

# The Power of Right Relationships:



***Encouraging Creativity  
Through Connection***

**Linda M. Hartling, Ph.D.**

**Human Dignity and Humiliation Studies**

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Jan Baker  
Miller, M.D.  
1927 - 2006

**Jean Baker Miller, MD**

***Personal creativity is of  
supreme importance, which we  
have probably barely begun to  
appreciate...***

***Personal creativity is a  
continuous process of  
bringing forth a changing  
vision of oneself, and of  
oneself in relation to the world.***

M. Hartling, 2010

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***The creative life  
of unknown  
people might be  
a tremendous  
hidden river.***



**~ William Stafford  
Oregon Poet, Peacemaker**



M. Hartling, 2010

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## Three Goals:

1. *To examine Relational-Cultural Theory as a science of “right relationships.”*
2. *To describe a serious obstacle to right relationships and creativity: “The H-Bomb”*
3. *To explore essential qualities of right relationships that encourage creativity and healthy, healing connection.*

M. Hartling, 2010

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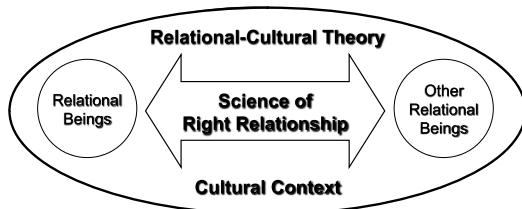
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## From “Separate Self” Psychology To a Science of Right Relationships



M. Hartling, 2010

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## Necessity of Connection...

Robert Putnam, Harvard University (2000):

*“...studies have established beyond reasonable doubt that social connectedness is one of the most powerful determinants of our well-being.”*

Julianne Holt-Lundstad, Brigham Young University (2010)

- ➔ 148 studies, 308,849 individuals, followed for an average of 7.5 years. People were 50% more likely to be alive if they had strong connections, regardless of age, gender, or health.

### Social Neuroscience - Hardwired to Connect

- ➔ *“Human connections create neural connections”*  
Daniel Siegle, 1999
- ➔ *“We need connection like we need food, air, and water...”*, Naomi Eisenberg et. al, 2003

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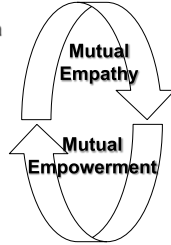
## Relational-Cultural Theory: 4 Key Qualities of Right Relationships

### 1. Mutual Empathy

A bi-directional dynamic process, a joining together based on the authentic thoughts and feelings of all the participants in the relationship.

### 2. Mutual Empowerment

Energy for action that grows out of empathic engagement, a central component of psychological growth.




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## Relational-Cultural Theory: Qualities of Right Relationships

### 3. Authenticity



"Authenticity is ever-evolving, not achieved at any one moment—it is a person's ongoing ability to represent herself in relationships more fully" (Miller, 1999).

### 4. Movement Toward Mutuality

A dynamic process in which the individuals engaged in a relationship are increasingly able to be authentic and authentically responsive to each other's thoughts and feelings.




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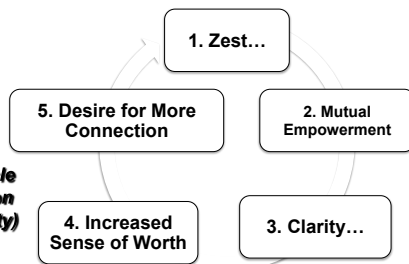
## Outcomes of Right Relationships

### "The Five Good Things"



Jean Baker Miller, M.D.

**Virtuous Cycle of Connection (and Creativity)**



M. Hartling, 2010

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## Obstacle to Right Relationships “The H-Bomb”



M. Hartling, 2010

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Donald Klein  
Journal of Primary  
Prevention, 1991



### What is Humiliation?

What one feels when one is ridiculed, scorned, held in contempt, or otherwise disparaged for who one *is* rather than what one *does*...

1. Internal Experience (e.g., feeling humiliated)
2. External Experience (e.g., degrading treatment)
3. Conditions (e.g., systemic injustice)

M. Hartling, 2010

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### Humiliation: Relational Perspective



♦ **Humiliation is a profound relational violation, which instills a sense of condemned isolation.**

- Jean Baker Miller



♦ **Humiliation is the feeling or experience of being made to feel unworthy of connection.** - Linda Hartling

M. Hartling, 2010

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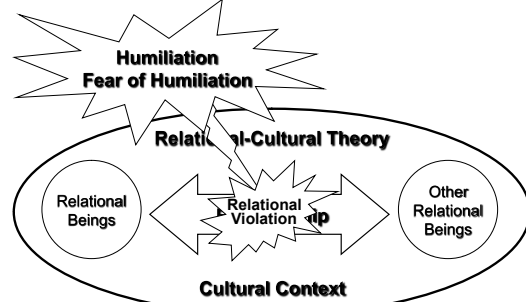
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## Humiliation: Disconnection and Devaluation



M. Hartling, 2010

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## Study of Stressful Life Events



**Kenneth Kendler et al., (2003)**  
Virginia Institute for Psychiatry and  
Behavioral Genetics and the Departments of  
Psychiatry

Study of 7322 twins exploring stressful life events  
and the onset of major depression.

- ✓ Loss
- ✓ Humiliation
- ✓ Loss + humiliation  
greater than loss alone

"When we looked at stressful life events that predisposed men and women to the onset of episodes of depression, the most toxic combination was loss and humiliation..."

