



Problematic Patterns Introduction

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This “dictionary” describes disorders that affect the behavioral, social interface, emotional, mental, and spiritual systems. Its “entry points” for seeking understanding of what is happening for the individual are disturbances, disruptions, disorganizations, disorientations or discombobulations in and/or from the individual’s functioning in four general areas.

These are:

- 1) their *behavioral/habitual/social* outputs,
- 2) their *emotional/attitudinal/evaluational* orientations,
- 3) their *cognitive/interpretive/spiritual* manifestations, and
- 4) their *wanting/willing/motivational* intentions.

Taken together, these difficulties in functioning represent the individual’s “Problematic Patterns.”

The sources for the entries in this “dictionary” are quite varied and rather exhaustive. Included are 1) the fundamental factorial dimensions underlying all of the trait names in the English Dictionary, 2) all the entries in the official psychiatric diagnostic system (the DSM-IV -- including the other culture disorders in the back of the DSM-IV) and 3) “0 to 3,” the Greenspan Committee work on early childhood psychopathology.

Also included are 4) the primary substance, process and experience addictions, 5) the patterns found in the author’s experience and research to underlie the “Jesness Behavior Checklist” profiles, 6) the 8 “object relations developmental arrest” personality patterns discovered by the author, 7) the 32 “family scripts” found in the author’s experience, and 8) the 55 types of children and the 35 staff characters encountered in child therapy programs as outlined by the author from his research.

In addition, there are 9) the patterns found in the criminal population by the author, 10) the “paranoid patriarchy” male and female “failure patterns” as delineated by the author, 11) Eric Berne’s “games,” 12) Claude Steiner’s “life-scripts,” 13) the “enneagram point” problematic manifestations, 14) the negative poles of the “chakras,” (the “division of labor” energy intake centers), 15) the “seven deadly sins,” and 16) the five “major mayas” (the “evils” of being “lost in the illusions of the world”).

Finally, there are the author’s 30 years of clinical experience and 25 overlapping years of sacred-secular integration training and practice, and the materials contained in the references. All together, these make a rather remarkably encompassing pool of “Problematic Patterns” with which to understand people, situations and needs.

Behavioral/emotional/cognitive/motivational/spiritual manifestations are a function of an interaction between the individual's soul qualities, their inherent biological resources, their destiny design, their standing on the three major genetic behavioral pattern determinants, (novelty-seeking, harm-avoidance and reward-dependence) and on the eleven temperamental dimensions (such as introversion-extraversion, irritability, ease of fear-induction, and mood swing propensity), and such inherent limitations as crippling, sensory handicaps, disfigurements or cognitive deficits.

All these in turn also interact with the family's culture, the life circumstances of the individual while they were a child, their family of origin's composition, the family members' personality processes and problematic patterns, the extended family's characteristics, the individual's environment and ethnic/cultural context during childhood, and the "age cohort" phenomena (world culture and events from the time they were conceived). The inter-relationships and interactions of all of these parameters generate patterns that have life-long consequences.

Still another source of problematic patterns is the impact of all this on the neurotransmitter conditions that result from the formative processes. Chronic and/or repeated traumatic experience patterns have specific impacts on the individual's neurotransmitters that tend to last throughout life.

Specifically, what has been found about the neurotransmitters is that:

- 1) Dopamine is lowered by joy-deprivation,
- 2) Norepinephrine is elevated by fear- and/or rage-induction,
- 3) Endorphine is lowered by love-deprivation, and
- 4) Serotonin is lowered by the induction of status-deprivation and powerlessness-generation.

What happens when "problematic patterns" develop is that the individual encounters a formative environment that requires that they develop non-optimal functioning strategies in order to meet their needs, to conform to the "injunctions" of the family, to prevent disaster to their loved ones, to deflect devastation, or in other ways to adapt themselves to the demands of their situation as they were growing up. And this interacts with the individual's Cosmic intentions to produce the outcomes encountered in the person's functioning.

