

**Experiential Therapy
Approaches to Reveal
Dynamics and Resolve
Anger, Grief, and
Relationship Issues**

CHINESE PROVERB

“What I hear, I forget.

What I see, I remember.

What I do, I understand.”



The picture can't be displayed.



The picture can't be displayed.



The picture can't be displayed.



The picture can't be displayed.





The picture can't be displayed.



The picture can't be displayed.

**Was it words
that we
remembered?**

 The picture can't be displayed.

 The picture can't be displayed.

Remembering all too well ...

JAWS







PSYCHO

How do we learn?





© Getty Images





“I never said
that
you stole
”

“I never said
that
you stole
”

“I never said
that
you stole
”

“I never said
that
you stole
”

“I never said
that
you stole
”

“I never said
that

you stole

”

“I never said
that

you stole

”

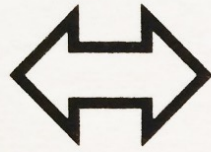
“I never said
that
you stole
”





Mapping

parental child



mom



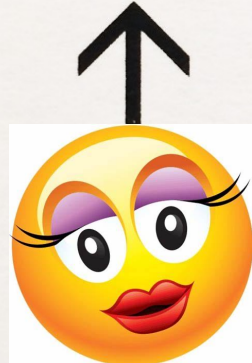
dad



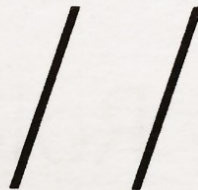
work



jealous
sister



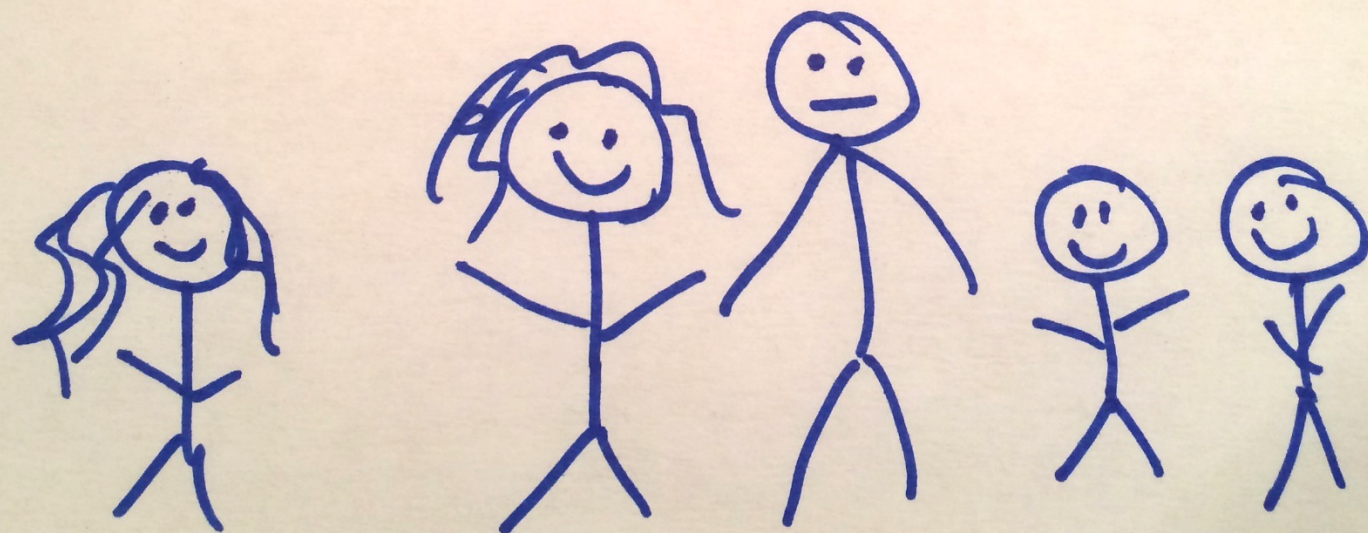
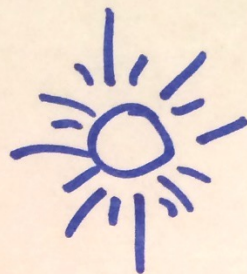
loyal
daughter

