

Chapter Thirty-Five Develop Good Professional Self-Care

Self-Assessment Tools:

What Are Guidelines Self-Therapy on How to Avoid the Drama Triangle?

Barry K Weinhold, PhD

Steps to Take:

1. Verbally support the client's feelings. "I can see and feel how sad you are."
2. Encourage a full expression of these feelings in nonviolent ways. "Just close your eyes for a moment and let yourself really feel your sadness."
3. Validate the reality of the client's experience: Say to yourself: "You have just experienced a deep loss, and it is natural to feel this kind of grief and sadness." Identify the need that is related to the client's feelings. "You are feeling sad and alone because you need to feel emotionally connected to people who can give you support and friendship."
4. Avoid taking sides and refuse to buy into any judgments or splitting by the client. "It is difficult when you feel sad and hurt about your wife leaving you. You mentioned that you sometimes think about getting revenge. This is also a natural feeling. However, getting revenge might be a way of avoiding your feelings of sadness and grief because you have lost your connection to her. I want to encourage you to just keep feeling your feelings and thinking about what you need. Is there something that you need from me right now?" "You have just experienced a deep loss, and it is natural to feel this kind of grief and sadness."
5. Identify the need that is related to the client's feelings. "You are feeling sad and alone because you need to feel emotionally connected to people who can give you support and friendship."
6. Avoid taking sides and refuse to buy into any judgments or splitting by the client. "It is difficult when you feel sad and hurt about your wife leaving you. You mentioned that you sometimes think about getting revenge. This is also a natural feeling. However, getting revenge might be a way of avoiding your feelings of sadness and grief because you have lost your connection to her. I want to encourage you to just keep feeling your feelings and thinking about what you need. Is there something that you need from me right now?"
7. Bring in the person with whom the client has conflicts and offer to serve as a mediator in resolving the conflicts. "It might be helpful to

resolve this problem with your wife directly." Avoid rescuing the client or participating in secrets. "Would you be willing to call your wife and ask her to come with you to our next session?"

8. Encourage the client to work on his or her part of the conflict even if the other person in the conflict is not willing to participate in a mediation. "It takes two people to create a conflict. What part do you think you contributed to this conflict?"
9. Have you ever had this kind of conflict before, either with your wife or with other people?"
10. Help the client identify the dynamics and patterns in the client's history of conflicts. "I am hearing some similarities in the stories you have told me about the recurring conflicts you have had with your wife and the kinds of conflicts you had with your father when you were growing up. Are you aware of any of these similarities?"

POWER, INFORMATION & RELATIONSHIP

Barry K. Weinhold, Ph.D.

People with unmet co-dependency and counter-dependency needs generally have difficulty with both power and intimacy in relationship. Those with unmet co-dependency needs tend to give up their own needs and sacrifice themselves or take care of the needs of other people with counter-dependency issues. They use their False Self to please others.

Those with unmet counter-dependency needs tend to use power to keep people away or to dominate and control others. They tend to create "one-up" and "one-down" relationships that severely hamper their efforts to be intimate. Because of their one-up behaviors, people with counter-dependent issues have trouble getting other people to trust them and to cooperate with them. This limits their effectiveness at work and in their intimate relationships. Part of the reason why people with unmet counter-dependent and co-dependent needs have so much conflict is that they often have different ways of looking at the world around them.

Power, Information and Relationship Orientations

Vanderburgh (1980) discovered three distinctly different orientations to the world that people use to shape their daily reality and their worldview. These three orientations are *power, relationship and information*. Power-oriented people place more value in the tasks they are involved in completing a project with rather than the people they are involved with. Relationship-oriented people value the relationships over the tasks they are involved in. Information-oriented people focus on describing the process they are involved in, but usually don't get as involved in either the task or the relationships. Ideally, we must integrate the elements from all three of these orientations in order to be effective and functional in a wide range of situations in the world. Most people have a "strong suit" and a "weak suit" with the third one somewhere in between. What holds people back is their weakest suit of the three. To become more effective and functional in your life, begin by focusing on ways to strengthen your weakest suit.

