

# Ancestral Blueprints and Systemic Family Constellations

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Families have an unconscious mind and soul that travels across generations and entangles those who follow in the fates of those who came before us. We are deeply bonded to family members we may not have even known or knew existed: a parent's deceased sibling; a grandmother's rage; a stillborn baby, miscarriage, or abortion; ancestors who were enslaved or enslaved others; a father's allies who died in wartime; our grandparents' previous partners; the ancestors who stayed in the home country; and many others.

Out of blind, loyal love, we unconsciously try to bring into light our ancestors' difficult fate(s). This bonding love may cause us to invite disease, suffering, depression, relationship struggles, and even suicide, into our lives in an unconscious attempt to restore balance to our family systems. The dynamics of this larger blueprint lies beyond our awareness, yet its effect on our lives is profound.

## Love's Own Truths

"Orders of love" is the term used by Bert Hellinger to name these powerful forces that influence our lives. These orders are hidden, natural laws. They involve belonging, give and take, and injustice and atonement. When balance within the family soul is restored, the same love entangled with illness, difficult fate, and suffering can be transformed into a force for healing.

Many families operate in ways that violate these natural laws because of deeply unconscious patterns, loyalty to family secrets, and tragic losses that make grieving difficult. Yet there are universal truths that connect all of us to one another, even while each family also has its own story that makes it unique. By restoring balance in our ancestral blueprints, personal suffering and unhappiness can be transformed into a force for healing.

## Systemic Family Constellations

The Systemic Family Constellation approach offers a gentle, profound way of acknowledging and liberating unseen truths from the family soul.

In a group or individual setting, a sacred space is created where unspoken truths about our families may be acknowledged. A person briefly describes their life issue, along with family facts. They pick others to represent family members, living or dead, and place them according to their heartfelt, body-knowing image of their family.

A piece of the hidden blueprint is revealed and restructured toward a more balanced, life-giving picture. This movement of honoring the family pictures that were kept in the shadows makes a palpable difference, often in surprising, liberating ways. While each family's story is unique, there are universal truths that connect us to one another. Systemic Family Constellations offer wisdom about the depth of our loyalty to family functioning like no other approach from western culture.

What often happens is that the experience of being in another's constellation, and witnessing another family's unfolding truths, wakes up parts of our own ancestry that want to be seen, acknowledged, and integrated. We are all entangled, in one way or another, with parts of our family history that want to be recognized. We are all very much a part of the larger, human family.

This approach is not about trying to change, fix, blame, analyze, or pathologize. Its power and depth lie in honoring what is, especially in those places of loss, pain, or tragedy, which have remained unacknowledged... in a circle of ancestral connection. When we do so, love and life can flow more freely, and our rightful place of belonging is restored. In our culture that so deeply values self-reliance, while struggling with distraction, compulsivity, isolation, and disconnection, there is no replacement for ancestral connection, honoring truth, and simply acknowledging what is.

Current fascination with DNA testing and genealogy shows one side of our longing for ancestral connection. Family is in our DNA. They are also in our soul. We carry in us, in our bodies, the whole of our families. Our parents, our grandparents, our great-grandparents, our great-great-grandparents, and so on, and so on, and so on. As the saying goes, "No roots, no wings."

## Healing Judgement and Exclusion

Most of us have family members of circumstances in family life that are judged or ignored. We pass judgment on others in an effort to protect ourselves from unexpressed or unacknowledged grief. The invisibility of grief and loss places systemic pressure on someone else to represent aspects of whoever or whatever is unacknowledged in the family tree. Judgment separates us from others and from an aspect of ourselves that we choose to avoid or not see. Whomever or whatever it is that we most want to judge or exclude is also a part of us in some way.

Pick a person who has a personality trait or represents a belief system that triggers feelings of judgment. Notice the feeling with compassion and where you have it in your body. Notice your body experience, thoughts, feelings, and image, simply allowing them to be there. Let the awareness connect you with

someone or something in your family in the ancestral map of which you are a part. Simply acknowledge the connection, and if you have permission to do so, say to the one with whom you have been connected, "I see you, I feel you. You are a part of me. Today I take a step toward making a good home for you in my soul."

If there is resistance to connecting, consider the idea that the resistance is also an aspect of resonance with family. With whom are you in resonance when you resist connection? Who else in your family resists acknowledging someone or something? Allow yourself to notice that resistance to acknowledging family connection is, paradoxically, blind love's way of being in connection with family.

"When we look at our parents, then we see that behind them are their parents, and behind their parents are other parents, and so on through many generations. The same life flows through all of them until it reaches us." --Bert Hellinger.

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