EMPIRICAL STUDIES
IN FAMILY THERAPY

Connection and Individuation as Separate and Independent Processes: A Qualitative Analysis

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ABSTRACT. Theoretical models of connection and individuation processes are presented and explored. The connection process involves attachment and affection. Dependency is met with nurture, resulting in a warm, accepting family climate that encourage self esteem and ability to trust. The individuation process involves validation and respect. Expression of feelings and thoughts is met with acknowledgement, resulting in a family with clear interpersonal boundaries that encourage self differentiation and personal autonomy for family members, particularly the children. The goal of this work is explore the clinical value of conceptualizing connection and individuation as separate and independent processes. Four families representing combinations of high or low values on measures of connection and individuation were evaluated qualitatively by a multi-cultural team using a variety of theories and measures. Family patterns are described and possible clinical interventions are discussed. doi:10.1300/J085v18n04_04 *[Article copies available for a fee from The Haworth Document Delivery Service: 1-800-HAWORTH. E-mail address: <docdelivery@haworthpress.com> Website: <http://www.HaworthPress.com> © 2007 by The Haworth Press. All rights reserved.]*

To grow mature is to separate more distinctly, to connect more closely.

–Hugo von Hofmannsthal, The Book of Friends, 1922

The purpose of this paper is to explore the usefulness of conceptualizing connection and individuation as independent variables. Like many other family therapists, we have been interested in how to help families strengthen their abilities to both nurture and validate one another. While researchers and theorists acknowledge the importance of connection, individuation, and related concepts for understanding the family-individual interface (Benson & Deal, 1995), the association between connection and individuation has been theoretically problematic. They are sometimes described as independent processes (Bell, D. C. & Bell, 1983; Bengtson & Grotevant, 1999; Grotevant & Cooper, 1998). However, they have also often been conceptualized as opposite ends of one continuum, with a mid-range balance between connection and individuation seen as the healthier position (Minuchen, 1974; Olson, 1993).

We hope to contribute to the understanding of connection and individuation processes through qualitative research by a multi-cultural team. We use several family models to look in detail at families selected for their relatively extreme values on connection and individuation based on a coding of family interaction process. These models include those developed by Bob Beavers (Beavers & Hampson, 1990a), Larry Constantine (1986), and David Olson (1981).

Our starting assumption is that connection and individuation are separate and independent processes (Bell & Bell, 2005). Our models of the two processes are given in Figure 1. Although we describe these processes relative to the parent-child relationship, similar, mutual process can also exist in other relationships, e.g., between friends or mates.

In the connection process, dependency behaviors by the child are met with support and nurture by the parent. Repetition of these nurturing exchanges create a warm, accepting family climate and support the development in the child of self-esteem and the ability to trust. Self-esteem and trust, in the context of a warm, accepting family climate, encourage the child to show his/her needs and depend on others for support. A child's increasing ability to trust enhances his or her ability to create affectionate, nurturing relationships with others.

In a negative connection process, neglect, rejection or abuse creates a cold, rejecting or hostile family climate, and inhibits both self-esteem and the ability to trust. These family and child characteristics reduce

FIGURE 1. Connection and Individuation Processes
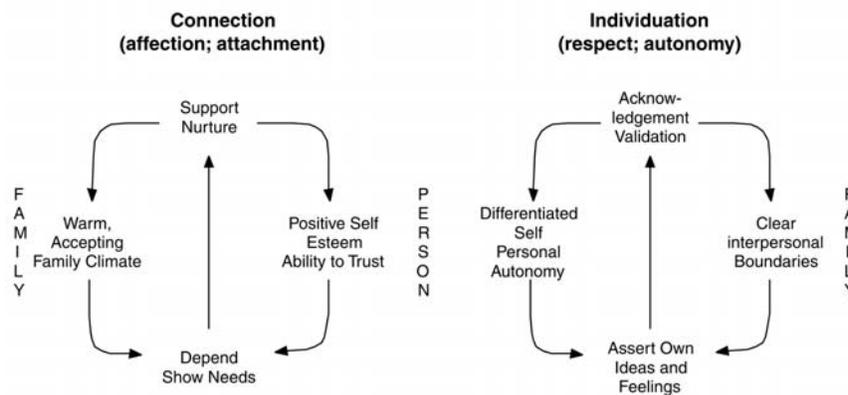
open dependency, leading instead to self protection, defensiveness, and an unwillingness to become vulnerable by exposing one's dependency needs.