It is important to understand that people do often view their world quite differently. Because of their different orientations, people also may understand concepts like "partnership," "intimacy," "power" or "relationship" very differently. People with unmet counter-dependency needs usually have a power orientation or an information orientation. Their "weakest suit" is always the relationship orientation. People with unmet co-dependency needs are usually strongest in relationship, but maybe weak in power and/or

information. Below are some common ways to identify each orientation, the main needs people with each orientation are trying to meet and the main decision-making strategy they try to use to meet their needs.

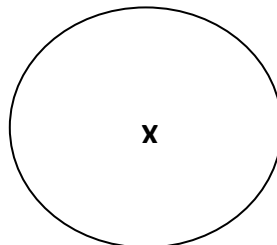
People With A Strong Power Orientation

Main Issue: Cooperation. The power person's main objective is to get others to cooperate with them. It is usually not true cooperation in that the power people often have already defined the project, vision or goal and simply wants others to "buy-in" and help accomplish their goal. This usually results in some resistance, distrust or fear on the part of others who sense the power orientation that is behind their efforts to get others to cooperate with them.

The unmet developmental needs from the counter-dependent stage that can hamper power people usually involve incomplete separation issues. The power person who has not successfully completed his or her individuation process or achieved his/her psychological birth will have trouble creating equal relationships. This means these people have to use their False Self to try to get people to cooperate with them. They often use manipulative attempts to please others (push their "guilty button") or they bully and threaten others to try to get them to cooperate. These are narcissistic behaviors. The power-oriented person will try to maintain either a one-up or one-down position in his/her relationships.

Characteristics: They like to keep a time schedule. (They will leave meetings in the middle of a sentence if the time set for the meeting has expired.) They hate to talk on the telephone. They make quick decisions and are impatient with others who take longer to decide. They may over-detail or over-structure their lives. They may try to do too much. They tend to define the reality for others ("It's cold in here, go put on a sweater."), which quite frequently causes them to get into trouble. Trying to define the reality of others is often seen as "crooked power." They may complain about the lack of support or cooperation of others with their idea or project. Power people are often leaders, but they may go beyond the call of duty and then may feel over-burdened or unappreciated. They may be interested in equalizing power in their relationships, but are less interested in being close and intimate, thus the relationship-oriented person may misunderstand their intentions.

Decision Making Strategy: Power oriented people stand in the center of their universe and get to look at all of their options quickly. The following diagram shows this:



Because they stand an equal distance from each of their options, they can survey all the options quickly and make quick decisions. However, the weakness of the decision-making strategy is that because they stand in the middle of the universe of possible options, they can only see those options that are in front of them and they are not aware of those behind them. They also do not think of involving others in the process of finding or selecting options so they are reluctant to ask for feedback or help from others. As a result, unforeseen problems can occur and even better options are sometimes overlooked. They can easily get themselves embroiled in conflict and often have no idea how they got there. Generally, they see the other person as the cause of their conflict and have a hard time seeing how they have contributed to the conflict.

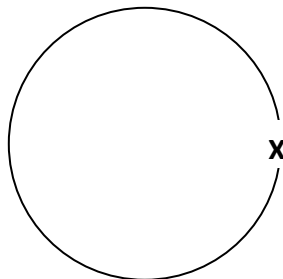
People with A Relationship Orientation

Main Issue: Intimacy. Relationship-oriented people want to be close to other people and want others to relate to them in close personal ways. They worry about whether or not other people like them and want to be with them. They like to cooperate with others, but only if they feel they are co-creating a project together. A possible weakness is that they may over-personalize their interactions with others. A remark or a small gesture that was not meant to be taken personally, can cause them to feel hurt or rejected. For example, if someone does not answer their email or phone message promptly, they may begin to fantasize that the other person or persons involved does not like them or has rejected them in some way.