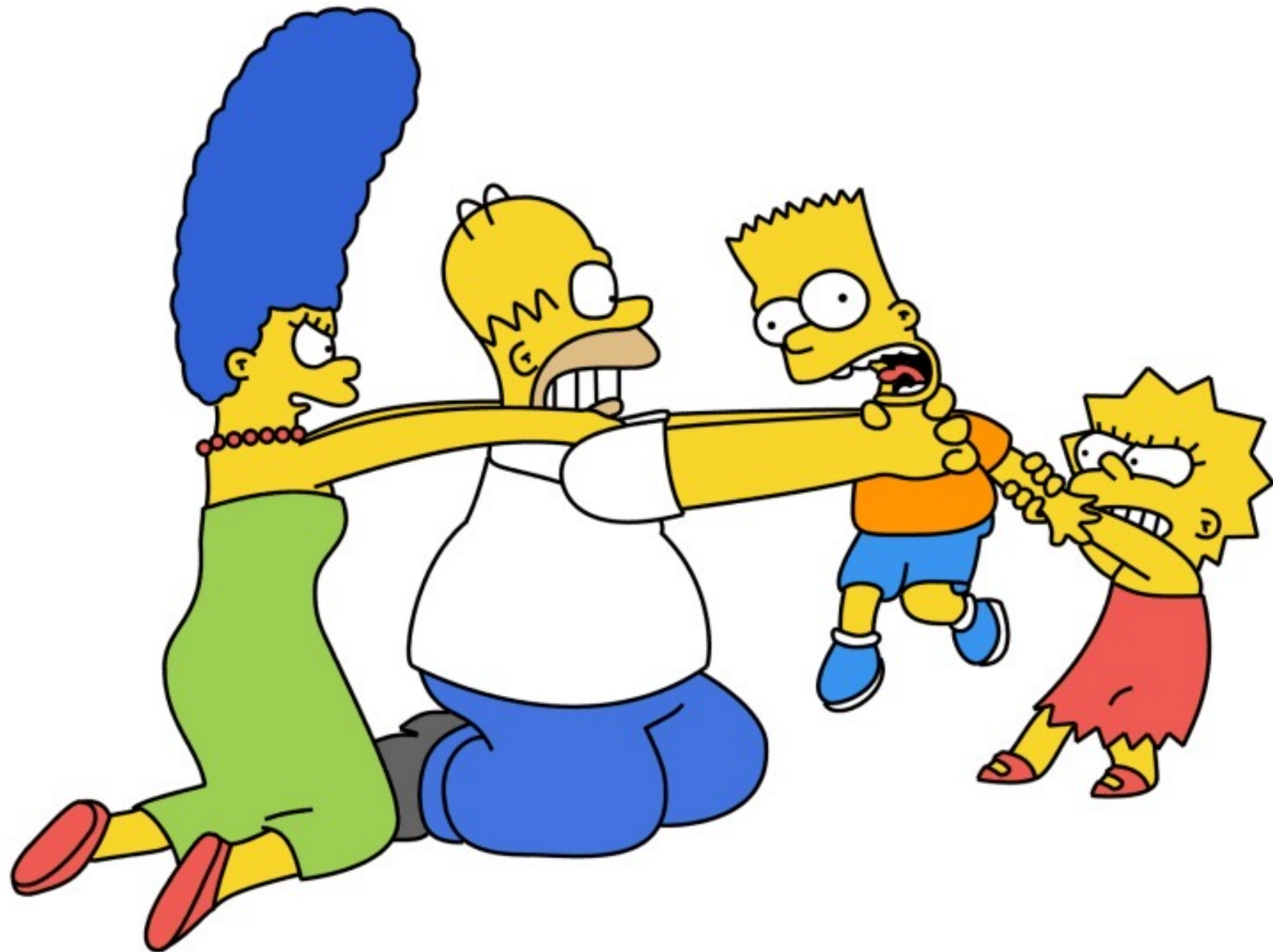


confused, detached,
angry son
(identified patient)

