

**ADOPTION
RESOURCE
MAPS**

2005

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ADOPTION RESOURCE MAPS Keith C Griffith 2005

ADOPTION

RESOURCE MAPS

Adoption Circle Members Journey in Strange Lands with no Maps

These Maps are compiled from experiences of well travelled Adoption Support Groups

Adoption Island Chart
Adoption Land
Adoptive Parent Land
Adopted Person Land.
Birth Father Land
Birth Mother Land
Conception Land
Defence Land
Fantasy Land
Fiction Land

Forgiveness Land
Ghost Land
Grief Land
Limbo Land
Myth Land
Pity Party Land
Rejection Land
Reunion Land
Search Land

Sibling Land
Spouse Land
Telling Land
Trauma Land
Veto Land
Victim Land
Wholeness Land
Openness
Conflict

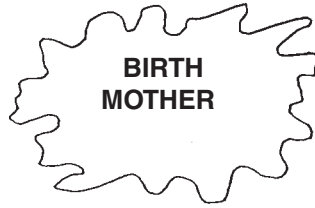
ADOPTION RESOURCE 2005

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ADOPTION ISLANDS CHART



**ADOPTIVE
PARENTS**



**BIRTH
MOTHER**



REJECTION



**GHOST
LAND**

**CONCEPTION
LAND**

**BIRTH
FATHER**



**ADOPTED
PERSON**



**REUNION
LAND**

**SIBLING
LAND**

**PITY PARTY
LAND**

**TRAUMA
LAND**

**MYTH
LAND**

**VICTIM
LAND**

**LIMBO
LAND**

**SPOUSE
LAND**

**FANTASY
LAND**

**SEARCH
LAND**

**VETO
LAND**

When complete will draw in all islands

ADOPTION HEALING RESOURCE

A resource kit for Adoption Support Groups and Counsellors, to facilitate their work.

- Adaptable to a wide range of group work and counselling methods.
- Provides a safe, effective communication.
- Facilitates group formation.
- Enables participants to focus on specific issues.
- System can be explained in a few minutes.
- First time participants find it easy to use.
- Requires no special skills.
- Requires no written skills.
- It is non-threatening.
- Each person puts themselves on the map at the place of their choice.
- Each person tells their own their story.
- Enables persons to identify and declare their core issues by pointing to an Island.
- If its not on a map put it in or create a new Land.
- They can point to a place on the island that identifies a specific aspect of their core issue.
- All participants set their own priorities.
- Provides powerful, natural non verbal messages as people stand up in front of the group and physically put their finger on, and identify with specific core issues.
- It is a facilitating tool that can be used when and if required, or discarded at any point in a group meeting or counselling session.

- Minimal cost- maps can be photocopied or used in over head projection systems.

The SYSTEM

Maps

A series islands, each named after a core adoption issue. The present series include.

Adopted Person Land.	Adoptive Parent Land
Birth Father Land	Birth Mother Land
Conception Land	Fantasy Land
Ghost Land	Limbo Land
Myth Land	Pity Party Land
Rejection Land	Reunion Land
Search Land	Sibling Land
Spouse Land	Trauma Land
Veto Land	Victim Land
Grief Land	Forgiveness Land

Map detail

Each Land has bays, points, mountains, tracks, features, and boxes; named after specific aspects, experiences and options relevant to the Lands Name. Thus the "Rejection Land" map, reveals many specific details, aspects and options relating to rejection issues in adoption. A participant may point to any of these features as a way to open up their experience.

Boxes

contain stories, statements and feelings. They provide a safe way for a person to open up a specific subject. What they find a box, and what they reveal is entirely up to them. They are free to shut the lid on the box at any time.

HOW TO USE

Support Group Meetings-

- A selection of Islands can be pasted up on a large display board in front of the group.
- Participants are invited to come up and point to some of the islands they have visited on their adoption journey. If it's not on the map draw it in.

- They may draw in and share some aspect of their journey. Each person uses a different coloured pen.
- The exercise enables everyone to put themselves on the map at a point they feel comfortable with.
- They also see how they link in with other experiences in the group.
- This accelerates the group formation by revealing common interests, resources and experience contained in the group.
- each person has revealed something significant about themselves to each other.
- people by putting themselves on the map, gives them a real sense of belonging.
- the map journeys reveal the story of the group.
- Preserves confidentiality- no personal names are on the map. Just coloured lines of journeys.
- It is helpful for new members if a previous chart of the group is shown, it's voyages portray the wide ranges of experiences and resources in the group.

Counselling

- Aides clients to tell their story.
- Most clients find it easier to show a person on a map the places they have visited or experienced.
- The map places before a client of whole range experiences and options as valid places to be.
- If its on the map they know they are not alone.
- If their position or experience is named on the map it helps them own and validate it.
- Moves clients away from generalities to focus on specific core issues.

- When a client places their finger on the map indicating the area they want to work on, it gives a clear mandate and focus to the counselling.
- Clients can mark in their voyage as counselling proceeds- a helpful log for client and counsellor.

SUPPORT GROUPS

No Adoption Support Group will function effectively unless there is a climate of support.

To self-disclose, confront and work through the core issues requires real support at real depth.

When faced with the more dramatic dimensions of others pain, joy, grief, fears, anger, highs and lows, we are often clumsy and ineffective. We often fumble around, babble inanities and cliché's, or take refuge in silence.

Helpful Supportive Behaviour

1. Total listening

Listen to the whole person

— Do not listen just with your ears, listen with your eyes and feelings and touch.

— Become aware of all the cues a person emits, be open to the totality of communication.

— Listen to sounds, listen to silences.

— Listen to your own emotional reactions or discord.

— The face is the primary site of communicative feeling. Note how often we slap, hide, stimulate, support and caress our faces with our hands.

Listen to the whole message

— No one likes listening to long speeches. Even with very short speeches we often jump to conclusions. "Yes, Yes, I know just how you feel", "You have no need to tell me, I know".

— We round off messages to suit ourselves.

— We modify messages to what we expect to hear or twist them to agree with our

own ideas.

— We push things into black and white categories because it is very difficult to file generalities, or messages we have no file for.

— Whatever is received is received according to the state, condition or bias of the receiver.

Active listening

— Passive listening is not enough.

— We must seek to reach out in active concern and sensitivity.

— It's only as I understand your deeper thoughts and feelings, no matter, how delightful or bizarre, and see them as you see them, and accept them and you, will you feel free to explore them with me.

Social intelligence in listening

— A feel for people in context of their life style.

— Ability to involve yourself creatively and responsibly.

— Personal involvement rather than mere intellectual interest.

Some obstacles to effective listening

— External Preoccupation 'Yes, I'm listening to you', but at the same time doing or thinking about something else.

— Self Centredness I am listening to you but really thinking about myself- keep interrupting, 'Oh That reminds me of me- or my...'

— Anxiety If I am upset, your messages will be distorted. I can not listen fully if I am trying to cope with myself.

— Group filtering Group pressure can have a very distorting effect if certain subjects are taboo, we tend to comply

rather than speak out.

The effective listener

— Tries to combat, the variety of obstacles stemming from within themselves and from the group.

— Conveys to the speaker you have listened fully, intelligently, with empathy, not prejudging their remarks.

— Conveys they are listening actively and intelligently.

Translates hearing into effective interaction

Effective listeners do not merely amass information, they also respond. Response may be:-

(a) direct supportive behaviour

(b) self disclosure

(c) expression or feeling and emotion

(d) some form of confrontation. All of these carried out responsibly are supportive. It's not only lack of insight into self that characterises the person in emotional trouble, but also lack of insight into others. If we are poorly aware of others our interactions with them are often awkward and self-defeating.

2 Interpersonal Warmth

The need begins before birth and is strongly felt throughout our whole life span.

A great problem of many intensive groups is they fail to supply sufficient support, to enable members to cope with the stresses they generate.

Fear of non-support is one of the greatest fears of those contemplating group work.

We need to know we are wanted, liked and loved in some ways and others want to share the good in us and we of them.

3 Direct and Indirect Encouragement

— Lead the way

Don't expect new group members to open up if you won't put yourself on the line. Experienced members who lead off with genuine work encourage others to follow.

— Reinforcement

When a person does make the effort to participate acknowledge the significance of it personally.

— Unconditional acceptance and support

It means a refusal to exercise various sorts of control over the other, a refusal to demand that his/her life-style conform, generally or in specific aspects to one's own.

I accept you as you are for what you are.

It means active love and concern that includes care, respect, and the desire to further the life of the other.

Such acceptance and love disregards status, for it is love between equals.

People must respect each other in the mysteriousness of their personalities. There must be mutual trust and availability.

— Acceptance not synonymous with approval

It does not mean that I have to approve of all you do.

We feel strong support from the person who accepts us for what we are instead of what they think we should be.

— Friendship

May be defined in terms of availability. Friends are mutually available, the degree of availability determines the strength and depth of the relationship. One can therefore only have a few

sustained friendships in depth at any one time. Availability must not be exploited by demanding inordinate time.

— **Mutual Trust**

Trust is absolutely essential for growth. Little happens in a group until members learn to trust one another. The quickest way to build trust in a group is to entrust yourself to them. As you overcome your own fears and caution it encourages others.

4 Failures in Support

— **Cliche' Ritual Support**

"I know how you feel" "Is there anything I can do?" "You must, feel awful!". The problem with ritual support is, it's *not* supportive. Non-cliche' support is difficult because it involves your emotional commitment and involvement.

— **No emotional response**

It's fruitless to engage in logical socialised dialogue with someone who is suffering. It's better to give of our emotions and cry with those who cry and rejoice with those who rejoice.

— **Cheap Empathy**

Those who rush in under the motto "I'm always on your side". In contrast authentic support does not mean 'propping the other up', it means being 'with' especially when the other person is, trying to come to grips with some of the more dramatic dimensions of life, positive or negative. Only those not afraid of full interaction with the other can provide a wide range of support.

— **Questions**

Sometimes a group does not know how to support a person and turns to questions. If support does not go beyond interesting questions not much can be achieved.

— **Red Crossing**

Some people just have to rush to the aid of anyone showing stress and try to defuse the situation. This is not much support for the person who is trying to get their feelings out, and ends up with them bandaged in.

— **Silence**

Those who only sit and wait. It is difficult to engage in self-disclosure in front of people who won't respond.

— **Social pleasantries and counterfeits**

Unfortunately groups can run for a long time, on, social pleasantness and counterfeits of support. Support counterfeits-

(a) Tend to make the group comfortable and participants tend to lose that edge of anxiety that serves to stir meaningful interaction.

(b) Confronting and working through personal core issues diminishes, becomes ineffective or disappears entirely. Genuine support normally opens up into more participation at depth and real growth action.

KCG Adopted Persons Resource Notes.

ADOPTED PERSON LAND

Adopted persons are normal people, subjected to some abnormal situations and stresses. Their experiences need to be understood and validated.

Adoption isn't a concept to be learned, a theory to be understood, or an idea to be developed. It is a real life experience about which adopted persons, have had and are continuing to have constant and conflicting feelings, all of which are legitimate.

The main source of support and healing comes from sharing and caring between adopted persons, and within the wider adoption circle. There is also a need for specialised counselling and support services, when required.

35 CORE ADOPTION ISSUES

Abandonment	Loss
Adoptive parents	Marriage
Anger	Myths
Anti social behaviour	Numbing
Birth parents	Primal wound
Attachment & Bonding	Rejection
Boundaries	Reunion
Control	Search
Defence mechanism	Secrecy
Fantasy	Sexuality
Fiction	Siblings
Forgiveness	Telling
Ghost Kingdom	Trauma
Grief	Trust
Guilt/Shame/Blame	Victim
Identity	Wholeness & Healing
Intimacy	
Legal fiction	
Limbo	

See "Adopted Person Resource" for full details

There is a need for resource material, that adopted persons become not only survivors but thrivers.

This paper does not discuss the pros and cons of adoption but deals with the reality of what is.

SELF IDENTITY

'Who am I?'

Self-identity is the essence or core being of a person. Our Self-identity supplies the drive and coordination to live, grow, achieve, love and have relationships. Self-identity is a key factor in self-esteem and wholeness.

Adopted persons face a more complex search for self. Ability to cope with different life situations or enter relationships is largely dependent on the strength and quality of our self-identity. Adopted persons often have a Swiss cheese identity- holes in it.

The Adoptive Self A person adopted into a closed adoption is shaped by its myths, secrets, taboos and denials. Denied their *Original self* they adapt by developing an *Adopted self*.

All adopted persons have a divided self. It is an inevitable consequence of the adoption process. The split between genetic reality and adoptive reality. Birth parents provided every gene in their body, genetic personality traits and the first nine months of nurturing. Adoptive parents then take over the full nurturing role. Resilient adopted persons come to terms with the reality of their dual origins and divided self. They seek and obtain the truth of their origins, reconcile their duality and affirm their true self-identity.

Self Identity Structure

Physical Who do I look like? Adoptees look

in a mirror not knowing where the face that stares back comes from.

Genetic Inherited genes determine our physical being and much of our personality.

Sexual maturity in adopted persons stirs up questions and fantasies on the mystery of their birth.

Medical Many medical conditions are genetic. Ignorance can prove fatal.

Social Adopted persons experience minority status and discriminatory laws re birth and social identity.

Cultural Cross-cultural adopted persons experience cultural conflicts.

Psychic/religious Adopted persons may span conflicting religious beliefs.

Dual identity- two worlds

Two people Adopted persons may feel like two persons, the adoptive self and the original self.

Two sets of parents Adopted persons must integrate two sets of parents within their self-identity structure.

Two mothers Adoptive persons normally have two real mothers, born to one and nurtured by the other.

Two fathers Adoptive persons normally have two real fathers.

Two names Adopted persons have birth names and adoptive names.

Two birth certificates Adopted persons have an original birth certificate and an adoptive birth certificate.

Two family trees Adopted persons perch ambivalent on two family trees.

Two cultures Transracial adopted persons,

search for identity is a Bi-cultural journey.

Two clans The adopted persons full extended family includes the whole *birth clans* of birth father and mother, plus their whole *adopted clan*. Both clans have their own culture, traditions, values and history.

Effects of dual identity

Alienation If parts of the Self are denied or suppressed we become more dysfunctional and alienate Self.

Isolation A person forced to suppress or deny parts of Self finds it difficult to develop a sense of belonging.

Diffusion Dual identity makes commitment to a particular identity, or set of moral values difficult.

Dissociation Separation of parts of Self can create multiple personalities.

Disavowal There is no healthy sense of Self if you must disavow reality.

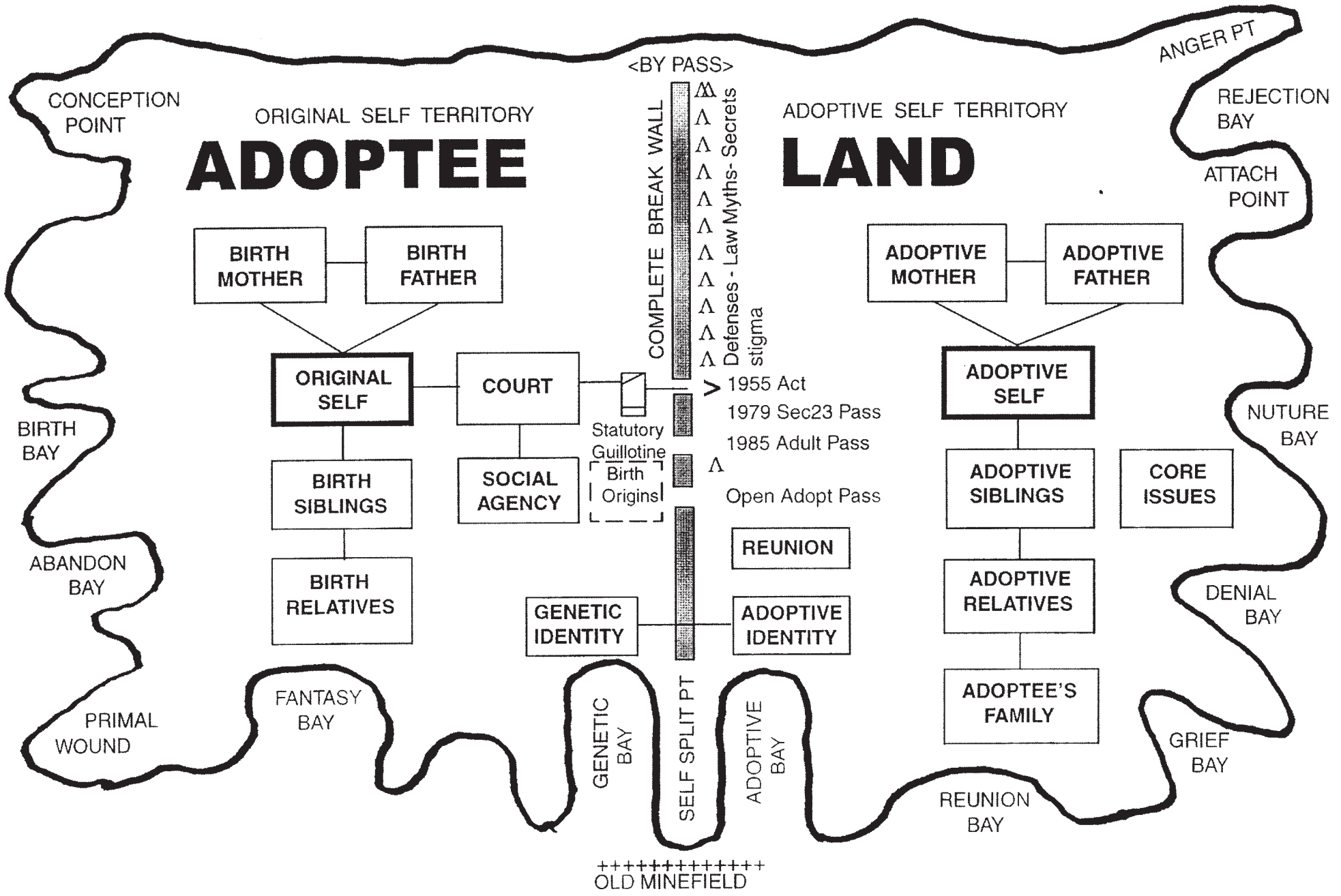
Splitting The tension of holding two self identities may cause a split apart.

Ambivalence Dual identity with dual value systems creates ambivalence in decision making.

Numbing Conflicts in the divided Self may drive feelings underground and numb out for protection- switch off.

Being and not being For some purposes the adopted person is the child of the adoptive parents, and for others the child of birth parents. Can never fully belong to either.

Abandonment Already abandoned by the birth mother, the adopted child may feel no choice but to abandon her, but in so doing, abandons part of their real Self.



ADOPTED PERSON LAND 2

Reintegration of Self

The adopted persons task of integrating their Self requires- that the Original Self be recovered, accepted and integrated to achieve wholeness.

Search

The ultimate act of testing reality. A journey toward your unknown parents and your unknown self. Every search has a life of its own, but also something happens to the searcher. Slowly, and painfully, we learn a great deal about yourself.

Reunion

“The search and reunion constitutes the adopted persons attempt to repair a sense of loss, relive the sense of disadvantage, con-

ADOPTED PERSON DUAL IDENTITY

Original Self

Also called-
**True Self or
Forbidden Self**

Components

- 1 Birth parents
- 2 Conception
- 3 Sex gender
- 4 Abandonment
- 5 Birth name
- 6 Prenatal nurturing
- 7 Prenatal bonding
- 8 Genetic identity
- 9 Physical identity
- 10 Personality traits
- 11 Hidden family
- 12 Ghost kingdom
- 13 Fantasy land
- 14 Forbidden Self
- 15 Illegitimate Self
- 16 Lost ones

COMPLETE BREAK ADOPTION WALL

Components

- Adoptive parents
- Chosen child
- Chosen gender
- Acceptance
- Adoptive name
- Postnatal nurturing
- Adoptive attachment
- Genetic expression
- Physical expression
- Personality expression
- Visible family
- Host kingdom
- Reality land
- Acceptable Self
- Legitimated Self
- Found ones

Adoptive Self

Also Called-
**False Self or
Artificial Self**

Search → Reunion → Integration

ADOPTIVE PARENTS BOX

Reunion, thoughts, feelings, hopes. -pressure on adopted person.

- Fears- see fear box details.
- Some choose to be part of reunion.
- Some retreat to a safety zone.
- Some pretend it never happened.
- One may support, other oppose.
- Some parents feel its safer to become part of the reunion than fight it.
- Some friends may fear parental support will wreck the adoption.
- Some see reunion as legally wrong, morally unjust and feel betrayed.
- Reactivates infertility grief and loss.
- Reunion can raise their worst fears.
- Fears- see fear box details.
- Some shocks to absorb...
- Reunion breaches closed adoption.
- Invisible BPs deghosted and visible.
- Our child now has two real families
- Our child now has four real parents
- We have to accept new realities.
- The reunion is no transitory thing but an ever after relationship.

Positive-

- Faces the inevitable reality that an adopted child has two families.
- Facing it as a whole family can bring every one closer to gether.
- The adoptive parents always remain part of the adopted person's psyche.
- Reunion strips away denial of differ.
- Reunion normally enchances the adopted parents relationships with their adopted person.
- They feel they are 'real parents' if not the 'exclusive ones.

