

Relational Life Therapy

Origins, Principals, Applications

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Origins

- Pia Mellody
- Created a recovery model for “developmental immaturity”
- The Meadows in Arizona - The Meadows Model
- Trained Terry Real, Jan Bergstrom, Kim Ploussard
- Terry applied her work to couples
- Jan developed her model for individuals – Healing Our Core Issues (HOI)

Overlap with AA-style recovery

- Coaching model - self-disclosure, not focused on transference
- Bigger emphasis on skills building
- Use of slogans
 - Staying on your own side of the street/Keeping your side of the street clean
 - Progress not perfection

Principles

Relational Empowerment, not Individual Empowerment

Enlightened self-interest

Healthy Boundaries

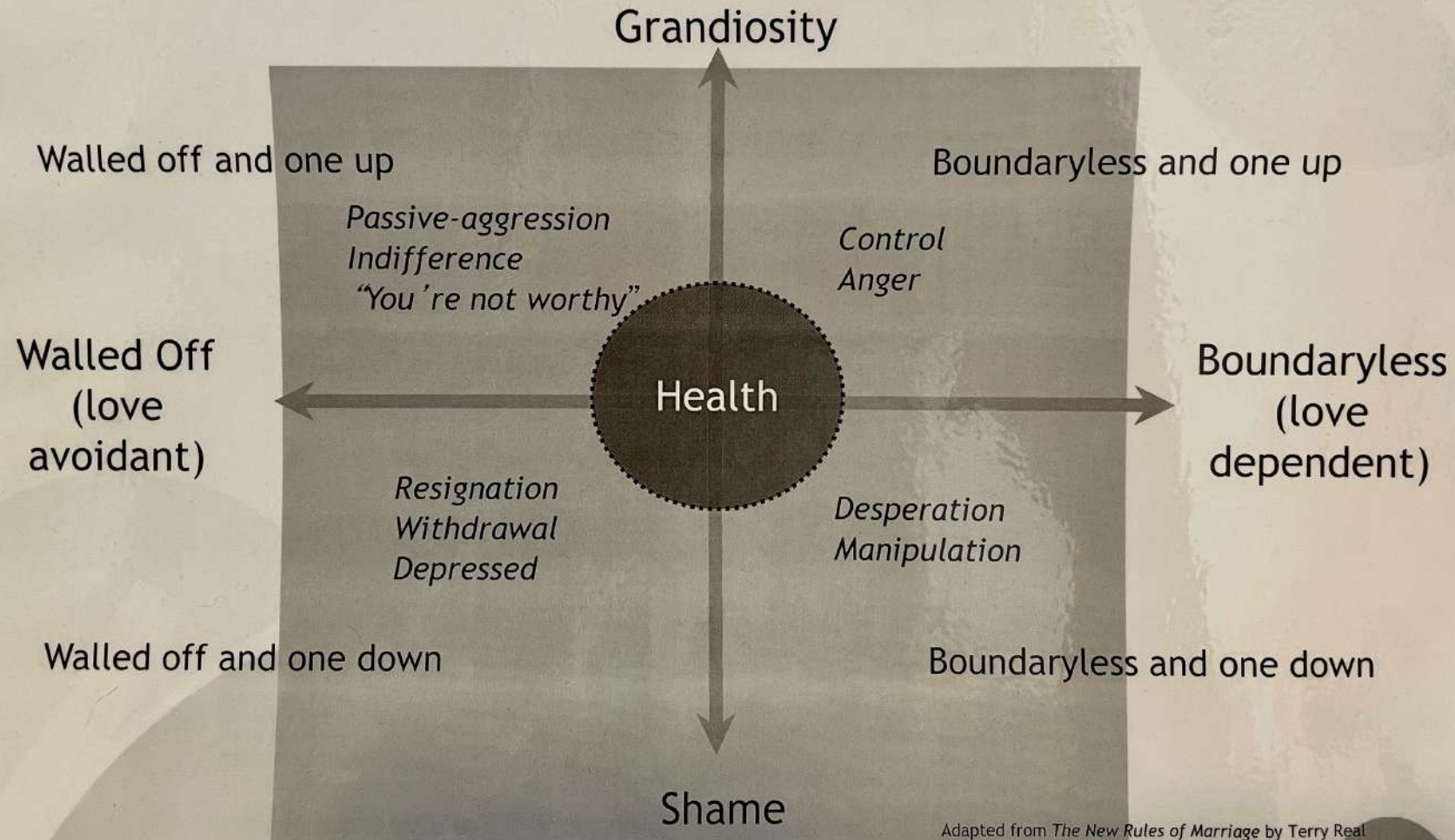
Neither too porous nor too walled off

Healthy Self-Esteem

Neither One-up nor One-down

- Inherent self-worth vs. Unstable sources of self-esteem

RELATIONSHIP GRID



Adapted from *The New Rules of Marriage* by Terry Real

Eight Basic Emotions

- Anger: resentment, irritation, frustration
- Fear: apprehension, overwhelmed, threatened, scared
- Pain: sad, lonely, hurt, pity
- Joy: hopeful, elated, happy, excitement
- Passion: enthusiasm, desire, zest
- Love: affection, tenderness, compassion, warmth
- Shame: embarrassment, humble, exposed
- Guilt: regretful, contrite, remorseful

Losing Strategies

- 1. Being right - self-righteous indignation
- 2. Controlling your partner - directly or indirectly
- 3. Unbridled self-expression
- 4. Retaliation - Offending from the victim position
- 5. Withdrawal

Winning Strategies

- 1. Shifting from Complaint to Request - move from a negative/past focus to a positive/future focus - specific, behavioral, reasonable
- 2. WAIT - Why Am I Talking - speaking with love and informed by wisdom.
- 3. Responding with generosity - Listen to understand, acknowledge whatever you can, give whatever you can
- 4. Empower each other
- 5. Cherishing - give specific positive feedback, practice enlightened self-interest.
- 6. Being willing to rock the boat
- 7. Using Respectful Time-outs

Boundary Violations

- Yelling and screaming
 - Name-calling
 - Shaming or humiliating
 - Telling an adult what they should do, think, or feel