What then occurs is that the individual experiences these survival and service requirements as emanating from the "Home Office" (All That Is), as a result of the "in loco Deity" reaction, in which children put God's face on their parents until they are about four.

The net effect is that they then "reach for God and get Godzilla," and they arrive at the illusionary conclusion that they have to get this thing straightened out with the "Home Office" (All That Is) between the "womb and the tomb," with the fear that if they don't, they will be annihilated by God.

The earlier the impact of the detrimental demands, the more "gut level convinced" the core of the operational ego of the person becomes of the "eternal verity" nature of their situation. This results in profound "inner child"-driven commitments to "make it all better" or to "pull whatever coals from the fire" that they can, as a "soul-saving" strategy.

This, in turn, sets off the quest for the "Golden Grail," for the "God Housekeeping Seal of Approval," for the "pardon from the Gov." That is, they start seeking to put an end to their "cursed condition" by "doing the right thing according to God," as they experience it.

The “right thing” is defined by the hoped for outcome of their parents’ responding to their efforts by “changing their tune,” so that the individual no longer has to do the deviant or detrimental pattern to be acceptable “in the eyes of God” (or, more correctly, in the eyes of “Godzilla”). Unfortunately, that is tantamount to trying to put a smile on that lizard’s face. Rotsa ruck!

The individual therefore keeps trying to find the “magic key” to “unlock his/her behavioral prison” by earning the “God Housekeeping Seal of Approval” from their parents. However, since the situation usually is the resultant of the inherent entrenched problematic patterns of the parents, the individual never succeeds in this desperate undertaking. The reality is that no child or offspring can ever cure their parents’ neuroses.

This reality then sets off three further processes that serve to maintain the pattern. One of them is the “trying to put a new ending on the old story” effect. In this process, they “selectively electro-magnetically” attract and are attracted to people, systems, relationships and situations that repeat the original formative process at the experiential level, as the individual tries to bring to bear all their most recently acquired resources to the “Great Quest.”

As they do so, all but the most damaged also apply what they have learned from their preceding attempts to screen out from the reactions of their audience what they have learned is “deadly poison.” Nevertheless, they are still seeking the impossible and the same old ending results again and again. This is the “repetition compulsion” that Freud talked about.

The second process that gets set in motion by the fact that it is impossible to cure your parents is the “self-fulfilling prophesy” effect. That is, the individual has adapted to their formative environment’s requirements with extremely high stakes involved. So when they leave that environment to go into the neighborhood, the school, the community, the workplace and intimate relationships, they take that pattern with them.

The net effect of that is that those who then encounter the individual are presented with a rigidly entrenched and vigorously defended functioning problematic pattern. This, in turn, strongly determines how the environment reacts to the individual.

The unavoidable outcome is that they end up shaping their ecology to re-create the family environment, which, in turn, re-validates their experience that the world is just like their family. They then seek to “convert” their environment in the same way they do or did with their family, with the same dreary results.

The third pattern that gets set in motion by this situation is the “gambler’s fallacy” effect. Here, the individual encounters the fact that unless what they are doing is so gross as to totally turn people away or against them, they will inevitably get a certain proportion of their functioning supported by the environment as a result of the fact that the environment’s reactions are multi-determined, and people don’t realize they are ending up supporting a detrimental pattern in the individual with their reactions to the individual.

That, in turn, means that only a small part of the social reactions in response to what the individual does is directly determined by the social environment’s functioning. In other words, the human ecology has many, many things to track and react to, only one piece of which is the individual’s behavior at a given moment.

And that fact creates the “Las Vegas syndrome” of the individual’s keeping at any response that occasionally pays off. Indeed, this tendency is so strong that it can maintain a pattern for years against great negative ultimate outcomes. Unfortunately, this also results in continuously repeated re-validations of the individual’s underlying beliefs, motivations and “repetition compulsion” processes that are involved in their problematic patterns.