Emotional Space

My Family







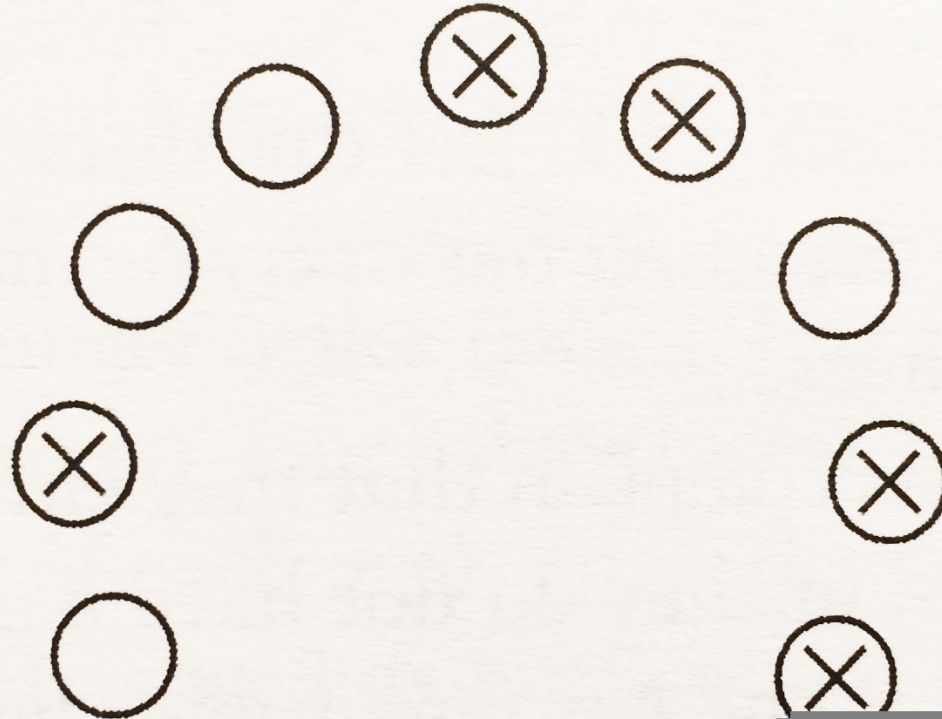
Kinetic Family Drawings



Using Dollhouse Figures

family

**Setting
Extra
Chairs**



**To See
Emotional
Distance**

Clinical Case Example:

**“The Onset of
Schizophrenia
in a Teenager”**



The picture can't be displayed.

Clinical Case Example:

**“Shrinking Away
into Anorexia**

Let's stand up for a moment.

Let's stand up for a moment.

Now move to where you feel

most comfortable ...

Let's stand up for a moment.

Now move to where you feel

most comfortable ...

Who would you be closest to?

Let's stand up for a moment.


Now move to where you feel

most comfortable ...


Who would you be closest to?

Move to where you *want* to be.

Let's see what a
“Typical Evening”
at home
would look like ...

 The picture can't be displayed.



 The picture can't be displayed.





Visual Historical Assessment

Starting Out as a Couple

Effects from Parents, Jobs, Close Friends

Adding Children

Losing Grandparents, Jobs, Child

Effects of Alcohol, Pills, Abuse

Sculpting the Family Dynamics

All family members: Living, Deceased, Absent, Distant

Effects of Parents, Grandparents -- Living or Deceased

**Interfering Habits, Addictions, Distractions,
Preoccupations**

Significant Others, Strong Influences or Beliefs

Therapist Position in the Family Picture

Helping the Invisible Become Visible

Strength of Relations

Use of ropes (jump ropes)

Long single

Double shorter

Strong,
3- 4 ropes

Captive, tied up

Who clings?

Who lets go?

Helping the Invisible Become Visible

Strong Emotions

Arms crossed	Back turned to others	Hands cover eyes
Plastic gun		
Rubber knife	Fetal position in corner	

Helping the Invisible Become Visible

Distractions

Infidelity

Job Hours

Finances

Serious Illness

Bullying at School

Helping the Invisible Become Visible

Strong Influences

Religion

Ex-Spouses

Politics

the Boss

Close Friends

Grandparents

Money

Helping the Invisible Become Visible

Conditions / Labels

“Crazy One”

Troublemaker

Disabled

“Daddy’s Little Girl”

Retarded

“Mama’s Golden Boy”

Helping the Invisible Become Visible

Addictions

Gambling

Alcohol

Spending \$\$

Social Media

Street Drugs

Pornography

Prescription Pills

Work

Helping the Invisible Become Visible

Impacting Events

Death

Empty Nest

Job Loss

Possible Divorce

Cancer

Disabling Injury

Emotional Age Exercise

Father	(age 42)	7, 11, 6, 8, 5	avg = 7
Mother	(age 36)	10, 12, 13, 15, 14	avg = 13
Richard	(age 16)	24, 21, 19, 22, 28	avg = 23
Susan	(age 13)	16, 15, 16, 18, 17	avg = 16
Billy	(age 8)	10, 9, 10, 8, 9	avg = 9

Metaphoric Imagery & Sculpting

1. Imagine for a moment that your partner / other person takes the form of either an animal, object, place, food item, or famous person. What image feels right to you?

2. Now imagine what image you would become in relation to the other person's image that you just imagined. What animal, object, place, food item, or famous person feels right for yourself?

Metaphoric Imagery & Sculpting

How do these images **relate**? Friendly? Oppositional?
 Intimate? Disconnected?

What kind of **action** is taking place?

Act these images out and see how they feel for each person.

How about trying some role reversals?

What image would you each become when **angry**?

During **intimacy**? While **parenting** the kids?

When dealing with **money** and bills?

When visiting the **in-laws**? Going with friends to the **bar**?

What image would you each become when ...

---- on the **job** around co-workers?

---- on **vacation** with the family?

---- during **church**?

What image did each of your parents
typically become when dealing with each other?

See any similarities or repeating patterns?

