



## Neutral Ground, Part I

*Are you still doing cranial work? If so, why didn't you treat your son?*

Yes, I still use cranial work when appropriate. As to treating Simon myself, this is a complex question. The first part of the answer is easy. My friend William is a retired dentist turned cranial wizard. While he is skilled in all areas of cranial work, he has an extraordinary amount of expertise with the teeth and face. He's a specialist; he's local; he gets great results. So, Simon goes to see him.

The challenging part comes with the fact that Simon is my son. This makes our relationship inherently complex. Before I go more deeply into our relationship, let's take a quick look at one aspect of the therapeutic process.

*The practitioner/client relationship is fundamentally challenging because the practitioner has to balance and manage his own history while entering into relationship with the client's history. One task of the practitioner is to find a point of balance between these two histories; this balance point is the "neutral ground" where healing can take place.* Since both histories are dynamic and in constant flux (because they are attached to human beings who are constantly changing), staying with this neutral ground is very difficult and requires the steady application of the practitioner's skill. With most clients the only relational component that I need to include as I create and maintain this neutral ground is the professional relationship. This consists of one hour every week or two and has very clear boundaries and agreements.

However, Simon and I spend a LOT more time together and have for 14 years; there are many different layers and types of relationship that we engage in. The complexity is greater by several orders of magnitude. I don't have one clearly defined relationship that is contained by specific boundaries and agreements, especially now that he's a teenager! The roles and agreements often change faster than I can keep up with them. *Because we have so much shared, interconnected, and intertwined history, it is virtually impossible for me to generate a neutral ground.* This is why it is not recommended to do certain types of work with family members and is another excellent reason to send Simon to a colleague.

Also, this explains why relationships that are in trouble often need a neutral third party (i.e. a counselor, mediator, referee, etc.) This third party is outside of the shared history and can create a safe, neutral ground that both parties can enter. While the people in the relationship are still connected to their personal history and their relational history, there is

the possibility to leave those histories outside of the neutral ground long enough to get a different perspective, see new choices, renegotiate, or do whatever work is necessary to resolve the problem.

In the next issue of EnergyMatters, I'll be exploring how a practitioner creates and maintains this neutral ground. Until then, Be Well!

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