

Emotionally Focused Therapy (EFT): A Love Society

Abstract:

This study aims to present the Emotionally Focused Therapy model. The purpose of the study is to highlight the importance of the model for the creation of a love society. First, a brief reference is made to the concept of love, as it has been shaped by studies that have been conducted. Then, Bowlby's study of attachment of the person to the parental figure, usually the mother, is mentioned, as well as other studies on this subject. At the same time, the need for a healthy attachment is emphasized, as the subsequent relationships of the individual are strongly based on this. It follows the reference to the EFT model, its stages and the success it has, not only in improving interpersonal relationships but also in the family as a whole. There is emphasis on the effect of a secure bond between partners, both in bringing up children and in shaping people who are able to love and be loved.

Keywords: EFT model, love society, Bowlby, attachment theory, interpersonal relationships

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1. The concept of love

Love is "a combination of emotions, attitudes and behaviors that consist of intimate relationships" (Hogg & Vaughan, 2008). Love is a very popular topic in research (Dion & Dion, 1996), as it leads to emotional engagement with important others, such as parents, siblings, friends and comrades. These important others are the ones that offer us the emotional protection we need in our lives (Johnson, 2008). We know very well that there are two truths about human life. Firstly, the fact that people rely on each other to survive and secondly that each of us is a separate unit, which means that as long as we work or interdepend in a society, there will be personal interests or goals that will lead us to a conflict (Oatley & Jenkins, 1996).

In 1973, Rubin distinguished the notions of "sympathy" and "love", developing a scale of measurement of each concept separately. We can say that sympathy indicates a person's desire to connect and interact with a person, while love adds to the element of trust, which plays a major role in transcendental relationships (Hogg et al, 2008). In many societies, "love" is praised through literature, music, poetry, etc. In a few cases, however, love is presented as problematic, and this may be the case in general of emotions, manifestations of a feeling. The manifestation of a feeling is the answer to a sudden change in the environment in which a person lives. A feeling, whether positive or negative, helps us to focus our attention on specific goals in order to achieve and regain their regularity (Greenberg, 2004; Oatley et al, 1996).

Kemper, in 1990, speaking of emotions, argued that affection, love affects the co-operation and acceptance of the other, while power, aggression, is related to controlling the other despite his will (Oatley et al, 1996).

2. Attachment Theory: Mother-Child bond as the matrix of our future bonds

The smooth and balanced development of a child depends largely on the processes of attachment and detachment (or psychological depulsion) of the parental model (Cosmopoulos, 2007: 76). Behaviorists believed that the inherent feature of attachment was hunger. This need is covered by breastfeeding and the normal serenity of the infant. One of the fathers of modern behavior, John B. Watson, argued that maternal love is very dangerous as it prevents children from becoming independent (Johnson, 2013; Cosmopoulos, 2007: 77). The first one to study extensively the attachment and detachment procedures was the English psychiatrist John Bowlby (Johnson, 2013; Cosmopoulos, 2007: 76).

In particular, Bowlby, working with disturbed young people at Child Guidance Clinics in London, argued that the problems of these youngsters were rooted in important relationships they had with people in their lives (Johnson, 2008). Later, after the end of the World War II, the World Health Organization asked Bowlby to conduct an investigation into children in which the war had deprived their parents and their home. His results confirmed his belief that love is as important as food. Bowlby concluded that keeping the faces you consider invaluable, meaning important others, is a great survival technique (Johnson, 2008; Johnson, 2013).

Bowlby, in his work *Mother Care and Mental Health* of 1951, referred to the power of love, the bond of mother and child, but also to the ties that are generally developed with persons in the immediate environment who deal with or care for him. Bowlby believed that since the time of his birth, man is determined to cling to his environment to survive. It is,

however, very important that this bond be maintained in time (Bowlby, 1982; Cosmopoulos, 2007: 76).

It is worth noting that Bowlby's theory was considered extreme and radical and, of course, was dismissed miserably. Until then, the view prevailed that parenting should have a rational and sterile distance. However, Bowlby continued his work and his attempt to show the world what he already knew (Johnson, 2008; Lehalle & Mellier, 2005; Johnson, 2013).

In surveys conducted by H. Harlow in the 30's it was found that a small animal, and by extension, the human being, is biologically more dependent than those associated with the "mother", such as physical contact, play, embrace, audio communication, etc. and less with the elements of a "food" that provides food to the child (Johnson, 2013; Cosmopoulos, 2007: 76). Specifically, in an experiment carried out with monkeys, the preference for the personal relationship and not for the food appeared. Two iron monkeys were placed in one room. One was cold and frozen but had the supply of food while the second was a skeleton with a coat but no food supply. The little monkey went to the first dummy to drink milk from the bottle but immediately returned to the warmth of the other dummy, which more closely resembled the mother's form (Cosmopoulos, 2007: 78). From this experiment we reasonably understand that "the form of the mother is a person and fact, a presence that gives the child psychological safety and warmth" (Cosmopoulos, 2007: 78).

