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Abstract

Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy (EFT) is an evidence-based therapy model. It has been viewed as an empirical approach to couple therapy, and it has lasting treatment effects (Johnson, 2004; Greenman & Johnson, 2013). However, Greenman and Johnson (2013) also argued that there is still a lack of research concerning the EFT process. This study focuses on connections between theory and practice by analyzing the EFT process. Recursive Frame Analysis (RFA), a tool developed by Chenail and Keeney to map therapeutic conversation (Chenail, 1993; Chenail, 1995; Keeney, 1987), is used here as a research method to examine Sue Johnson's use of EFT interventions and techniques to delivering EFT theory in the educational DVD titled, "Emotionally Focused Therapy in Action" (Johnson, 2011). Specifically, this study analyzes the conversational movement within and between the EFT stages and steps, to examine interventions and techniques related to interactional patterns, emotions, and attachment. It is a descriptive research. An analysis of the DVD session illustrates Johnson's skills in using systemic interventions, experiential interventions, and attachment interventions and techniques linking EFT theories to practice. The skills of how and when to use specific interventions and techniques, as informed by a language perspective, can be very beneficial for therapists' better understanding of the transitions and flows between EFT theories and practice. In addition, the researcher found that RFA as a research methodology is well-suited to analyzing an EFT session.

Keywords

Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy (EFT), EFT Interventions, Process, Recursive Frame Analysis (RFA)

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The Use of Recursive Frame Analysis on an Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy Session

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Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy (EFT) is an evidence-based therapy model. It has been viewed as an empirical approach to couple therapy, and it has lasting treatment effects (Johnson, 2004; Greenman & Johnson, 2013). However, Greenman and Johnson (2013) also argued that there is still a lack of research concerning the EFT process. This study focuses on connections between theory and practice by analyzing the EFT process. Recursive Frame Analysis (RFA), a tool developed by Chenail and Keeney to map therapeutic conversation (Chenail, 1993; Chenail, 1995; Keeney, 1987), is used here as a research method to examine Sue Johnson's use of EFT interventions and techniques to delivering EFT theory in the educational DVD titled, "Emotionally Focused Therapy in Action" (Johnson, 2011). Specifically, this study analyzes the conversational movement within and between the EFT stages and steps, to examine interventions and techniques related to interactional patterns, emotions, and attachment. It is a descriptive research. An analysis of the DVD session illustrates Johnson's skills in using systemic interventions, experiential interventions, and attachment interventions and techniques linking EFT theories to practice. The skills of how and when to use specific interventions and techniques, as informed by a language perspective, can be very beneficial for therapists' better understanding of the transitions and flows between EFT theories and practice. In addition, the researcher found that RFA as a research methodology is well-suited to analyzing an EFT session. Keywords: Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy (EFT), EFT Interventions, Process, Recursive Frame Analysis (RFA)

Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy (EFT) is an evidenced-based therapy model. During the last three decades, researchers have divided the EFT theory into a sequence of stages and steps to help therapists make the leap from theory to practice. This article begins by explaining the EFT model and Recursive Frame Analysis (RFA). RFA is here used as a qualitative research method to analyze a selected EFT session lead by Sue Johnson, one of the originators of EFT. Specifically, the study focuses on the interventions and techniques of EFT while analyzing the EFT session process from an RFA perspective.

Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy (EFT)

Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy (EFT) was founded by Greenberg and Johnson in the early 1980s based on systemic theory, humanistic and experiential therapy, and attachment theory (Greenberg & Johnson, 1985). First, systemic theory views the couple as a system in which they affect each other's behaviors (Bateson, 1972). Johnson (2004) believed that a couple's distress results from their negative interactional cycle. Second, the humanistic experiential approach is based on Rogers' client-centered therapy (Rogers, 1951). The humanistic approach focuses on the growth of clients and believes that change happens in the present moment and the now-experience. Last, EFT therapists view attachment needs and emotional bonds within a couple as the source of a healthy relationship. Couples' attachment

theory was generated from Bowlby's attachment theory based on caregivers and children (Bowlby, 1969). Researchers have since expanded on attachment theory between children and their caregivers to understand couples' emotional bonds (Collins & Read, 1990; Levy & Davis, 1988). The three theories are combined to conceptualize relationship distress and integrated to develop EFT stages, interventions, and techniques for treatment (Moser & Johnson, 2008).