In the *individuation process,* assertions by the child of own ideas and feelings are respected and acknowledged by the parent. From validating interactions, a family system arises with clear interpersonal boundaries, in which individuals are comfortable with individuality and with interpersonal differences. Acknowledgement and validation support the child's increasing differentiation of self and his/her sense of personal autonomy. Clear interpersonal boundaries within the family, an increasing differentiated self, and a sense of personal autonomy encourage the child to express his or her own ideas and feeling. Participation in an individuated family process enhances the ability to form similar relationships with others outside of the family. The child grows up able to participate in mutually validating adult relationships.

In a negative individuation process, invalidation or mystification is associated with decreased comfort with individual differences. Interpersonal boundaries are blurred, leading to less accurate interpersonal perception. It is difficult for the child to form a differentiated self or a sense of personal autonomy, thus further reducing self assertion.

METHOD

Recruitment and Home Interview

Structured interviews were conducted with 99 families. Families were white, middle class, suburban, with two parents and their two or three adolescent children. This non-clinical sample was recruited through high schools. The home interview included questionnaires, a marital and a family revealed difference task (Strodtbeck, 1951) and a family projective exercise, the Family Paper Sculpture (Bell, L. G., 1986; Bell, L. G. et al., 2004). The revealed difference tasks were based on family members' individual answers to selected items from the Family Environment Scales (Moos, 1974; Moos, 1990). Items on which mates or family members disagreed were selected for discussion, and the family was asked to discuss these items one at a time and try to reach agreement. This task was chosen in order to explore how family members dealt with individual differences and disagreements. The Family Paper Sculpture involved the family as a group making a symbolic picture of the family showing closeness, similarity, difference, and boundaries. Family interactions during

all three exercises were audio-taped, then coded (in the 1980s) for family system variables both micro-analytically and on a global coding scheme by coders trained in family systems.

Selection of Families

Global Coding Scheme (GCS, Bell, L. G. & Bell, 2005; Bell, L. G. et al., 1983). The GCS has two major factors, one described as Family Connection which includes the scales: warmth and support, depression [-], overt conflict [-], and humor. The other factor is Family Individuation: clear interpersonal boundaries, comfort with differences and disagreements, problem solving efficiency, and covert conflict [-]. The GCS was used to select four families with extreme scores on these two factors. These families form the basis for our discussion. We will refer to these four families as:

High: high on both Connection and on Individuation
Low: low on both Connection and on Individuation
Connected: high on Connection, low on Individuation
Individuated: high on Individuation, low on Connection

Family Evaluations

These families at the "four corners," were studied in detail by a multi-cultural team unfamiliar with the reason for their selection or the manner in which the families were selected.

Family Maps, Models and Coding Schemes

Olson's circumplex model (1981). This model organizes families along three dimensions: Cohesion, Flexibility, and Communication. The cohesion dimension has extreme connectedness at one end and extreme separateness at the other. The four cohesion levels are Enmeshed, Cohesive, Connected, and Disengaged. Flexibility varies from Chaotic through Flexible and Structured, to Rigid. General scales (Olson & DeFrain, 2000) were used to evaluate families on each of the three dimensions in Olson's model. We might expect that the Connected family would code higher on Cohesion and the Individuated family lower. Individuated families might be expected to have better communication skills.
Beavers' model. Beavers' family typology (1982; Beavers & Hampson, 1990b) has two dimensions. The dimension of Family Health

moves from Chaotic through Rigid to Flexible, with families at points along this continuum described as Severely Dysfunctional, Borderline, Midrange, Adequate or Optimal. The second dimension, based on Stierlin (1976), ranges from Centrifugal to Centripetal, with healthier families seen as in the middle, able to enjoy warmth and intimacy while showing respect for individual choice and ambivalence.