 - Telling an adult what they are thinking or feeling
 - Making contracts and then breaking them
 - Lying
 - Manipulating
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- From: Terry Real, Relational Life Therapy

Eight Diagnostic Lenses

- Presenting Problem – gather data
- Preconditions – i.e., addictions, SMI, violence
- Stance – Stance – Dance
- Relationship Grid
- Losing Strategy Profile
- Blatant/Latent
- Family of Origins Role
- Cultural Factors

Stages of Treatment

- Gather Data: Information on “Pre-existing Conditions”
- Stance, Stance, Dance
- Blatant, Latent
- Reconnect the Blatant with their wish to not be doing this
- Teach skills
- Use Trauma work when people are stuck

Adaptive Child & Wounded Child

- Wounded child - preverbal, shows up in adult as profound depression, frozen
- Adaptive child - child adapts to their family, figures out what role they need to take on. We carry our adaptive child into our adulthood. Usually the adaptive child helps us feel safe in the world (workaholic, shy, bossy, etc.) The cloak we are comfortable wearing in the world.

Trauma work

- Experiential, guided imagery, re-parenting the adaptive child and bringing the child into the heart
- Get the sticky hands of the adaptive child off the steering wheel of your life and place them lovingly in the back seat
- For wounded children, rescuing from birth scene

First Session: Understand the Dance

"I want to understand what this relationship is like for each of you."

Gather Data – 3 examples of "and then what happens"

Beginning and Ending each session

- Check-in's – Feeling chart, losing/winning strategies, goals for the session
- Take-away's – Each partner names what skills/practices they will focus on until the next session.
- Use of therapy notebook

Other Skills/Lenses

- Using CNI (Core Negative Image)
- Cultivating BPI (assuming your partner has the Best Possible Intentions) - Kim Ploussard
- Boundary work
- Cultivating Inherent Self-Esteem
- And lots more!

Resources

- Terry Real: “Fierce Intimacy” - a 6-hour recording
- Pia Mellody: Facing Love Addiction; Facing CoDependence; The Intimacy Factor
- Jan Bergstrom: The Gifts of a Challenging Childhood
- Kim Ploussard and David Pettie offer intensive 3-day workshops based on Pia Mellody’s work online and in Albany