**** Try this exercise with the whole family ...**

“The Family Zoo” Exercise

Father **Grizzly Bear, Lion, Gorilla, Tiger, German Shepherd**

Mother **Lamb, Pony, Sheep, Kitten, Love Bird**

Richard **Hawk, Rat, Doberman, Weasel, Cobra**

Susan **Raccoon, Owl, Squirrel, Cat, Poodle**

Billy **Bunny, Puppy, Kitty, Guinea Pig, Hamster**

FAMILY WORLDS

The Courtroom

The Sports Arena

Military

The Family Buffet

**Departments of
Government**

The Shopping Mall

Role Discovery through Playful Activity

Who takes charge? Who offers a plan or ideas?

Who is eager to participate? Who is not?

Who sabotages the activity? Who won't participate?

Who competes or fights for control?

Whose silence is powerful? Who acts helpless?

Who is the best helper? Who is the peacemaker?

ANGER

LOUD EXPRESSIONS

QUIET EXPRESSIONS

PHYSICAL RELEASE

INWARD RELEASE / SELF-ABUSE

BAD LOUD EXPRESSIONS

Screaming,

Cursing

Slamming Doors,

Cabinets

Blasting Music or TV

Volume

Banging Pots &

Pans

GOOD

LOUD EXPRESSIONS

Screaming into a Pillow

Screaming Outside if

Possible

Blasting Music but Headphones on

Banging on Drum, Make
Music

BAD QUIET EXPRESSIONS

Social Media Bullying

Hateful Texting,

Messaging

**Lies, Rumors to Get Others in
Trouble**

Passive-Aggressive Actions

Hurtful, Embarrassing Pranks

GOOD

QUIET EXPRESSIONS

Angry Letter (not to share)

Compose Emotional Music

Lyrics

Draw or Paint Angry

Feelings

Listen to Soothing or Angry

Music

Vent Anger through Video Game
Play

BAD

PHYSICAL RELEASE

Hitting Others, Kicking Animals

Punching Holes in Walls,

Doors

Throwing and Breaking

Things

Destroying Personal Items of

Others

Disabling

Devices

Running

Away

GOOD

PHYSICAL RELEASE

Hitting a Punching Bag of Towels
Punching Pillows, Beds, Stuffed
Animals
Throwing Balls and Breaking
Trash
Target Practice with Tin Cans
Chopping Wood, Lifting
Weights
Exercise, Running, Brisk
Walk
Squirt Gun Battle
Outside

BAD INWARD RELEASE / SELF-ABUSE

Cutting on Body, Self-Mutilation

Punching and Bruising Self

Hitting Head on Walls

Blaming, Critical toward

Self

Negative Thoughts, Low Self-

Esteem Suicidal Ideas

GOOD

INWARD RELEASE / SELF-ABUSE

Fantasy Release (Boulder in
Woods)

Guided Imagery (Perfect
Escape)

Reclaiming Positive Self (20
Traits)

Redirecting Anger Outwardly with
Imagery

Holding Ice Cubes as Safe
Pain

GRIEF

Personal Contact Letters / Mail to Heaven

Guided Imagery Contact / Advice

Empty Chair Conversation

Fantasy Funeral

Afterlife Drawings – Joys & Fears

Complicated Grief – Emotional Release Letters

The Empty Chair

VENTING

Unfinished Business

Good-byes

Rehearsal

Differentiation

Emotional Impact

Unwanted Intruders

Absent Members

“Unintentional Alignment”

