

1 pm - Conflict in Dysfunctional Family Systems (Peter Steinke, Edwin Friedman, Eric Berne)

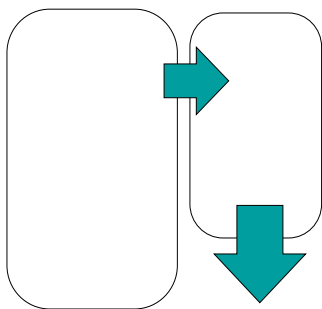
Story time: “A Nervous Condition” from Edwin Friedman, *Friedman’s Fables*, 17.

1. **Life is difficult** (Peck). The closeness of intimacy creates friction and anxiety increases the temptation to reduce anxiety by trying to force other people to change. *Neither God nor the pastor can make everyone happy.*

2. Conflict is a result of the attempt to control other people; people cannot be controlled. *Ask Moses.*

3. The struggle for control takes predictable forms:

Co-dependent “Alcoholic”



Overfunction “Under-function”

What is happening in the system?

- 1 2 3 4 5 Anxious?
- 1 2 3 4 5 Controlling?
- 1 2 3 4 5 Manipulative?
- 1 2 3 4 5 Passive Aggressive?
- 1 2 3 4 5 Intimidating?
- 1 2 3 4 5 Avoids responsibility?
- 1 2 3 4 5 Abusive?
- 1 2 3 4 5 Lying and denial?
- 1 2 3 4 5 Pressure to conform?
- 1 2 3 4 5 Pressure to rescue?

4. **TRIANGLING:** the goal is to stabilize anxiety by offloading stress onto a third person. Instead of resolving the discomfort by communicating directly with the person involved, the triangler avoids the issue by communicating and often transferring their emotional distress and garbage to a third person.

Eric Berne: *"A game is an ongoing series of complementary ulterior transactions progressing to a well-defined, predictable outcome. Descriptively, it is a recurring set of transactions... with a concealed motivation... or gimmick."* (And a payoff.) <http://www.ericberne.com/Games People Play.htm>

“Let’s you and him fight...” “Ain’t It Awful”

5. **KARPMAN DRAMA TRIANGLE:** Persecutor → Victim → Rescuer →

Triangling can cycle endlessly as the attacked *persecutor* becomes the new *victim*.

6. Overfunctioning increases closeness & friction, dependency & anxiety resulting in the need to avoid the other. When overfunctioning ceases, people grow up & become less dependent. **Carefully** let consequences happen.

7. “Referred pain” in interlocking family systems: *My family My church family Pastor’s family*

8. Avoid the temptation to “cut off” - stay in relationship. We can only influence a relationship that exists.

SUGGESTIONS

9. Secrets are used to hide the truth & avoid discomfort. T.A.C.T - **Carefully Tell the Absolute Complete Truth.** Should confidentiality protect the divisive triangler hidden behind a chain of message bearers?

10. *Differentiation while keeping in touch* - avoid overfunctioning by defining yourself clearly and be faithful to who you are. Rather than reacting to anxiety by moving closer, go do something you enjoy somewhere else.

11. **Carefully** use *paradox* to break up rigid patterns. Intensity increases anxiety. Lighten up.

12. When the healthiest person in a system changes, everything changes. The supposedly unhealthiest person (identified patient/scapegoat) is often incapable of change, but others are more than capable.