In other studies, by R. Spitz, J. Bowlby and H. Harlow conducted in the 50s and 60s, it has been shown that personal relationships that develop during childhood and youth contribute significantly to the child's smooth emotional development. The relationship between mother and child is a model for all subsequent relationships of the individual (Hogg et al, 2008; Cosmopoulos, 2007: 77; Oatley et al, 1996). In this conclusion, Berscheid concluded in 1990, observing that the relationships we develop as adults rely heavily on attachment of the individual in infancy and youth (Hogg et al, 2008).

New research, of course, shows that it is necessary for the child not to cling only to a person, to that of the mother, but rather to many different ones, such as the father. Children grow up and grow well when they create many strong and close bonds (Cosmopoulos, 2007: 80; Lehalle et al, 2005). Under no circumstances, we could not forget the great work done by the mother, namely the impersonation of the person, the child with humanity and values, which give honor to the human being, as it is often the mother who takes over the child's upbringing, bringing the child into his / her future relationship with other people (Cosmopoulos, 2007: 82).

Very important was the Mary Ainsworth experiment, which was termed a "treaty with the stranger" or "an unusual situation" (Feldman, 2008; Jehalle et al, 2009: 66). In particular, in this experiment a mother and her child are in an unknown room. After a while the mother leaves the room, leaving the child alone with the researcher, who has the role of "foreign". The researcher, of course, is ready to console the child whenever necessary. Three minutes later the mother returns. Separation and reunion are repeated once more (Feldman, 2008; Jehalle et al, 2009: 67; Oatley et al, 1996).

This experiment showed that most children, when they lost their mother from their field of view, were upset, they were shaking and throwing their toys. However, there were cases of children who proved to be more emotionally capable. These children were quieting fastly, easily reattached with their mother, and very quickly continued to play with their toys. The research showed that children who were easily resting had warmer mothers responding, mothers of angry children had unpredictable behavior, while mothers of distant children were cold and rejected (Feldman, 2008; Jehalle et al, 2009: 67 - 68; Oatley et al., 1996).

Although the initial interest of the researchers was around the attachment of the child to the mother, it gradually expanded in general to the relationships a person develops throughout his or her life, whether as a child or as an adult. Man has an inherent need for social contact, connection and bonding (Bowlby, 1982; Hogg et al, 2008). "The urge of people to connect and interact with other people is called a need for affiliation" (Hogg et al, 2010: 632).

This need is so strong that it governs the way in which we shape our interpersonal and transgender relationships. Schachter, in his work "The Psychology of Attendance", argued that a person in social isolation can suffer from anxiety. This anxiety will gradually create the desire to find it among people, whether of its own or even unknown (Hogg et al, 2008).

Hazan and Shaver (1978), moving one step further than the Bowlby survey, studied both love and loneliness in adults. In their study, they noticed the existence of three different attachment textures. Specifically, they saw a secure, an avoidant and an insecure type. In the first type, secure, the person shows confidence in others while there is no worry about abandonment. Of course, there is a comfort in proximity and dependence on both the others and vice versa. Instead, in the type of avoidance the individual tries to suppress his attachment needs, rejects efforts for emotional proximity, has difficulty in trusting and thus not depends on those around him. Finally, in the insecure type there is anxiety that the people around will not be able to repay one's desire for intimacy. Among the individuals there is a feeling that the partner will not really be able to offer love or that he may wish to leave, to be departed (Hogg et al, 2008).

3. Emotionally Focused Therapy

(a). The basis of the model

The EFT (Emotionally Focused Therapy) began by Dr. Johnson Sue and Les Greenberg. Dr. Johnson used the sessions of couples who had to develop more the model. Johnson quickly realized that, what two people can bring together, is a common enemy. So, she thought she could help couples see the negative motives of their actions as an enemy. The couples slowly realized that their dialogues, their conflicts, hurt both (Greenberg, 2006, Johnson, 2008).

These conflicts occurred when a member of the couple could not achieve a secure bond (Crawley & Grant, 2005; Johnson, 2008). People who have created a secure bond as a child with the infant face, appear to be more capable of feeling emotionally, showing confidence and the necessary care that their partner needs (Hogg et al, 2008).

When couples shared more mild feelings, they saw each other differently. Some emotional stimuli can change the bond between partners (Greenberg, 2004; Johnson, 2008). The EFT program after years of implementation has been successful, with more than 85% of couples receiving significant assistance. It is worth noting that the EFT program is aimed at both heterosexual and homosexual couples (Johnson, 2008).