ADOPTIVE PARENT LAND

GRIEF BAY

GRIEF
Box

TWO
MOTHERS
Box

TWO
FATHERS
Box

BIRTH
FATHER
Box

FEAR BAY

B FATHER BAY

INFERTILITY
Box

GENE
Box

TELLING
Box

REUNION BAY

ATTACHMENT

OPEN
ADOPTION
Box

B MOTHER BAY

NO DIFFERENCE
BAY

DENIAL
Box

ACKNOWLEDGE
DIFFERENCE
Box

BIRTH
MOTHER
Box

BIRTH MOTHER LAND GUIDE

Population

This Land is has a large resident population of about 90,000. Ages range from 13 to 100. They come from the whole strata of society- all cultural, sporting, entertainment and religious groups are well represented.

Membership

They normally prefer to be incognito, but some small groups are now meeting openly.

Travel

Birth mothers' travel around the adoption islands. Grief Land and Limbo Land are popular resorts. Between 1955-1985 Government agents tried to place a complete ban on travel between Birth mother Land and Adopted Persons Land and refused all visas. However, since 1985 the Government has lifted its ban and allows travel by adults only, with a visa and no vetos. Some 35,000 adopted persons or birth mothers have now applied for and been issued with travel permits.

BOX CONTENTS

It's entirely your choice which boxes you ignore, acknowledge, open or shut. What you do with the contents and what you share is your decision.

Boxes may contain strong feelings.

Affirm What people affirm in me. Who I affirm. What I affirm in myself.

Awaken The pain and dysfunction I recognise, own, and seek resolve.

BF Birth father, the person, relationship, conflict and resolve.

Consent The story of my consent to adop-

tion and its effects.

Defences Self protection devices- repression, disassociation, denial, intellectualising, projecting, disowning, avoidance and numbing.

Denial is the shock absorber of the soul. The feelings and reality I denied.

False Self The self I constructed to protect myself, survive, and conform to the expectation of others.

Forgive Who I have forgiven and not forgiven. Who has forgiven or not- me.

Grief All the losses I have experienced and my response to them.

Guilt The guilt I experienced, guilt I overcame and guilt I retain.

Hospital My experience of confinement, birth and nurturing my child.

Marital My marriage or solo, family and impact of relinquishing a child.

Parents My parents, my relationship with them, past and present.

Relinquish My experience of relinquishing my child.

Renew Reintegration of self, new goals and purpose in life.

Shame The shame I experienced, shame I overcame and shame I retain.

Sibling How my children cope with the relinquishment and reunion.

Social Agency My experience of social workers and those who arranged the adoption.

Survival The tactics I used to survive the adoption experience.

Victim Victims of adoption, and those still locked in the victim mode.

Wish List My wishes and hopes.

RECOVERY

Seven Steps- Carlini-

1 Denial The first stage is to overcome denial that you have an emotional problem with relinquishment.

2 Survival We learn to deny, adapt and survive relinquishment. The True Self becomes buried in shame, and sadness in the subconscious mind. A False Self is created to pretend all is OK, and convince yourself giving up the baby was the best thing to do.

3 Awakening Looking inside and acknowledging the pain. When you "awaken" you go through a catharsis of anger, sorrow, resentment, self-hatred, remorse and shame. This can open a way to love and acceptance.

4 Grief is an ongoing process enabling us to accept, cope and adjust to our losses. The trauma of losing your child needs validation by a Support group, friend, or counsellor. Anger, sadness, hurt, shame have to be expressed and worked through.

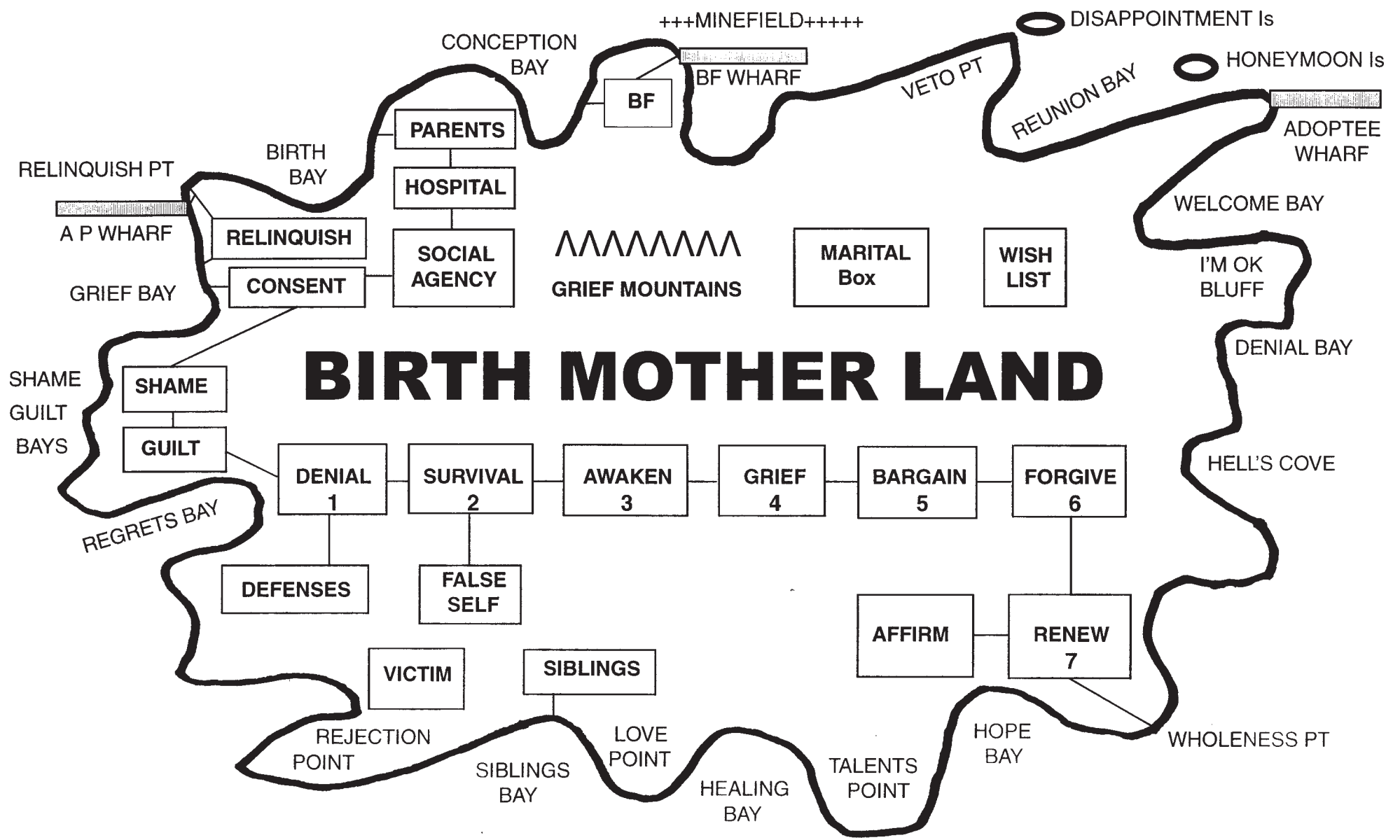
5 Bargain Empathy for other birth mothers is awakened, sharing your stories and feelings. You bargain with God or yourself, promising if you can make it through the healing process, you will help others do it.

6 Forgive Forgiving yourself and others involved in the relinquishment. Resentment causes you to replay old tapes over and over in the mind. Forgiveness, gives you permission to let go of the past and live in the present.

7 Renewal Having worked through the dysfunctional parts of your life; there comes healing that allows you become fully functional again. You learn new coping skills. You are aware of your emotional responses. You learn to nurture yourself, set goals and recover your

True Self.

Resource For a comprehensive program for birth mother recovery- See- "Birth Mother Trauma" Heather Carlini. 1997 Mourning Side Publications. PO Box 21071 Saanichton BC Canada V8M 2C4.



BIRTH FATHER LAND GUIDE

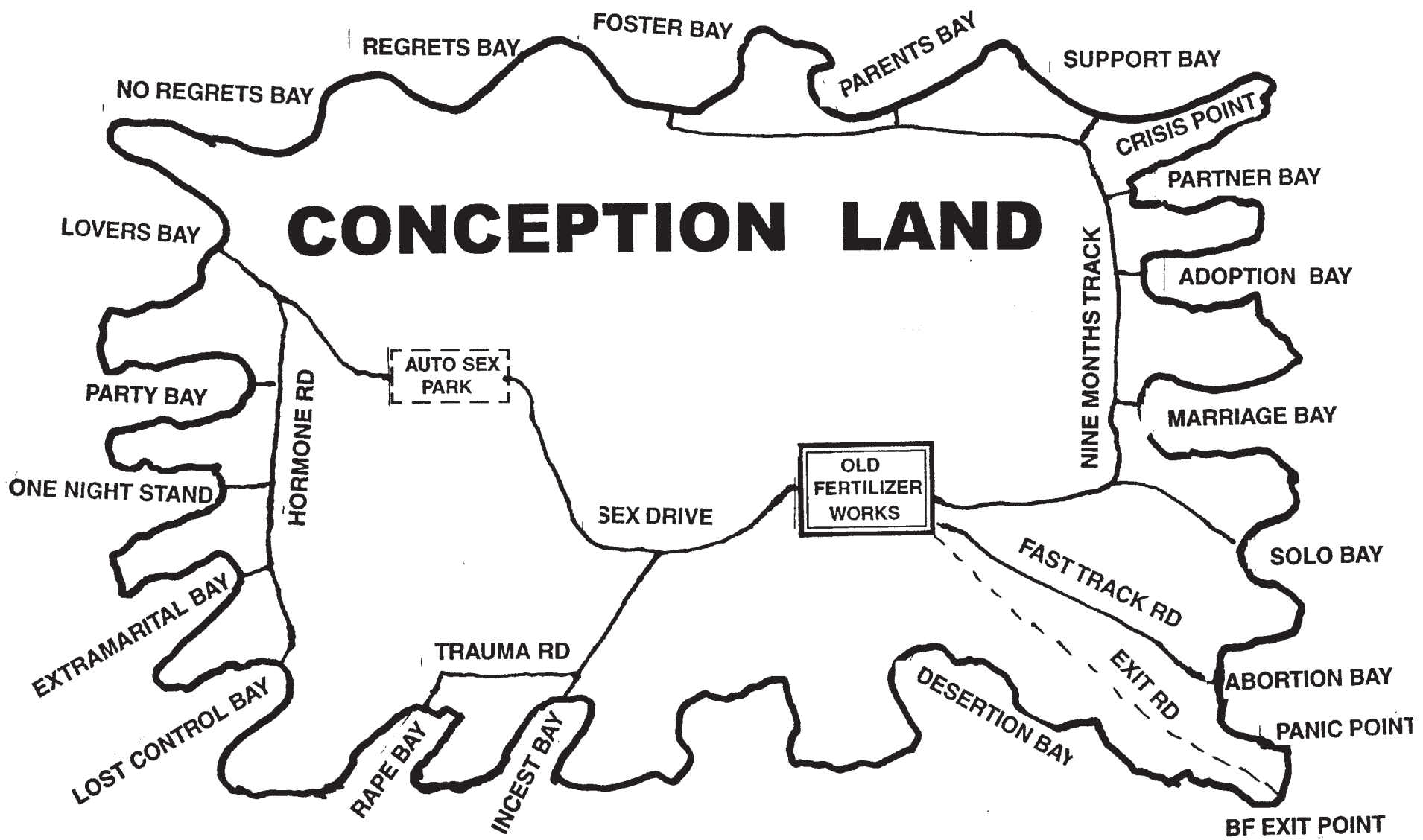
BIRTH FATHER BOX

At best, he is viewed as a mystery man, at worst he is seen as a villain. But in almost all cases birthfathers are deeply misunderstood. Birth-fathers are non-entities in adoption: In the “How you came to be adopted” story, parents take their cue from children’s adoption books- omitting the birthfather altogether, or quickly dispensing with his awkward part of the quotient. *Julia Stoop*

- Some persons blot out the BF as if born by immaculate conception.
- It’s normally only after reunion with the BM that a search is made for BF.
- The search for the birth father is secondary in psychic importance.
- BFs often took no part in the adoption decision- it was made BM family.
- How does BF know that its his child? Only recently we have genetic proof.
- BFs may beat a hasty retreat from financial liability and maintenance.
- BFs may be double abandoners.
- BFs hover on the fringe of society.
- An adoptee person who looks in the mirror has no way of knowing if the face that looks back is from BM or BF.
- Adopted persons beware! Many BMs have unfinished business with BF.
- Many BM’s make sure the BF stays lost by refusing to reveal his identity
- BMs feelings about BFs range from “I hate the bastrard’ to ‘I’ve always loved him’.

BIRTH FATHER LAND MAP

CONCEPTION LAND



DEFENCE LAND

Basic defense mechanisms

1 Repression

If the adopted person learns to repress all their feelings towards being adopted and dreads to confront those feelings, they set up a system of repressions or hidden feelings they cannot handle in the conscious mind. As long as the feelings remain deeply buried, they are terrified of facing them or experiencing them as part of their own existence. In doing this, they cut themselves off from a part of self. The repression of emotions, memories and thoughts then becomes part of their facade... In the process they have disowned a part of themselves to protect their self-esteem.

2 Disassociation

When a person becomes aware of an emotion that is painful or threatening to their self-esteem, they will intellectualize it. This induces a state of disassociation which enables them to escape from their own experience. They do not want to face their own pain.

3 Denial

of adoption feelings enables the mind to push the feelings down inside and ignore them. Denial is the shock absorber of the soul, a protective reaction to loss, pain and change.

4 Intellectualising

Avoiding emotional issues by raising questions and talking logic. Trying to convince everyone adoption has no effect on us.

5 Projecting

Repudiate unwanted thoughts, impulses or feelings by attributing them to someone else.

6 Disowning

Repression of humiliating thoughts and memo-

ries. We disowns a part of ourselves to protect our self-esteem.

7 Isolation

Separating an idea from its emotional content. All feelings connected with it are pushed out of conscious awareness.

8 Avoidance

Avoid discussing adoption issues to escape dealing with feelings and emotions attached to them.

9 Reaction formation

By over emphasizing the opposite impulse, the unwanted impulse can be kept out of the conscious mind by exclaiming, 'I don't ever want to find my birth mother'.

10 Numbing

Shut down all thoughts and feelings, make no response at all. Avoids any painful encounter by switching off completely.

11 Splitting

All of the above defense mechanisms serve to keep the body's system in balance, even if it is only on a dysfunctional level." Carlini 1997 pp42-43,51



DEFENCE LAND

FANTASY LAND

Fantasy is important Without the ability to fantasize life becomes very dull. With no imagination there is no vision. But fantasy can become a fool's paradise, a source of fears, tensions and inability to cope with realities.

Fantasy v reality People automatically try to piece together or draw a conclusion from the information at hand. If reality is not available, fantasy takes its place. Adopted persons cherish every small piece of reality, the rest they dwells in Fantasy Land.

Adoption Fantasies

- Complicates adoptive relationships where secrecy denies any solution.
- Adopted persons have another set of real parents to fantasize about.
- Fantasy, being the actual truth, ever remains a possibility.
- Lack of factual information stimulates and feeds fantasy.
- If truth is denied then one can only imagine what it must be.
- Fantasy fill the gaps in reality.
- Fantasy ranges sublime to horrific.
- All adoption triad indulge in fantasy.

Fantasy Box

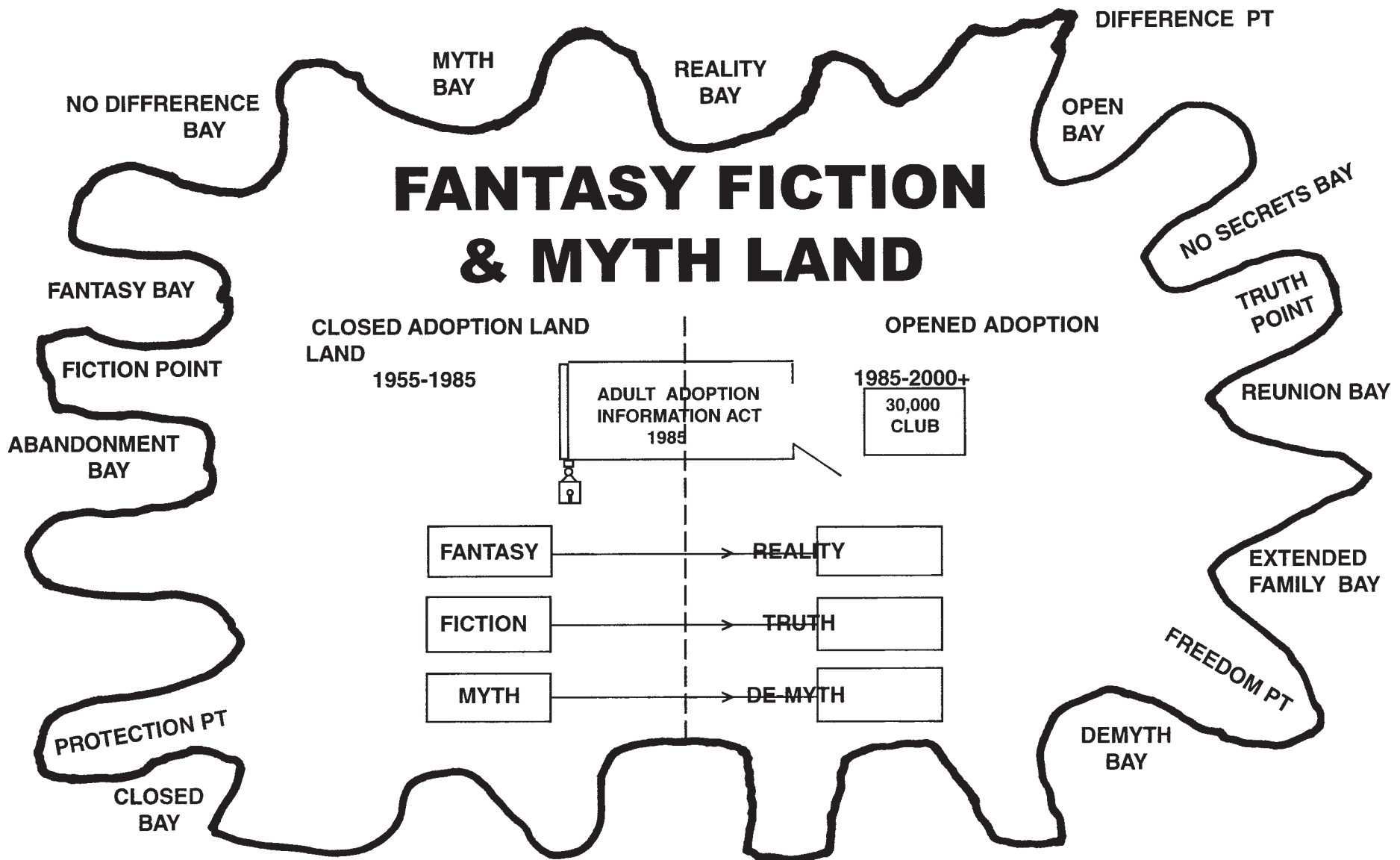
- Adopted persons fantasies.
- Birth parents fantasies.
- Adoptive parents fantasies.

— Societies fantasies.

Reality Box

— My fantasies in light of my realities.

FANTASY FICTION & MYTH LAND



FICTION LAND

A supposition known to be at variance with fact.

Fiction Box

Legal fiction is a device used to simplify application of a statute. It provides a simplistic solution to the transfer of parental rights from the birth to the adoptive parents, 'as if' the child was born to them in lawful wedlock. *Legal* fiction, became *general* fiction, creating a web of pretence and denial.

Fictional relations created by legal fiction in non-relative adoptions—

1 *Adopted persons* are the natural child of their adoptive parents, when in fact they are not.

2 *Adopted persons* have consanguineous blood relationship with adoptive parents, when in fact they do not.

3 *Adoptive parents* the child was 'as if' born to them when in fact it was not.

4 *Adoptive parents* have consanguineous blood relationship with adopted person when in fact they do not.

5 *Birth parents* did not give birth to the child when in fact they did.

6 *Birth relatives* have no relationship to adoptee, when in fact they do.

7 *Birth Certificate* of adopted person states they are born to the adoptive parents when in fact they were not.

8 *Blood* For some legal purposes the adoptee has the blood of BPs, for others blood of APs, for others both. He can be in all three states at same time.

Family tree fictions

Adopted persons perch ambivalent on two fam-

ily trees. Legal pruning and grafting of family trees becomes acute when you are adopted by your grandmother she becomes your mother, your birth mother becomes your sister, your aunts and uncles become your siblings, your birth mother's other children that were your siblings now become nephews and nieces. Also known as *adoptio chamelonitis* a complication of *legalitis*, in Maori *whakapapa pakaru*.

Is legal fiction really necessary?
Why not replace fiction with truth?

FICTION LAND MAP

FORGIVENESS LAND

Forgiveness

is a vital step in letting go the past, climbing out of the victim role and getting on with your life.

Healing road block

Support groups constantly face the challenge of “How can I get out of the victim role?” “How can I release the past and get on with life?” “What’s stopping me?”. The harsh reality is our pathway to healing often stalls at the forgiveness road block.

Birth parents

“The task for birth parents is to forgive themselves. Many birth parents carry the burden of blame and guilt around for years. Some birth parents want forgiveness from the adopted person, their family, or society. To forgive oneself is a gift that every birth parent deserves and can learn to do. Forgiveness can also extend to the people who were in the birth parent’s life at the time of the pregnancy and relinquishment. Most likely, everyone involved was doing what they felt was best at the time.

It is important to remember that birth parents today have choices that were not available in the past. Society has changed in many ways that have opened up options and choices. Forgiveness can be accelerated by acknowledging the differences in time and attitudes from the past to the present.” Russell 1996 p82

Adopted persons

Relinquishment, being given up for adoption.