The main unmet developmental needs for a relationship-oriented person are anchored in the co-dependent stage of development. The relationship person who has not successfully met his or her early bonding needs will tend to over-personalize issues and be overly afraid that people will not like them or will abandon them. Their behavior is geared to get people to like them and they tend to avoid conflict at all cost.

Characteristics: It is more important for a relationship-oriented person to finish a task before going on to another one. They will take the extra time to complete something even if the scheduled time to complete it has expired. They do not structure their day around time schedules, but more around relationships and completion of projects. They do not like to leave a project hanging. They love to talk on the telephone and can go on for hours if they feel in relationship with the other person. They may tend to ramble on about issues and power people will often lose interest in what they are saying.

Decision Making Strategy: Relationship people tend not to view themselves at the center of their universe, but they reside on the perimeter. It can be shown like this:



Because of this position, generally they can see all of their options (often twice as many as a power person) and therefore, it takes them longer to decide. Because some options seem closer and easier to reach, if they are pressed for a decision, they may make expedient decisions that turn out not to work as well as others might have worked. A relationship-oriented person is generally better at helping to generate all the possible options in a discussion than choosing which one will work the best.

People with An Information Orientation

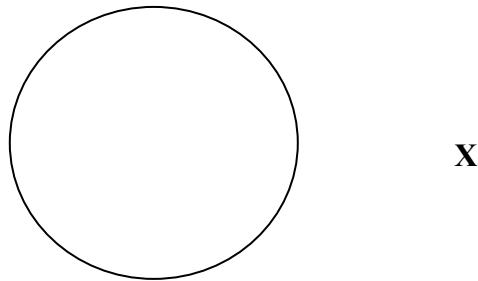
Main Issue: Trust. They decide whether or not to trust people based upon the amount and accuracy of that person's information. Also, they distrust someone who has information that is different from the "conventional wisdom" or from their own information. They split against others (good and bad) based mostly on what information that person puts forward.

The unmet developmental needs that hamper the effectiveness of an information-oriented person are typically anchored in the early part of the co-dependent stage of development and then reinforced in the counter-dependent stage. The information person who has not completed his or her early bonding needs may need lots of rules and structure

and be very uncomfortable in intimate situations where there is little structure or rules. In the counter-dependent stage, an information person learned how to use information to establish a protective, superior or one-up position that keeps people at a distance.

Characteristics: They tend to theorize about things or give lots of information, but they usually aren't available to implement any of the decisions of the group. They stand back and observe what is happening and then share their observations with whomever will listen. If they have a receptive audience in a group, they can take people off on a tangent and keep them there for considerable time.

Decision Making Strategy: Information oriented people view their options from afar. They assume a vantage point away from the options where they can examine each option carefully using whatever information they have. It may look like this:



They usually have much less interest in the decision than they do in talking about the various options. Frequently, when a decision is to be made, they are nowhere to be found. They avoid making decisions at all costs. They may appear very interested in the decision during any group discussion, but then they may find something wrong with all the decisions that are suggested or made. They can be useful in the discussion phase of decision-making, but generally are not useful when making or implementing decisions.

Integration of the Three Orientations: Integration occurs when people can make equal use of all of their three of their orientations effectively to get their unmet needs met. Good decisions usually require cooperation, intimacy and trust. Conflicts frequently occur because a person who leads frequently with one orientation doesn't understand that the other person may be leading with a different orientation. Once you understand these differences and learn to accept the different orientations, you can help minimize your conflicts. With this knowledge, you can often see the causes of group conflicts and help people to resolve them. Remember, it is always the weakest suit that holds you back. Therefore, a person with unmet counter-dependent needs usually is also weak in the relationship area and needs to develop relationship skills before he or she can be more effective in the other two areas.