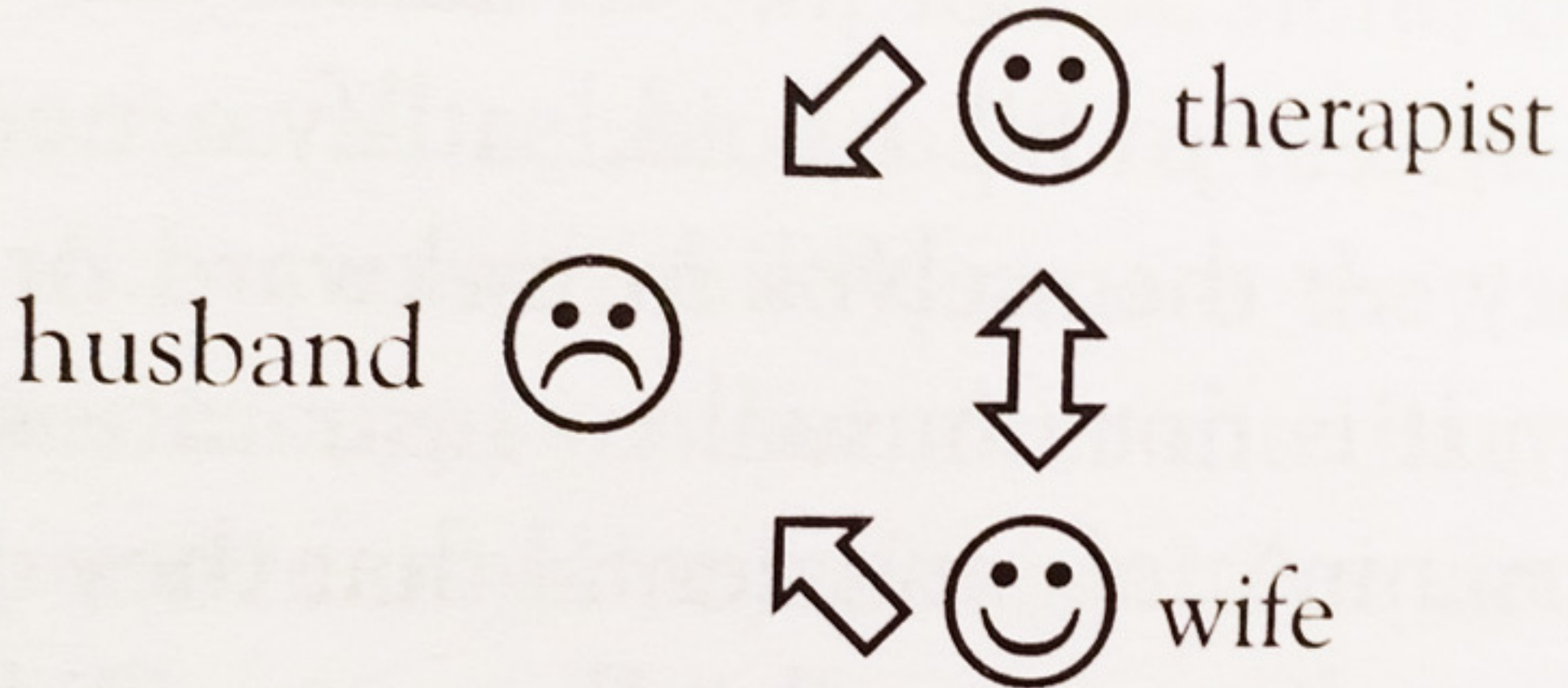


husband

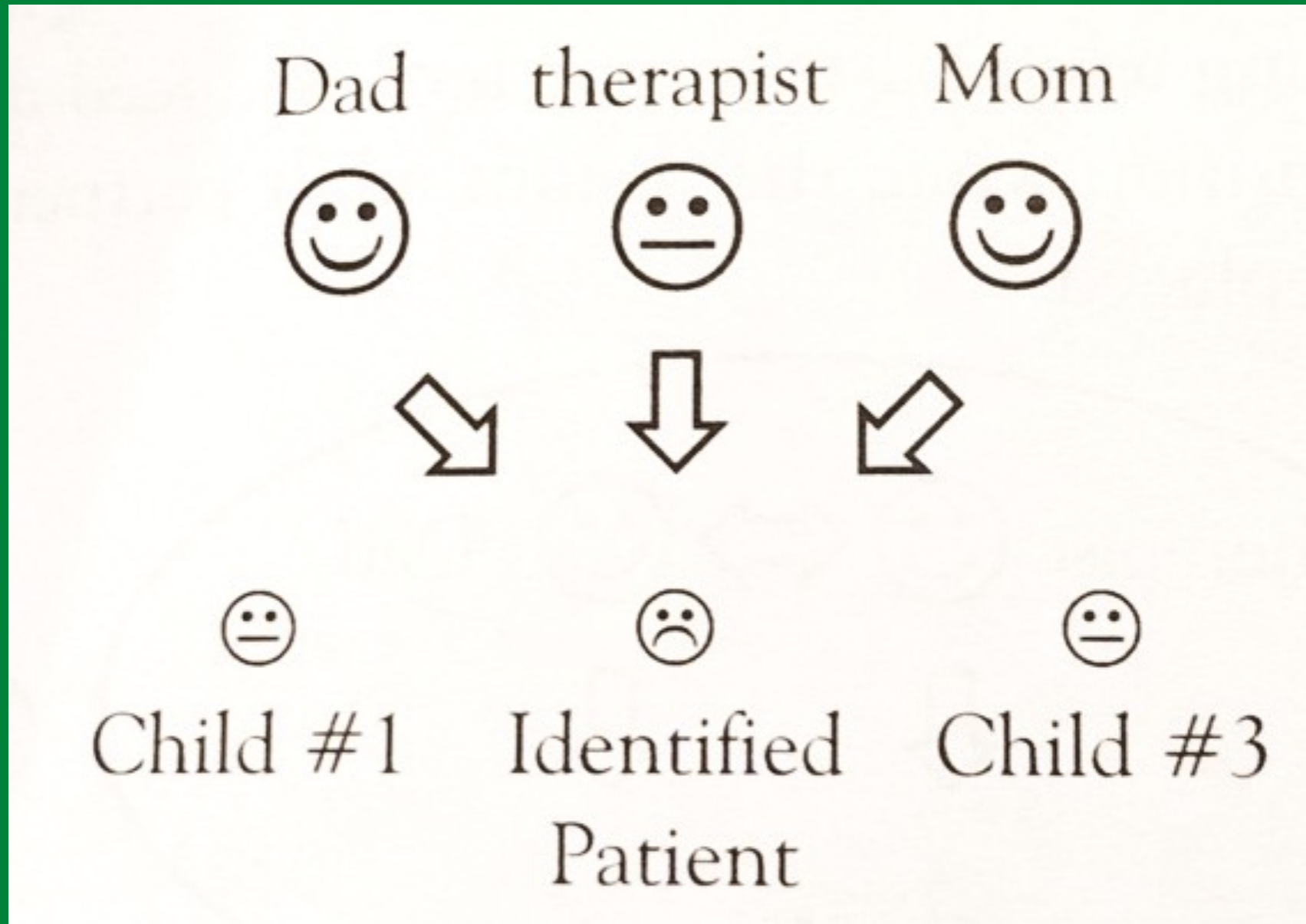


therapist wife

“Deliberate Alignment”



“Adults vs. the Kids”



“Bad Parents”