NO FORGIVENESS

— If you cannot forgive you live in your own prison. The victim who won’t forgive lives in psychological bondage to the victimizer, lead-

ing to a kind of paralysis they are unable to escape.

Non-forgiveness-

- Confuses our emotions.
- Drives people away from us.
- Alienates us from society
- Relations are fragile and superficial.
- Depletes physical and mental health.
- Anger, resentment and bitterness consume us.

FORGIVENESS

- Comes to terms with the past.
- Allows us to let go the past.
- Clears a space for change to occur.
- Breaks bindings, opens the future.
- Frees us to be spontaneous again.
- Draws people to us.
- Allows us to risk being ourselves in full, free, genuine, authentic integrity.

LEARNING TO FORGIVE

- Forgiveness is difficult work.
- Takes time, there is no quick fix.
- Forgiveness is not about forgetting.
- What happened can’t be undone.
- It’s a journey of many steps.
- A road paved with uncertainty.
- No guarantee of mutual receptivity.
- The journey begins in pain.

I can’t forgive until I deal with the injury I suffered, or indignation I carry. No strategy of avoidance, denial, magic words, actions, or exercises of blaming is of help or healing. The injury must be faced and validated.

LOCK UP LOOP

This loop recycles until it is broken. However, as issues are forgiven and removed from the Unforgiven Box, they are removed from the loop and we cease to be hung up by that issue.

There is no magic way of breaking the whole loop in a grand act of forgiveness. Deal with

one issues at a time.

AGENDA

The *specific issue* for which forgiveness is sought must be clearly stated.

VALIDATION

The issue and context is fully clarified, examined and accepted.

- Forgiveness needs validation of past.
- I must accept the past to let it go.
- Define what happened.
- Share what happened.
- Share feelings and validate them.
- Accept reality of what happened.
- Retell story from other participants’ points of view.
- Define what I need to forgive.
- My choice to forgive or not forgive.

LETTING GO

Is the emotional release and relaxation that lets go my hurt, resentment, defences, and demands.

Resentment

is a bulldog grip that clenches the teeth of memory into the dead past and refuses to let go.

- Stops time until anger is satisfied.
- Keeps us fighting past battles.
- Internalizes the fight in our bodies.
- Burns up our energy.
- Stops flow of inner healing.
- Stalls my emotional development, and thinking and freezes it in time.
- We must let go the old resentments.

Old tapes

Replaying old tapes over and over gives past memories power to destroy the present and future.

Demands

that seem so just, just because they’re mine.

Blindness

It’s hard to see my part in conflict, my defences block my vision.

Pain

Holding on to the past is like fixing my nerve ends to an object outside myself that’s stuck. I must stay with it to avoid pain, or feel my nerve fibres stretch to breaking point in torment. But I can’t stay with the past.

Result of letting go

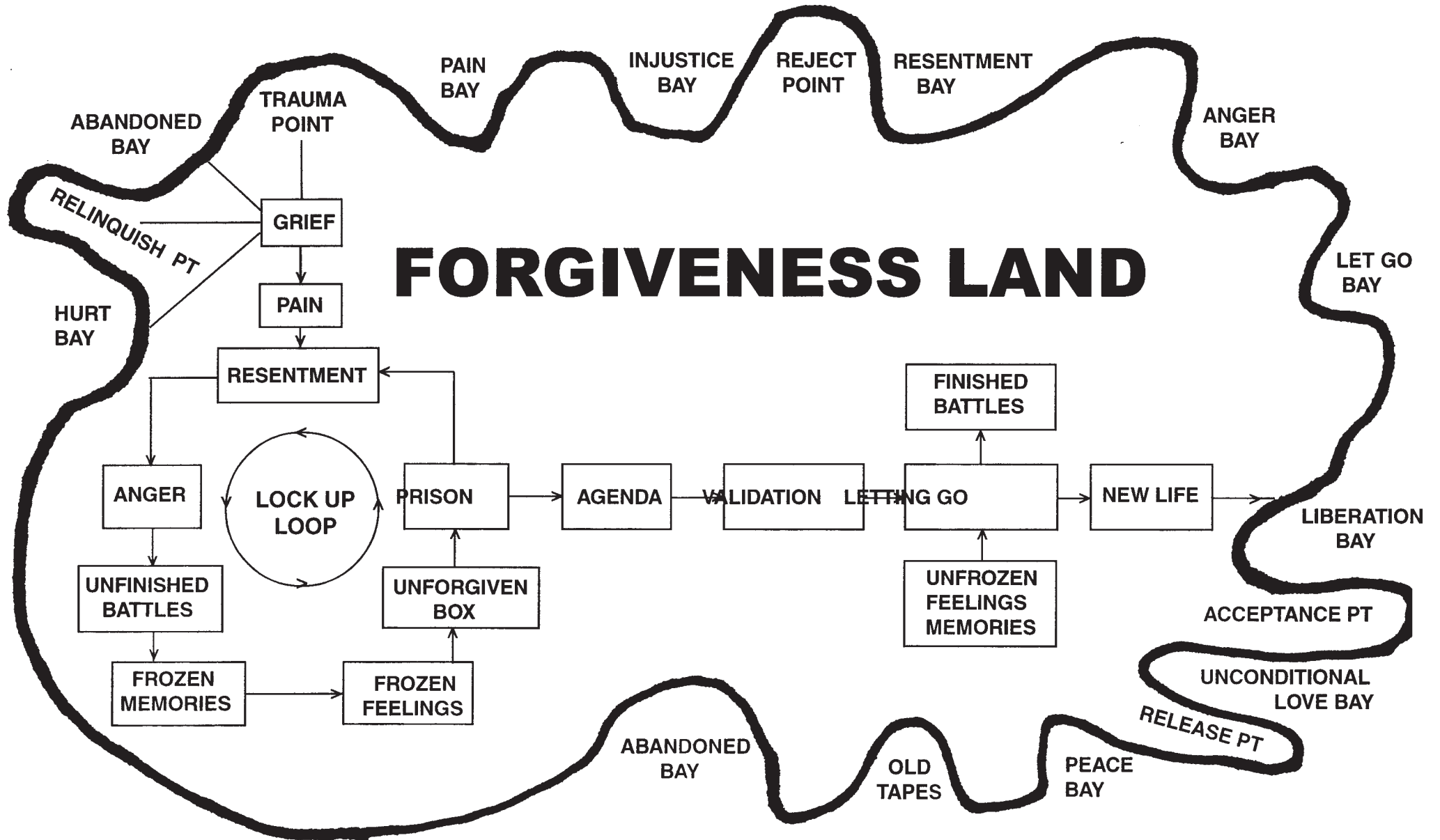
As we let go our blocked emotional energy from the subconscious and go through the forgiveness process, a sense of love and acceptance emerges.

- Frozen emotions begin to flow.
- Views, feelings, and emotion laden opinions become fluid again.
- We can examine, assess and change.
- We accept our humanity.
- Let go past and dream new dreams.
- I can love, plan and grow again.
- Experience unconditional love of one’s self in spite of the past.
- As this love extends to others we know we are in a healing process.

NEW LIFE

Accept love and hate in memory. Let go the past without rewriting history. Let me go into the future, free, uncumbered, and unafraid.

FORGIVENESS LAND



GHOST LAND

Adoption haunted by real ghosts

"The ghosts haunt the dark crevices of the unconscious and trail each member of the adoption triangle parents and child alike wherever they go. Unless one is aware of these ghosts, one will never be able to understand or to help the child who is adopted, the parents who adopt, or the parents who give up a child to adoption." Lifton "Journey of Adopted Self" 1994 p11

"Mothers and fathers, the bodies and lives from which the children came, are ghost-like, having no substance, no faces, no names, no personally delivered history and most important of all for some children, can offer no explanation of the parental absence... Despite this unreality, what is believed to be real is very real in its consequences." Kate Inglis 1984

History

Our scientific world rejects ghosts as fragments of fiction. However, many adoption ghosts are real, sustained by legal fiction and statute. Some of these ghosts may materialise and become real people in the flesh at any time. Closed complete break adoption in 1940s-1980s created and sustained a plethora of adoption ghosts.

New statutes allowing access to information and open adoption have helped exorcise many ghosts and restore greater reality and sanity.

BOX CONTENTS

It's entirely your choice which boxes you ignore, acknowledge, open or shut. What you do with the contents and what you share is your decision.

Ghost generator

Closed complete break adoption tried to dispose of ghosts by legal fiction, and shrouds of secrecy. In fact it generated, enhanced and sustained a whole new plethora of ghosts.

Ghost Box

The Main abode of all the ghosts that live on the island. If you open this box it has- Three boxes inside-

- 1 Adopted persons.
- 2 Adoptive parents.
- 3 Birth parents.

Small boxes Each of the three boxes contain several small boxes, each contain specific ghosts as follows--

Adopted Persons

May be accompanied by nine ghosts-

- Ghost of the child they might have been had they stayed with their birth mother.
- Ghost of the fantasy child the adoptive parents might have had.
- Ghost of the birth mother from whom they never completely disconnected.
- Ghost of the birth father hidden behind the birth mother.
- Hereditary ghost erases their background, strips their heritage.
- Genetic ghost that lives in every cell in their body.
- Ghost of their birth name in a shroud of secrecy.
- Ghosts of their lost siblings.
- Ghosts of their lost relations.

Adoptive parents

May be accompanied by four ghosts-

- Ghost of biological child they might have had, walks beside the adopted child

who takes its place.

- Ghost of birth mother who may materialise to reclaim the child.
- Ghost of birth father may materialise to displace adoptive father.
- Ghost of infertility may haunt them.

Birth mother

May be accompanied by four ghosts-(Birth-father to a lesser extent).

- Ghost of baby she gave up.
- Ghost of her lost lover; whom she connects with the baby.
- Ghost of the mother she might have been.
- Ghosts of the baby's adoptive parents and family.

Birth grandparents-

- Ghost of grandchild they may never know.

All of these ghosts are members of the extended adoptive and birth families.

EXORCISING GHOSTS

Accept

Examine the ghosts listed and acknowledge the ones that seem real to you, particularly any that haunt you.

Validate

Are your ghosts real or imagined? Many ghost stories don't stand up. However, many adoption ghosts are based on proven reality. Some may materialise at any time. What is real must be accepted as real.

Name

Naming the ghost is an important part of exorcism. If the ghost of the birth mother haunts you, by naming her she become a person. Finding her real name she becomes a real person.

Search

Having named your ghosts search for them, and find their abode. Decide if you want to meet them.

Reunion

Meeting fleshes out the ghost into a real person. Reunion is the most potent form of exorcism.

5A De-myth

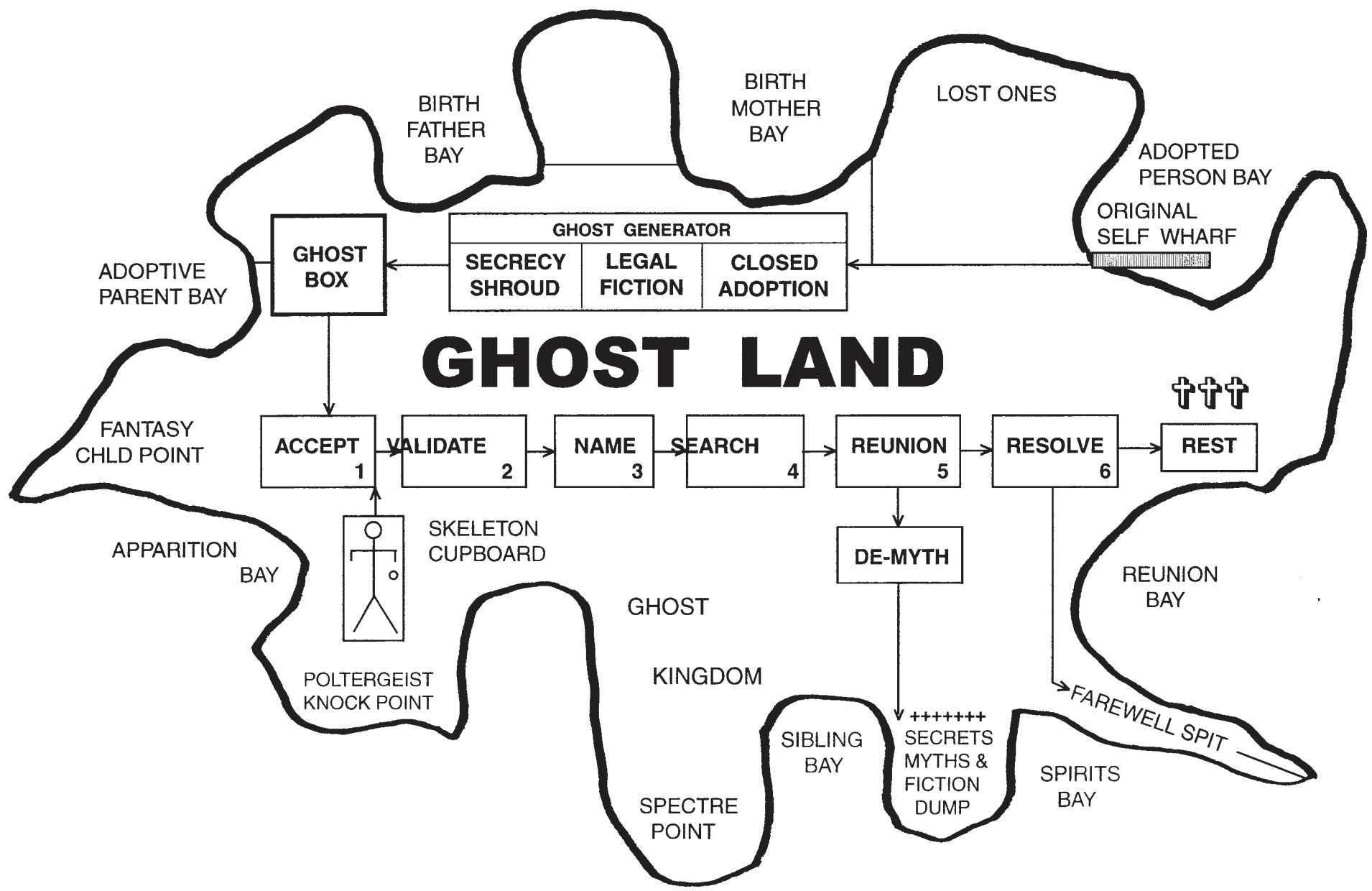
Sort out the truth. Dispose of fictions, myths and secrets.

Resolve

Having establish the truth, resolved the ghosts, reintegrate your life and live in peace with one another.

Rest

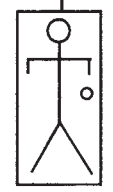
Some ghosts cannot be exorcised, they may forever remain inaccessible and have to be laid to rest.



GHOST LAND

GHOST GENERATOR		
SECRECY SHROUD	LEGAL FICTION	CLOSED ADOPTION

- ACCEPT 1 → VALIDATE 2 → NAME 3 → SEARCH 4 → REUNION 5 → RESOLVE 6 → REST †††



SECRETS
MYTHS &
FICTION
DUMP

GRIEF LAND

Grief is a natural reaction to loss. It is a healing process. Loss and grief are core issues in adoption.

Adoption created through loss

Without loss there is no adoption.

- Birth parents lose their child.
- Adopted persons lose their birth parents.
- Adoptive parents lose the child that should have been born to them, also loss of fertility.
- Denial -until recently adoption policy has ignored loss and grief. Adoptive parents are expected to be happy; adopted persons are expected to be grateful; and birth parents are expected to forget and get out. The grieving is further complicated by the fact that there is no end to these losses. The reality of the adopted persons unresolved grief for their birth parents has been largely ignored by professionals. Becoming disconnected from one's ancestry is perhaps the loneliest experience known. It is like floating in time and space without an anchor. Small 1987

Stages of Grief

There are six stages in the normal grieving process; Shock, Denial, Anger, Bargaining, Depression and Acceptance. The six stages can be worked through in any order.

Shock

Shock at the loss event.

- Being told you are adopted.
- Being told you were relinquished.
- Being told you are infertile.
- Being told you have lost parents.
- Being told I'm not your real parents.
- BM signing of consent to adoption.

- BM relinquishment of their child.

Denial

- Denial of reality to avoid painful loss and block painful thoughts.
- Denial by that any adoption makes any difference.
- It's the shock absorber of the soul.
- Denial is protective, helps us function when reality would be too much.
- Staying in denial, has negative consequences, and stalls healing process.

Anger

- Feeling a situation is unfair and should not have happened.
- Often look for someone to blame.
- Adopted persons may be angry at the loss of their birth parents, abandonment, the law and society.
- BMs may be angry with persons or agencies in relinquishment process.
- BF may be angry at being shut out.
- APs may be angry at fertility loss.
- Anger can motivate us to action.

Bargaining

- Trying to find ways to undo the situation by searching for trade-offs.
- The person is no longer in denial.
- There is real awareness of the loss.
- Bargaining is an attempt to control a situation that feels out of control.

Remorse

- A sense of deep regret or guilt.
- BMs remorseful of relinquishment.
- Adopted persons are remorseful at loss of biological family and roots.
- Tears help free up the inner pain.
- No tears can leave person 'frozen' in.

Depression

- Feeling helpless and hopeless.
- Physical symptoms, lack of energy,

- changed eating and sleep patterns.
- Moods, lack concentration and interest in usual activities, tiredness.
- Feelings of intense sadness.

Acceptance

- Feeling situation partly resolved.
- It is no longer the main focus.
- Some new activities and interests.
- A balance has been achieved.
- You don't forget the adoption issues but accept the ongoing realities.
- The goal of acceptance is to honour and integrate the people and experience of adoption. Russell

Survival

When an adopted person reaches the survival stage of grief, they have probably used many coping skills and ego defences to hide their feelings. They have learned how to deny, adapt, pretend and numb out... Each person is born with a biological blueprint, predisposing them to certain personality traits. As they grow older, adopted persons sense their personality differences from their adoptive family... They struggle to be like the other family members so they will be totally accepted...When all else fails, they numb out and turn to fantasizing about their biological family. Carlini 1997 p36

Recovery

The adopted person is searching to discover how they really feel about having been adopted. They are ready to examine and work through those feelings to resolve their inner turmoil. Carlini 1997 p37

Integration

The adopted person begins to take on new perspectives for their life. They are able to integrate the two sides of their personality into one. In this process they form the basis for a new belief system which can now become a strong foundation on which to change their life,

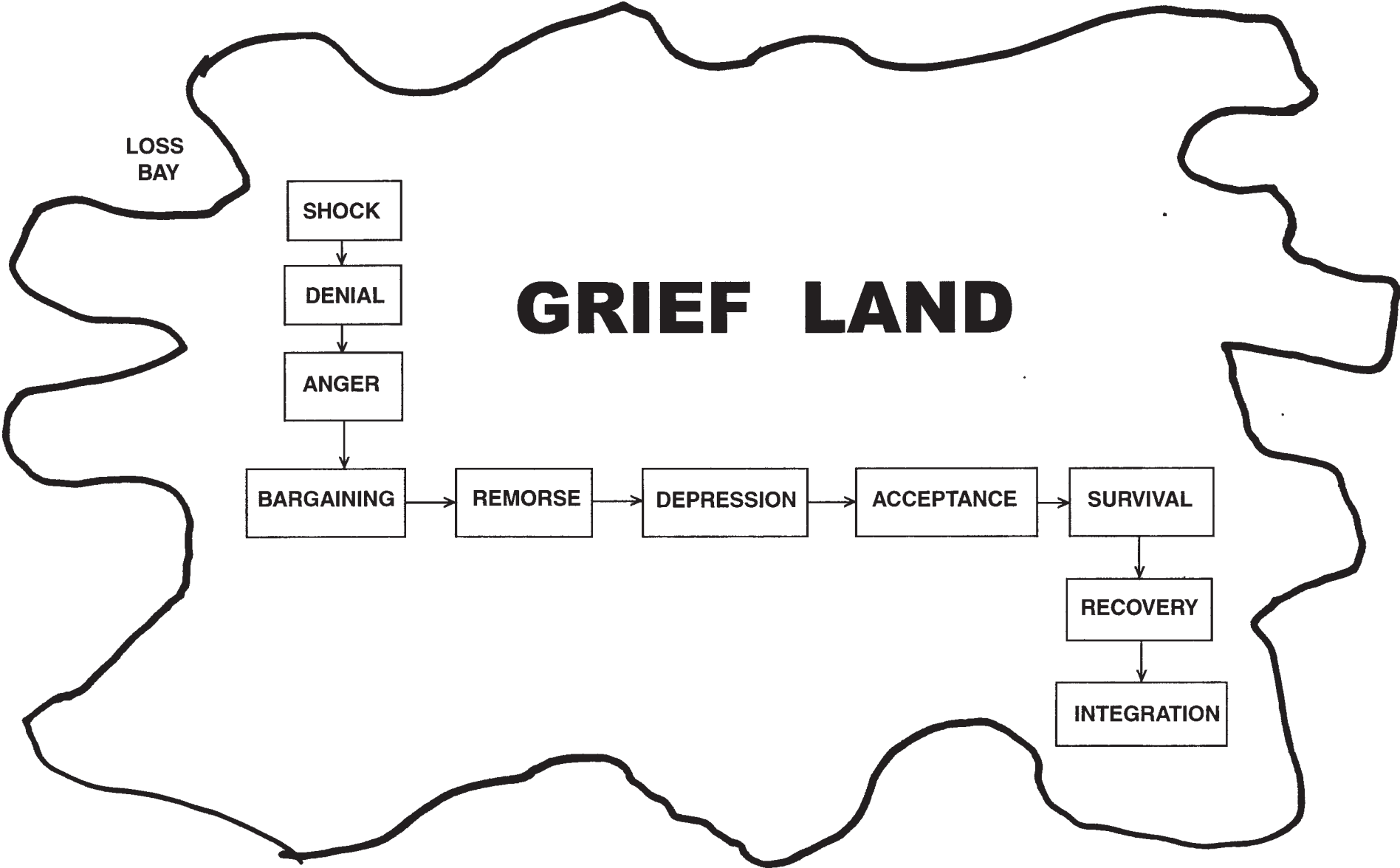
their attitudes, and their behaviours. Carlini 1997

Holding On

As I recall past experiences I hold on to them emotionally. Rationally I know they exist only in memory, but I get emotionally involved as if it's present reality. Rather than accept consequences I try turning time back to redo it. I hold on to the past and act if it were still present.