Constantine's family paradigms. Constantine (1986) describes four family patterns: Closed, Random, Open and Synchronous. A *Closed* family values security, loyalty and belonging. Family comes first; dependability and loyalty are valued individual traits. The family boundary (the boundary between the family and others) is relatively closed. The internal structure is hierarchical and gender roles often follow traditional patterns. Differences and disagreements are negatively valued. The *Random* family values individuality, freedom and creativity. Self-discovery of personal identity is fostered. The family boundary is open, the organization equalitarian, anarchical. Feelings are expressed spontaneously, and there is a high tolerance for ambiguity. The *Open* family values mutuality and effective problem-solving. Both connection and autonomy are valued and seen as complementary. The *Synchronous* family values harmony, wholeness, and empathic understanding. There is a transcendent identification of the individual with the group. The family boundary is relatively closed, and roles are often static, reflecting family or cultural history. There is an emphasis on non-verbal rather than verbal communication.

Grotevant and Cooper. Hal Grotevant, Cathy Cooper and their colleagues have also had a long-term interest in connection and individuation (Grotevant & Cooper, 1998). In their model, Individuality and Connection contribute independently to psychological well-being. We used a Q-sort developed by Bengtson and Grotevant (1999) to assess the concepts of Individuality and Connection.

Moos Family Environment Scale (FES, Moos, 1974). Seven scales from this instrument were used: Cohesion (commitment to the family; helpful and supportive interactions), Expressiveness (act openly and express feelings directly), Conflict (open expression of anger and aggression), Independence (value assertiveness and self sufficiency), Achievement Orientation (achievement oriented or competitive view of school, work activities), Organization (order, organization and structure important; clear family rules and responsibilities), and Control (hierarchical organization, rigid rules). The average score for all family members was taken as the family's score on each scale.

Interaction Process Coding Scheme (IPCS, Bell, D. C., Bell, & Cornwell, 1982). The IPCS measures family interaction at the micro-analytic level. Trained observers code the family discussions during the family revealed difference exercise from tapes and transcripts on five scales: Topic (on task, floor control), Orientation (question, assertion as opinion, assertion as fact, Focus (on the feelings, attitudes or behavior of particular family members), Support, and Acknowledgement.

Evaluation Procedures

A group of five graduate students in family therapy, at the stage of beginning internship, participated in describing the families. First they listened several times, independently, to the tapes of the four families' discussions. Each student listened to the tapes in a different order from the other students; also in a different order each time they were described or coded. The first time the tapes were heard, students listened only to the family revealed difference task and wrote descriptive comments. The second time, they listened to both marital and family revealed difference tasks and to the Family Paper Sculpture task. They then reconsidered their initial descriptions.

After writing their own descriptive comments, students were introduced to the various models one at a time, coding each in turn before being introduced to the next. The students were first given scales for scoring according to Olson's model. Each student coded each family independently on these scales; then the 5 students discussed their individual coding and arrived at a group consensus. This same process was then followed for Beavers' coding. When listening and coding according to Constantine's types, the students individually studied description of the family types and then listed similarities of each family to each type, then gave each family a rating of '1' (not at all like this) to 'l0' (very much like this) for each type; then did the group discussion and consensus. Finally, the Bengtson and Grotevant Q-Sort was done as a group for each family. (The GCS and the IPCS had been coded previously.)