NOTE! Some of this material was originally developed by Ms. Jan Vanderburgh, who served as one of Barry's teachers and therapists. Unfortunately, Jan died before she could get this information into print. We offer it in memory of her and her excellent contributions to this field as a theorist, teacher and therapist.

Counter-dependency Issues with Power

People with unmet counter-dependency needs have difficulty using their power to help them get what they want in relationship, which is to be able to be close and still feel safe. Because they often have weak relationship skills, they don't know how to generate intimacy in their lives. They may operate exclusively from their left brain. So, they use their power to manipulate and control rather than sharing feelings and being authentic. They also tend to use "crooked power" and manipulate in order to get what they want. Here are some examples of crooked power:

- Defining the reality of other people. This means telling others what they are feeling ("you are angry"), how they look ("you look angry"), what they should do ("you should go release that anger before you hurt someone") or what they shouldn't do ("you shouldn't get so angry").
- Pulling one-up power plays to get their way, such as pulling rank, using money, leaving or threatening to leave, being sarcastic, name-calling, getting even, blaming, escalating and mind reading.

Using Your Power Orientation Appropriately

Those with unmet counter-dependency needs need to learn appropriate ways to use their power orientation in their relationships to get what they want. First, they need to realize that they can't get what they want by using crooked power because people, particularly those with a relationship orientation, will not willingly cooperate with them and realize that they are being manipulated.

Rollo May (1972) defines power as the ability to cause or prevent change. He sees five types of power present in every person all the time. He says our personal challenge is to use each type of power appropriately. The five types of power he discusses are:

- *exploitive power*, where the strong meet their needs at the expense of the weak;
- *manipulative power*, where the strong collude to get the weak to cooperate so the strong can get their needs met;
- *competitive power*, where the strong use their power to deny the needs of another strong person (this is the only kind of power that could have both destructive and creative forces);
- *nurturant power*, where the strong use their power to satisfy their need to the benefit others and
- *integrative power*, where the strong use their power with another strong person to benefit both and others.

Restoring Natural Power

There is another type of power that people with unmet codependent and counter-dependent needs must develop. It is called *natural power* (Weinhold 1978). This creative power is our birthright, but we may never have learned how to utilize this natural, creative power authentically in our daily lives.

One of the grand illusions we all must destroy before we can be truly powerful in the natural sense of the term, is that we need a master or someone else to teach us the secrets of life. The truth is that there are no masters and there are no secrets. Everything is just the way it is. The secret of life is that when you are hungry, eat and when you are tired, sleep. In other words, we create what is real for us and nothing that seems to come from sources outside of ourselves is real. We are powerful and what we need to do is recognize that our power comes from within. The only meaning in our lives is that which we create for ourselves.

A Credo For Living Your Life Using Your Power Naturally

The following is a credo for how to live your life in a naturally powerful way:

"I create the forms, colors, textures, smells, sounds and tastes of my dreams and fantasies. My perception of the people, things and events around me shapes my world. People around me are beautiful or ugly, pleasant or angry depending upon my perceptions. I have the power to create pleasant or unpleasant feelings in myself. I can put myself in the kind of situations I want to be in and avoid the kind of situations I don't want to be in. In short, I alone am responsible for creating my own world.

"I can shape the world around me to some extent to my liking. I can relate to the world around me in a powerful way because I know my power and my possibilities are limitless. I can be successful or I am free to fail if I choose. If I take responsibility for what I really

want and go after it, I can free myself to get it. I realize that I am the source of all my feelings and all my behaviors and that others are the source of their feelings and behaviors.

"At the same time, I can decide to act responsibly with others as brothers and sisters, not as parents or masters over them. The opinions and judgments of others cannot affect me unless I allow them to. If I want to be your friend, I will listen to you and possibly decide to change my behavior based on how you feel toward me.

"I can create my world because I choose that which pleases me and reject that which displeases me. I can say "no" and have others say "no" to me without upsetting myself.

