



## DIFFERENTIATION

- ❖ Clear sense of self in *close proximity to important partner.*
- ❖ Self-regulate anxiety & self-soothe hurts.
- ❖ Non-reactivity to partner's anxieties.
- ❖ Tolerate discomfort for growth.

## Glossary of Terms

**Borrowed functioning**—an exchange of “self” that enhances one partner’s functioning at the expense of the other. Often confused with mutuality.

**Critical mass**—the anxiety and pressure required for fundamental change to occur. Inversely proportional to level of differentiation.

**Differentiation**—distinguishing and balancing self-regulation and emotional attachment, by going through relationship struggles that teach you the difference between the two. “Self-development” controlling how we function with others and by ourselves.

**Emotional fusion**—emotional attachment

without separateness.

**Intimacy**—self confrontation and self disclosure in the presence of partner.

**Other-validated intimacy**—partner accepts and validates your disclosure, making you feel good about yourself.

**Self-validated intimacy**—you validate your own disclosures when partner does not (or tries to invalidate you). Self-validated intimacy requires and increases differentiation.

**Gridlock**—interlocking binds that immobilize partners from discussing and resolving conflictual issues. Gridlocking arises from dependence on other-validation and anxiety regulation through accommodation.

**Leap of faith**—holding onto the best in you and going forward when gridlocked, frightened, or challenged.

**Non-pathological approach**—An approach focusing on natural growth processes rather than on what’s “wrong,” “wounded,” “defective,” or “blocked” to explain relationships and why people act as they do.

**Self-soothing & self-regulation**—Anxiety management which facilitates individual functioning and relationship stability, mutuality, and loving.

**Self-presentation**—deliberately withholding, overemphasizing, or “shading” information to insure positive response from your partner. The opposite of self disclosure—the unvarnished truth—which is necessary for intimacy.

**Sociobiology**—the study of the intertwined evolution of physiology and society.

**Systemic approach**—An approach that understands (and uses) a relationship as a whole with rules of it’s own (like world ecology) that’s not reducible to feelings, unconscious motives, gender differences or replays from childhood.

**Triune brain**—a model which breaks the human brain (and emotional functioning) into 3 levels: reptile, mammal, and human (neocortical).

**Two-choice dilemmas**—forced-choice problems inherent in relationships.

**Tyranny of lowest common denominator**—Undue partiality given to people’s limitations in poorly differentiated relationships.