

Making Love Successful*

New Discoveries From Family Constellations About Love And Relationship

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The Family Clan Of Fate

We want our love to be successful. Already as infants we have this desire to succeed in love. The parents also want their love to be fulfilled with each other and with their children.

Given this deep desire for love, why do we fail with such an amazing frequency?

We do not take into account the Codes of Love and we overlook that our love is bound to the deeds and the past of our family. We are all connected to our family by a strong bond of fate. This influence, which actually comes from both the living and the dead, reaches back many generations.

By bringing light to the family's past we can bring success to our love today.

We are all part of a family clan of fate. Our siblings, parents, aunts, uncles, and grandparents make up this Clan of Fate, which has many influences on our life, especially on our love. The events of the past silently but steadily exert their influence on our everyday life. Uncovering these family events, often many generations past, can reveal the hidden obstacles in our life and our love. By bringing light to the family history we can bring success to our love today.

Love is successful when it is in accordance with the flow of life. B.H. (Bert Hellinger)



Your Clan Of Fate

Your Clan of Fate is primarily composed of your siblings, parents, aunts, uncles and grandparents. However, family members from further back also may be included depending on the severity of their deeds. This Clan of Fate may also include perpetrators that have caused severe hardship, harm or death to your family, as well as any victims outside your family which had such deeds perpetrated against them by your family. All these individuals are members of your Clan of Fate.

In order to reduce the entanglements in your family, consider this: Who in your Clan of Fate has been shut out, banned, shunned, or otherwise concealed by your family?

Unless you recognize their right to have an equal place in your family, they may inadvertently exert a harmful influence on the family system. Find out who they are and begin to include them with as much loving remembrance as you can muster.

Unique Discoveries About Love

This book presents new and unique discoveries about the source of suffering and the subsequent path to healing our love and relationships. This information has been discovered in the last decade through the practice of Family Constellations as developed by Bert Hellinger, an internationally renowned therapist.

Working with hundreds of Family Constellations, Bert Hellinger has discovered these previously hidden structures, the so-called Codes, or Orders, of Love. The Family Constellations have made visible these previously hidden forces which operate in our relational life. A completely new source of knowledge about love has thus come to our attention.

The Codes of Love are relationship determining patterns which influence the success or failure of love relationships. They are a kind of “given truth” about relationships. The Codes have revealed the importance of belonging, bonding as well as giving and taking in successful relationships. An example of such a Code of Love is that children, out of blind love for their parents, may unknowingly live out the fate of an earlier family member. They may sacrifice their own destiny and sometimes even their own life.

Family Influences

I feel very strongly that I am under the influence of things or questions which were left incomplete and unanswered by my parents and distant ancestors. It often seems as if there were an impersonal karma within a family, which is passed on from parents to children. It has always seemed to me that I had to answer questions which fate had posed to my forefathers, and which had not yet been answered, or as if I had to complete, or perhaps continue, things which previous ages had left unfinished.

Carl Gustav Jung, in *Memories, Dreams,*

Reflections

The Family Constellation is a method of revealing significant past and present family influences on all kinds of life-issues.

Unseen forces connect us inextricably to our family and to our family's past. These bonds operate regardless of how close or distant we are either geographically or emotionally. Across time and space we are connected to our previous family generations and the damaging actions of one past family member can easily affect individuals in generations to follow.

The Family Constellations have made visible the hidden forces, which operate in our relational lives.

An actual Family Constellation takes place in a group setting. The group size can be as few as sixteen people and as many as hundreds. In the constellation the client first presents a problem. He or she then selects individuals from a group of strangers -- the other constellation group members -- to represent the various family members. The client then places these representatives in standing positions so that their physical position mirrors the relationships among them.

At this point, an extra-ordinary phenomenon occurs. The representatives, who do not know the people they have been selected to represent, regularly begin to feel like the actual family members they are representing.

By observing the personal and inter-personal reactions among these representatives, the hidden problematic influences from other family members, on the client's current life, are often revealed. With an astonishing frequency concealed family influences are brought to light in just about any type of life-problem.

Sometimes, it even appears that the client has assumed the fate or destiny of a distant, unknown ancestor. In so doing, he relinquished his own fate in favor of that of the predecessor. This is called an "entanglement".

A large boulder thrown in the river can create turbulence for a long way down stream even though the rock is hidden under the water and invisible to the observer. The Codes of Love work in this same hidden, but powerfully influential way. Family Constellations make the Codes of Love visible.

A Taste Of A Family Constellation

After a recent Family Constellations workshop, which I had led, this is what one of the participants reported to me. He described the curious phenomena of representatives actually experiencing the thoughts and sensations that the real family member most likely had experienced. This consistently happens to representatives although the representative has no prior information about this family member.

During my first constellation workshop a woman - the client - picked me to be the representative of her former husband. She then arranged the representatives by physically standing them in relationship to each other.