In the three decades of EFT's model and practice development, EFT has been viewed as "one of the most empirically supported models of couple therapy" (Denton, Johnson, & Burleson, 2009, p. 226). It shows effective outcomes of 70 to 73 percent in couple recovery (Johnson, 2003). It is also viewed as an empirical approach to couple therapy and it has lasting treatment effects (Greenman & Johnson, 2013).

According to Johnson (2004), EFT has three tasks: monitoring the alliance; engaging, exploring, and expanding emotional responses in an attachment context; and reconstructing positive interactions. In practice, she divides the tasks into three stages and nine steps. The first stage has four steps: creating an alliance and directing conflicts issues into the attachment struggle, identifying the negative interactional cycle, assessing primary emotions underlying interactional positions, and reframing the problem by using primary emotions and attachment needs. The goal of the first stage is to de-escalate the negative interaction. The second stage is to change interactional positions. It has three steps: promoting identification of attachment emotions and needs, and then integrating into relationship interactions; promoting acceptance of each other's experience and validating new interactional responses; and facilitating the expression of needs and wants and creating bonding events. The third stage is consolidation and integration. It has only two steps: facilitating new solutions and consolidating new positions and new cycle of attachment behavior. The three stages and nine steps have guided therapists to connect theory to practice.

Johnson (2004) also developed interventions and techniques for delivering EFT effectively. The interventions are based on the three theories: experiential therapy, systemic theory, and attachment theory. For example, systemic interventions include the tracking and reflecting process, and reframing partners' interactions in the context of the negative cycle. Experiential interventions include empathic reflections / attunement, validation, evocative responding. Attachment interventions include empathic conjecture, heightening emotional needs, and reframing their needs in attachment terminology (Zuccarini, Johnson, Dalglish, & Makinen, 2013). EFT techniques include slowing down the therapy process, repeating the key words, speaking in soft tone, and using clients' words and images (Johnson, 2004). The interventions and techniques will be exemplified later in the analysis section.

Linking theory to practice is essential. A large amount of research has been dedicated to the process of EFT including interventions and techniques, and what leads to change for clients. Looking at specific interventions and techniques helps see the micro-perspective on change. According to Woolley, Ampler, and Davis (2012), process research has great advantages because it provides specific information on how change happens in a therapy session and "...gain[s] information on what therapeutic behavior actually makes therapy effective with specific clients" (p. 286). Yet, as Greenman and Johnson (2013) stated that, "The knowledge of the process of psychotherapy is lacking, which can be particularly troubling to the therapist attempting to navigate the landscape of couple and family dynamics" (p. 46). This study is a process research of the EFT model, specifically on interventions, techniques and their related use of language. Its main aim is to enrich the current body of EFT literature on linking theory to practice.

Studying discourse is an important component of EFT process. Bavelas et al. (2000) asserted that studying how conversation unfolds in therapy is important for understanding the process of how therapeutic dialogue works. Analysis of language such as phrases, words, and

therapeutic questions is utilized to understand the therapy process. For example, Bavelas (2007) used microanalysis to examine the therapeutic questions and responses based on the therapy model. Couture and Strong (2004) used discourse analysis to study therapy conversations as well. Studying language in therapy sessions is essential to understanding the therapy process. For this reason, the researcher used Recursive Frame Analysis (RFA) to study connections between theory and practice.