M. Hartling, 2010

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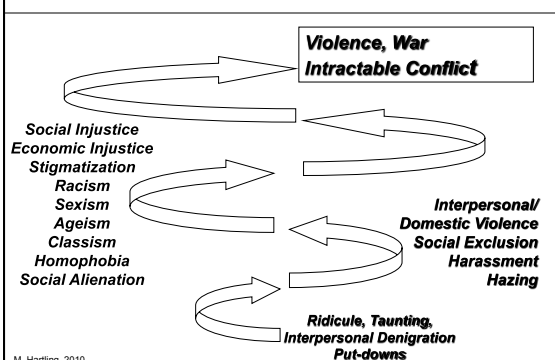
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## Humiliation: Relational Violations



M. Hartling, 2010

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## Global Perspective on Humiliation



“...is the strongest force that creates rifts between people and breaks down relationships”



“...the nuclear bomb of emotions”

M. Hartling, 2010

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## Humiliation and History of Relationships

Three major types of societies...  
William Ury  
Evelin Lindner

Hunter-Gatherer Societies

Complex Agriculture Society

We are here!

Global Information Society

Rigid hierarchies

Masters-Subordinates  
Using animals, people as tools

Subjugation viewed as “normal and necessary”  
Humiliation viewed as legitimate

Electronic Communication  
Human Rights  
Interdependence

Subjugation/humiliation viewed as illegitimate

future

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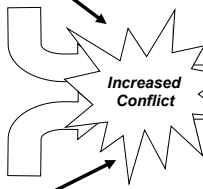
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## From an Old to a New Arrangement of Relationships

Dominants



Subordinates

“All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.”

Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the UN General Assembly, Dec. 10, 1948

Line of Equal Dignity

Human Rights  
Right Relationships

Evelin Lindner, Making Enemies, 2006

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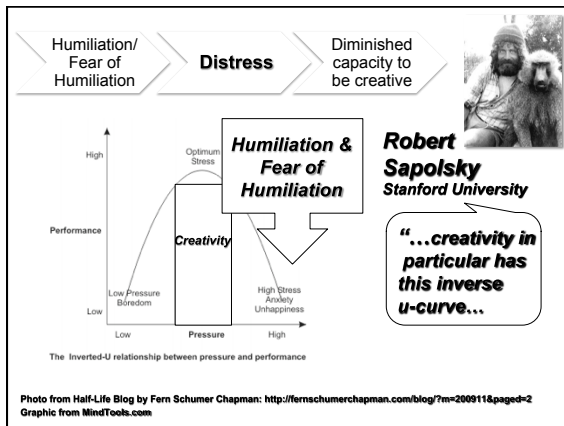
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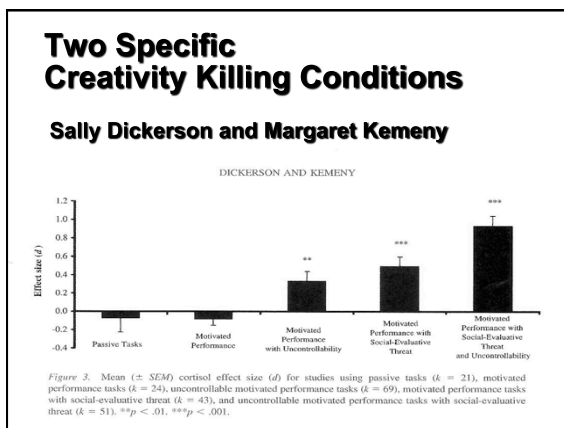
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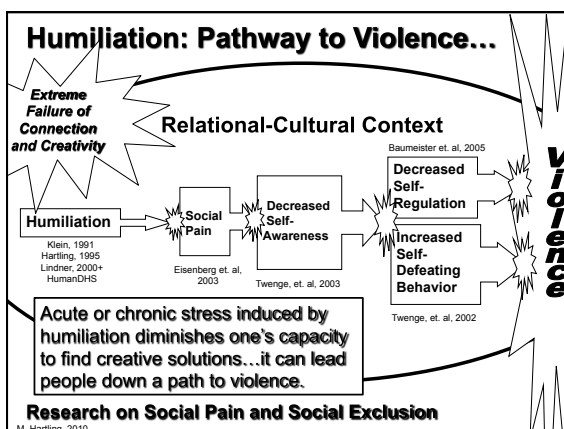
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# Relational Transformation

## Tapping into the Power of Right Relationships

THE ASSOCIATION FOR  
CREATIVITY IN COUNSELING  
A DIVISION OF THE AMERICAN COUNSELING ASSOCIATION



### Right Relationship Reflection:

With your partners, share an instance when you, or someone you know, helped someone overcome a difficulty **and** tap into their capacity to be creative!

M. Hartling, 2010

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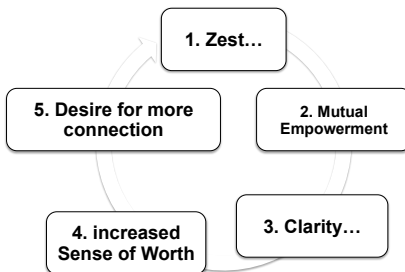
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## Virtuous Cycle of Right Relationship



Jean Baker Miller, M.D.

### "Five Good Things"



M. Hartling, 2010

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## 10 Quick Tips for Right Relationships



1. Think relationship

2. Radiate respect

3. Emphasize empathy

4. Listen with love

5. Be present



6. Make it mutual

7. Build resilience

8. Respond, repair, reconnect

9. Laugh liberally

10. Say yes to zest!



M. Hartling, 2010

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**humiliationstudies.org**



## ***Mahatma Gandhi 4 Important Principles of Building Relationships***

1. Begin with practicing respect in relationship,
2. Respect leads to understanding,
3. Understanding leads to acceptance,
4. Acceptance leads to **appreciation!**

**French Philosopher**  
**Voltaire**



***The creative life  
of unknown  
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**~ William Stafford**  
Oregon Poet, Peaceworker



M. Hartling, 2010

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***World without humiliation  
dignifies us all***

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