Accept pain emotionally and rationally

Grieving is a way of absorbing the full impact and coming to believe it with the heart as well and the head.



LOSS
BAY

SHOCK

DENIAL

ANGER

BARGAINING

REMORSE

DEPRESSION

ACCEPTANCE

SURVIVAL

RECOVERY

INTEGRATION

GRIEF LAND

LIMBO LAND

Limbo Land is a quiet island where nothing much happens and most issues are left permanently on hold. Placing issues in Limbo for a while until we can deal with them is OK. Likewise, blotting out for a rest. But splitting off part of ourselves on a permanent basis, impairs wholeness and creates dysfunction.

The *Time Out Hotel* is popular for persons seeking temporary relief from stress. The *Denial Hotel* offers package deals. The *Original Self Retreat* caters for adopted persons. The *Unresolved Grief Retreat* is frequented by birth mothers.

Limbo land is a place where-

- You can live in a daydream.
- Dumb down feelings.
- Denial is a way of life.
- You can disavow reality.
- You go, or sent, if you don't belong.
- Unresolved issues are stored.
- State of emotional detachment.
- State of complacency and passivity.
- The subconscious mind buries it's painful memories and emotions.
- You can split off part of yourself.
- Dump your Original Self and claim you only have an Adoptive Self.
- *Disown* memories too humiliating or shameful to own.
- *Isolate* emotions and push them out of conscious awareness.
- *Avoid* refuse to face adoption issues.
- A storehouse for unresolved grief.

Veto Limbo

Vetos consign adopted persons and birth parents to Limbo Land.

Search Limbo

- Some get *marooned* in Limbo Land.
- Some reach a *dead end* road block.
- Some are sent to Limbo by a "veto".
- Some put search on hold in Limbo.
- Some just sit and *wait to be found*.

Reunion Limbo

Reunion relationship is on hold-

- One party puts off meeting you, but holds out a possibility for the future.
- Refuses to meet you, but does not block your relationship with others.
- You manage to meet your siblings without your mother knowing.
- Person sends out mixed signals, loving one time, hostile another.
- Some persons fear they will spend their lives in Limbo, and some do.

Adopted person Limbo

Adopted persons have an Original Self and Adoptive Self. Some resolve the dual identity by consigning the Original Self to Limbo. Withholding truth of origins places a person in Limbo.

Birth Mother Limbo

Some birth mothers, with or without consent are sent to Limbo to get rid of them. Social stigma and shame sends them to Limbo. Closed adoption keeps them in Limbo. A re-neged open adoption places them in Limbo. Denying birth mothers any knowledge or access to their child leaves them in Limbo. They grieve in Limbo.

Birth Father Limbo

Being left off Birth entry, and thereby cannot use Adult Adoption Information Act sends many to Limbo. Some intentionally disappear to Limbo.

Adoptive Parents Limbo

Prospective adoptors may experience infertility limbo. May have a long stay in Limbo awaiting flights to Adoption Land. Some divert to other countries. Reunion can leave them in Limbo.

Rejection Limbo

Any person in the triad can be rejected by any other and be sent to Limbo. Limbo becomes a residence for rejected persons, rejected by Law, society and/or social stigma.

Myths Limbo

The opening up of adoption disposed of many old myths to Limbo.

- The adoption myths in Limbo?
- The myths I have suffered from?

Legal Limbo

Governments from 1970-1999 sent Adoption Law Reforms to Limbo.

DENIAL Limbo

Persons in denial visit Limbo Land. Some disavow reality and live in Limbo. *Currency*- is the 'denial', subject to devaluation of the "Self", and under heavy pressure from the "Real".

Denial Box contains

- Suppressed thoughts and feelings.
- I'm OK outfits and cover stories.
- Masking tape and face masks.
- No difference charade.
- Thought and feeling blocks.

NUMBING Limbo

If feelings or issues get too intense we *numb out*- refuse to respond. Adopted persons may numb out adoption and birth mothers relinquishment.

Numbing Box contains-

- Your experiences of numbing out.
- Issues you refuse to discuss.
- Thoughts I refuse to acknowledge.
- Repressed and suppressed feelings.

- Blank face mask and masking tape.
- Numbing medications, drink, drugs.

SPLITTING Limbo

Refers to splitting off part of yourself.

- Some adopted persons split off their original Self and consign it to Limbo.
- From 1955-85 the Law split off the Original Self and placed it in Limbo.
- Social practice split off the Original Self and placed it in Limbo.
- Adoptive parents told to consign the child's Original Self to Limbo.
- Birth mothers are split off from their child. Some split off their relinquishing experience to Limbo.
- Splitting off the Original Self, denying its existence or consigning it to Limbo is dysfunctional behaviour.

The splitting off the Original Self of adopted persons and birthmothers splitting off their child is at the heart of much dysfunction.

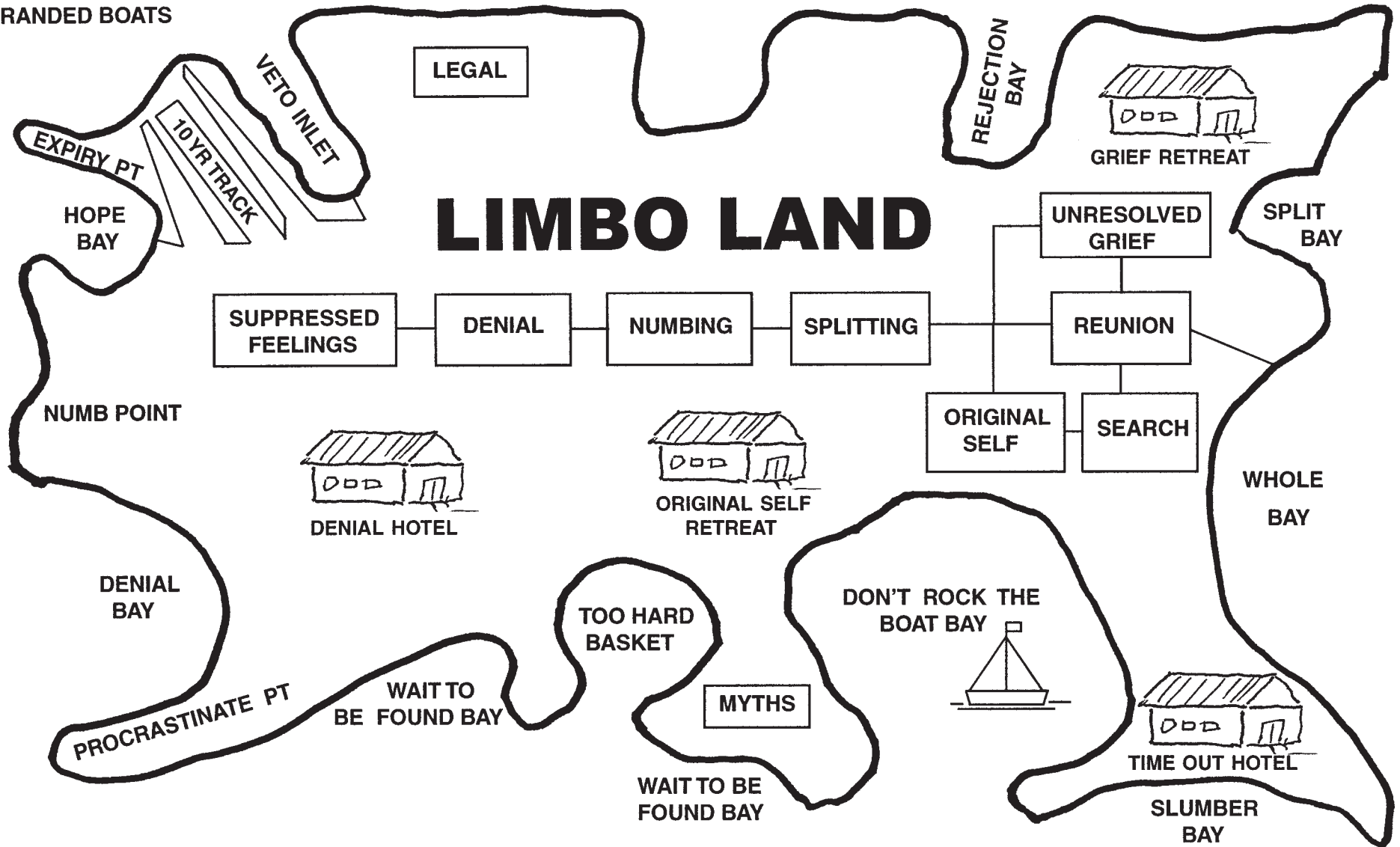
Splitting Box contains

- My split off parts, issues, feelings.
- Issues I've been unable to integrate.

Exit

- Quickest way to quit Limbo Land is catch the fast ferry back to reality.

SAND BAR
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
STRANDED BOATS



MYTH LAND

Adoption has been fraught with myths and misunderstandings.

From 1955 to 1985 closed secret adoption, legal fiction and pretence encouraged myths to grow and flourish. The myths did much harm creating false hopes and false stereotypes. The Adult Adoption Information Act 1985, lifted secrecy, opened adoption and exposed the myths.

Myth Box

- 1 Having children by adoption is no different than by birth.
- 2 There is no difference in adoptive and non-adoptive families
- 3 Birthmothers don't care about the child because they gave it away.
- 4 Secrecy is necessary for protection.
- 5 Birth parents forget about the child.
- 6 Good adoptees won't search.
- 7 Very few adoptees will search.
- 8 Birth mothers need protection.
- 9 Lifting secrecy increases abortion.
- 10 Open adoption will break families.
- 11 APs will lose their child.
- 12 Adoption is time limited process,
- 13 Cannot integrate two families.
- 14 There are no ties to birth parents.

How have these myths affected you and your families?

De-myth Box

- 1 There are big difference between gestation and adoption.
- 2 There are some different dynamics in adoptive families.
- 3 Birth parents do care about the child the relinquished.
- 4 Secrecy protection is not needed.
- 5 Birth parents don't forget the child.
- 6 Most adopted persons search.
- 7 Over 30,000 have now searched.
- 8 Birth mother don't need protection.
- 9 Had no effect on the abortion rate.
- 10 No evidence of increased breakups,
- 11 APs relationship improves.
- 12 Life long consequences-all parties.
- 13 Can integrate within two families.
- 14 Genetically tied to birth parents.

How has the opening up of adoption affected you and your families?

MYTH LAND MAP

PITY PARTY LAND

Pity Parties

You gain full sole attention at the party to express your woes, justify yourself and persuade others to take pity on you.

Arrangements Can call a special party on a pretext, but it's much less hassle taking over an existing party.

Strategy-

- Tell a story much worse than theirs.
- My hurt is much worse than yours.
- No one has listened to my hurt.
- No one has understood my hurt.
- You're first to listen and understand.
- If you don't help me no one will.

Objectives-

- Justify myself and the mess I'm in.
- Prove I can't do anything about it.
- Gain full sympathy and attention.
- Evoke others to fight my battles.

Evaluation- Pity parties provide short term gains but you lose friends.

Antidote- Refuse to be a party, expose it for what it is. "We are not here to run pity parties. We don't want pity, or sympathy, we want empathy and that's a two way street." This stops the pity party in its tracks and provides a positive solution of sharing.

Empathy

is showing a positive regard for a person, with an accurate emphatic understanding and being completely at home in the universe of that person. However, empathy alone is not enough to promote healing it also requires constructive confrontation with the real issues and choices.

Question Box

- My experience of pity parties?

- What's pity, sympathy and empathy?
- How do we evoke empathy?
- How do we confront reality?

SELF BLAME

You constantly criticise yourself, hate yourself. You will certainly become depressed. It doesn't matter what you blame yourself for so long as you give yourself hell for it.

Graduations of Self Blame

A little self blame makes you feel uncomfortable and moody.

Moderate self blame make you cry, mope or have a 'pity party'.

Heavy consistent self blame makes you feel like jumping in the river.

Extra Heavy self blame, makes others wish you would jump in the river,

SELF PITY

Pitying oneself in an exaggerated or self-indulgent manner.

How to do it-

- Put on your long sad face mask.
- Recall worst things that happened.
- Believe the world owes you a living.

Self-Pity can be a powerful weapon: Because everyone knows they can be made upset by others, or they can upset others, they get hooked in.

Manipulation and control

Guilt control. Be terribly hurt about something said or done. If you are upset enough they won't do it again. Your friend goes off blaming themselves for making you so miserable.

Suicide threat. A powerful way to manipulating people with your self pity.

Self-pity & drug addicts: A very high percentage are motivated by self-pity.

Believe - they have no rights.

- Any confrontation is worse than high blood pressure and migraines.

- If someone challenges me I must always be wrong.
- Find it impossible to think well of Self, so I have nothing to stand up for!
- Countless people end up licking their wounds, suffering in silence, crying in privacy, and feeling that they have no right to stand up for themselves.

Release-

- Do you really need to be a doormat? Treat yourself like a doormat you become a doormat.
- There is no red carpet for us.
- This world's a pretty rough place.
- A mixture of love and hard knocks.
- Learn to love and take knocks.
- Get real for your own health.
- People step on you as you let them.
- Its time the mouse roared.
- Learn to stand up for yourself.
- Remove yourself from the doormat.
- Get a right opinion of yourself.
- Get others to make an inventory.
- Affirm your gifts, acknowledge your deficiencies and get on with life.

DEPRESSION

The most common emotional disturbance is anger, but fear and depression are second equal. We all get depressed at times. Pity Parties are game playing but genuine depression is not.

Depression

is a condition marked by feelings of worthlessness, dejection and worry. The depressed person is an unhappy individual with a pessimistic outlook on life.-

- Consider themselves a failure.
- Consider themselves inadequate and unworthy of love and respect.
- Have a very negative self-image.
- Can't name any positive attributes. - Often

have feelings of strong guilt. - - Expect or fear punishment for mistakes and failures.

Type

of depression.

1. *Common neurotic depression:* Levels of behaviour described above.
2. *Manic Depressive.* Experience big highs and low lows. Need medication.
3. *Psychotic depressive* Suffer delusions and traumatic hallucinations. Needs urgent medical help.

Cause

Depression can be caused by high stress levels, medical, genetic, hormonal or environmental factors.

Help

and deliverance

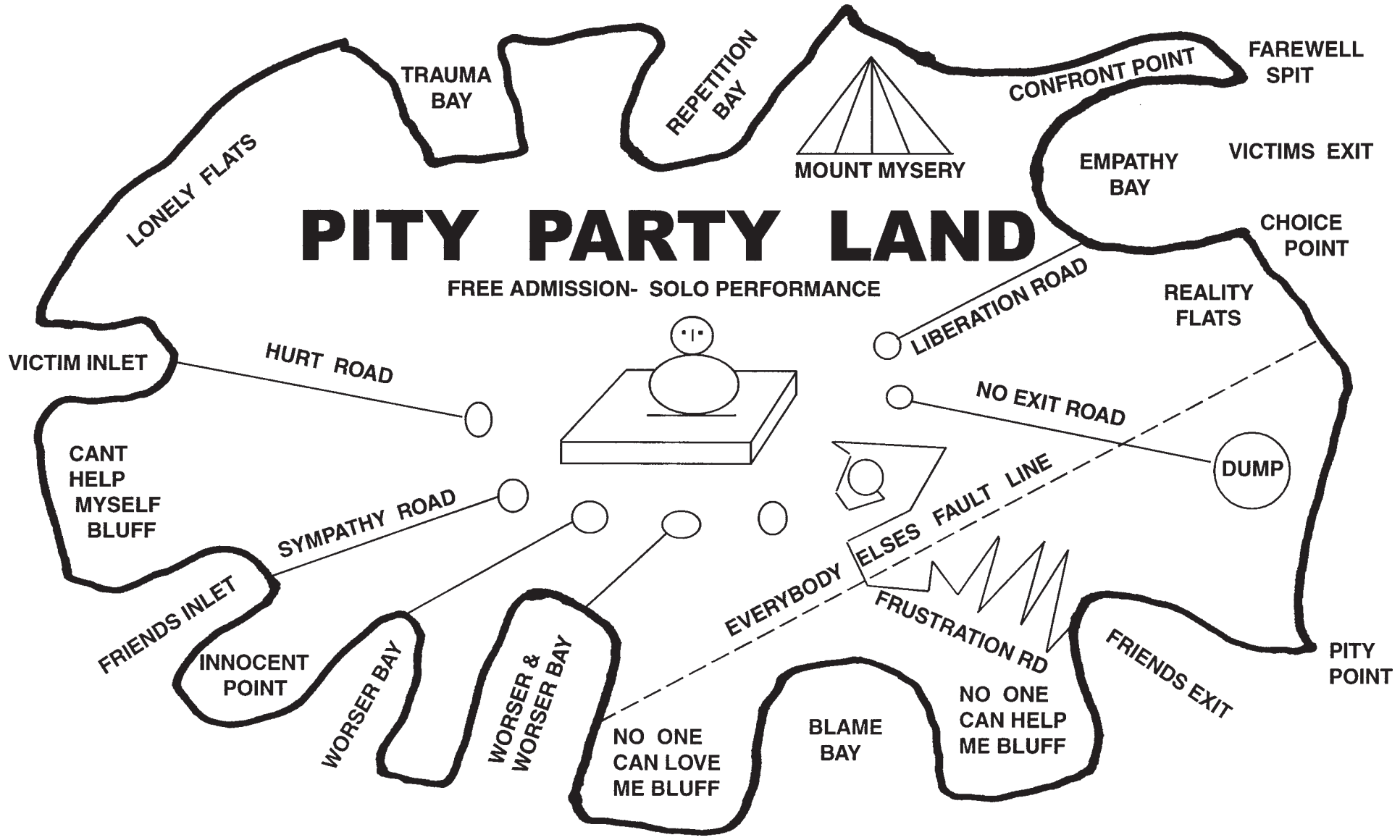
Most depression is temporary. Persistent depression needs medication or counselling. Severe depression needs urgent professional help.

Do you want to be healed?

You cannot help a person unless they are prepared to help themselves. In Christian teaching, Jesus frequently challenged people, "Do you want to be healed?" Healing involves self-help.

PITY PARTY LAND

FREE ADMISSION- SOLO PERFORMANCE



LONELY FLATS

TRAUMA BAY

REPETITION BAY

MOUNT MYSTERY

CONFRONT POINT

FAREWELL SPIT

EMPATHY BAY

VICTIMS EXIT

PITY PARTY LAND

FREE ADMISSION- SOLO PERFORMANCE

VICTIM INLET

HURT ROAD

CANT HELP MYSELF BLUFF

SYMPATHY ROAD

FRIENDS INLET

INNOCENT POINT

WORSER BAY

WORSER & WORSER BAY

NO ONE CAN LOVE ME BLUFF

BLAME BAY

NO ONE CAN HELP ME BLUFF

FRIENDS EXIT

PITY POINT

REALITY FLATS

CHOICE POINT

DUMP

LIBERATION ROAD

NO EXIT ROAD

EVERYBODY ELSES FAULT LINE

FRUSTRATION RD

REJECTION LAND

Rejection feelings are part of adoption.

Adopted persons may feel rejected by birth parents, the Law and society's illegitimate label.

Birth mothers may be rejected by the father, family, friends, society and fear rejection by adopted person.

Adoptive parents may feel rejected by infertility, God, failed adoption application or the adoptee searching.

MOUNTAINS

Mount Rejection Many adopted persons, birth parents and adoptive parents live under it's shadow. Its core rocks are guilt, shame, grief, prejudice, anger, fear and rejection. The higher slopes are frozen in time. To conquer Mt Rejection use an experienced guide or support group.

Mount Vigilant Adopted persons maintain sensitive surveillance antennae on the summit.

Rejection detector All communications on all wavelengths are intercepted and scanned for "rejection".

Abandonment detector. People moving away are assumed to be rejecting.

Proximity radar. Rings alarm bells if any person or relationship gets too close. Triggers defences, pulls down shutters, withdrawals, pushing people away, may even sabotage the relationship or flee.

Telescope. Looks for people like me!

PLACES

Abandon Bay Where adopted persons or birth parents are abandoned.

Acceptance Bay Where rejected persons are accepted by others.

Affirm Bay Where rejected person are understood, validated and affirmed.

BF, AP, BM, Adoptee Reject Bays, Rejection by or-of named party.

Chosen Bay Where choices are made or denied.

Eject Point Being thrown out of a family or relationship.

Family Reject Bay Where any person is rejected by their own family.

Acceptance Bays Where any person is accepted by their own family.

Hypervigilant Point Where adoptees always look for, and expect rejection.

Mountains of fear Where rejection fears are dominant feature of our life.

Rejection Bog Where many good feelings get bogged down by rejection.

Relinquishment Point Place where the birth mother loses her child.

Self-reject Bay Where you reject yourself as of no worth.

Self-worth Bay Where you discover and recover your self-worth.