RESULTS

An overview of results is given in Table 1. In thinking about the results, it should be remembered that this is a non-clinical sample. Our

TABLE 1. Summary of the Four Families

FAMILY	LOW	CONNECTED	INDIVIDUATED	HIGH
Constantine	Closed	Synchronous	Random	Open
Beavers	High borderline Health Centrifugal	Hi Adequate Health Centripetal	Low Adequate Health Midrange Centrip./Centrif.	Optimal Health Midrange Centrip./Centrif.
Olson	Rigid/Disengaged Poor Communication	Structured/Connected Good Communication	Structured/Connected Good Communication	Flexible/Cohesive Very Good Communication
FES	Low Organization Very Low Control	Low Cohesion Low Expressiveness	High Expressiveness Low Organization	Low Cohesion
IPCS	Low on humor Express sad and anxious feelings Low on acknowledgement Avoid discussion of differences	Express sad and anxious feelings Sad and anxious feelings increase over time	Supportive High on focus on (talking about) feelings	Supportive; Humor Express sad and anxious feelings Acknowledgement and laughter increase over time
Q-Sort	Leave little room for others' input Use derogatory or criticizing remarks or tone Monologue without acknowledging others' attempts to speak	Demonstrate a clear point of view Make comments and explain them Leave little room for others' input Initiate compromise Agree with others' opinions	Make comments and explain them When challenged are open to further discussion Ramble on and on (over-elaboration)	Demonstrate a clear point of view Ask for others' opinions Seem to understand others' feelings Respond relevantly to others' comments

Note: Families were selected using the Global Coding Scheme. The "LOW" family scored low on both connection and individuation. The "CONNECTED" family scored high on connection and low on individuation. The "INDIVIDUATED" family scored low on connection and high on individuation. The "HIGH" family scored high on both connection and individuation.

least healthy family was scored as "high borderline" on Beaver's scale of Family Health (*4* on a 10-point scale, 10 = healthiest).

The FES scales listed in Table 1 are those on which a family scored at least 1 standard deviation from the mean, using Moos' norms (Moos, 1974). The IPCS items are those on which families scored more than 1 SD above or below the mean for all coded families. The items for the Bengtson and Grotevant Q-Sort are those on which the family was rated *7* on a 7-point scale. The exception is the Connected family. For this family, no items were rated seven; those rated a *6* are listed.

High (High on Individuation; High on Connection)

This family was evaluated as Open (Constantine), Very Healthy (Beavers), Flexible and Cohesive with Very Good Communication (Olson). They described themselves as being low on Cohesion (FES).

On the IPCS they were scored as supportive. They expressed sad and anxious feelings, and scored high on use of humor. As the discussion of differences progressed, acknowledgement and laughter increased. On the Q-sort, they were described as demonstrating clear points of view, asking for others' opinions, understanding others' feelings, and responding relevantly to others.

During the Family Paper Sculpture task, the family made a very complex picture, showing relationships between individuals *and* relationships between subsystems (e.g., parents and children). They showed, for instance, that Grandmother got along well with each of two kids individually, but not with the pair together.

Coders' comments. The marital dyad has an alliance and so do the kids. The family uses humor to show warmth and caring. People are curious about others' reasons for answering as they did; but it was OK to disagree, recognizing that different family members have different experiences. The family displayed a supportive, loving, playful, sense of togetherness, a sense of humor, fun, joy. All have a voice. They equally shared opinions and perspectives, and often changed their minds. Even when they disagreed, they could see each others' perspectives; it was OK not to reach agreement.

Thoughts about therapy. This family might choose to talk with a therapist after a crisis or loss. Important therapeutic behaviors would include providing an empathic ear, normalizing experience, giving the family members information about resources, and about others who've shared their plight. The family brings many strengths that the therapist can highlight, access and help them engage.

Connected (High on Connection, Low on Individuation)

This family was evaluated as Synchronous, Healthy, Flexible and Connected with Good Communication. The family described themselves as low on Cohesion and low on Expressiveness. Like the High family, they expressed sad and anxious feelings, but in this family, sadness and anxiety increased as the revealed difference discussion progressed. On the Q-sort, they were described as demonstrating a clear point of view, making comments and explaining them, and also as leaving little room for other's input, as initiating compromise, and agreeing with other's opinions.