The model is based on the emotional response of the comrades. In particular, the emotional response has three elements: Availability, Response and Commitment. By availability is meant how open an individual remains in his partner, even in doubt and insecurity. The partner is called upon to understand his feelings, to overcome his personal tendency to flee and to coordinate with his beloved connection needs (Greenberg, 2004; Johnson, 2008). Several times there will be problems, conflicts within a relationship, and individuals will choose the way to escape and move away from the problem. The success of

the model is based on both the physical and emotional presence of comrades (Johnson, 2008; Oatley et al, 1996).

The term response refers to emotional co-ordination with the partner, particularly with the needs and fears of the emotional bond (Greenberg, 2004; Johnson, 2008). As has already been mentioned, a basic, sexual need of man is that of social contact, acceptance by others (Hogg et al, 2008; Rohner, 1986; Khaleque & Cournoyer, 2012). The last element of the emotional response is the commitment, that is, the particular attention we give to a loved one, looking at it and touching it most. Often the comrades call it an "emotional presence" (Johnson, 2008). Just as the baby is clinging to the mother, in the same way in our later relationships, we want the special, unique contact with a separate person, our partner. This relationship is naturally based on mutual trust and love, developed within the bond (Hogg et al, 2008).

(b). The implementation of the model

Comrades, quite often, are involved in conflicts (Johnson, 2008), but most of the time, they do not declare the real cause. These conflicts are called demonic dialogues and are divided into three motives: "Find the Bad Guy", "Protest Polka" and "Freeze and Flee". Each pattern has different features. But in all three, one is the common problem: emotional detachment. Comrades feel unacceptable, mutually accountable or passively defensively in the need of the other for contact, for connection, for care (Crawley et al, 2005; Gottman, 1997; Johnson, 2008). The sense of security that an emotional bond gives us is lost and the fear of loss of relationships is dominated (Crawley et al, 2005; Johnson, 2008; Rohner, 1986; Rohner et al, 2012). It has been observed that in Western culture women take on the role of prosecutors more often, as they are the ones who care more about the relationship. Men have been taught to repress their emotional responses and needs, resolving problems with leaving the relationship (Gottman, 1997; Johnson, 2008).

Many times, during a conflict, comrades are likely to touch a sensitive point, which is "a hypersensitivity of the person caused by moments that have passed in the past or present relationships, moments when an emotional need in the relationship has been repeatedly neglected, ignored or rejected. This usually results in emotional deprivation or abandonment" (Johnson, 2008). The source of these sensitive signs is probably traumatic relationships of the past that may have happened some months before or even years, but still retain their power up this day (Johnson, 2008), with people who were of great importance to us (Hogg et al., 2008), such as siblings, friends, ex-comrades, but especially parents, who are the basic models for our future sexual relationships (Johnson, 635; Johnson, 2008; Cosmopoulos, 2007; 77; Oatley et al., 1996).

People tend to protect these sensitive points by any means (Johnson, 2008: 117). An event touching such a sensitive point automatically makes the individual weaker against his partner. People want to avoid manifestation, reveal their weaknesses as they fear their exploitation by others. This, however, leads increasingly to the removal of the two comrades, the lack of confidence and often the final dissolution of the relationship (Johnson, 2008; Oatley et al, 1996).

However, in order to cope with such a situation, it is necessary for individuals to talk about these sensitive points and try to co-treat them with their partner (Crawley et al, 2005; Greenberg, 2004; Greenberg, 2006; Johnson, 2008). Research has shown that people who have grown up in a safe environment are more easily able to heal these points (Johnson, 2008). On the contrary, for people who have no secure ties, either as children or as adults, this

process is more time-consuming and, of course, more painful. This is easily explained by what we have already mentioned about the importance of attaching the individual to the mother and creating a secure relationship of trust and love with her (Hogg et al, 2008; Cosmopoulos, 2007: 77-78; Oatley et al, 1996).

In order to build and maintain a secure bond, one must be able to co-ordinate with his beloved person as loudly as in the first time of the relationship. Over time, we become less cautious, more compassionate, and sometimes we feel tired with our partner. Therefore, it is very important that the longing that we feel for a special person at the beginning of a relationship, the imaginary and temporary love can be preserved over time and transform into a lasting love and care for that person (Johnson, 2008; Johnson, 2013; Oatley et al., 1996).

In the context of model implementation, it is very important for comrades to talk openly about what they are afraid of (Johnson, 2008). Anger, fear and contempt are the feelings of competition and are directly involved, appearing during a conflict (Oatley et al, 2004: 451). The deepest fear in a bond in crisis is the very fear of dissolving the relationship (Hogg et al, 2008; Johnson, 2008). It is commonly accepted that a person can hurt a fellow man not only through anger, violence and aggression, but also through contempt (Gottman, 1997; Oatley et al, 2004: 475). The feeling that the loved one will be there whenever and wherever we need it, is a source of power and the principle of the response and the commitment (Johnson, 2008). Through the revelation of fears, individuals are led to reveal their primary needs, the need for emotional engagement, for contact (Hogg et al, 2008).

