

THE IDENTITY MATRIX. FRACTAL COMMUNITIES. Part two.

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Introduction.

This is the second in a series of three papers exploring the fractal patterns of script in relationships. In part one of the series I introduced the concept of Fractal communities to illustrate the continuation of script patterns in multiple relationships.

In this second paper I will describe the development of a matrix which was originally designed to aid residential social workers to have a quick to use reference which held different levels and aspects of child development and transference for use in diagnosis, treatment planning, reflection and supervision. (Felton.2012) Building from the matrix I suggest potential treatment options, derived from a synthesis of several different theories from TA and other modalities. This synthesis particularly links TA models with neuroscience and what is described as Mindsight.(Siegel.2007)

History.

Back in the early 1980's I was a Relate counsellor and married with two young sons. I became a counsellor in order to understand and solve the problems in my life, particularly my relationships, mostly my marriage. It seemed to me that talk therapists must know all the answers, and as my Jungian therapist at the time would not tell me what I should do, I decided I would get qualified and then I would know all the answers too! I saw a documentary on TV at the time on Quantum physics explaining that fractals are a never ending repeating pattern of self similarity through different scales (see paper one for a more detailed explanation). That moment is frozen in time. I can still recall the image of trees and the universe on the screen, and a deep knowing that this was a key piece in the puzzle of life, and I placed that piece at the centre of my own personal frame of reference.

More recently epigenetic research has shown that unresolved trauma can be passed down through DNA. A study by researchers from the Emory University School of Medicine, USA,(2013) showed that the experience of parents can influence the structure and function in the nervous system of later generations. I will expand on this element in the third paper.

When we use TA to illustrate neuroscience each new piece of research highlights the brilliance of Berne's thinking. Ego states and the second order structure of ego states, life positions, (Berne 1961)The OK Corral (Ernst 1971) Carlo Moiso's Feeling Loop, (1984) attachment theories, systems theory, and neuroscience are all connected in The Identity Matrix which enables me and whoever I am working with to identify the core script issues or fractals in whatever "problem" they present.

The Identity Matrix.

In this short article I will share with you some of the components of the matrix and some examples of how it can be used .The basis of the matrix is Life Positions (Berne 1966) and my own adaptation of The OK Corral (Ernst, 1971).

Life Positions.

I + U -	I + U +
I - U -	I - U +

Carlo Moiso in his Feeling Loop (1984) describes several aspects which fit into the matrix.

- The emotion of joy and the action of going towards others results in an acceptance of good in the world. Get on with.
- The emotion of scare /fear and the action of escape results in an acceptance of my own limits. Get away from.
- The emotion of anger and the action of attack results in the acceptance of the limits of others. Get rid of.
- The emotion of sadness and the action of closing up results in an acceptance of the limits of the human condition. Get nowhere with.

The Feeling Loop.

Anger. Attack. Accept limits of others.	Joy. Go Towards. Accept Good.
Sadness. Close Up. Accept Limits of human condition	Scare. Escape. Accept own limits.

Berne (1972.P.87) made clear references to the life position being conditioned and decided in early childhood, and after several years of using the ok corral with clients I began to form the opinion that each position has both positive and negative aspects and can be thought of as including developmental tasks. Also Berne's (1957) writing on the development of the mind and "physis the force of nature which eternally strives to make things grow, and to make growing things more perfect" seems to sit alongside Siegels writing on the mind most elegantly.

Levin: I drew on Pam Levin's (1988) work on the cycling of developmental stages.

Clarke, Dawson: Jean Illsley Clarke and Connie Dawson(1998) have had a great influence on my thinking around the developmental tasks for the child and needed parenting.

The following section is a very brief description of developmental stages.

I+U+ Developmental stage 0-6 months. Being in the world.

An experience of being ok in the world would begin with the development of a secure attached relationship with care givers. For an infant this is an experience of connectedness, grandiosity, and results in the first experience of falling in love with the other, in a healthily attached relationship the feeling in the foreground is pleasure or joy. This does not mean that other feelings are not present, but that in an ideal world joyfulness should be in the forefront or at least experienced. This secure base continues to expand the baby's growth and ability to do things and in doing so incorporates more risk as he or she begins to crawl, climb walk, run etc.

I-U+ Developmental stage 6-18 months. Doing.

As the baby learns to do more things there is increased risk, possible danger, and therefore a feeling of fear or vulnerability, of being dependant on carers . If we think of the dynamic process of learning to do things for a very beginning toddler we can see that with appropriate parenting, involving a balance of protection and permission to explore, might enable the child to begin to learn to use a feeling of scare to inform themselves of what is safe or not. This stage requires extremely close parenting to protect the baby from harm as their ability to act, to do things increases but without the ability to think or see trouble coming. When the balance is good enough between protection and permission to explore the baby begins to introject a protective parent ego state, and in this frame of confidence in their ability at around 18 months a toddler will move into a phase of increased personal power.