On the Global Coding Scheme the family's laughter was scored as both anxious, defensive (4 on a 5-point scale) and warm, responsive (4 on a 5-point scale). On the Family Paper Sculpture, unique relationships

were described for different family members, i.e., different patterns of similarity and difference among family members. This was true of all four families, but is particularly noted here because, to the Western mind, the idea of a synchronous family often brings the idea of everyone being identical.

Coders' comments. The couple would NOT put 'no agreement' during the couple revealed difference discussion, even if one person had to change their answer when they didn't really agree. Any disagreement was blamed on the wording of the item. The family, however, seemed relaxed and friendly, *very* cooperative. Lots of "we" statements. Children's views were rarely listened to. Mother spoke for all of the children. Feelings were expressed via tone of voice. Covert conflict seemed high. Rigid family boundary; no mention of friends except for one daughter being 'in love.' Very close; enmeshed. Denial of conflict and anger. Family members appear to genuinely care for each other.

There was lots of laughing, especially when expressing negative feelings. Family members *could* express differences of opinion, but always laughing; affect didn't match behavior–laughter with disagreement. They did not argue their points, were easily swayed, and easily changed their minds when given concrete examples. They did the revealed difference exercise very fast–hurried to get everybody's say, then voted and quickly moved on to the next item. Family members talked over one another, more than one conversation going on at a time. Everyone's opinion was gotten; there were no arguments. One daughter said, "Daddy and I are different; he yells at me because he doesn't know how to talk to me."

Thoughts about therapy. This family might likely be seen in therapy during the adolescent life cycle stage, or around some other issue that seems to disrupt the family's need to be always in agreement with each other. It seems to us that a "yes, and" approach might be very much in order here, enriching the family's map of the world: love *and* respect, closeness *and* acknowledgement. You can have both; you can be respectful of differences and at the same time maintain your closeness. You can love someone and also disagree with them. The family may not only lack the skills or the ideas necessary to walk this path without help, they may also be fearful. Making the implicit explicit might support constructive change. What do family members fear might happen if anger is openly expressed? What memories do they (especially parents) have from childhood that taught them that disagreement is dangerous?

For some families, particularly immigrant families, the struggle may be a cultural one. The home culture might be more synchronous, re-

specting family connection, respect for authority, consensus about values and rules for behavior. Perhaps the children are being pulled towards a more individualistic pattern, desiring "independence," and this is threatening to the parents. Discussion of cultural differences with a focus on taking the benefits or strengths of each culture can often be the key.

Individuated (High on Individuation, Low on Connection)

This family was described as Random, Midrange on Health, Structured and Connected with Good Communication. They described themselves as high on Expressiveness and low on Organization. They were supportive and talked about feelings. Family members tended to explain their comments; when they were challenged, they were open to further discussion. They also tended to over-elaborate their ideas (ramble on and on).

On the Global Coding Scheme, the family was seen as somewhat cold, somewhat sad, with almost no use of joking or humor. In the Family Paper Sculpture, each person had an individual boundary, and there were marital and sibling boundaries. There was a family boundary at the insistence of the father; the teenagers did not want it. When they did not agree how to describe relationships (similarities and differences), the solution was for each person to put their own ideas into the picture.

Coders' comments. Good negotiations; good problem-solving and conflict resolution skills; all respected and listened to each other. Very calm, all were verbal. They critiqued others' opinions–very detail oriented. Wanted to talk and talk and talk about details. Very attentive, but not necessarily supportive. Argue, but calm–no temper–*argue* is not the right word, but *convince* or *debate*. Mom and Dad were able to say 'I was wrong.' Accepting of others' perspectives; family members worked well to negotiate and come to an agreement on a mutual interpretation of the items. Affect neutral; there was not a sense of warmth. One daughter said her feelings were often hurt by what family members said. Parents defended lack of togetherness (of which they were aware) by saying that the kids were teenagers.