Stigma Point Societies place for unmarried mothers and illegitimates.

Veto Reject Bay- Where vetos placed.

BOX CONTENTS

It's entirely your choice which boxes you ignore, acknowledge, open or shut. What you do with the contents and what you share is your decision.

Most boxes contain strong feelings.

Acceptance Who accepts me as I am. What I accept or don't about myself.

Rejection All my rejection experiences, real, imagined, past, present and potential.

Self-worth What people affirm in me, I in them, and me in myself.

Choice All choices of all parties in the adoption- given, denied or frustrated.

Displaced Person Adopted persons always remain displaced persons. They have been *taken*, and *moved*, and *transplanted*, and given *new names* and *new identities*.

Fear All my fears of rejection, what triggers them, how I deny, suppress, fight, flee, or front them.

GSB All my guilt, shame, and blame that was bestowed on me and what I bestowed on myself and others.

HooHa *BM* What happened to me and my family when I got pregnant.

Original Self my pre adoptive and genetic self now repressed by my Adoptive Self.

Primal Wound Relinquishment or abandonment by birth mother.

Veto The formal rejection of an adopted person or birth parent.

RECOVERY

It is natural and healthy to have a fear of rejection and abandonment, but if excessive it impairs self-worth, trust and intimate relationships.

Most adopted persons have strong fears of rejection and abandonment built into their system. *It is of primal origin*, and no amount of counselling or group work will ever eradicate it. You have to learn to live with it.

Learning to live with rejection

oUnderstand where it comes from. When rejection is *primal* it may manifest itself as a strong *irrational* fear.

oValidation. It is a normal reaction to severing our birth relationship.

oAcknowledge rejection sensitivity.

oAcknowledge our inbuilt bias.

oApply our bias corrections.

oPrecautions against overreaction.

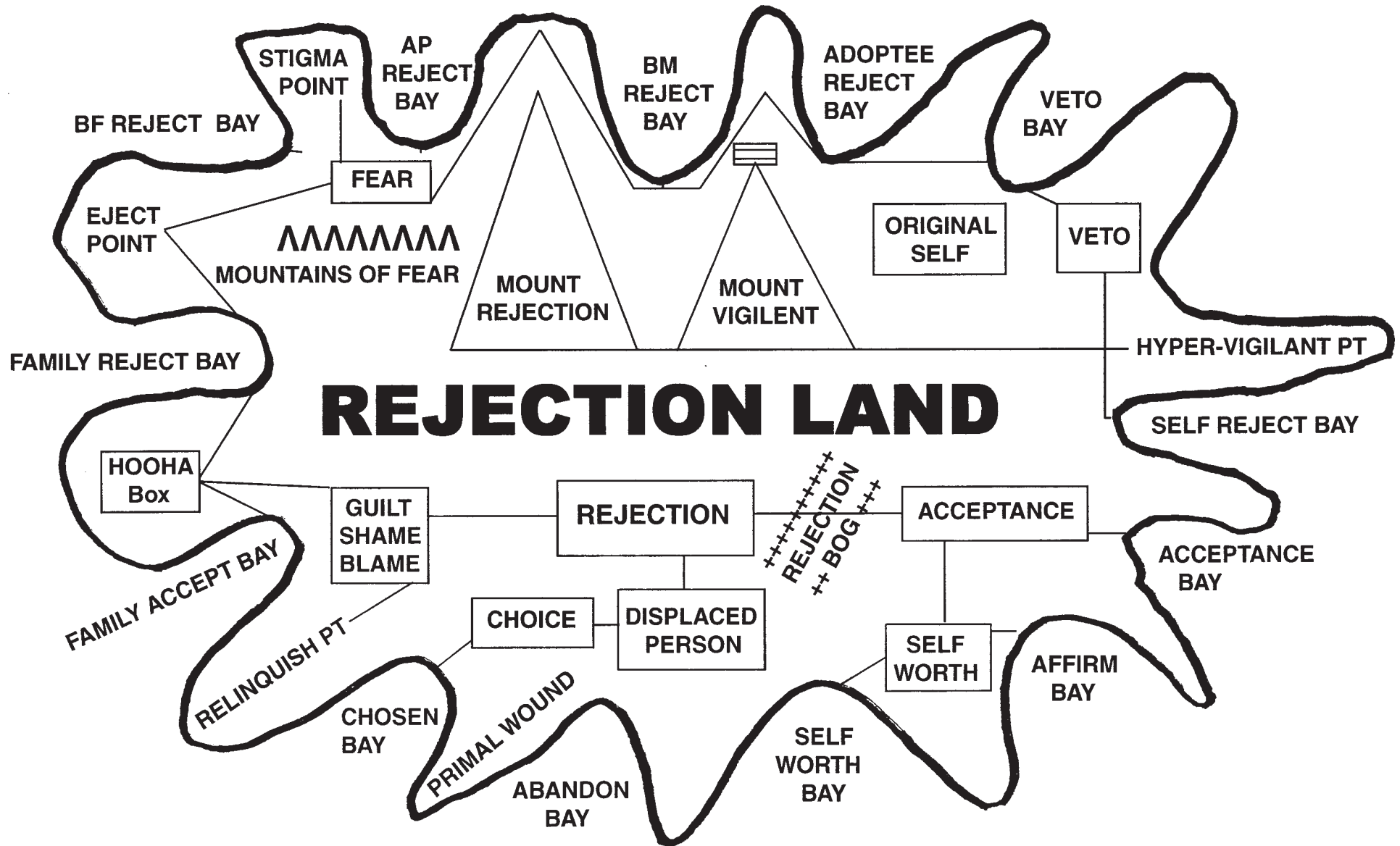
oJoin an Adoption Support Group or work with a counsellor.

oIf we reject or alienate our original self we go hollow inside.

oSearch for and recover the original self and integrate it with adoptive self.

oLearn to receive and give affirm-ation will enhance self-worth.

These measures can help reduce level of rejection fear, and allow building of trust and intimate relationships.



REUNION LAND 1

A reunion is the continuation of a previous relationship. Intimate strangers come together again with few memories and a deep bond. There is nothing quite like the reunion experience. It is a dream come true, a time that becomes etched in one's mind. A reunion involves getting to know someone so familiar and yet unknown. The search and reunion experience changes life forever. Russell 1996 p137.

It's difficult for the most loving of adopted persons and birth mothers to make their way back to each other.

— The separation, unresolved grief, and secrecy have traumatized them both. -The closed adoption system has made them taboo to each other.

— There are no accepted rituals for recognising or welcoming a Reunion.

— No one knows what will happen and how people will react.

Changes life for ever You can terminate a search at any stage and resume the status quo. Reunion involves contact and ongoing consequences for all persons. Turning back to the status quo is now not an option, you have to learn to live with the consequences.

Preparation Meet and share with others who have experienced reunion. Explore the reality of your expectations. Be prepared for anything.

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ADOPTIVE PARENTS

- Reunion, thoughts, feelings, hopes.
- Pressures on adopted person.
- Fears- *see* fear box detail.
- Role in search and reunion.
- Fathers attitude to reunion.
- Mothers attitude to reunion
- First meeting with birth mother.
- First meeting with birth father.
- Role in post reunion.
- Relationship between AF and BF.
- Relationship between AM and BM.
- APs changes of attitude by reunion.
- Reaction of relatives to reunion.
- Reaction of friends to reunion
- Impact of reunion on grief and loss.
- Impact of reunion on infertility loss.
- Expectations of reunion first & now.
- Our child now has two real families
- Our child now has four real parents
- Accept or reject new reality.
- Reunion affects our life forever.
- Faces the inevitable reality that an adopted child has two families.
- Facing it as a family unites us.
- We always remain part of adopted person's psyche.
- Reunion strips denial of difference.
- Reunion enhances adopted parents relationships with APs
- We're real parents but not exclusive.

BIRTH MOTHER

- BM refusal to disclose BF identity.
- First meeting with adopted person.
- First meeting with adoptive parents.
- First reunion meeting with BF.
- Reunion, thoughts, feelings, hopes.
- Fears- *see* fear box details.
- Marital relationships.
- Husband or partner response.
- Childrens response to reunion.

- Parents response to reunion.
- Extended family response.
- Friends reunion response.
- Adoptive parents response.
- Rejection fears and incidents.
- Love and acceptance experiences.
- Grief, Guilt, Shame or blame.
- Role in ongoing reunion.

BIRTH FATHER

- First meeting with adopted person.
- First meeting with adoptive parents.
- First reunion meeting with BM.
- Fear of prosecution if BM under age.
- Fear of financial liability.
- Sibling response to BF and adoptee.
- Spouses response to reunion
- Role in ongoing reunion.
- A Mystery man or a villain.
- Acknowledged or ignored nonentity.
- Physical similarity to adoptee.
- Personality similarity to adoptee.
- BF part in adoption decision.-
- How do I know that it's my child?
- BFs and financial liability.
- Is BFs a double abandoner.
- BM unfinished business with BF.
- BM feelings about BF then and now.
- BF reunion relationship with BM.

ADOPTED PERSON

- First meeting with birth mother.
- First meeting with birth father.
- First visits to BM and BFs homes.
- Relationship with BF siblings.
- Relationship with BM siblings.
- Relationship with AF siblings.
- Reunion, thoughts, feelings, hopes.
- Marital relationships.
- Spouse or partner's response.
- Childrens response to reunion.
- Parents response to reunion.
- Extended family response.
- Friends reunion response.

- Adoptive parents response.
- Rejection fears and incidents.
- Rejection of original or adoptive Self.
- Love and acceptance experiences.
- Grief, Guilt, Shame or blame.
- Role in ongoing reunion.
- Fear of hurting adoptive parents.
- Need security of their adoptive bond as they test their birth bond.
- Fears- *see* fear box details.

Rejection

- *Rejection By-*
- Birth mother.
- Birth father
- Adopted person.
- Adoptive parent.
- Siblings of BM or BF
- Siblings Adoptive.
- Parents of BM.
- Parents of Adoptee
- Grandparents.
- Relatives of BM
- Relatives of Adoptee
- Significant others

Acceptance

- *Acceptance by-*
- Birth mother.
- Adopted person.
- Adoptive parent.
- Siblings of BM.
- Siblings Adoptive.
- Parents of BM.
- Parents of Adoptee
- Grandparents.
- Birth Clan
- Adoptive Clan
- Significant others

Honey Moon

- A primal moment. Cloud Nine.
- A euphoria-magical and wonderful.

REUNION LAND 2

- Feels numb in intoxicated trance.
- Re-experience big bang of ones birth.
- All Honeymoons come to an end.
- Bumpy landing in reality land.
- Return to emotional chaos of search
- Emotions crash through defences.

Fear

- Fear of personal rejection.
- Fear of being found or not found.
- Fear sought person will be dead.
- Irrational fears and phobias.
- Fear of angry responses.
- Fear the reunion will fail.

Adopted Persons reunion fears

- Fear of rejection by birth parents.
- Fear of loosing adoptive parents.
- Fear reunion could kill A Parents.
- Fear of their own response.
- Fear of adoptive fathers response.
- Fear adoptive mothers response.
- Fear adoptive siblings response
- Fear adoptive grandparent response.

Birth Mothers reunion fears

- Fear of rejection by adopted person.
- Fear of rejection by adoptive parents.
- Fear of rejection by spouse.
- Fear of response by her children.
- Fear of what might happen.

Birth Fathers reunion fears

- Rejection by adopted person.
- Rejection by birth mother.

Adoptive Parents reunion fears

- Fear of what's going to happen.
- Fear of consequences to their child.
- Fear of loosing their child.
- Fear of parental role takeover.
- Fear of loosing reality of family.

Grief

Grieving for-

What we lost or missed out on.

Emotions

- Emotions of search flow into reunion like a river into the sea.
- Many emotions rush to the surface.
- Cement mixer of conflicting feeling.
- Can laugh and cry at same time.
- Suffer emotional indigestion.
- A roller coaster ride
- Anger- Grief- Guilt and sadness.
- Love, Joy and peace
- Laughter and crying.
- Exuberance and retreat.
- Intoxication and exhilaration.
- Cloud nine.
- Reclaiming lost emotions
- Ricocheting highs and lows.

First Events

- First Visit to birthmother's home.
- First Meeting between adopted person and birth mother's family.
- First Meeting between the two mothers and their spouses.
- First Meeting between birth mother and her child's adoptive siblings.
- First Attendance at a major event in birth family.
- First Holiday together.
- First big disappointment.
- First holding or hugging.
- First argument.
- First row or fight.

Photos

The photographic records of the Birth and Adoptive family trees. Plus other significant people and places.

Story

Contains life story of reunion participants, people, places and history.

- telling our stories
- filling the info vacuum
- can't fix the past
- What we do with the past.
- impact of time

- Our on-going history

Retreat

- What I hold back
- What I back off.
- My hidi Hole.
- Visits to Limbo Land.

Genetic

- Every genes in our body from BPs
- Genetic personality.
- Genetic emotions.
- Genes determine much of health.
- Our medical histories.
- Our idiosyncrasies
- Bridge of commonality
- Delights of similarity
- Emotional commonality
- Genetic sexual attraction

Two Mothers

- Two mothers
- Names we call them
- Who's the real one.
- Pecking order.
- BM precarious perch.
- Competition
- Mother's Day cards
- Who I invite to what.
- Two mother-in-laws.
- Each mother a threat to the other.
- Toleration or acceptance.
- Requires delicate balancing acts.
- First meetings between mothers often superficial and formal.

Regrets-

- Adoptive mother regrets her child is not biologically related.
- Birth mother regrets that she relinquished her child.
- Adoptive mother regrets that the birth mother has come back.
- Birth mother regrets she ever left.
- These two women, who have always been invisibly linked, try to cover up their

feelings as they manoeuvre from their designated places on either side of the adopted person.

Reunion relationship

- What we call each other.
- What are our boundaries.
- How much do we share.
- Who do we tell- How and When.
- How often do we meet.

Birth Grandparents

- Were yesterdays decision makers.
- Their part in the original decision colours their view reunion.
- May see reunion as old trouble again
- Attitudes change with time.
- Greet grandchildren with pleasure.

Birth Clan

- Reactions range from, not interested or embarrassed to warm and welcome
- May meet adopted person on family occasions but don't develop close ties.
- Reactions between BM and her siblings are often stronger.
- How we fit in- Weddings- Funerals- Reunions and celebrations

Spouse

— Response of BM spouse.- Response of AP spouse- Jealousy- threats- feeling of being left out.- coping with new in-laws.- where do I stand

BUILDING REUNION RELATIONSHIPS

There is no perfect or easy reunion. Too many people are involved, each with their own personality, history, and conflicts. But birth mothers can derive peace of mind, enhanced self-esteem, and liberation. Adopted persons can reintegrate themselves and move on. Adoptive parents experience a renewed relationship with their son or daughter. A time when the lost are found and restored in an extended fam-

REUNION LAND 3

ily.

Time

5 years or more may be required before significant turning points are reached or major problems resolved.

Early years are more struggling and stressful, things get turned upside down. *Later years* pieces fit together, and life starts feeling normal again.

Pathway

Reunions develops along two pathways simultaneously.

- (a) The tangled path back to the past.
- (b) The new path into the future.

Work

Birth mothers and adopted persons have work to do; On *themselves* and *jointly* on their relationship.

- Tell your own stories.
- Fill the information vacuum.
- Reality replace fantasy.
- Share memories and family tradition.
- BMs come to peace with the past and the relinquishment of their child.
- Adopted persons and abandonment.
- Informing family members and friends about the past.
- Integrating the new relationship into other existing relationships
- Growing a shared history that enhances feelings of connectedness, warmth and closeness.
- Negotiating a mutually acceptable relationship and how to relate.
- Freeing oneself from unfinished business and emotional baggage.
- Ebbs and tides in reunion relations.

- The scars always remain, no matter how diligent the efforts.
- New opportunities open for personal growth and new relationships.

Early relationship decisions

- Some relationships will never get off the ground.
- Some relationships won't continue.
- Established limits defining what you will and will not do.
- Some test the limits of their comfort zone and conclude that they won't do what ever it is again (e.g., getting the two families together) because it's unnecessary or too painful or difficult.
- The more hurdles completed the more fulfilling the reunion.

Personal Strategies

- Reunion is *no cure all* of life's problems.
- *Get help*. Join a support group; read books, share with friends.
- *Emotions* expect roller coaster ride.
- *Stay in touch* with all contradictory feelings. It's okay to be angry.
- *Guilt* of relinquishment is normal but avoid self-flagellation.
- Take it slow, one day at a time.
- *Don't overwhelm* the other person.
- *Patience* relations take years to build
- *Respect* other person while dealing with your own feelings.
- *Learn* to walk on eggshells.
- *Be honest*. Adoption has many secrets.
- Be open and truthful.
- *Give a lot, but set limits*.
- Don't spoil.
- Don't take on a *mothering role*.
- Connect but don't *merge*.
- *Be cautious*. It's a complicated relationships with powerful emotions.
- *Appreciate* whatever you have. Try to be

content; don't push for more.

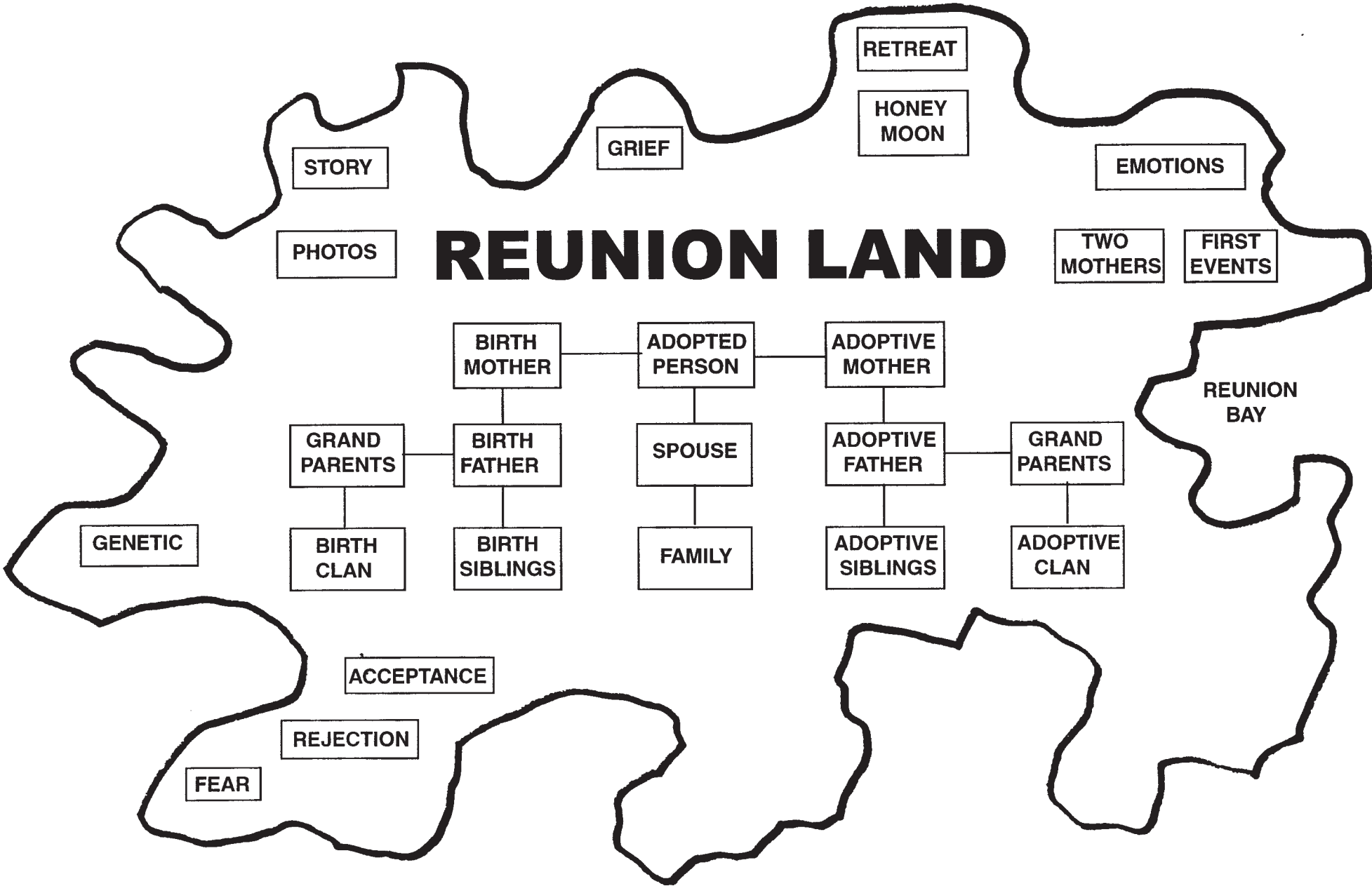
Relationship may be impossible

20 or 30 years after separation of the birth relationship some people find it impossible to carve out a new relationship with each other.

Closure

In reunions vast amounts of energy are spent working constructively through the past. Only then can the door on the past be closed, and its echoes stop reverberating through the post-reunion space. Reunion can become *the closure of the adoption* and the opening of a re-integrated life. Reunion rearrange your life.

Reunion and post-reunion change the boundaries of the family.



SEARCH LAND

The journey toward your unknown parents and your unknown self. It's the ultimate test of reality.

Normality of searching

- Searching for a self that incorporates one's past and one's present is a normal life pursuit for all human beings.

