

IT DIDN'T START WITH YOU

SOMETIMES, DIFFICULT PSYCHOLOGICAL OR BEHAVIOURAL PROBLEMS CAN BE ANSWERED EASILY THROUGH COMMON THERAPEUTIC METHODS. BUT DID YOU KNOW THAT SOMETHING THAT HAPPENED IN YOUR FAMILY LINE CAN AFFECT THE WAY YOU THINK, FEEL, AND BEHAVE? **FAMILY CONSTELLATION THERAPY** EXPLAINS THIS BECAUSE IT IS BELIEVED THAT FAMILY MEMBERS ARE CONNECTED IN THE MORPHOGENIC FIELD, AND THEY ALL FEEL EFFECTS OF WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO EACH OF THE FAMILY MEMBERS BEFORE THEM. **DELNA MISTRY ANAND** TELLS US MORE.

“Your father is in every cell of your body. He lives on in you, and you bring him into your future.” Thich Nhat Hanh

Maryam, the only child of her parents, was only 13 when they separated. Her mother was a successful lawyer and her father had taken to alcohol after his restaurant business tanked. Maryam had been a straight A student and became a lawyer like her mother. Soon when the pressure of living alone and relationship issues got to her, she took to alcohol. Constantly straddling between her ambitious career and self-sabotaging use of alcohol, Maryam was at the end of her rope when she went into therapy.

Through a modality called Family Constellation, she learnt that she was the perfect example of a child's loyalty to both parents, enacted completely unconsciously, and at the high cost of hindering the success of the now-grown child. She had hidden loyalties to both parents – she took up Law just like her mother, and turned to alcoholism in the face of stress – just like her father.

We not only have our grandpa's long legs or mother's curly hair, but we also inherit their pain, their fears, their traumas. We inherit the residue from traumatic events that have taken place in our family. While our physical traits are easily discernible, this emotional legacy is often hidden from us.



WHAT IS FAMILY CONSTELLATION?

Family Constellation originally developed by Bert Hellinger in the 1990's in Germany, is an alternative therapeutic healing method by which we uncover hidden family dynamics and repressed feelings within the Family System that may originate with your parents or grandparents.

Family constellation is a healing modality that takes place in a group under the guidance of one person. This process supports healing, reconciliation and brings about a progressive change of perspective. Difficulties experienced by people may be influenced by traumas suffered in previous generations of the family, even if those affected now are unaware of the original event.

The relatively new science of **epigenetics** is proving that who you are is the culmination of the experiences in your life—and even those of your ancestors—which cause changes in how your genes operate. In other words, you are born with a certain set of genes, but the events of your life determine which genes get expressed and which genes don't.

For example, if our grandparents lived in a war-torn with a constant fear of death, they could pass on a survivor skill set to us—reflexes to react quickly to loud noises, and other such protective responses. This skill set would be helpful if we were to also live under a similar environment. But living in a safe and peaceful environment where this skill isn't useful, the constant hypervigilance can create havoc in our bodies.

The bad news is that trauma can be inherited through epigenetic changes and a multitude of illnesses, behaviours, and health issues have been linked to epigenetic mechanisms. Related conditions include cancer, autoimmune diseases, neurodegenerative and psychological disorders, addictions, and respiratory, cardiovascular, reproductive, and neurobehavioral illnesses. Even their fears, their angers, their grief can all involuntarily become ours, a legacy we can perpetuate in our family. And only few of us ever make the link between our issues—our unexplained fear, anxiety, and depression—and what happened to our family members in a previous generation.

But there's good news too! There are actions we can take that can help break the cycle.

BREAK THE PATTERN OF EMOTIONAL TRAUMA

Here's the short list of things you can do, as per Mark Wolynn, Director of The Family Constellation Institute, The Inherited Trauma Institute and The Hellinger Institute of Northern California:

Heal Your Core Circle

If strained, then start with healing your relationship with your parents first. Remember, the residue of pain can pass forward. Back in the 1950s, researchers at Harvard Medical School asked 21-year-old students to describe their relationship with their parents using the following scale: "very close," "warm and friendly," "tolerant," or "strained and cold."

Thirty-five years later, the results were tallied. What the researchers discovered was astounding. Ninety-one percent of participants who stated that their relationship with their mother was "tolerant" or "strained and cold" were diagnosed with a significant health issue such as coronary artery disease, hypertension, alcoholism, etc. Similar numbers were reported for participants who described their relationship with their father. If participants had a strained or cold relationship with both parents, the results were startling: 100 percent had significant health issues.

These statistics are revealing, and suggest that our connection, or lack of connection, to our parents can influence our health as we age. Not only can your relationship with your parents affect your health, it can mirror the quality of the relationship you have with your partner, your boss, your friend, and even the relationship you have with yourself. Yet, no matter how unhappy we perceive our relationship with our parents to be, one thing remains certain; these relationships can heal.

Reconcile your broken relationships with your parents.

Shake the family tree and see what falls out.

Who are you and where do you come from? What family secrets have been hidden? What stories didn't get told? What traumas have never fully healed? It can be important to know these things, especially if we're unconsciously reliving elements of traumas that don't belong to us.

Talk to your children

It's important to talk openly to your children about the not-so-fun things that happened in their parents or grandparents life. When you share the situations that have smouldered in the family history, it could even come as a great relief to them—especially if they make the connection that they've been carrying an emotion or fear that they now see as belonging to you or to your parents or grandparents.

We can't change the past and we can't change our lineage, but we can certainly change what is. And what will be. We may ask: 'What are my children really inheriting? Can my baggage, the unfinished business I don't deal with, pass on to my kids? Without knowing it, could I be hurting them?' Change is notoriously known for not always being easy. It often pushes the very edges of who we are so that we can step beyond our limits and become more of the person we want to be. But before your **outwardly** world changes - that new job or the right partner comes along, your **inner** world must change. Your thoughts, and your willingness. Right this moment, if you were just a step away from making a change towards a more full and complete life, what step would you take?

It didn't start with you.... But it can certainly end with you.

Excerpts taken from

<https://www.markwolynn.com/category/blog/>

Certified Clinical Hypnotherapist and Trauma Therapist Nissa Rahim conducts Family Constellation.



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