Thoughts about therapy. What would bring this family into therapy? Sadness or a lack of joy? Perhaps one of the children grows up and finds difficulty in a relationship where their partner wants more intimacy, warmth, holding. One approach might be to teach parents about the importance of attachment for humans, and explore their experiences of attachment in their families or origin. One might help a mate learn to

listen and hold and comfort–and give up on fixing or solving, even practice hugs in the therapy room. A family that does not talk about feelings can be given a feeling chart (a list or pictures of a large variety of feelings), and each day they are asked to point to a feeling and explain to the rest of the family when they experienced that feeling.

Low (Low on Individuation; Low on Connection)

This family was described as Closed, Unhealthy, Rigid and Disengaged with Poor Communication. They described themselves as low on Organization and very low on Control. They expressed sadness and anxiety, did not acknowledge each other, and showed little humor. They avoided discussion of differences. They left little room for others' input, used derogatory or criticizing remarks or tone, and tended to monologue without acknowledging others' attempts to speak.

On the Global Coding Scheme, in addition to the low scores on the Connection and Individuation dimensions, the children were described as having more power than the parents; and the family was seen as pulling back from the task because it was scary. Also members were seen as very unreceptive to other family members' statements. On the Family Paper Sculpture, family members cooperated to some extent, but ended up making three different pictures because of inability to agree on a common picture.

Coders' comments. There seemed to be some underlying conflict between the parents which wasn't being expressed. They had a calm exchange during the marital revealed difference exercise; however there was no talk in either the couple or the family discussion about different perspectives, just what was the right answer. Dad led the family discussion which was disorganized and disorderly. Individual boundaries not clearly established. The whole family seemed tense when together. It sounded like the children were in control of the family. No laughter. Weak family boundary; there was a sense that the teenagers would just like to get out. Overt conflict between Mom and one daughter; this daughter seems to have an alliance with Dad. Dad stressed verbally that he could only speak for himself, but constantly spoke for the other family members. Much anger was expressed. There was mention of physical discipline, hitting. Family members had many opposing ideas, but they didn't seem to be able to discuss or resolve them. Lots of items were marked "no agreement" during the revealed difference exercise. Even when the conflict is expressed, they don't resolve the problem because no one listens to anyone else–they just talk.

Thoughts about therapy. This family might find their way to the therapist via a strong referral or demand by a school or court. Strong therapist support, management, or "holding" might be called for. Identifying concrete goals and teaching communication and conflict management skills could help. Exploring expectations and past experiences concerning conflict or disagreement might include experiential exercises in the room, as a way to allow the family to practice the sharing of differences with positive rather than negative consequences. The family might then be able to follow thorough with homework. It may be possible to address attachment issues between the couple, or in parent-child relationships.

DISCUSSION

The goal of this study was to explore the usefulness of conceptualizing connection and individuation as independent variables. Can this distinction make a contribution to the practice of family therapy?

There often seems to be a confusion about the relationship between connection and individuation, particularly in Western culture–sometimes there is a tendency to assume that if a family is high on one, they are also high on the other; other times there seems to be a tendency to assume that if they are high on one, they are necessarily low on the other. It was hoped that by looking at families high on connection or high on individuation and low on the other variable, and comparing both of these families with a family high on both variables, and with one low on both, we might clarify our thinking and thus enhance our therapeutic work with families.

