with 1) conflict, 2) distance, 3) triangling, or 4) overfunctioning/underfunctioning reciprocity?"

The middle column is the contribution of the author. It shows ways the protective patterns can be used wisely rather than automatically, with generally better results.

The "I" position info comes from the study of healthy people.