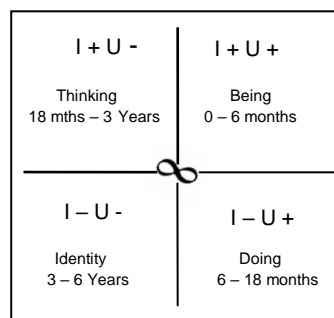
I+U- Developmental stage 18 months to 3 years. Thinking.

This stage is often referred to as the terrible twos. Parenting needs include continued love ,care and protection but now also firmer boundaries and control as the toddler tests power and sometimes appears to be a mini tyrant. The task for the toddler during this phase is to learn to think about what they do. The explicit memory system is engaged which enables the toddler to understand past and present. Balanced management of this stage results in a beginning empathy and consideration for the needs and rights of others as well as for self. The feeling of anger is foreground and by careful and consistent support from Parents the toddler begins to learn it's ok to be powerful in my own right, I can express anger to get change, and I can also self soothe and hold consideration for others.

I-U- Developmental stage 3-6 years. Identity.

As the frontal cortex engages at around 3 years we move into a stage of increasing ability for reflection and an emerging identity. This is a stage of coming to terms with the realities of life. The increasing ability to think cognitively leads to a beginning awareness of death and loss. Sadness is the foreground emotion to learn to integrate as we realise there are some things in life that no one can change and we have to come to terms with human vulnerability. Parenting needs are for all that has gone before plus an allowance for the child to come to terms with the problems in his life, to stand by with awareness ready to support but not imposing solutions nor over protecting or rescuing.

Developmental stages.



The concept of recycling and the concept of physis is represented by the symbol of infinity at the centre of the matrix. This represents the dynamic cycle of development and integration, or linkage of differentiated parts which according to Siegel (2015) is necessary for a healthy mind.

This first or basic model is representing healthy development of the mind. If the child's needs are not met well enough this causes a stuck place or impasse which the child will navigate to the best of his ability in order to continue growing. However this unmet need will be likely to result in unintegrated experience leading to either chaos or rigidity. (Siegel 2015)

Bowlby (1969) and Ainsworth (1973) If we now think in terms of attachment theory we can add the following on to the matrix.

I+U+ represents secure attachment as it is rooted in the earliest relationship with primary carers. In the first months of life, pre and post birth, the relationship between carer and infant is central. The carers main task is to attune to the infant which hopefully results in the infant feeling felt and mutual attunement, I described this earlier as when the Mother and baby fall in love, that observable delightful joy in each other that provides the safe haven of protection and permission to explore. If there is no or inadequate connection at this stage there is likely to be a beginning defence or insecure attachment and little or no trust.

I-U+ This position reflects an Ambivalent Attachment style when the baby is not secure in the relationship with primary carers. At the stage when doing things is foreground, walking, running, jumping etc. To feel unsure of the protection of the

other is likely to result in an adaptation to passivity, vulnerability, fear and anxiety where the beginning toddler does not learn to use a feeling of fear to inform them about risk and does not introject a protective other who soothes when baby inevitably gets hurt in the process of learning to do things. At this stage the child may also as an alternative move to what Siegel 2015 calls “ premature autonomy” Equally an over protective parenting style might also result in either adaptation or rebellion. Permission to explore is an essential component of this stage.

I+U- Premature autonomy in my frame is when the child decides to take on responsibility and thinking for themselves too early. This corresponds to the Avoidant attachment style and is observable as rejecting of others. The descriptions of this life position are relevant to this style of non secure attachment. With no trust in others and unintegrated vulnerability the child is unlikely to learn to consider the needs of others and therefore does not integrate empathy. The focus is on power and control.

I-U- This is where I place disorganised attachment. Unresolved and unintegrated trauma or grief interferes with the formation of a coherent narrative and therefore a coherent identity The previous two positions reflect a rigid system and prevent differentiation linkage and integration of life experiences. According to Main and Hesse (1993) the mothers of children with disorganised attachment had often suffered major loss or trauma around the time of the birth of the infant.

Attachment.

Avoidant	Secure
Disorganised	Ambivalent

As the matrix develops we might also now add game(Berne 1961) and drama triangle(Karpman.1968) positions which are defined by the defensive and unintegrated life position.

- Persecutor and Rescuer are placed in I+U- with homicide escape hatch.
- Victim is placed in I-U+ with a suicide escape hatch.
- Bystander is placed in I-U- with a mental breakdown escape hatch.
- And movement out of a Game would be I+U+. Negotiator

Games.