the children

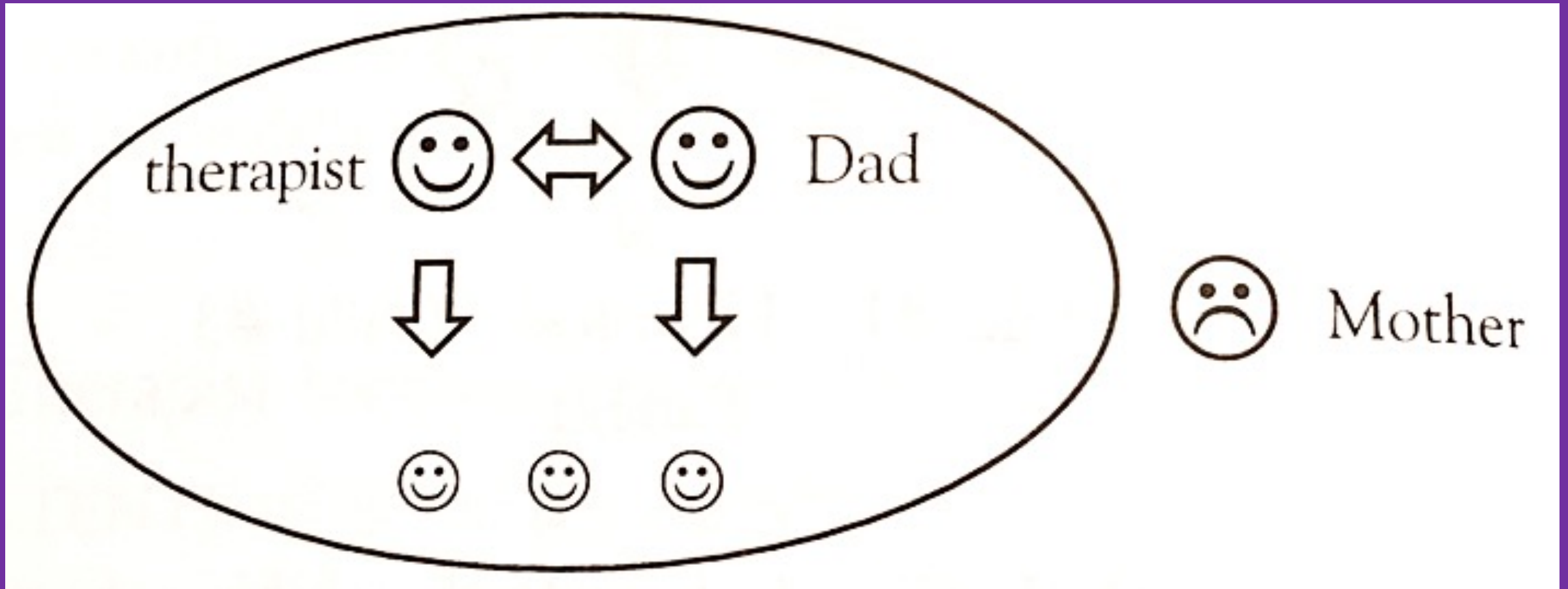


therapist

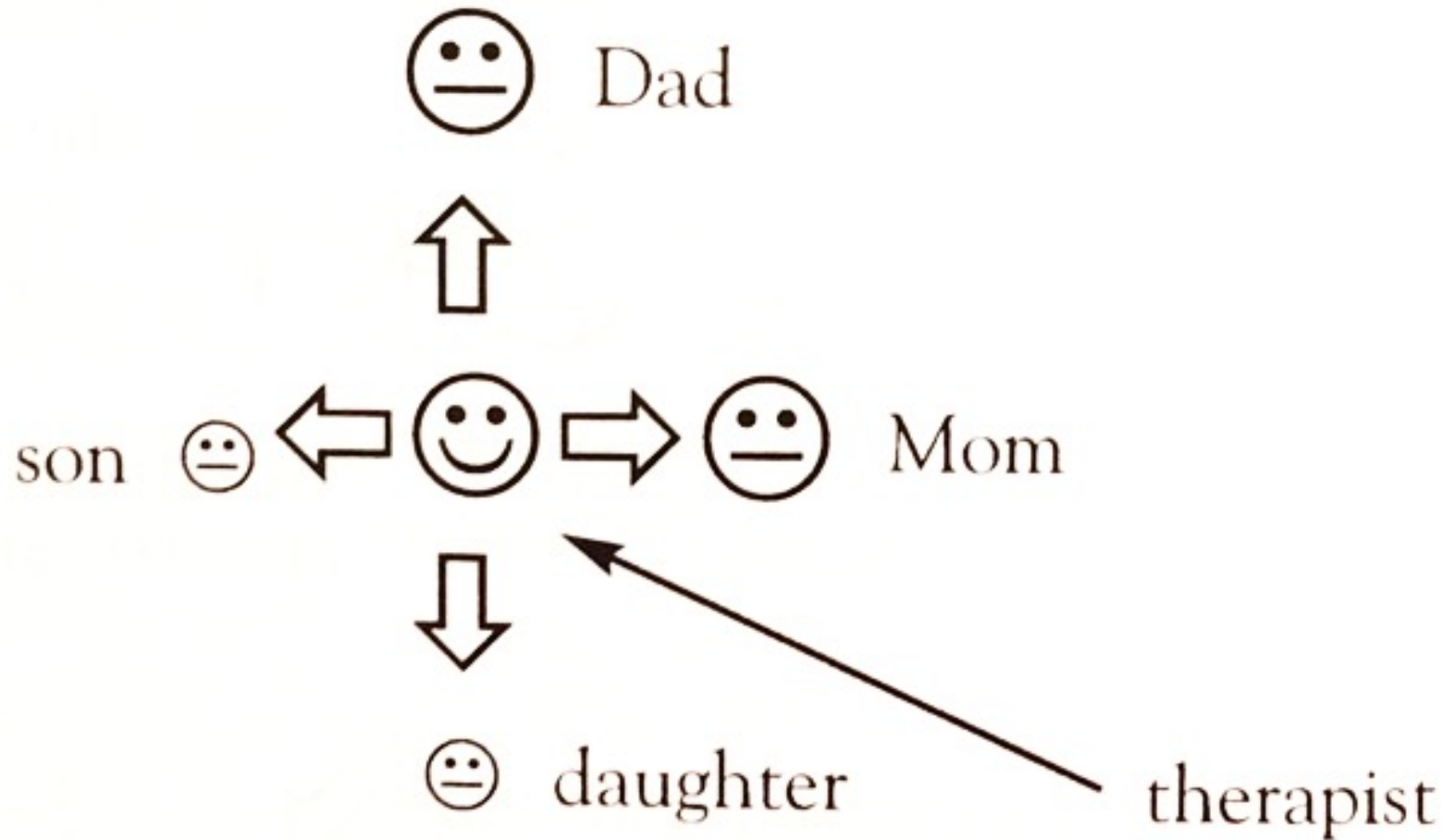


the parents

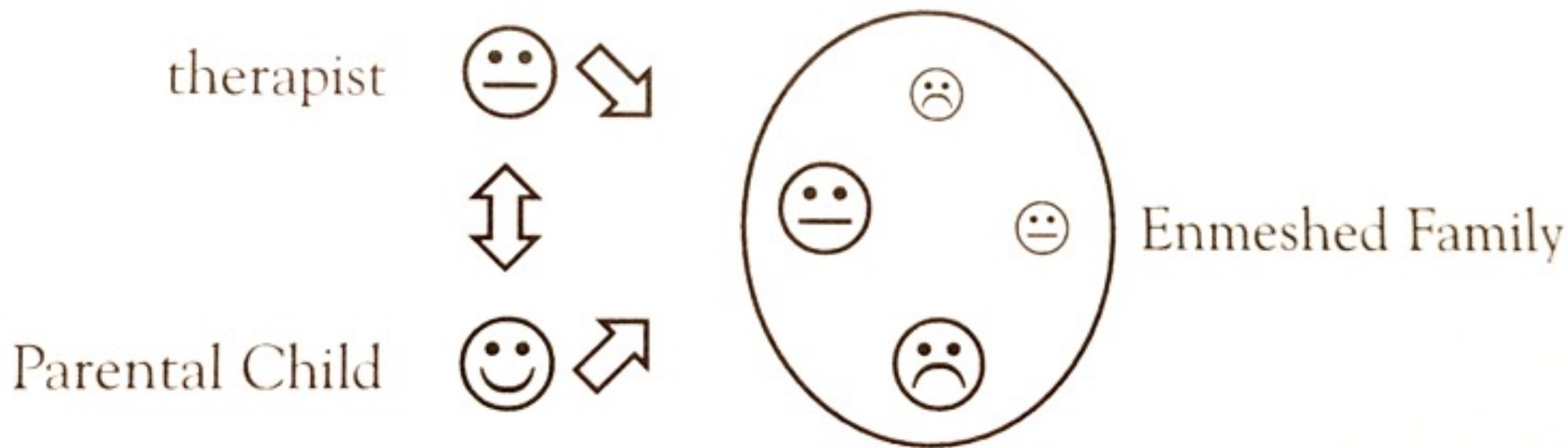
“Filling a Void”



“Therapist Glue”