Methodology: Recursive Frame Analysis

Recursive Frame Analysis (RFA) is one type of discourse analysis that values discourses in the micro- and macro- levels of conversation (Cotton, 2010). Together, both levels of conversation offer a way to connect theory and practice. The micro-level reveals specific dialogues and details happening in therapy sessions. The macro-level reveals the stages and steps of therapy models, which connects with therapy theories. RFA helps therapists and researchers punctuate words, phrases, and sentences and the relationships between them to interpret talk. The aim of RFA is to see shifts in therapeutic conversations and the movement of therapeutic conversations. RFA has two foci:

- a) the content of the conversation and
- b) the process of the conversation.

Chenail (1995) stated that RFA can be used as sequential analysis, semantic analysis, or pragmatic analysis. This paper focuses on sequential and semantic analysis.

Based on Bateson's theory about communication patterns, Keeney (1987) developed this RFA model to analyze therapy conversation. RFA utilizes the basic concepts of openings, frames, galleries, and wings to organize therapeutic movements (Keeney, Keeney, & Chenail, 2012). The concept of *frame* was originated from Bateson and Goffman's theory about communication (Bateson, 1972; Goffman, 1974). During the last two decades, Keeney, Chenail, and other scholars have enriched this model to interpret the movement and flow of conversations in many situations such as therapy sessions and supervision.

Frames and contexts in the conversations are the most important terms with this method. Distinguishing the difference between these two concepts can help to understand this analysis tool better. Chenail and Duffy (2009) defined that "a frame is considered to be the basic unit of meaning" (p. 119). Frames are meant as linguistic patterns and can be words, phrases, or sentences. Chenail (1995) claimed, "Words are woven together to create contexts and then these frames are configured to create a shape or contour to the conversation." In other words, context is the active relationship between the frames. The meaning of the conversation is based on words or phrases and the connection between them.

Frames and contexts are recursive within the conversations. Cotton (2011) defined "recursion as a repeating or an unfolding process of phrasing words, questions, formulations, and responses that create a context of meaning and communication at both the micro and macro level" (p. 58). "Researchers or therapists reconsider the relationships of texts and contexts" because texts and contexts have recursive relationship (Chenail, 1995). He also went on saying that "a particular piece of text contextualizes other text, and in turn, is also contextualized by the other surrounding bits of text" (Chenail, 1995). Because of the recursive relationship, conversations have movements and flow.

The RFA theory described above has been put into practice as a method for analyzing conversations. Frames, openings, galleries, and wings have been developed to analyze conversations in practice. As stated above, frames are the basic unit of meaning and they serve at the micro-level of conversations. Next, according to Keeney (1987), a section of

frames can be contextualized within a gallery. Cotton (2011) stated that “the collective frames organize into themes of specific galleries and wings at the macro-level” (p. 59). According to Keeney (1987), openings are at the beginning of the gallery.

Using an analogy from a writing discourse, composition theory, can help readers to understand the relationship between frames, openings, galleries, and wings. They correspond to sentences, opening statements in a paragraph, paragraphs, and sections of a paper. Frames are like sentences in a paper. Galleries are like collecting sentences into paragraphs. First sentences are important in paragraphs, which are called openings in RFA. Paragraphs are based on themes divided into sections, which are called wings in RFA. These four concepts have a recursive relationship; they depend on each other to develop a flowing, logical piece of writing or a flowing, logical therapy session.

RFA has been used as a practical tool and research method to analyze the structure of therapeutic conversations (Chenail, 1995; Keeney, 1991; Kenney, Keeney, & Chenail, 2012). This method of analyzing conversations has been applied in many contexts such as in supervision, therapy, and a research model for conducting qualitative research (Cotton, 2010; Keeney & Keeney, 2012; Rudes, Shilts, & Berg, 1997). This study will utilize RFA to study the language process of EFT to examine interventions and techniques on how to deliver EFT theory in practice within a recorded therapy session by Sue Johnson (2011). Specifically, flows and transitions between and within the micro-level (specific situations) and the macro-level (EFT theory) are examined.