She placed the representatives for her self, the current husband and the daughter in relatively close proximity and I, the representative of her former husband, was placed at a slight distance and off to the side.



The Constellation Facilitator started to focus on the rest of the family representatives. While I stood there, uninvolved, I started noticing my curious thoughts. I was having thoughts about how I didn't want to let this woman go, how I wanted her with me, and so on. Since I did not know anything about this woman or her situation, the strength of my reaction baffled me. To my surprise, I started to notice a pain building in my heart. At this point, some time had passed and the constellation work began to include me. At this point I had a big noticeable heart ache and strongly felt, somehow, that I did not want to let this woman go.

The client then explained that the ex-husband, for which I was the representative, actually had been against their separation. He was still causing difficulty because he never accepted the break up. The Constellation Facilitator asked me to say to her, "I let you go, with love." Everything in me rose up against speaking these words. When I finally spoke them, immediately my heartache diminished significantly. Then I was moved a few feet further away from the rest of the representatives and turned around, so that my back was to them. This brought on the final change. The rest of my heartache disappeared and I had the feeling that my life was my own now. I felt free and also had warm feelings about giving the woman her freedom to live without me. This resolution seemed to bring peace to the woman and the representatives of her new family.

Without love there is no solution. Bert Hellinger

The Effects Of A Family Constellation

You may wonder what real effect such representational placement of a family may ultimately have. Hellinger and many of us other facilitators have received hundreds of reports and letters of gratitude from participants about how impactful these Constellations are. Below are segments from one such report.

A Family Constellation Report: Frank

First I proceeded to set up my constellation and then watched it all unfold. I was mesmerized to say the least. I couldn't believe the emotions I was feeling as I watched my family express themselves. This is really what I wanted to share with you in this letter. The volunteers from the audience, who knew nothing about my family were responding exactly like my family and this moved my soul.

In the constellation the man representing me was very resistant to hugging and accepting my Dad's love and painfully it fit the real me as I'm so scared of my Dad hurting me as he has done so much in my life.

When the man described his physical sensations of feeling tight in the throat etc.. I felt a lot of emotion too because those are the exact sensation I've felt my entire life.

The work in the constellation where I became my father's son and then my father gave me his blessing was so profound and truly so needed. Watching this was like a giant healing injection right into my soul. I never knew it until that moment, but that is the blessing I yearn for so deeply.

At the end of the work I was placed in the actual constellation. At first the woman representing my wife felt strange and I was aware that this was not really my wife. The constellation was then moved a little and suddenly I felt completely different. I felt such love and compassion and hope. I felt like we were united through our ancestry and our children and we were now a family that had backing, support and love. I felt vulnerable, but brave somehow as I stood there with my family looking towards the future with some clarity and direction for once.

I've been deeply impacted and I feel as though my healing has been catapulted far ahead into the future to a place that would have taken a long time to reach in any other way. Something inside of me has really shifted; energy is flowing through me in a different and more fluid manner. That day was one of the most profound experiences I've ever had in my entire life.

Let me complete the picture of the above constellation with one more report. The following is a description from an observer who witnessed Frank's Family Constellation. The report also shows the healing effect that a constellation can have on an observer who is not actively involved in the Constellation.

Witnessing The Constellation

As I witnessed the constellation I found myself welling up with emotion and amazement. I wondered what was moving these complete strangers to experience these feelings that they themselves didn't have any personal connection to. Frequently I had to remind myself that none of what was said was scripted nor was it play-acting.

I was particularly moved when Hellinger stated that one person standing alone is not enough to be a father. I thought of my own father who had lost his father at the age of two. Right then and there I felt a peace where

there had previously only been disappointment about all the years my father had not been the father to me that I wanted. Hellinger's words which followed this constellation, "you are in very good hands with your own soul," continue to move me deeply.

In addition to the numerous reports from participants about the effectiveness of this approach proof from scientific research is also beginning to gather. Recently a doctoral study at the University of Munich has also confirmed this effectiveness of the Family Constellations. The research showed a significant improvement in the problem that the clients focused on in the constellation as well as a betterment in an overall sense of their self. The progress was reported by the client both immediately after the Constellation had taken place as well as some time later. In other words, the Family Constellation had an almost immediate as well as a long lasting positive effect.

...the resolution is there when all the members of the family are pleased. When each person is in the right place; when each is being true to what is important to that person; when each is attending to his or her own life and not interfering with the others; then everyone has dignity and self-esteem and feels good. That's a resolution. B.H.

A Conversation With Bert Hellinger

Let me introduce you to Bert Hellinger, the originator of the Family Constellations approach, in a more personal way through a recent conversation I had with him. On a balmy early summer day in California we first met face to face. I had studied and applied his work for some time now and had participated in one of his huge workshops, with about 700 people present. But this was our first personal meeting. He immediately struck me as an unpretentious, endearing and kind man. He had come here to do a workshop and also to be interviewed on my local television show. It was after the workshop that we sat together for this conversation in front of the camera.