"Within my limits of availability, I can choose what I eat or wear, and where and with whom I spend my time. I can decide with whom I want to spend much of my time and I can avoid those I don't like to spend time with. Others can manipulate me only to the extent that I allow. I can choose to live in harmony with myself, other people and my environment, or I can choose to live at odds with myself, others and my environment. My life is not my master, for I am its engineer.

"Earthquakes, famines, diseases and weather changes are my limits, for I have no power over them. However, they are part of my world, and I can choose to use my power to do what I can to deal with the causes and effects of these natural events. I can be satisfied to limit myself to using my power in those situations that I do create. Basically, my world is an extension of me and is not separate from me. Those beautiful mountains are my mountains; that highway is my highway; that pollution is my pollution, and they are all part of my being. At the same time, these things are extensions of others as well and are part of our collective connection."

Case Example:

John and Susan signed up to do couples therapy with me. Here is part of what Susan wrote in her initial contact with me: "My husband and I are still very much dedicated to each other, but we have very identifiable patterns that we need to break or we may not be able to sustain our relationship permanently. We both have things from our past that we may be bringing into our present." Both are working professionals who have three children and lead very busy lives.

I was delighted when I read this. I thought, "Finally a couple understands that any unfinished learning experiences from their past will show up when their current relationship gets close enough and safe enough." I was looking forward to working with them on this issue, because I didn't have to first convince them about the reason that they were having conflicts.

However, as I began to work with them as a couple, I saw that each was projecting their inner demons on the other one. Yes, they knew that they had some unfinished business, but they saw that show up mostly in the other person. John did not see the source of his projections at all and Susan was somewhat aware of where her inner demons came from, but in their conflicts, she seemed to forget that information.

After working with them as a couple for a while to build some trust, I suggested I meet with each of them separately between our couple sessions. I decided to work with John first. He mostly told me about his relationship with his father. His parents divorced when John was in eighth grade. They had joint custody, but he father moved 100 miles away. He visited John every other weekend but constantly berated John for not wanting to spend more time with him. His dad had a violent temper and frequently engaged in road rage, even when John was with him in the car. His mother remarried and John got along great with his new

step-dad. John finally cut off contact with him and he had no further contact with him for 7-8 years.

John's father finally showed up again and demanded that John relate to him, without making any amends for not contacting him for 7-8 years. When John refused, he got mean to John and tried to shame him. I asked John if any of his unfinished business with his dad ever shows up in his relationship with Susan. He replied, yes, sometimes she acts like my dad did. They typically get into a debate about who is right or wrong. It becomes very competitive. The argument then shifts to who is right. I tried to help John see how that related to his relationship with his father, but he had a hard time connecting the dots. He thought he left that all behind when he had a good relationship with step-father who replaced his dad.

According to Susan, he behaves much like his dad when they have a conflict. He refuses to see his contribution to any conflict. This triggers Susan, because she was told she was wrong often by her dad. I told John that he needed to be able to accept some of the blame about what is happening in their arguments instead of telling Susan it was all her fault. Susan, gets triggered when that happens, because that I dial up her unfinished business with her dad.

My meeting with Susan, produced similar results, although she sees how John resembles her father, but she still fails to see why that triggers her so much. As I try to get them each to make a stronger connection with their inner demons, I have given them some skill training to see if that will prevent more escalations. That is working temporarily. I taught them to do "perception checks," by repeating back what they heard the other person say and get an agreement that is what they meant to say, before replying to what they said.

When they remember to do that it does seem to reduce the amount of projection. This has reduced the number of escalations where both get triggered by their inner demons. I have also suggested they use "time out" when either one of them feels like they are getting triggered. During the time out, they both are to think about what other issues are being dialed up for them. I asked them to come back together and share what they thought about. when they do that, they are able to take back some of their protections.

The final resolution has to involve them building more of a relationship with their inner demons and learning not to use them just for self-protection. I believe we will get there, but it turned out to be much more complex than I first thought.