Above and beyond these sustaining processes are the underlying psychodynamic factors. What happens here is that the individual comes to various profound conclusions about who and what they are, who other people are, what the world and ultimately what the Universe/Cosmos is all about, and what their relationships to all of that are.

These “premises” or “foundational assumptions” become the individual’s “existential orientation” -- the organizing cognitions about how everything is -- their *meaning* and *interpretation* system. This is the basis of their “reading-taking” process in response to what they experience, so that everything that happens is framed in terms of these “illusional conclusions and delusions” arising originally in their survival and success struggles in their formative environment.

The result is that they live in their own reality, a reality which varies from “consensual reality” to the degree that their formative environment was distorted by detrimental circumstances and by the neurotic needs and patterns of their family. And that, in turn, generates a super-structure of functioning systems that determine everything the individual does.

Which means that any threat to their foundational premises will activate profound reverberation reactions throughout their entire life. This makes for a highly conservative system that changes only with massive reassurance that it won’t result in calamitous Cosmic outcomes, and with clear promises that things will be far, far better in the long run. Not to mention that these “foundational premises” are also constantly re-validated by the “gambler’s fallacy effect.”

The patterns contained in this “dictionary” are largely the resultants of the dynamics of the “isolated nuclear family.” That is, a parents-and-children unit living in a separate dwelling seeking to meet all their personal and intimate life needs with each other.

Although the pair-bonded parents and children are a basic biological unit, the evolutionary origins of our characteristics involved a free-flowing community-wide involvement in the physical, emotional, mental, social and spiritual sustenance and formative processes by all the individuals in the community.

The separation of the bonded nuclear unit from the rest of the community began with the agricultural revolution, and it has reached disastrous completeness with the urban industrial culture’s isolated nuclear family.

The responsibilities that used to be carried by the entire community now have to be somehow handled by the bonded unit all by itself. This is a biologic impossibility, and the result has been a deteriorating manifestation that is passed on and compounded from generation to generation in the confines of the “castle.”

We simply must and will re-open the portals of the family to the community and vice versa, or we will perish as a species. And it has to be done in the context of mutual commitment and a fundamental foundation of impeccable integrity and heart-centeredness as the fabric of the human condition, without which we will only end up with the “lowest common denominator” outcomes of the commune, the ashram and other intentional communities as they have played out in the past.

In the meantime, though, the distorted patterns that are “abnormally” generated by the restricted resources of the isolated nuclear family are profoundly and pervasively ingrained and sustained by our present circumstances and cultures.

The only way to correct the damage engendered by our origins is to work on ourselves from within. By paying attention to what our dysfunctional patterns are and noting what trips them off, what sustains them, and what drives them from within, we can begin a genuine liberation and revolution in our lives.

In other words, the basic message here is that “IT ALL MAKES SENSE!” What appear to be “magical mystery tour” arbitrary, capricious, inexplicable and pernicious patterns is actually the resultant of profound formative and preservative processes that *can* be understood and overcome. The overall purpose, then, of this “dictionary” is to foster what could be characterized as “**COMPASSIONATE COMPREHENSION.**”

Closely allied with this purpose is its effect on your “automatic pilot” tendency to “play into” these patterns with the person, so that you unintentionally and unconsciously end up furthering and sustaining their “problematic patterns.”

This arises both out of the multi-dimensional nature of social interaction that generates the “gambler’s fallacy” outcome, and out of the “self-fulfilling prophesy” and “behavior chain completion” effects of eliciting from the individual the next steps in their sequence of functioning from moment to moment as we seek to relate to everything that is happening -- including the individual’s behavior.

Given this compassionate comprehension, it is far less likely that such an outcome will occur, or if it does, you’ll catch it much quicker. It has the effect of “breaking the behavioral/interpersonal chain” of the patterns. That, in turn, has the effect of “cutting the pattern off at the pass” a lot of the time. And that saves a lot of grief for both you and them.