Instead of going to the studio we had decided to hold our conversation in a quiet and secluded garden. If you can imagine palm trees swaying in the background, the occasional hummingbird whizzing by, and two mockingbirds insistently broadcasting their ever changing tunes, then you are almost there.

Below is the first segment of the interview, only slightly edited for clarity. I will include further segments of the interview later throughout the book.

Family Constellations and Entanglements

Dyrian Benz-Chartrand: Bert Hellinger thank you for agreeing to this interview. For people who have not been exposed to your approach, how would you explain your work with families?

Bert Hellinger: The main method that I apply is the Family Constellation. That means that a client who presents with a problem selects, from a group of strangers, individuals to represent various members of his or her family.

DBC: Do you mean that someone picks out strangers from an audience to play their mother, brother, father, sister; that kind of thing?

BH: Well, he doesn't 'play' them; he 'represents' them. Then they are set up, which means that they are placed in relation to each other. That way you view a physical representation of the relationships between them. Then, the representatives begin to feel like the persons they are representing, although they do not know them. That extraordinary phenomenon comes to life through a Family Constellation.

DBC: That sounds very mysterious!

Participating In Something Greater

BH: It is; for me, too! I cannot explain how that happens. The 'representatives' frequently even have the symptoms of the people they represent without having any knowledge about the people they represent.

DBC: So, a representative who is placed in the position of a specific family member, according to the client's point of view - picks up or feels something?

BH: Well, what I conclude from this is that we are able to gain knowledge without having been told anything about those family members. It's a kind of participating in something greater in which there's knowledge present. Perhaps like participating in a 'knowing field' which encompasses all the participants and the family members.

DBC: I think that's why you speak of your system as a 'systemic family therapy'. Is that the 'knowing field' to which you are referring right now?

BH: Yes. And this field of the family reacts in a particular way. We can observe that in a family, in a wider sense. Not only the parents and children, but also the grandparents and the brothers and sisters of the parents of that family are steered by a common conscience which is completely unconscious. This common conscience sees to it that no member of the family is lost. So, if a member in any generation is excluded or forgotten for any reason - as in the case of a stillborn child - this member will be represented by a family member in a succeeding generation. Although this later family member may have no idea about the particular ancestor, or his or her way of life, the later member will take on, and repeat, the ancestor's fate and destiny. This is very strange. It means

that the member who is 'picked up' by that common family conscience has to live a life which is foreign to his own personal destiny.

DBC: When you say, 'foreign to his own personal destiny' what do you mean?

The Family Conscience Remembers

BH: I mean that the fate of the former family member is repeated because that member has been excluded. So this family conscience sees to it that the excluded former family member is again represented at a later date.

DBC: So, one of the components of this 'knowing field' that you talk about would be that it has a memory; and that even though we may forget, the greater intelligence will not forget and it wants to be sure that things are not forgotten!

BH: Yes. Exactly. However, while this is honoring the former member, it is disregarding the later member. This common conscience is not 'just;' and the later member who has to represent the former member of his family feels he is not in contact with his own destiny. In a sense he has to pay for the deeds of the former member.

DBC: Lets take a practical example. If some family member - such as a grandparent - is very hateful and spiteful and maybe even commits a criminal act, then the family will want to forget about that person. They do not talk about him or her. Then somehow, a later child or grandchild will be hateful and have criminal tendencies even though they would never have gone that way if they had been left alone.

BH: Exactly. This connection comes to light through the Family Constellation -- if that excluded person is represented in the Constellation.

DBC: That person needs to be looked at and seen?

BH: Yes. Then you can see that the current family member, who is identified by that former member, feels good as soon as this former family member is also included.

DBC: So, if that energy - that presence - is coming in, then that current family member doesn't have to be anybody else anymore. They can release that and be more themselves?

Entanglements

BH: There will be several steps to achieve this. The solution will be as follows: First, through the Family Constellation, the problem will emerge, revealing the identification and the 'entanglement.'

DBC: Which is the problem that somebody is left out?

BH: Yes. And the problem that somebody has to represent that former person. Now, if you bring them together and you include this other person, then the later family member is freed. Once the excluded member is honored and included, he will serve as a protection for the current family member.

Those who are dead are never gone

Those who are dead are never gone:
They are there in the thickening shadow.
The dead are not under the earth:
they are in the tree that rustles,
they are in the wood that groans,
they are in the water that sleeps,
they are in the hut, they are in the crowd,
the dead are not dead.

Those who are dead are never gone,
they are in the breast of the woman,
they are in the child who is wailing
and in the firebrand that flames.
The dead are not under the earth
they are in the fire that is dying,
they are in the grasses that weep,
they are in the whimpering rocks,
they are in the forest, they are in the house,
the dead are not dead

Birago Diop