So what to make of all of this. Is it a difference that makes a difference? Is this a helpful way to think about families? The four families we examined in detail were clearly differentiated in meaningful ways. The Individuated and Connected families had distinctive family systems. Some family self descriptions on the Moos Family Environment Scale were unexpected, high connection families describing themselves as low on cohesion. Otherwise, there were few surprises when these four families were observed through various theoretical lenses; most results were consistent with expectations. Families high on individuation were characterized by open expression of opinions and attention to others. Families scoring low on individuation were characterized by the non-valuing of, and discomfort with, individual differences. Families high on connection were characterized by a warm, supportive atmosphere and laughter. In the family scoring high on both connection and

individuation, the laughter was described as lighthearted; in the Connected family (high connection, low individuation), as more anxious. Both of these families were also coded as expressing sadness and anxiety. Being high on connection, then, appears to go along with the expression of affect, sadness and anxiety as well at warmth and humor.

While connection and individuation are often empirically related (Bell, L. G. & Bell, 2005), they may best be viewed as separate but complementary processes. Carl Whitaker often said that family members can only be as connected as they are separate:

> We feel that the family's capacity to be intimate and caring and their capacity to be separate and divergent increase in careful synchrony. People can't risk being close unless they have the ability to be separate–it's too frightening to be deeply involved if you aren't sure you can be separate and stand on your own. They also can't risk being truly divergent and separate if they are unable to count on a residual warmth and caring to keep them together. The more forceful and independent they become, the easier it is to risk being intimate and close. The more closeness, the easier it is to risk independence. (Napier & Whitaker, 1978: 93)

While our results suggest that neither balance nor synchronicity fully cover, or fully differentiate, all family patterns, it is still helpful for a therapist to have multiple possible "maps." When working with families one useful metaphor, for talking about connection and individuation as competing needs, might be the see-saw. A therapist might encourage individuals in relationship to find the right balance between connection, closeness, or togetherness and individuation, autonomy, or personal freedom. A metaphor for Whitaker's view would be two pendulums–swinging toward, then away, from each other. The closer they come together, the farther they can swing apart. And a family with strengths in one area can simply be encouraged to add strengths in the other (without sacrificing the strengths they already have).

The whole is more than the sum of its parts. It is important to remember the interaction of connection and individuation in families. It's not an additive matter; different levels of the two variables may come together in unique ways. Emergent qualities will be associated with various combinations of the two. Families high on connection (the High and Connected families) were more joyful, and both expressed sad and anxious feelings. However, the High family enjoyed increasing laughter and acknowledgement as the family discussed their different percep-

tions of the family; the Connected family, increasing sadness and anxiety. In neither of the families low on Individuation did family members show an openness to views of others. But the Low family was negative and critical; the Connected family were very cooperative, simply "agreeing" without an actual discussion of different opinions.

Believing is seeing. One value of a theory or theoretical model is that it may help us see things we normally don't notice. However, as theorists and therapists one of our biggest hurdles is often our own culture. Western culture tends to be enamored of dichotomous, either-or, and win-lose thinking. Complementary is less natural to the Western than to the Eastern mind; interdependency is not a prominent concept. Rather, *dependency* carries a negative connotation in Western culture. In a competitive win-lose culture, "looking out for number one" is often considered a positive trait. "All's fair in love and war," competition and winning are often valued over process or responsibility to others in school, sports, politics and business. Caring and support imply self *sacrifice* rather than self *fulfillment*. And while selfless service and self sacrifice are also valued, they are usually associated with mothers or members of monastic orders. If we assume that respect and affection go together, then when we see one, we expect to see the other. If we assume that connection and individuation are two ends of one continuum, then when we notice a close relationship, we may assume that it is low on individuation, enmeshed. This assumption can limit both perception and understanding.

New perspectives, new "maps" can open new therapeutic and relationship possibilities. The relationship between connection and individuation is an important dialectic of human experience and many relationship issues hinge on how they are experienced. Adolescents develop both individuation and connection with respect to their parents, with well-functioning young people reporting a close connection with parents while at the same time demonstrating high levels of autonomy and individuation (Apter, 1990; Cooper, 1999; Grotevant & Cooper, 1998; Hill & Holmbeck, 1986). Recent research has identified family connection and family individuation during adolescence as predictive of adult well-being 25 years later at midlife (Bell, L. G. & Bell, 2005).

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