A universal quest

We can see the search for Home as a universal quest, but for the adopted person it is also a literal one. It is a quest for the beginning of one's narrative; for the lost mother; for unconditional love; for meaning; for the recovery of lost time; for a coherent sense of self; for security; for form and structure; for grounding and centering. The search for Home reflects the adopted persons need for biological, historical, and human connectedness. It is close to a religious search because it is an attempt to connect to forces larger than oneself. Lifton 1994 p128

Call to search

- Adopted persons have been in exile since their separation.
- Their original birth certificate- connects them to their origins—is lost.

The hero's journey

.The journey is the adopted persons heroic attempt to bring together the split parts of the self...

Crossing the threshold

Some adopted persons get their 'wake-up call' on 'Oprah'. Others are jolted out of sleep by an unexpected life crisis and find themselves suddenly falling through a trapdoor in the self into the dark pit of the unconscious. Everything that was neatly arranged and nailed down in their psyche comes undone and flies through

the trapdoor with them. They are caught in a gravitational pull toward an alternate reality: the very Ghost Kingdom they had so painfully split off. They could disappear entirely. It is terrifying, this moment you realize you are going to cross a threshold from which you may never return. Lifton 1994 p131

What are you searching for?

Many reasons- may include-

- I want to find the truth.
- The reason I was given up.
- Find someone who looks like me.
- Find my lost family and its history.
- Find my sisters and brothers.
- I want to meet my birth parents.
- I want to meet my birth kin.
- I want my family medical History.
- I want to reconcile my adoptive and Original Self.

Deciding to search

- A real turning point for adopted persons and birth parents.
- Usually made after much consideration and marks the
- Beginning of an unknown journey.
- Open up adoption feelings and issues.
- You start when you are ready.
- Adopted persons tend to search in their — teens, getting married, after parents have died, or in retirement.

Making the search decision

Making the decision to initiate the search is a critical turning point in the life of an adopted person. As he walks a path that may link unknown events and people from an unknown past to the events and people of the present, preparation is an absolute necessity, and he must face a multitude of concerns.

- The searcher will encounter unexpected —
- emotions that may propel them into confusion, anger, fear, even depression at a depth which they have not yet ex-

perienced.

- Must learn to recognize unrealistic expectations within themselves and balance those with probable reality
- Should be aware of the people they will meet and their reactions, both positive and negative.
- The searcher must know how and where to gain support. Schooler 1995 p56

Crossing a rickety bridge

Opening search and reunion issues with your adoptive family requires you to cross over a rickety, unstable bridge. A bridge built by materials from an unknown past, reinforced by the circumstances of the present, yet jeopardized by the concealed issues of the future, stands shaky and uncertain. Crossing it will alter the lives of everyone within your family circle. Schooler

Adoptive Parents box.

- Some adoptive parents are thrilled. Some feel offended by the searching. May find searching threatening-
- Searching violates the rules of closed complete break adoption.
- Their parent child relationship may have been built on the closed system.



SEARCH LAND

SIBLING LAND

Significant as finding a parent

Finding a brother or sister you never knew can be as significant as finding a parent. If the birth mother is deceased, reunions with birth siblings become paramount. Sibling reunions can also substitute for meetings were a birth mother refuses to meet.

— Why should she have the right, adopted persons ask, to prevent me from knowing her other children, my own brothers and sisters?

Desire to connect with siblings

Adopted persons who know about siblings often have compelling desires to meet them. Those who lack the knowledge ponder the possibility. Connecting with a birthparent fills a void, connecting with a brother or sister is an added bonus.

Not reunions but meet for first time

- Meeting for first time is not reunion.
- They often experience strong, even instantaneous, kindred feelings.
- Shared heredity creates ties.
- Sudden siblings can feel connected.
- Many feel closer to birth siblings than adopted siblings.

Sibling reunions less complicated

- They are less encumbered by sticky issues of a complicated past.
- Less likely to be derailed by unresolved issues.
- Are closer in age.
- They live in an era when attitudes about sex were more relaxed.

BMs dread of telling siblings

- BMs often dread telling their other children about the lost sibling.
- Fear losing their children's respect.

- They worry about the kind of message or model they're presenting.
- Children are seldom horror-struck, shocked, or judgmental.
- Most children accept it as no big deal, but sorry it's been a secret.
- When Mum's fallen of her pedestal she's easier to communicate with.

Sibling relations less problematic

- Very few siblings' relationships are a problematic part of post-reunion.
- BMs want siblings to love each other, like one another or it not be polite.
- BMs avoid pushing. Don't want to be in the middle so stay on sidelines.

Sensitivity and awkwardness

- Some siblings protect their mother by not telling her their full feelings.
- Some siblings are friendly to the adopted person when they visit, but don't seek them out.

Siblings don't understand adoption

- May not understand adopted persons loss, and relinquishment issues.
- Some sympathize and empathize with the adopted person immediately.

Older siblings more perceptive

- Adult siblings are more perceptive.
- See reunion as a gain, not a loss.
- Grown ups are occupied with lives and families of their own.

Bringing in new histories

- New siblings bring in their own history, personality, and insecurities.
- Some greeted as a long lost sister.
- Some treated as a distance cousin.
- Initial reactions may continue to hold for some years.

Challenge household tranquillity

- Siblings have to work through their own

feelings and relationships.

- Siblings are capable of giving each other a rough time.
- Intruder is real person not cardboard figure labelled brother or sister.

Dramatic shift in pecking order

- Life is not always what it seems.
- Figuring out family relationships in adoption is very challenging.
- Birth order can shift dramatically at a moment's notice, that's exciting, disconcerting, and displacing.
- People are accustomed to fill a certain role in the family. Takes time.
- Eldest child may have to move down a notch in birth order from first place
- Some sibs rejoice at dethronement of a dominant eldest sib.

Range of relationships

- From very close to guarded or perfunctory. Take it or leave it. Run hot and cold. Friendly but not close. Cordial but not warm. Uncertain and polite. Siblings prefer to sort out their relationships with no interference.

Determining the new relationship

- The bottom line questions- "Do I love you like a sister," or "Do I like you like a friend," or "Do I have to put up with you because we're related?" Half or full sibling makes no difference.

Adoptive sibling may split roles

Adopted siblings display their individuality in the different feelings they express about searching for birth parents. One may think about it a lot; the other not at all. One may become the 'good adoptee', the conformist and other the 'bad adoptee', the rebellious troublemaker in the family.

Inter sibling reactions to searching

Once an adopted siblings starts searching, the other sibling may become angry that his coun-

terpart is disloyal to their parents.

- The angry one may actually want to search too, but be reluctant or scared - Some sit back and observe, becoming stimulated and intrigued.

Sexual issues

Some new siblings experience strong feelings of physical attraction to one another. There is a risk of sexual encounter. The incest taboo is weaker between siblings that have never met.

Changing boundaries

In mixed families, the adult biological child has to contend with another kind of question. If my adopted sibling searches, who is his birthmother to me? And who are all those other birth relatives to me?

Source *'Birth Bond Reunions Between Birthparents and Adoptees- What happens After'* Judith Gediman and Linda Brown. New Horizon Press 1991 Ch 10. pp185-201

VETO MINE FIELD
XXXXXXXXXXXXXX

WELCOME BAY
ADOPTED PERSON BAY
PRODIGALS RETURN BAY

BP DEFENCE PT
FULL SIS
FULL SIBS
FULL BRO

SIBLING LAND

GENETIC SIBLING LAND

LIMBO LAND

REJECTION BAY

ELDEST SIB
DEMOTION PT

GET LOST RD
HOT & COLD BATH

SIBS JUNCTION
MOTEL

ON/OFF AGAIN RD
GENETIC CLICKS RD

HALF SIS
BM SIBS
HALF BRO

GRIEF ROAD
DEAD END RD
EXTENDED FAMILY BAY

ONLY CHILD END
HALF SIS



MT VIEW

BF SIBS
HALF BRO

NO BIG DEAL RD
BM TELLING

SPY RD

SECRET LANDING

LOST SIBLING BAY

SIBS CEMETERY
+++++

CLOSED RECORDS FORT

BP SMOKE SCREENS

BF SMOKE SCREENS

XXXXXX

SPOUSE LAND

\

3 Spouse resentment

It is not unusual for an adopted person to break off the relationship if the spouse resents the emotions being spent on the birth mother...In such cases, the adopted person retreats back into the Artificial Self, splitting off the birth mother once again in order to avoid the emotional turmoil that including her in their life would cause. In situations where the spouse welcomes the birth mother into the new family, it is possible for her to become a part of the adopted persons life and even a grandmother to his child. Lifton 1994 p168

SPOUSE LAND MAP

TRAUMA LAND

Psychological trauma

is an experience that is sudden, unexpected, abnormal. It exceeds the individual's ability to meet its demands. It disrupts one's sense of self and identity; it threatens one's psychological core. Lifton 1994 p48

Adoption process is the only trauma where the victims are expected by the whole of society to be grateful.

BOX CONTENTS

It's entirely your choice which boxes you ignore, acknowledge, open or shut. What you do with the contents and what you share is your decision.

Adopted Persons Traumas

Four traumas create the divided Self—

First trauma

Abandonment A two-part, devastating, debilitating experience for the child. The *first* part is the abandonment itself. No matter how much the mother wanted to keep her baby and no matter what the altruistic or intellectual reasons she had for relinquishing him/her, the child experiences the separation as abandonment. The *second* part is that of being handed over to strangers. Verrier 1993 p14

Second trauma

child learns that they are adopted. Hearing that you were not born to your mother is a profound and unrecognized trauma. It is as if the child has received a 'deadly traumatic telegram,' as the psychoanalyst Harold Blum puts it. 'The child finds it incomprehensible'. This is not to say that the child is irreparably damaged, as some adoptive parents fear is meant when professionals speak of wounds or traumas.

Children are known to be resilient, to suffer all kinds of early abandonments and other traumas and to recover. Lifton 1994 p49

Third trauma

The child learns they are, and are not the child of their parents. When the adopted child learns that he/she both *is* and *is not* the child of their parents, the shock connects to that earlier preverbal trauma the baby had at separation from the mother and has retained as an inner experience. Lifton 94 p49

Fourth trauma

The secrecy that disconnects the adopted person from their parentage and history They are forbidden to know to whom they were born. Blum suggests that the revelation of adoption can be softened in the context of a 'lovingly secure parent-child relationship.' This is true but, unfortunately, not even the most loving adoptive parents can soften the psychic toll that secrecy exacts from the child in that it interferes with the child's struggle to form an early sense of self. Lifton 1994 p49

Birth Mothers traumas

Relinquishment.

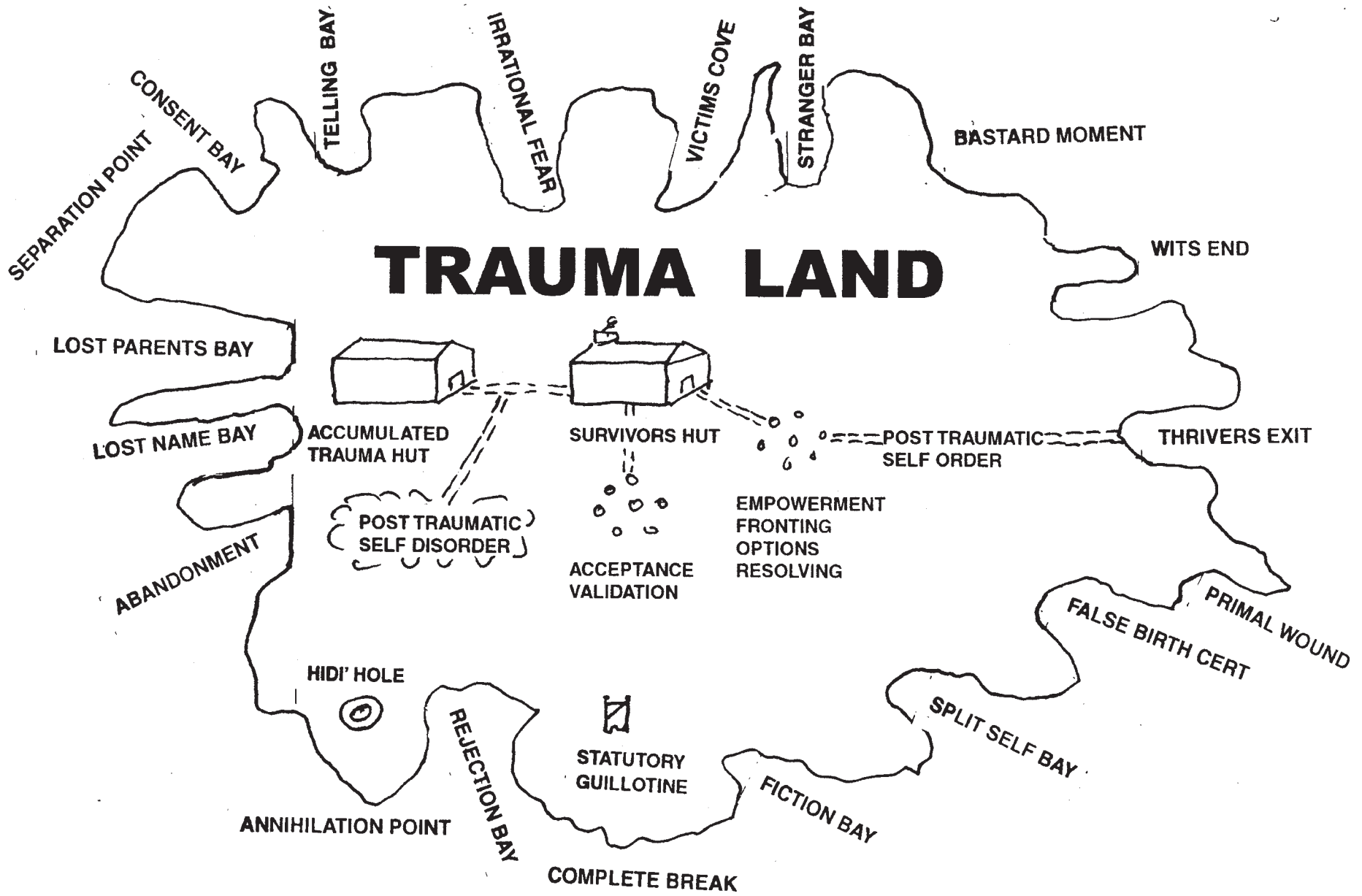
Adoptive Parents traumas

Infertility
The search

Post-traumatic stress disorder

Is a condition that often affects people who have experienced a traumatic event that is considered outside the range of normal human experience such as rape, fires, earthquakes, and tornadoes. The separation of a child from its mother is also a trauma that is outside the range of normal human experience. PTSD symptoms can include trying to avoid situations that remind the person of the traumatic event, having flashback memories, and anni-

versary reactions. It can be said that an adopted person's birthday is the anniversary of a traumatic event. Some adopted persons feel sad around their birthdays or remember birthdays as a time when they acted out or got in trouble. Russell 1996 p75



VETO LAND

VETO LAND MAP

VICTIM LAND

Victim is a person that suffers harm, from another or from some adverse act or circumstance. Some adopted persons and birth parents feel they are victims of the adoption system. Adoptive parents may feel they are victims of infertility. The adoption process is the only trauma where the victims are expected by the whole of society to be grateful. While not detracting from the trauma, being a victim, has now also become an 'in-thing'.

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Trauma

- Original trauma event and feelings.
- Story of how it all happened.
- Responses of all persons involved.

Victim

- Who labelled me a victim.
- The guilt and shame I retain.
- Where do I place the blame.
- Anger or vengeance I retain.
- On going consequences I suffer.
- Am I powerless and have no control.
- Am I, in or out, of the victim role.
- Victim role has a paralysing effect.
- Am I sick and tired of being a victim.
- The victim role is hard to brake.
- Can I change. Can I recover.
- I must take full responsibility for my own life and actions.

Victim/Recovery Cycle

- A victim has two basic choices.
- (a) Martyr/victim destruct cycle.
 - (b) Victim recovery cycle.

The longer we remain in the victim cycle the greater the self destruction. As we share our story, we can begin to break free of being a victim, recover and reintegrate our original self.

Martyr/Victim Cycle Recovery Cycle

Journey False self	True Self
Self-contraction	Self-expansion
There and then	Here and now
Unfinished business	Finished and finishing
Few personal rights	Many personal rights
Stagnation regression	Growth
Sharing little	Sharing as appropriate
Same story repetition	Growing story
Repetition compulsion	Telling present story
Impulsive & compulsive	Spontaneous & flowing
Pity parties	Enjoy parties
Unaware stuckness	Progressively aware
Unfocused	Focused
Not working on recovery	Working on recovery
Less open to input	Open to input of others
Dry drunk	Working thru pain an joy
Often grandiose	Humble yet confident
Unhappy dream	Happy dreams
Exclude Higher Power	Includes Higher Power
Illness	Health

Source C L Whitfield 'The Child Within' 1987 p111

Mountains of hurt Hurt can be accumulated to form mountains

Blame Mountains Victim either blame themselves or someone else.

Frozen Feelings Feeling can be paralysed or frozen in time. Suppressed strong feelings cause depression.

Depression Pit Feeling helpless and hopeless with no control or escape.

Old old story Compulsive, endless repetition of same old story with no progress. Then claim nobody listens. A way to drive friends up the wall.

Pity Party Solo monologue performance to justify self pity and wallow in Why Me?. Fast way to loose friends.

Victim Role Prison

- Victimization is now an 'in thing'.
- You can get locked into victim role.
- Self identity becomes a victim.
- May gain sympathy but not freedom.
- Dress is the cloak of a victim.
- There are few visitors and no parole.
- A place of anguish an little hope.
- Only you can get yourself out.

Validation

- Defining what happened.
- Accept reality of what happened.
- Share what happened.
- Share feelings and validate them.
- Seek empathy not sympathy.
- Choice, remain a victim or move on.
- Retelling the story from other participants' points of view helps you find routes to empathy and objectivity.
- *Join support group.* Sharing helps under standing, and validates feelings.
- *Helping others,* puts your own miseries in perspective.

Letting go

- Life is now about choices.
- Choice to stay a victim or get out.
- Repeating old patterns is a choice.
- Retaining your anger is a choice.
- Forgiveness is a choice.
- Letting go the hurt is a choice.
- If you refuse to let go the hurt, resentment, anger and sorrow of past, there can be no real healing.
- Only by letting go the anger, the pain, the hurt, the self pity and offering forgiveness can we open the way for true happiness, healing and wholeness.
- *Invent healing ritual* to mark the restoration of justice and end of anger.
- *Confess* deep fears and thoughts to gain distance and understanding.
- Let go the old old story repetition.

Forgiveness

— A victim who won't forgive lives in a psychological bondage to the victimizer, and a form of paralysis.

Forgiveness-

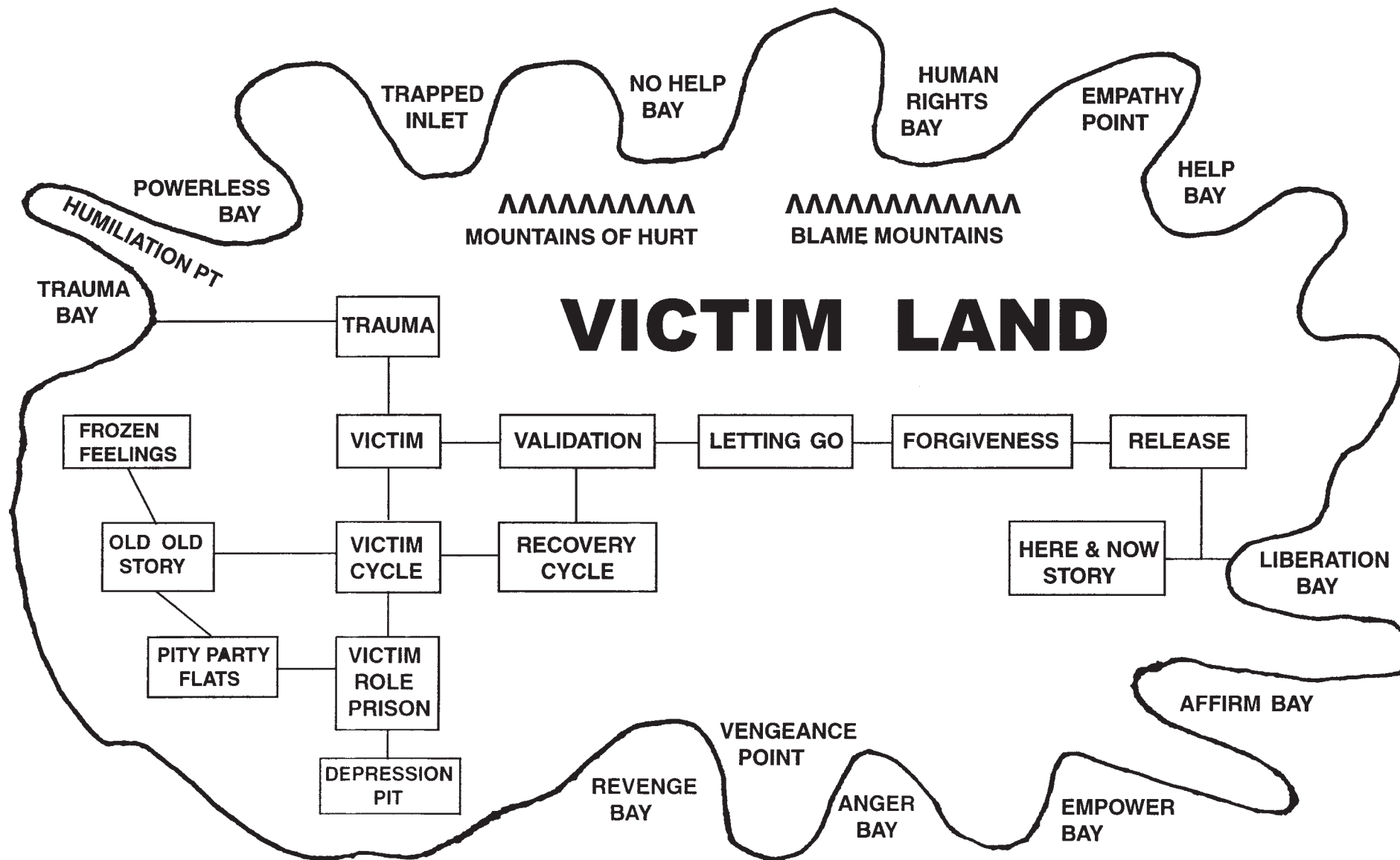
- It's beginning of accepting the past.
- Lets go old resentment and anger.
- Allows frozen emotions to flow.
- Healing energy frees the soul.
- Lets unfinished business go.
- Forgiveness doesn't mean I forget.
- It releases my life into the present.
- Recreates your life in the present.

