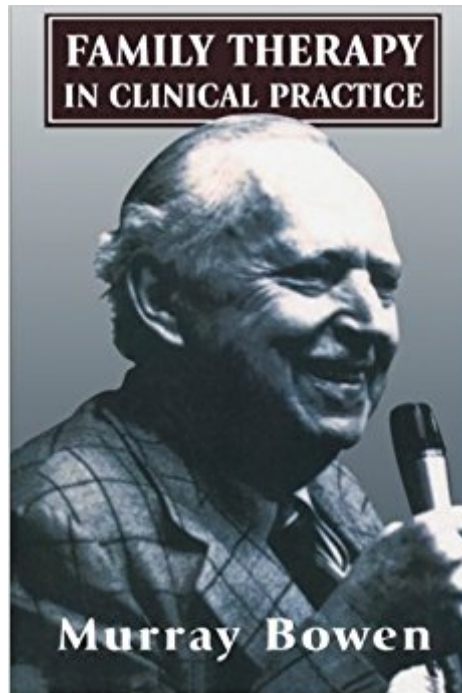




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# Family Therapy In Clinical Practice



## Synopsis

When Bowen was a student and practitioner of classical psychoanalysis at the Menninger Clinic, he became engrossed in understanding the process of schizophrenia and its relationship to mother-child symbiosis. Between the years 1950 and 1959, at Menninger and later at the National Institute of Mental Health (as first chief of family studies), he worked clinically with over 500 schizophrenic families. This extensive experience was a time of fruition for his thinking as he began to conceptualize human behavior as emerging from within the context of a family system. Later, at Georgetown University Medical School, Bowen worked to extend the application of his ideas to the neurotic family system. Initially he saw his work as an amplification and modification of Freudian theory, but later viewed it as an evolutionary step toward understanding human beings as functioning within their primary network—their family. One of the most renowned theorist and therapist in the field of family work, this book encompasses the breadth and depth of Bowen's contributions. It presents the evolution of Bowen's Family Theory from his earliest essays on schizophrenic families and their treatment, through the development of his concepts of triangulation, intergenerational conflict and societal regression, and culminating in his brilliant exploration of the differentiation of one's self in one's family of origin.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I highly recommend this rich, insightful, warm, and reflective book, not only to those interested in family therapy but to all who must consider the family nexus in their work with their patients or

clients. (Maurice R. Green Journal Of The American Academy Of Psychoanalysis and Dynamic Psychiatry) A stimulating theoretical exploration of the process of individual development within the family and the subsequent influence of this on society. [I] would recommend it as being of interest to professionals engaged in enabling individuation in various circumstances, from families [and] organizations to the elderly. (James Atkinson The British Journal of Psychiatry) One of the fathers of family therapy, Murray Bowen is both a pioneer and a chronicler. In publishing his collected papers, he traces the development of his theory from his 1950s research on families of schizophrenics, to his experiment in differentiating himself from his own [professional] family, to his method of working with the family of origin rather than the nuclear family. His book is a historical treasure. (Marianne RichÃfÂ©, Menninger Foundation)

This is a great book to get great clarity on Bowen's own thoughts regarding his underlying presuppositions, his theoretical development, and changing process of adapting techniques as his theory developed. A must-read for understanding Bowen at a deeper level!

Murray Bowen was one of the major thought leaders for the Family Systems Movement that grew to dominance in the 1950s, '60s and '70s. Bowen had a "conviction that the human mind could be as much of a science as the rest of the human." (Bowen and Kerr, Family Evaluation, 1988, p.347) Psychoanalytic Theory, the prevailing paradigm to that point, originated with the work of Sigmund Freud. Groundbreaking and brilliant, Freud's thinking was rooted in mythology, literature, medical and cultural ideas of his day. Unlike Freud, who developed his ideas about the family from listening to individual patients' perceptions, Bowen observed entire families with as little clinical interference as possible. In this book, Bowen has "described the disciplined effort to select consistent theoretical concepts that might someday conceptualize emotional illness as a product of that part of man he shares with the lower forms of life." (FTCP, xiv) He developed his Eight Concepts through scrupulous observation of families, without the advantage of modern scientific techniques to augment his thinking. The Eight Concepts are increasingly being validated through advances in biology, anthropology, neuroscience and other specialties, although Bowen still integrates systems thinking and the other natural sciences in a unique way. He himself said that it "may be a century or two before we can have a science of human behavior, but the potential is present (Bowen and Kerr, Family Evaluation, 1988, p.354). This is a must-read for any serious student of Family Systems Theory and also highly recommended for anyone who works in mental health. Many organizations use BFST as a guide to human functioning and leadership in systems. Reading Bowen's original

thinking remains the best way to learn the theory.

Everyone using Bowen Family Systems theory either in their professional practice (therapy) or for exploring one's own family history will love this book. It is not always the easiest but after you read and reread it becomes so clear that what Dr. Bowen was thinking revolutioned family therapy in the 50's. There is a large following of Dr. Bowen's admirers, and of course those who buy the book usually know about the Bowen Center in Georgetown, Washington DC, which is still the hub for those wishing to continue studying Dr. Bowen and his theory. A book to read and a book to have as a forever current reference book.

I have worked with a hard copy of this book since the 1980s when I became acquainted with it. I finally ordered the electronic version of it for my Kindle App and it is fabulous. I have accomplished in a very short period of time review of particular subject areas. In the hard copy it took days to do a limited version of the same work. This is a basic reference book on Bowen theory and its applications as they stood at the time of publication. Bowen continued work throughout his life (he died in 1990). I believe my familiarity with the hard copy of the book was important to my doing the most recent searches. However, without the e-version of the book, I could not have achieved the clarity of insight across the full sweep of the material in the 1978 book, which for the most part consists of previously published papers across over two decades of research into the theory and its applications. Pat Comella

The beauty of Bowen's theory of family dynamics is it's simplicity. Long before the terms codependent were ever written, Bowen used the terms Fusion and Differentiation to describe the human dance in separating emotion and logic. Bowen's concepts are not only applicable to families but are applicable to organizations and even relations between nation states. I give great credence to many postmodern philosophies that have developed in the field of Marriage and Family therapy, however I do not think that we can ever underestimate the enormous contribution that Murray Bowen gave to us in understanding how individuals develop within the family system!

Excellent resource for the study of Bowen/systems theory. Bowen writes in a concise and accessible manner, never too jargon-y or clinical. I've been tending to read it as one reads a bible or other dense collection - a little at a time, with much thought and potential underlining involved. Highly recommended for students of Bowen theory.

This book is gripping. I am reading it as I would a novel--cover to cover. Bowen was the first to look at schizophrenia as a family disease. Then, he applied the family therapy concept to mood disorders as well. The book is well written. It is a compilation of many papers, so the reader finds important concepts are repeated. This helps me to remember those important concepts. This one stays in my library for future reference.

This was a gift for my husband. He has spent a great deal of time reading this from cover to cover. He keeps telling me how GREAT and HELPFUL this book has been.

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