I + U - Persecutor Rescuer	I + U + Negotiator
I - U - Bystander	I - U + Victim

The drama triangle (Karpman 1968) represents a rigid system of the mind as described by Siegel(2015)

Finally, for this paper, one of the first ideas outside of TA that I integrated into the OK Corral was the work of Virginia Satir(1967) and systems theory. I discovered that Satir and Berne knew each other and reference each other in early writing. Satir describes the family system and levels of self esteem as generated in the relationships of family members creating open or closed family systems.

- An open system of communication leads to open negotiation. I place this in OK-OK.
- A closed system has three different outcomes depending on interactions.
- Eliminating self I place in I-U+
- Eliminating others I place in I+U-
- Eliminating self and others I place in I-U-.

Family System

CLOSED Eliminates others	OPEN Accounting
CLOSED Eliminates self and others	CLOSED Eliminates self

Residential child care is often an extremely pressured environment when the staff members often need to communicate on the spot with a language that all understand which they can then take to supervision in order to improve practice. The developmental matrix above is a text book description, whereas an individual is unique and must be assessed individually. Life has many challenges along the way and each person may respond differently. Each frame in the matrix can reveal the positive and negative patterns of an individual’s experience, the level of integration in primary relationships, within their own ego states and in current relationships, however it is important to remember that the matrix is a tool for mutual exploration and not in itself a diagnosis.

As a psychotherapist I am aware of the patterns of contact that the client makes with me and how they describe contacts with others. This informs me of the interpersonal patterns of communication. What is the story they tell? What response does that raise in me? Where in this person’s life and family system is there a lack of integration (Siegel 2015). What is the client’s current identity?

COMPOSITE CASE STUDY. Tom made several calls in quick succession requesting an urgent appointment. I noted the scare in his voice and my own mild irritation at what felt like his escalating demands. He reminded me of a fractious two year old (I+U-) who was escalating demand over accounting his vulnerability. I wondered if I was reacting as his

primary other had and on allowing myself to put words to the feeling it sounded like this. "Stop bothering me, you will wait till I am ready." I noticed the dynamic pull into a negative controlling Parent state (I+U-) and the potential game invitation to persecute or rescue. With a beginning hypothesis I suspected Tom did not have a protective other from 6-18 months which resulted in both his defence of power over by demanding and his unmet needs for soothing and protection. I called Tom and used my integrated adult state (I+U+) to account the urgency of his calls and also the tone and emphasis of my voice to communicate my ability and willingness to hold the process between us.

When Tom arrived he told me he ran a very successful business and his time was precious. He described a workaholic script. His presenting problem was a crisis in his relationship and that his partner threatened to leave him. Again this reminded me of the two year old focussed on "Doing" in order to be powerful, with the shock of turning round to find the "other" had gone.

Tom's history revealed the same pattern at different stages. His mother had spent several weeks in hospital when Tom was 18 months old and she had died when Tom was 14. He had survived by taking control of his world and discounting his vulnerability. Also on exploring the history of Toms parents we could see aspects of the same dynamic and throughout his life there had been little or no contact when he was distressed. His family system demanded he "be strong" and as a result Tom never learned how to manage his vulnerability. Instead he moved very firmly into premature autonomy and learned how to use his power to control the scared and vulnerable child inside. By using the Identity Matrix Tom could see where the imbalance was in his life, he could see the fractal pattern that was repeating through several stages of his life, and his unrelenting physis (Berne 1957) or life force in choosing a partner who was capable of recreating with him the patterns of unintegrated experience and another chance to get his needs met.

The therapeutic relationship and the therapists' ability to attune to the client is central to the healing process. What happened in the relationship with primary carers becomes the template for future relationships with others and with self. What was done to me I do to myself, and what I do to myself can reveal the core issue or a fractal pattern which may even go back to the unresolved trauma of my ancestors.(Maddox,Schafe and Ressler. 2013)

In my third paper I will draw together some questions that arise for our TA community from these ideas. I will introduce the value of the matrix for supervision and expand on transgenerational trauma, intuition and parallel process through the lens of fractal patterns.

I close this second paper with a favourite quote from The Four Quartets by T S Elliot:

"We shall not cease from exploration

And the end of all our exploring

Will be to arrive where we started

And know the place for the first time"

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I + U -

Anger – Attack
Accepts limits of others.
Thinking 18 mths – 3 years
Avoidant attachment
Persecutor – Rescuer
Eliminates others
Homicide.

I + U +

Joy – Go towards
Accept good
Being 0 – 6 mths
Secure attachment
Negotiator
Accounts all.

I - U -

Sadness – Close up
Accepts limits of human
condition.
Identity – 3yrs – 6yrs
Disorganised attachment.
Bystander
Eliminates self & others.
Go crazy.

I - U +

Scare – Escape
Accepts own limits
Doing – 6 – 18 mths
Ambivalent attachment
Victim
Eliminates self
Suicide.