Release

- Liberation from the victim role.
- Liberation from my past and release for my future.
- Reintegration of Self, accepting the reality and validity of my trauma.
- A letting go and forgiveness that reconciles me to myself and others.
- I can now get on with my life.

Here and Now story

I no longer live in the past. I live in the here and now.



WHOLENESS LAND

WHOLENESS LAND MAP

OPENNESS & SELF DISCLOSURE

Inability to be intimate and honest with at least a few persons blocks self-growth and prevents fulfilment of potential.

Self-disclosure decisions greatly influence our life. They determine our friends, how well we know them and the happiness and satisfaction we get from life. Two persons may live together for years but not really know each other. Relationships depend on the amount of personal information we and they are willing to share. Only when we share our strong negative and positive feelings, hopes, dreams, and fears we can become valued and accepted as unique persons.

We rarely talk openly about our reactions to each other. We withhold our feelings because we're afraid of hurting the other person, making them angry, being misunderstood or rejected, so we say nothing. Many relationships of promise deteriorate under lots of tiny annoyances, hurt feelings, and misunderstandings we can't talk about.

WHY SELF DISCLOSE?

I can't relate at depth to a person I don't know: Members of in depth sharing groups must engage in significant self-disclosure. I must make a real effort to reveal the person I am within to other members of the group.

I can't relate at depth to a person I don't know. If I'm to get to know you! You'll have to tell me about yourself'.

If I find my behaviour unacceptable, both to myself and to others, I will conceal and mask my true identity. It takes time and courage to talk about oneself at any depth.

"A person who cannot love cannot reveal himself. He who cannot reveal cannot love."

Concealment creates tension Energy I pour into concealment adds to my stress and dulls my awareness of my inner experience. Communication with others is through a facade; a mask. Rigidity or stereotype permeates our relationships.

Causes loneliness and depression because the concealer is separate, apart, out of community.

Increases physical and mental risks: The concealers increased stress load puts them physically and mentally at risk.

By concealing our failures deception becomes a way of life. It

is a break with reality. Breaking with reality is the warp and woof of emotional disorder. The symptoms and efforts to escape them are :-

Symptoms of concealment: tension, anxiety, depression, loss of appetite, fatigue, loneliness, phobias, hypocrisy, sense of unreality, hypochondria.

Efforts to escape symptoms. Withdraw, suicide, rationalize, blame others, self-pity, pity parties, busyness, over-eating, abuse of sex, daydreaming, intoxicants, tranquillisers. These are all delaying tactics- ultimately they make things worse unless the root cause is tackled.

Concealment leads to a deceptive way of life that becomes destructive of the person. Some emotional disturbances lose their power when they lose their privacy.

I need openness honesty to cope Only when we become open with our thoughts and feelings can we cope directly with problems in our social relationships

Love. A person who cannot love cannot reveal himself and a person who cannot reveal himself cannot love.

Being wanted. Close friendships make us feel wanted and needed.

Listening. Helps the other person and enhances our feelings of importance in the relationship.

Sharing load: We discover our problems are not unique, other have travelled that road and we can learn from them.

Clarifying view: Left alone we can stew things up out proportion. Self-disclosure is a vehicle for gaining feedback and reducing uncertainty about how to behave or choose the appropriate course of action.

Mutual openness accelerates growth and deepens friendships. Once we stop hiding behind masks or playing roles, information is sent and received much more quickly and accurately.

GUIDELINES SELF-DISCLOSURE

Disclosing my "Real" reaction: Self-disclosure should be honest, genuine and authentic as possible. Only then can I be close to or valued by others for who I really am. Share honestly and pull together; stay silent and stay strangers. To like you I must know who you are. To like me, you must know who I am. As well as being open with other people, I must be open to others. When in doubt be honest.

Disclosing my 'Here' and 'Now' reaction: Focus on, and disclose my here and now reaction. Focus on dynamic action in the group: Recalling action outside the group with unknown persons is less helpful. Focus on interaction within the group, insures both parties are present, available and open to resolve. Here and now action is monitored first hand.

Don't live in past: Past history is only helpful if it clarifies my present "now" reactions. The past brought up to here and now. "Having disclosed the past, what do you want now". New reconciliation, forgiveness, acceptance can only happen in the here and now.

Not intimate post history: Self-disclosure does not mean revealing intimate past dark secrets. Confessions about your past can give temporary feeling of intimacy, but relationships are built by disclosing the here and now. Only share intimate past if it's necessary to understanding your present.

Disclosing my "Thoughts and feelings" I must tell you honestly not only what I am thinking but also what I am feeling. Reaction to people and events are based more on feelings than facts. Self-disclosure therefore involves a lot of feeling communication.

Mutual trust Coming to know another is a risky process. Allowing oneself to be known is even greater. To merit trust I must be trustworthy. Main- way of trust building is risking self-revelation. "A friend is a person with whom I can think aloud".

Early childhood patterns As children we learn patterns of self-disclosure from parents and peers. Early feelings of trust or mistrust for others has profound effect on subsequent patterns of disclosure.

Openness foundation for growth The open person has a teachable spirit, ready to learn, change and grow. Wants to front and overcome hang-ups and bindings and gain insight for more effective living. Uptight people suffer anxiety, have unteachable spirits and will not grow.

Self-awareness and self acceptance My ability to disclose myself to others depends on my self-awareness and self acceptance. I must be aware of my thinking and feeling to communicate. Unless I accept my thoughts and feelings I cannot feel free to communicate them to others.

Build on agreed foundations Group should share similar

basic faith. 'Disclosures must be within groups concern, interest and agreed objectives. Some people will hijack groups to ride their own hobby horse.

Love one another Positive motive to work through real needs, hurts confusions and affirm and celebrate joys. Love is a growth promoting relationship.

Take reasonable risks No more than group can handle. Each group is limited by the experience of the participants. Don't get out of your depth. Nor open up areas you are not prepared to stick with and handle.

Reciprocal sharing Never invite another to share deeply if you will not reciprocate. Sharing is a two way street. Avoid Monologuers- they are verbal road hogs who take up both sides of the conversation.

Don't overwhelm: Revealing too much too fast scares people off. Large chunks of information cause group indigestion, can also overpower and bewilder people and they bomb out. "Blockbusters" are as much a group problem as "Icebergers" who freeze up. Seek permission of group before launching forth a lot of information. Take account of effects on others.

Take time Most relationships build gradually, sharing to deeper levels by natural progression. Handle hothouse relationships with caution until they become more hardy all weather ones.

Share one issue at a time: Most people can only concentrate on one issue at a time. Don't empty a heap of negatives all at once, or gripe about everything in general. The group will get a guts full of you. That's what. "Fed up to the back teeth" means.

Do you want to be healed? If the answer is No! Then better shut up. If you don't want to do anything about a problem skip it, you are just wasting your time and the group time.

Get rid of emotional rubbish Don't use people as your emotional rubbish bin. People will help you put your rubbish in the trash can if you want to dispose of it, but don't take too kindly to you tipping it all out again next week. If you want to make a mess of your life, please do it somewhere else where you can wallow in it to your hearts content.

Need ongoing relationship of continuing trust, accountability and support. Emotional streaking or venting to stran-

gers is rarely useful. Flashing intimate experiences does not resolve problems. Opening up in a once only group can leave you vulnerable and bewildered.

Group contract In-depth sharing requires both a high degree of commitment and support to work at and through issues raised. Contracts help pin us down to action within specified limits and time.

RESISTANCE OR FEAR OF SELF-DISCLOSURE

Moving to a deeper levels of self-disclosure means higher risks and greater pain, one is more reluctant to reveal. The deeper we go, the closer we get to our core, to the person within, to the person we really are. Deep self-disclosure gets at a person's identity. It gets at the repressed, the unrecognized, the ignored, the unseen, the unannounced in a person; it gets at the best and worst in us. It is what Christian confession seeks to do. In total honesty, in the presence of others I reveal myself as I truly am; that the best in me may be affirmed and rejoiced and the worst in me may be changed. The deeper we go the more it reveals the mystery of our self.

Fear of rejection Why I'm afraid to tell you who I am? "Because if I did you might not like me."

The two conflicting poles of Self-disclosing:-

- (a) If you find out what am really like, you won't love me.
- (b) If you understood me, you'd love me.

The first drives us away from others, the second draws us toward them. We have both poles. One part of self yearns to be heard and understood, the other hides lest it be found and rejected. The side winning the inner tug-of-war controls our relationships.

Receiving no support Even in an atmosphere of relative trust, self-disclosure entails risk. If I put myself on the line and then don't get support, self-disclosure can be quite traumatic. If the group doesn't respond, I will usually take it as rejection, no matter what the real state of affairs may be. Even when all goes well, we often feel down for a day or two, shaken up with rough edges, because getting rid of unwanted load always leaves a vacuum, that needs to be filled. The need for continued support.

Fear of intimacy It's impossible to reveal oneself on a deep level without some degree of intimacy. Our culture puts us on

guard. The possibility of intimacy frightens many people. For some people the fear of intimate human relationships is greater than the fear of death. Past hurts, traumas, breach of trust, lack of love leave very deep scars.

Vulnerability When others access my secrets, they acquire leverage against me. Information can be used as a weapon. Any increased exposure of mind or body increases vulnerability, the more we are exposed the higher the risk.

Discloses weakness Reverse halo effect. A group member fears self-disclosure because they think only of disclosing the worst, in themselves. If I reveal I can't cope in one area of life, you will assume I'm incompetent in all areas of my life. I want to give the impression I'm strong, I have made it, I'm victorious. If I reveal weakness or faults I'll topple off my pedestal. But alas! The great fall thereof makes us a lot more loving and lovable.

No one would understand We fear our feelings are unique and no one has ever felt that way. It's a great relief to discover that someone else has a similar interior life.

Lack of trust Without trust I won't self-disclose. Trust building encourages self-disclosure. Self-disclosure is also a trust building block.

Making a fool of yourself "Better remain silent and be thought a fool than to speak out and remove all doubt" Abraham Lincoln. We fear being laughed at. Being treated as a joke is the opposite of being affirmed. Some people only confide in pets. A Cat's a safe confidant, they don't blab to people, nor dissolve in peels of laughter when you make a fool of yourself.

Hypocrisy Concealing myself from others commits me to building a false public image. Hiding myself from others is an exhausting, full time job. Not being honest with self and others engenders a life of self-deception. Breaking with reality is the warp and woof of emotional disorder.

Masking The masks we put on, depend on the audience and the impression we desire to create. The more we play a mechanical, artificial role, the harder it is for others to figure out who we really are. The under-revealer is masked. They control themselves. Cautious and contained, they present a set face to the world. Appear disciplined, self-sufficient, or very private. Do not easily reciprocate sharing of personal information. "Be brave" which means controlled. "Be strong" means silent. "Be

cool” means uninvolved. “Be wise” means hidden.

Self alienated people have great difficulty in loving and being loved. Effective loving requires knowledge of the object. I cannot love a person I don't know! Neither can a person love me if they don't know me? Building loving relationship requires self disclosure in full spontaneous honesty.

Mobility discourages deep attachments, but absence of intimacy occurs in long term relationships. In some marriages people pass as ships in the night. Many people cautiously conceal their true feelings under the guise of being discreet. Chaucer.. “Keep well thy tongue and keep thy friends”.

Fear of being invaded, rejected or abandoned A person disclosing may fears being engulfed, rejected and abandoned. Mind rape can be devastating. Don't try and force the other person to disclose or change.

Flight from Self Knowledge In self-disclosure we not only communicate with others, but also with yourself. It can be assumed that some people flee self-revelation because they fear closer contact with themselves. Some claim a group is only as threatening to a participant as we are to yourself.

Flight from Responsibility “We reveal only to the extent we want to change. We have a deeply embedded desire to change first, if change at all, and then present ourselves as changed to others. If self revelation takes place in a group then the pressure to change is much greater than a one to one.

GUILT AND DISCLOSURE

Guilt often keeps us from self-disclosure. Guilt implies violation of a standard, whether the standard be real or imagined. Also a some kind of perception of this violation on the part of the violator, whether this perception be clear and distinct, vague, or even unconscious.

Moral guilt A wilful violation of some moral, ethical, or contractual standard that a person holds, either implicitly or explicitly Falling short of requirements of life with others.

Failed potential guilt There stand before us any number of possibilities or potentialities in life. But if we allow too many possibilities to slip by, or chooses poorly we may have guilt feelings.

Neurotic guilt Guilt that's got all out of proportion. A person may reach the stage where because of failure in one area of life, the whole of life becomes meaningless. Regards self as worthless.

Pharisaical guilt Can arise if one feels overly conformed to certain non-essential standards of living. Ritual is important in life it gives security and order. But meaningless ritual should be given up - some do not feel free to give up meaningless ritual and feel guilty.

CULTURAL TABOO

Self disclosure seen as weakness Any revelation of failure by society or individuals is seen as revealed weakness. Such secrets could be used by enemies, so are concealed. Society afraid of honesty cannot ban self-disclosure completely.

Graduations of self-disclosure reaction

(i) Extermination or severe punishment of all who dare say or do the wrong thing- no freedom of self-disclosure. (ii) Society sets up special people - confession should be restricted to them. Priests, Gurus, Psychotherapists etc. (iii) Allow discussion and self-disclosure in small special groups controlled by a trusty of the government, or organization (iv) Allow open self disclosure.

Cultivation of the lie The lie has become part of accepted cover up by Governments etc. It's okay if you can get away with it. Lies' have become part of our cultural concealment of failure.

To sum up If you handle guilt by concealment; It's the most painless way initially but builds up hurt later and stops growth. The truth is often the hardest and most painful in the short term, but the easiest in the long term, and opens the way for growth.

RISK AND TRUST REQUIRED

Most people hesitate to disclose themselves in a group, they balance on the diving board a long time. Some need to watch others diving to build up confidence to take the plunge. But what if no one will take the plunge? Like diving, self-disclosure can be a shock getting in, but once in, it's not so bad. Experienced members build up risk and trust and are prepared to lead the way and plunge in first.

SHAME AND FANTASY

We all daydream, most have well developed fantasies. These can reveal a good deal about a person - but it takes some courage. We may be ashamed to reveal our fantasies.

VALUES We shy away from two important topics, ‘the worst in me’ and, ‘the best in me’. This becomes talk about values - if we disclose our values then we reveal a lot, for self-disclosure in the area of values demands action. We are often afraid to say ‘I believe’ to a world that has lost faith even in itself.

STORY VERSUS HISTORY

HISTORY

Is pseudo self-disclosure. Clicks off the facts of experience but can leave the person of the revealer relatively untouched. Accounted ‘for’ but unrevealed. The person relates many facts about themselves but the real inner person still remains unknown. History is often a long account. The speaker deals with themselves as object rather than subject. Attempts to relate to the persons present inner life as subject, are often met with a claim there is nothing wrong with them. It's the fault of the group or someone else. This diverts thrust to another' persons. May launch a pre-emptive strike. Attack the leader or a key member of the group or attack the group process. Such is the fear of self-disclosure of their real inner self and possible rejection thereof.

STORY

Authentic self-disclosure, tries to reveal the person within and get them involved with the listeners. Story is an invitation for others to come into my life. Story usually avoids interpretation, is graphic and specific, does not hide behind generalities. Story is always a sharing of ones life with an implicit request for human support. The person gives testimony about themselves, gives witness to their own mysteriousness, both the mystery of goodness and mystery of evil that he or she is.

HANDLING MARITAL CONFLICT

(These notes are based on the book 'The Intimate Enemy- How to fight Fair in love and marriage' By Dr.G.R.Bach & P.Wyden. Pub. Avon.

CONFLICT BETWEEN INTIMATES IS INEVITABLE

There is the romantic belief that intimates should smoothly accept each other and live happily ever

after. Victorian etiquette tried to do this under social pressure. However the notion of quarrel free intimacy is a myth born in ignorance of personal realities. The closer we come the more our rough edges and sensitivities are exposed. In mature intimacy we relish the giving and receiving of love, but we also learn to accept and handle our conflicts. What stops most people progressing to more intimate relationships is that they cannot handle conflict. Learning to cope with intense conflict constructively can therefore open the way to greater love. Conflict is inevitable, the future of any intimate relationship depends on the ability to handle conflict constructively rather than destructive.

ANGER

Is the basic emotional reaction when we are frustrated or concerned when things go wrong. *Anger is real, natural and healthy* and we must learn to cope with it. To ignore anger in marriage is just as stupid as trying to ignore and suppress our sexual nature, both require healthy acceptance and

expression rather than suppression. The alternative to constructive expression of anger and conflict is repression. We collect all the 'nasty' bits up and put them in our sack 'gunny-sacking'. The result is inevitable- a very nasty explosive mixture and a major storage problem. Living in fear that some jolt, bump or tiny spark may trigger a destructive blast. You face the alternative of a major blow up or withdrawing to a safe non-communicating distance of non interaction. Our divorce rates are high, but even more couples remain physically and legally married but emotionally divorced. They live on in card houses held together by social, religious, economic or legal pressures, with depressed hopes and constant fear of collapse.

The couple that learns to engage in conflict constructively finds their frustrations reduced. Since they live with fewer lies and inhibitions and have discarded outmoded notions of etiquette are far more freer to be themselves creatively.

THE QUEST AND FLIGHT FROM INTIMACY

Most people want a deep satisfying relationship with at least one other person, but are also at the same time afraid of drawing too close. Divorce can be a flight from intimacy but can also be a quest for intimacy- acknowledge failure and desire to try again.

Intimacy like anger *is also a suspect behaviour in our culture.* For many people it conjures up only two meanings: (a) Sexual illicit overtones.

(b) Smothering - mothering relationship - swallowing up. Intimacy has also no place in our 'hero culture'- today's hero is a free roaming, unencumbered wheeler dealer, self-made, self-propelled, self-sufficient operator.

Some also mistakenly seek intimacy by going on a depersonalised sex binge romping their way through a sexual Disneyland on a pay you later basis.

Each couple has to find their optimal closeness To learn when you want intense intimacy and when you want to be left alone. Any intense intimacy is exhausting and exciting, we all need times to distance and recharge our batteries. Being too close too long can bug you, we all need some privacy as well as intensity. You can't just live on highs, or you likely to have a mighty crash.

TYPES OF MARRIAGE RELATIONSHIPS

1 Card- house marriages Almost totally lacking in intimacy. Fake front, held together largely by partners neurotic concern for appearances, social

success, status, and respectability. At worst it can be a 'zipper relationship' of interlocking neuroses.

2 Game Playing Marriages Have some degree of intimacy, but essentially they resign themselves to game playing, and other ritualised routines. Often mutual protection associations that stagnate into a lost cause.

3 True intimates Live in the here and now reality. Can take ups and downs of life. Can express anger and love with plenty of give and take. Take up their conflicts and handle them as natural as eating as part of the relationship. Couples who can't display their hostilities are not polite by phony.

FIGHT STYLES

With high levels of frustration, anger and aggression the battle will take place, it's only a matter of time and place. You have two basic choices:-

(a) Having it out in the open. (b) Letting it rip internally- amid the ulcers and migraines. Some people have appalling fights within themselves, incurring damages every bit as severe as the worst external fights. We are quite capable of destroying ourselves mentally and physically. Some understanding of common fight styles can free us up and guide us to more constructive encounters.

1 Kitchen Sink fights Contestants throw every accusation they can think of, real or imagined. No accusation is answered other than by counter accusation. "You accuse me of .. What about when you did.." So the yelling match goes on. When words run out some throw objects. Throwing words or objects may let off steam, blow safety valve, but does nothing to resolve anything. Pressure builds up again for repeated blow outs. Until they can sit down and work out one thing at a time this couple will make no progress.

2 Round Robin fights When one wants to uncork same pent-up hostile feelings, one may trot out a few pet grievances, the partner then reciprocates. This results in quick merry-go-round ending with each partner declaring that they will not change until the other person does first. Thus they promise to do nothing until they learn to break out of the round robin.

3 Vesuvius Just blowing off lots of steam, spontaneous irrelevant sounding off. Normal conditions (a) Person raved about is not present. (b) An audience is required -normally the spouse. (c) The issue raved about must have nothing to do with real problems between the couple. Releases tension but does nothing to resolve basic problems. Some spouses become regular faithful geysers.

4 Pearl Harbour fights Much time and work is put into planning a surprise attack. It's launched without any warning and is all over and done with before the spouse can collect their scattered wits or retaliate.

5 Dunkirk Retreat There is every indication of shaping up for a decisive battle, but the spouse just vanishes quietly off into the night, and turns up in another place, saved for another

day...