It has been noticed that unhappy comrades, 50% - 70%, attribute their difficulties in dealing with sexual problems. However, what really has happened is that the couple has lost his contact, there is no emotional safety and thus enjoy less satisfying sex. This leads gradually to less sex and more hurt feelings and thus to a looser emotional connection, until there is no longer a bond (Johnson, 2008).

It is worth noting here the importance of touch amongst comrades (Johnson, 2008). Darwin, as early as 1872, assumed that the hugging for the infant is a similar experience to that experienced by adults when they are taken care of by their partner. Later, Freud added to this idea that through love, the person returns to the first euphemistic union with his mother (Oatley et al, 1996). From this, it is perceived how important the first attachment of the infant to the mother is for his subsequent erotic relationships and the creation of secure bonds (Hogg et al, 2008; Oatsley et al, 2004: 445).

In order to maintain love among partners, it is necessary to create a strong and secure bond between them, based on mutual trust and acceptance (Hogg et al, 2008). Johnson (2014) proposes the creation of a "Strong Relationship History" that will teach the couple how to fall in love each time, over and over, as they did the first time (Oatley et al, 1996), while the couple must create and a "Future History of Love," which will show how the couple dreams to be his love in the future. It is also very important to have signaling rituals of separation and reconnection moments, such as hugs when they meet, love messages, and so on. (Johnson, 2008).

4. The Power of Love

The conflict within a bond hurts both comrades. The question that arises is why someone wants to hurt his partner, his loved one? Several times the manifestation of such behavior is imitation of parental patterns (Hogg et al, 2008). This also highlights the important role the EFT can play in generating wider circles of love throughout society. Conflicts between

couples as well as increased divorce are a cause of social concern. Several times, some forms of marital conflict have the same harmful consequences as a divorce (Gottman, 1997).

In particular, it is worth noting that conflicts between parents significantly affect the physical and mental health of children. Every child needs not only his two parents but also the sense of their successful marital relationship in order to grow up properly (Gottman, 1997; Cosmopoulos, 2007: 85). Therefore, a child who lives and grows in an environment of conflicts, quarrels, and disagreements is likely to experience a sense of disorganization, and the shock of the sense of security that has been caused may never be met (Cosmopoulos, 2007: 87). Initially, parental divorce was considered to be the responsibility of children's delinquency. However, now we know that the problems of externalizing adolescents and children, even adults, also arise in parental conflicts before divorce (Oatley et al, 1996).

It has also been observed that aggressive behavior among parents, hostile and negative emotions among adults can also be aggressive for the children themselves. Parents are exemplars for children, with the result that their negative emotional expression as a way of dealing with a problem is also the property of the children themselves in similar cases (Oatley et al, 1996; Gottman, 1997). There is a great correlation between marital relationships and the behavior of children with their friends. In particular, children whose parents felt they had an unhappy marriage, had difficulties in their social relationships as opposed to children whose parents had a happy marriage (Gottman, 1997).

Therefore, love between comrades contributes to the empowerment and healthy life of the whole family. For decades, we have known that happy families are based on happy relationships between comrades. Frequent conflicts lead comrades to become less consistent with their children in terms of care and guidance they need and may also be violent. This whole situation often causes emotional and behavioral problems in children, including depression, anxiety, introversion, removal, substance abuse, low school performance, delinquent behavior, and so on. (Gottman, 1997; Johnson, 2008). It is remarkable that men, who are removed from their spouses, are also inaccessible to their children. In a survey by Zill (1981), 65% of young people with separated parents reported only a small relationship with fathers, as opposed to 9% of children whose parents had not separated. At similar rates, of course, the relationship between children and mothers is also observed. Approximately 30% of children with divorced parents reported rather poor relationships with mothers, compared to 16% of children of undivided parents (Gottman, 1997).

It has been found for many years that people develop relationships amongst themselves, not only with their beloved people, but also with friends of their friends, co-workers, and so on. These social networks that are formed can be said to look like a dense forest. Of course, a social network can have both positive and negative effects. People who show love to their comrades, their parents, their friends, their partners, can create wider circles of love, beyond their own personal circle (Christakis & Fowler, 2009). Therefore, the best relationships between sex partners are not just a personal preference, but also a social offer, as Christakis & Fowler (2009) says. Families with more love mean societies that can better correspond the needs of their members (Johnson, 2008).

To summarize, we would say that the Emotional Focused Therapy (EFT) model can be applied not only to couples but also to families, social relationships and any other human subsystem (school, professional space), enhancing interpersonal relationships for the purpose of mental resilience of individuals.

5. References

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