“Alignment with Parental Child”



“The Siege of Services”

Mom 😐 😊 therapist

probation officer 😐 😞 Dad

young son 😐 😊 DFS
social worker

😊 Juvenile Services
😊 teen son (Identified Patient)

😊 teen daughter
😊 Hospital Adolescent Program

“The Wounded Couple”

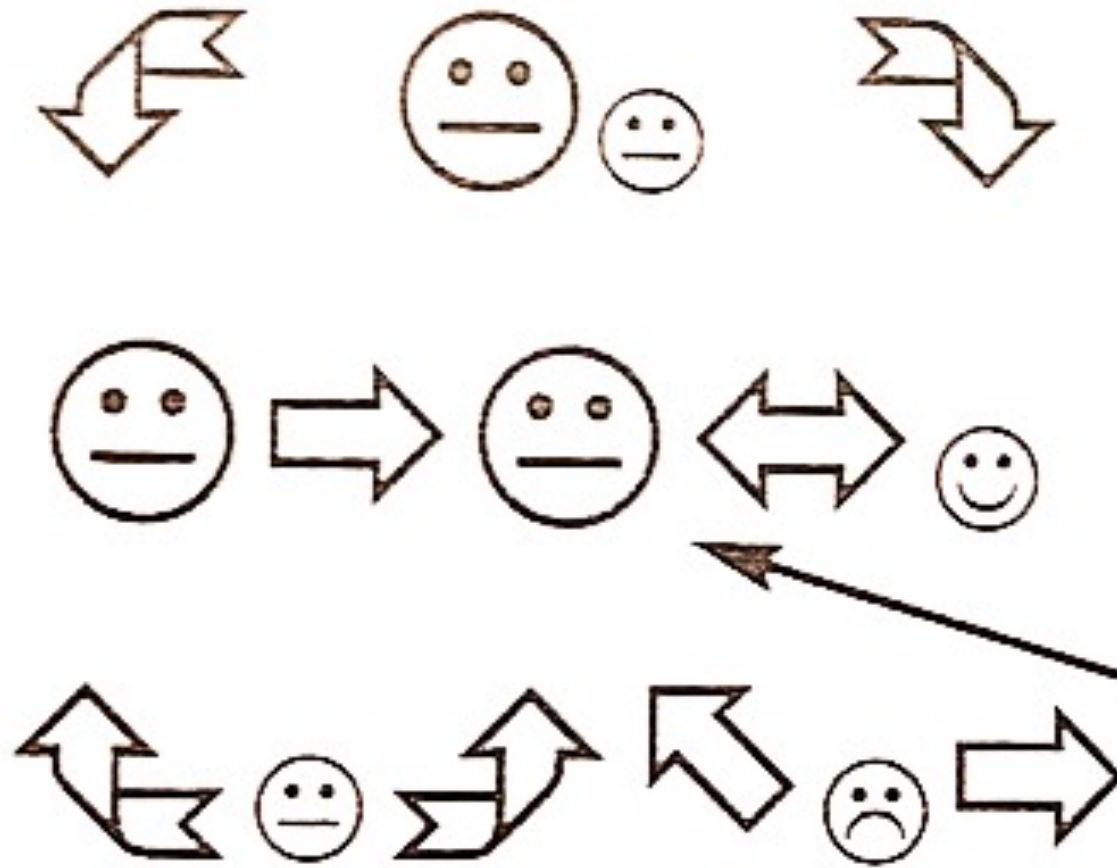


therapist (parental role)



parents (child-like role)

“Traffic Cop in the Woods”



therapist