6 Eve-ball to eyeball levelling These couples have their conflicts out one at a time. They seek to be completely honest and open with each other. Focus on present reality not past history. They attack the problem rather than the person. Often fight by appointment. (a) Gives time to think about it and get things into perspective. (b) Allows cooling off time. (c) Can set aside a sufficient time when they are not too tired.

The only way to win intimate encounters is both win or a suitable compromise. Straight wins are bound to result in a rematch.

MALE AND FEMALE FIGHT STYLES

The basic hostility reactions in men and women are the same. The battle of the sexes is largely based on cultural stereotypes. Men have the same need to cry, but are culturally stopped. Women can be as violent as men if means are available. Both male and female can equally harbour grudges and aggressiveness. The genuinely angry woman is little different from the genuinely angry man. The sooner husbands and wives accept this truth the easier it will be to level as equals.

BAD AND DIRTY FIGHTERS TACTICS TO AVOID

1 Spouse watchers Like Peeping Toms, watching and waiting. Silently gathering in sufficient information as ammunition for the next trial or intimate ambush.

2 Privacy Invaders Insist that partners must share everything on demand. They have no respect for partners need of privacy. The constant ransacking of partners privacy - mail - where are you and what are you doing,? Breeds distrust.

3 ATTACKING THE PERSON RATHER THAN THE PROBLEM Character Assassination.

Attacking the person rather than facing the real problem is 'hitting below the belt'.

(a) Depersonalization Person is treated as an object, "You are just a piece of ..." Or an animal "you son of a bitch" "you are a pig" "Stupid Ass" **(b) Sex role attack**- "When I married you I thought you were a man" "No man would stand for that" "If you were a woman you would know" "All I ask is to be mar-

ried to a man".

(c) Physical attack The rage against the person comes out in physical violence ranging anywhere between a slap and murder. The threat of violence is used more often than actual violence. "You just touch Me!"

(d) Mental attack "You are mad" "stupid bitch" "Your whole family are cracked" "The only way they can prove me insane is that I married you".

(e) Genetic Attack "Just take one look at your mother" "With a father like you what else can we expect", "Your family is a bunch of creeps".

(f) Racial attack "Its you Irish temper" "Yes, I know your kind".

(g) Religious attack "All Catholics are the same" You are just a Bible Basher". "If you are a Christian, the God help me" In any close relationship we become aware of our partners weak spots. We all have an 'Achilles heel' its cruel to take advantage of this.

The Halo Polishes They always know that they are innocent and so very hurt and right. Its always someone else that's to blame, someone else has got to change while they sit wait and dictate.

5 Buck Passes 'They are your kids' 'You married me' "It's your brat" "So what it's your problem" "You got us into it so you can get out of it".

6 Procrastinators The time is never right- "I've got to be out" "It would not be right to ruin our holiday" "I'll have a heart attack" "Think of my ulcer"

7. False Promises 'Its all sorted out, don't worry it will be done" but it never is. The dishes are left in the sink, they don't deliver the goods.

8 Monloguers Hold one way conversation or one way rage. All lines of communication are jammed with one way traffic, no feed back is possible.

9 Amateur Psychologists None of us takes too kindly to an uninvited character analysis from an amateur even if given free. "I have read all about you in the books" "I know what is wrong with you and its time you knew".

10 Hit and run Will hit out but will refuse to stay and take the

consequences, they are also never available for a rematch.

11 Compromisers Peace at all costs. They go along with partners beliefs, attitudes and actions when these are clearly inconsistent. May even make false confessions or lie to avoid rocking the boat to avoid conflict. Compromise may be required -but never at the expense of honesty and integrity.

12 Satanic Fighters These are bent on the destruction of the mate by all means. May drive a spouse from home or insane, wreck public image, or suicide. Every couple at times strikes a foul blow in the heat of the moment - but these are not clumsy hitters who land the occasional blow - they deliberately set out to destroy the spouse.

13 Fighting by mail and telephone When eyeball-to-eyeball contact is removed, soon people feel safer and therefore become more aggressive and dirtier. Suicide, physical violence, and murder are more likely threatened by mail or telephone. Letters are a favourite, medium of poor or pseudo intimates.

Paper + Pen + distance from the partner conspire to shape the perfect environment to sit down and build a unilateral dream world. The communicator by letter is free to paint himself in any light he chooses. He can sit back and bank in his own independent, unchecked interpretations and luxuriate in a self made Utopia,

14 Bullies Where one partner is much stronger than the other or more educated than the other, they try to physically or mentally bash the partner into submission.

GUIDE LINES FOR HANDLING MARITAL CONFLICT

1 Accept as normal recognize that it can be either destructive or constructive. Be determined to have things out constructively,

2 Recognise-Partners stress clues Can range from minor annoyances to flashing red danger signals indicating a dangerously ballooning "gunny sack" full of grievances.

3 Think before starting, a fight Is it a real issue? Is it my fight or someone else's?" Am I just tired? Am I over-reacting? What's really at stake?

4 Level and 'hook in' Recognize tension and desire to have it out. 'Come on you look upset - Whats bugging you?' This will normally trigger the negative feelings off and pave the way to

get down to the real issue.

5, Fight by appointment Don't leave it to bedtime when you are too tired to cope. If home coming indicates tension - agree to have it out after tea. Don't delay too long or today's bickering may escalate into tomorrow's kitchen sink' battle.

6 Tackle one issue at a time 'Kitchen sink' type fights with shots ricocheting, all over the intimate landscape achieve nothing.

7. Don't hit below the belt: You should know each other's belt line, hits above can be absorbed and below is unfair 'foul'. Because intimates have the knowledge and power to do major psychological, social and economic damage to each other they need to agree on belt lines and avoid foul hits, Everyone has limits to tolerances the inner fortresses that one will not give up and whose inviolability is not negotiable.

8 Allow full release of tension Don't stop it off - let it out and get the pressure down. Every one becomes blinded in the heat of battle, When it cools then rationality sheds more light than heat. Sometimes may have to put the emergency brakes on "Stop we are getting nowhere" "Cool it" to keep release anger within safe limits - slow down but get it out.

9 Listen for feedback Cheek to make sure you have got the message right and allow the person time to reply. Just one way yelling gets nowhere

10. Try to both win Often by negotiated compromise both gain something in the relationship. Clever wins will always provoke a counter-attack.

11 Make it up afterwards Some do confine the partner in the marital jail or dog box for a period. But with experience partners get their fights over more quickly with more rapid reconciliation and love making.

12 Learn from mistakes Recognize mistakes and learn from them. Be prepared to apologize to partner or children when you are wrong.

SOME BASIC REQUIREMENTS FOR INTIMACY

1 Intimacy must be a basic outlook Must be convinced it is a good thing. That mutual shared experiences are prefer-

able to solos. A basic desire to remain in love, and find for each other a central place in your heart,

2 Adequate information required One has to be open and determined to share one's inner world of thoughts and feelings. Intimates let each other know where they stand - don't just assume.

3 Intimates trust each other Not afraid that their partner will exploit their weaknesses. They report things to each other without quizzing.

4 Intimacy requires equal authority In all true partnerships the leadership will change from situation to situation depending on partners competence, energy and health. But lines of command always remain reversible.

5. Dynamic not static relationship. Both partners go on growing and changing. They respond realistically to the here and now. casting aside stale routines or obsolete stances.

6 Intimacy implies freedom They have a basic contract without fine rigid details. Can renegotiate the contract at any time by mutual consent. Respect each other's privacy and have some independent interests.

7 Intimates are loyally devoted to each other's reciprocal commitment to be first in each other's life and heart without jealous possessiveness.

8 Intimates are realistic: They keep their own and each other's feet on the ground by constant candid feedback both positive and negative,

9 Intimacy requires humour Can laugh at themselves and share their own idiosyncrasies with family and friends. Can mimic each other's faults at times and laugh without loss of face and reap the reward of having fun together.

Intimacy passes through many phases- the accommodations of courtship, on through power struggles, loyalty problems, successes and failures of projects. It is helpful to realise that quarrels frequently are symptoms of the emergence of a new phase if truth and love prevail.

BLAMING AND SCAPE-GOATING

What goes wrong is always someone else's fault. Taking the

prosecutor role implies I'm innocent and defines my task:- To find, name, try and punish the guilty person. Lets me off the hook, proves my innocence, nails the blame, stirs the shame and lays the full blame at another door.

Fear of being blamed The need to blame rises from a fear of being blamed. Every blamer seeks a placater; every guilty victim, a tyrant.

Avoids responsibility The impulse to blame is an ancient escape from responsibility. Adam's triple blame manoeuvre. It's the woman, the snake, and God who created them. Because it's punitive, negative, evasive, blaming increases frustration and conflict in both parties.

THE BLAME DANCE

Two step Tune: "Yes you did, No You Did!" Two people try to put the blame on the other and neither can let go. Each fuel the conflict, it's a very exhausting no win dance.

Side step Tune: "don't blame me". "If you hadn't said (done, acted, looked) as you did, it would not have happened. It's your problem and your fault. What a relief to lay it all at your door and to know I'm innocent". There is no resolve it simply dumps the problem on another. Avoids any responsibility.

The back step Tune: "You have done it again" Blame looks backward. Penalises the past, punishing person's for acts whether real or fantasized. Rather than point to the future inviting change, growth and healing by taking responsibility.

The Maypole Tune "round the mulberry bush" One succeeds in blaming the other, the recipient can express regrets and offer appropriate change. O.K. If blame fully justified, if not you'll will dance to increasingly unreasonable demands.

Shame dance Tune "I knew you would let me down". Chorus "I'm ashamed of You". Stirs up shame, pain, self-rejection in hope of stimulating self correction. Negative methods normally give negative results.

Guilt dance Tune "If only they knew" Trying to hook another's guilt, only succeeds if guilt is available to be hooked. As one makes peace with old guilt or bad experiences through inner healing and forgiveness there's no guilt to hook.

END THE BLAMING

1 blame you ... and you blame me?

It's all your fault ... and you blame me?

If we are both prepared to share blame the dance stops. Mutual admission of 50/50 score will stop it instantly.

CONFRONTING BLAME

Effective confronting has sharp focus, expresses and addresses responsibility. Responsibility means "response-ability".

Confrontation that places blame has in it the source of its own dysfunction. Blame inevitably evokes resistance and resentment whether conscious or surfacing later on reflection.

Confrontation that probes for shame guarantee's defeat. Shame elicits self-doubt and depressive pain which provoke new drives for expressing the original behaviour again. It serves only to increase the actions it intended to stop.

Confrontation that stimulates responsibility we see past behaviour more objectively and consider new behaviour more satisfying to both persons. The past must be honoured as past, the present seized, the future envisioned.

Responsibility is focused on present, and openness to future: Recognises ability to respond here and now and potential for the future. I can respond now and in the future, but I cannot respond in the past. The past, being past, is not subject to change. I can change my present stance to the past and alter my future behaviour from what I did in the past. That's my present and future responsibility.

Blame puts down the past to lift up better future option? No! Negative judgments and punitive actions to one's past tend to boomerang. Negatively loaded behaviour sticks in the memory and in times of frustration surfaces insistently.

Shame puts down the self that acted in the past as though self-negation will create a positive self-image in the future. Two negations guarantee nothing except more negation. Blame is powerless to effect change and growth. Shame is powerless to evoke new inner direction. My capacity to choose creatively increases as I take responsibility for the past and affirm my ability to respond anew.

Who's fault is it when things go wrong First question in

most crises.

(a) For those who off load responsibility, the question triggers a wild-goat chase to find the scapegoat. (b) Those who store anger inside, take on the blame heroically. "It's all my fault", "I'm a failure". Some do both. At one moment they blame themselves for the whole tragedy, at the next they take another swing at the scapegoat.

Blaming ourselves is useless for a variety of reasons:- We blame ourselves for wrong reasons. Crucial things that went wrong are not likely to occur to us alone.

We're not qualified to sit in judgement of our life We slip into (a) Total rejection, "I'm no good at all, I don't deserve to live," or (b) Excuse ourselves lightly. "I'm only human". If I assume the right to sit in self-judgment over myself is to play God. I don't truly understand my past.

My memory is selective I recall things that fit with my self-image. When pride and memory argue it's memory gives in. Most pictures we recall from our past are retouched. Most scripts we quote have been edited by pride.

Memory is a museum We produce a biased series of fragments which reassure us that things were as we wish they were.

Memory reviews the past, rearranges detail, reinterprets meanings for the challenges of the moment.

Memory is a gyroscope that balances the self and maintains harmony and unity within.

Memory is my story Going through old memories trying to place blame is useless. Better to own my past with as few defences as possible, and live now in the present.

Love ends blaming games and asks the real questions: What is the loving responsible thing to do now? (Response-able love). Where do we go from here?

Love owns responsibility, breaks legalism, tears up the scorecard, and begins Now!

Learn to say "I appreciate... I want... I need.." Hear each other. Cancel old hidden demands. Drop blaming strategies, work toward what you truly want for yourself, and for each other.

Accept Responsibility

Growth comes from owning responsibility, not from accepting blame. Take responsibility for your mistakes, own them and seek to overcome them. If I assume the Prosecutor role, my relationship is in trouble. It takes two to dance and only one to quit- so quit it.

Resource. "Caring Enough to Confront" Ch.6. D.Augsburger.

ANGER

Anger has a very definite purpose to perform. Anger is a perfectly good feeling, given to us for a specific purpose, to help and protect us from injury, hurt, and exploitation.

Most adults grow up with almost total non-understanding of angry feelings. The result is chaos. Oceans of valuable energy are wasted in futile anger: couples quarrel, neighbours argue, in-laws bicker. Communities and nations fight. Often no one really knows why they are angry or fight.

Mature people are angry for specific reasons. They know what they are angry about. They are able to stop, consider, and change things they are angry about.

A person who never gets angry is almost certainly sick. A person who is constantly angry is also very sick.

ATTITUDES TO ANGER

1 Anger is evil, deny it This moralistic view sees anger as sinful, to be controlled, contained, concealed at any cost. In fact only some anger is evil.

2 Anger is attacking suppress it This fear response comes from all too frequent experience of attacks by an angry person. But mistakenly assumes that destructive rage is the only type of anger.

3 Anger is immaturity This superior view is partly true. Much anger arises from childish fantasy, global demands or god-like pretensions.

4 Anger is power, assert it: Anger can supply needed motivation to demand appropriate change. But abuse of anger power boomerangs.

5 Anger is self-destructive, ventilate it Appropriate for those who internalize anger in the body and live with it bottled up, can develop ulcers, arthritis, colitis, hypertension etc. But not all anger is destructive, nor will ventilation help if anger is being used to wrong ends.

6 Anger is arousal manage it, direct it: Anger is the bodily arousal when encountering frustrated demands. 1 accept, own and examine my anger as a normal part of me. 1 choose to express, withhold or cancel the frustrated demands.

Exercise 1. Reflect on the six basic attitudes toward anger. Have you held different ones during different periods of your life ? Where are you now ? 2. How do we sort our demands. Then express, store or cancel them ?

REPRESSED ANGER is anger buried alive!!! Repressed anger is as destructive as any poison.

WHY REPRESS ANGER? Because most people fear the dire results of letting it go.

Fear of losing a persons love If I express anger to someone close to me, or I'm dependent on, there is often intense fear that it will trigger my rejection, some find it utterly terrifying.

Fear of retaliation I not only risk rejection, but I may be attacked mentally or physically.

Fear of losing self control I don't know what would happen if I really let it all go. Fear of doing myself an injury or someone else and injury.

EFFECTS OF REPRESSED ANGER

Fake indifference When attacked the person behaves as if it doesn't matter, resigns to fate. Gives no sign of anger or being upset. This false behaviour normally triggers more intense abuse. A Devil's merry-go-round of being exploited, repressing the anger, and thereby inviting further abuse. People who repress anger are easy targets for exploitation.

Become accident prone A lot of accidents are caused by repressed anger boiling up in a rage that impairs our performance. Anger is a powerful force, when you deflect it from hitting the right target (the person you're mad at), it must hit somewhere, self is often the nearest target.

Anger accumulates Builds up for months, years, then Wham! You end up storming out of the house forever, walking out of a vitally important job and shattering friendships forever. As you have never hinted that anything is wrong, people are left stunned. Assassins are normally not hot heads but anger repressors.

Signs of Repressed Anger Depression, crying, coats, head aches etc. Depression is the commonest manifestation of repressed anger. You push down your anger inside you, and you get bound up and weighed down with it.

FOUR STEPS IN DEALING WITH OUR ANGER

1 Recognize any anger, own and admit it Until I recognize my anger, I cannot do anything about it. This first step is the most difficult. People will continue to speak of being disappointed, frustrated, let down, unaware that these expressions may indicate repressed anger. Anger may be denied because (a) We feel too guilty about it or (b) Are afraid of it.

Accept our anger. To know my anger is one thing, but to accept my anger is different matter. Acceptance of any feelings means relaxation. The feelings expressed in my eyes, gut, body, skin, heartbeat and in whatever words come out, all have to be recognized and accepted as part of me. If we cannot accept our own anger we often end up throwing it at other people.

Unrecognized, unaccepted anger Can cause great suffering. This process can be unconscious, which means even though we are savagely angry inside we would deny anything of the kind. We are not aware we are angry because it is thoroughly repressed and out of sight. Very Uptight People are often filled-up-tight with anger. Once I can own and accept my anger, admit irritations, and deal with my demands I will seldom ventilate rage on others.

2. Identify source of my anger To deal with the anger we must clearly identify its source. This may be: Obvious: If you stomp on my foot we will both know what is the source of my anger without a doubt.

TRANSFERRED ANGER

We may transfer the anger to another person or object. Take it out on the wrong person.

(i) Facing a powerful or potentially harmful person: we find it prudent to transfer the anger, often unconsciously, to another person or object. A bad day with the boss and the family may cop it instead.

(ii) Avoid humiliation Kick the door you have bumped into. Blame another person. If it was not for you it would not have happened.

(iii) Guilt Can confuse real anger source. A daughter angry with her sick mothers demands but through guilt won't express the anger other than to a substitute.

(iv) Decoy cover-up using opposite true feeling: On the surface all is loving, but underneath the anger is constantly boiling and eventually comes through. The clue to transference is when our anger is out of all proportion to the supposed cause.

3 Understand Why you are angry Anger can be:-
Realistic: Justified- intentional damage being done.

Unrealistic: A small thing triggers a mighty explosion. Example a husband is angry that his wife is not treating him as his mother did... She is not his mother...

4 Deal with anger realistically

Unrealistic Orgy of destruction. Thump a policeman.

Realistic- Express my anger: Nothing cleans the system better than healthy rage, fearlessly expressed in a way acceptable to the whole personality. Get the lid off and release stored anger. It reduces inner tension, allows rational examination of real issues. Venting rage is a temporary release, a safety valve. Getting it off your chest only puts it on your shoulders. You still must decide what to do with the frustrations that lie behind it all, or we keep on brewing anger and blowing up.

Once the anger is out in the open and is realistic it's OK to be Angry: The liberation to express at least some of your anger often comes when you realise that it's human, not criminal, to sometimes be furious with the people you love most.

Physical release Hammer the pillow or cushion. Hard physical exercise.

Vocal release *Shout* scream at the waves. Then talk out. Acknowledge it, can then often talk it out...

Focus my anger The impact of clearly focused demands is far greater than the explosion of free-floating anger.

Sort my anger Sort trash from anger based on real issues. Unjust demands. We carry many childhood demands into adulthood. Many are irrational, unreal or out of all proportion. These need be owned and, with proper humility and humour cancelled and thrown in the rubbish bin.

Just core value demands Central beliefs that shape the personality. These contain just demands requiring expression and negotiation, must be dealt with.

Negotiate solution: Satisfaction of finding a way to negoti-

ate the central values at stake is far more rewarding than any rush of adrenaline.

Summary I will own my anxiety. Accept my anger. Describe and sort my demands. Assert the few that are just and important. Cancel the many that are unfair or useless. So that my anger will both clear the air and show I care.

The four steps in dealing with anger are easy to describe but not so easy to carry out. They will help in coming to grips with destructive anger in yourself and a greater understanding of other people.

Anger in itself, is neither angelic nor demonic...moral or immoral. It is just one of our powerful emotions that can be used or abused. It signals that something is troubling you, a threat to your being or relationships, a warning blast. On the other hand if not handled wisely it can become a self devastating cyclone.

DEALING WITH OTHER PEOPLES ANGER

1 Respect angry feeling of others Recognize that an angry feeling person feels threatened or hurt. Don't stop to condemn or ridicule the anger as uncalled for. If a person is angry, he is angry, and we respect the feeling and try to find what is behind it. We ask what hurts.

2 Encourage expression of the angry feelings in any way, provided that it is not dangerous or harmful to other people, or the person releasing. Suitable objects to hit, like large cushions are useful.

3 Sort out the problem When anger has been dealt with, we sort out the problem that caused the anger. We take action that will alleviate or remove the cause of the problem. In some cases we can do nothing. But anger that is received and understood ceases to be hurtful, whether or not the cause can be removed.

4 Listening integrity In receiving angry feelings it pays the listener to accept as true the angry feelings being expressed. Even when the anger is a personal attack on the listener. Refusal to listen to anger is taken as rejection, that invokes even more anger. Listening and acknowledgment of content and reality of anger, and desire to sort things out can defuse the situation quickly.

Cultivate the art of separating yourself, your own feelings from the angry feelings of the other person. Most of us faced with anger are thrown back into childhood scripts where we are bullied, shouted at or punished by the angry person. There is a wish to retaliate, but we must not get caught up in conflict, while it may appear a personal attack, in reality it is a symptom of hurt feelings or a fear of being hurt. It is in fact a cry for help. We must learn to listen to anger impersonally and put aside our own angry feelings meantime.