



*Coming to grips with family systems theory in a collaborative, learning environment.*

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## Types of Connection

### **Separateness and Connection instead of Fusion or Cut off**

#### **Fusion:**

- Taking everything the other says personally. Reacting with attack, defence or hurt withdrawal.
- Needing the other to agree with us all the time
- Expecting the other to solve our problems or make us feel good
- Wanting the other to take our side against people we have a conflict with
- Mind reading the other. Completing their sentences. Interrupting. Assuming we know what they think.
- Thinking more about the relationship than our own responsibilities

#### **Cut Off:**

- Withdrawing contact when togetherness feels broken
- Staying silent on our view because of fear of conflict
- Believing that we can only be safe and happy by stopping all contact
- Distancing without expressing our reasons

#### **Connection:**

- Enjoying that we share some things in common
- Friendship. Sharing things that are happening in our lives. Having fun together.
- Providing a sounding board: listening to each other's problems, allowing each to work their own way through them. (Parents should not involve children in issues of adult concern or problems that involve someone the child shares a relationship with)
- Being interested in our different viewpoints
- Co-operating with each other in practical ways
- Treating each other with warmth and respect
- Acts of kindness and affection
- Being able to have disagreements

#### **Separateness:**

- Having separate interests and friendships
- Having different perspectives and points of view

- Taking responsibility for our own needs and growth.
- Taking responsibility for our own problem solving
- Taking responsibility for calming our anxieties
- Being able to ask for the space, privacy and respect we need

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