Research Design

The study will look closely at the Profession-Specific Acts of EFT to see the movement of therapy. Profession-Specific Acts are specialized dialogues conducted to work for teachers, attorneys, therapists, and other professionals (Chenail & Duffy, 2009). As described by Chenail and Duffy (2009), “By using the profession-specific speech acts, RFA researchers are able to make note of unique ways these professionals offer contextual clues to produce interesting configurations of frames, galleries, wings, and museums” (p. 122). By looking at the Profession-Specific Speech Acts of EFT, the researcher focuses on Johnson’s professional skills in delivering interventions and techniques in integrating emotions, attachment needs, interactional patterns, and other elements to create positive change for the client couple. The researcher focuses on sequential and semantic analysis of the Profession-Specific Acts of EFT between the therapist Johnson and the couple in the DVD titled *Emotionally Focused Therapy in Action* (Johnson, 2011).

Credibility

This educational DVD is shown to therapists in training as an example of well-done Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy. This example of EFT can represent the standard of EFT, since Johnson developed the EFT manual and she is internationally known for training EFT therapists. When Cotton wanted to study Solution Focused Therapy, he chose to analyze Berg and de Shazer’s videos on therapy sessions (Cotton, 2011); likewise, the researcher picked Johnson’s DVD, because Johnson is one of the founders of EFT. Therefore, this DVD is reliable for studying the process of EFT.

The data includes two discs of the DVD, the published transcript of the recorded session. The published transcript was typed into a Microsoft® Word document by the researcher with the same format. The researcher watched and listened to the full recorded session six times and watched and listened to small sections until she identified the presence of the interventions and techniques from EFT theory. When listening to the recorded session,

the researcher used one printed copy of transcript and used color highlights to code the data. By immersing herself in understanding EFT theory, reading the EFT manual, and having assistance from her peers, the researcher was able to best locate frames, galleries, openings, and wings in the transcript.

Procedures for Data Analysis

In the DVD *Emotionally Focused Therapy in Action*, Johnson is doing consultation with the couple named Matt and Rhea, who are dealing with marital conflicts. The first disc shows Johnson and the couple’s therapist, Joshua, consulting about the couple before Johnson meets them. The second disc is Johnson conducting an EFT session with Matt and Rhea along with a brief follow-up with the DVD’s host at the end. This research only focuses on the therapy session in the second disc. However, the researcher also used the first disc and the final follow-up to gain information about the couple’s history and EFT’s theory and practice. The transcript published within the DVD was used as raw data for the research.

Based on RFA as an analysis tool, a portion of the transcript was put into RFA structure, coded into frames, openings, galleries, and wings. This methodology has four stages: observing the talk, coding the talk, interpreting the talk and discussing the talk. Based on the research design of Keeney (1987) and Cotton (2011), the researcher created the following figure to illustrate the process of the research:

Recursive Frame Analysis Research Design

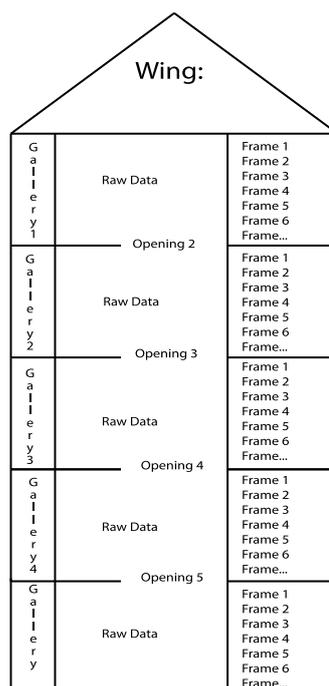


Figure 1. Recursive Frame Analysis Research Design

The transcripts are coded based on Chenail and Duffy’s coding system (2009). They developed their coding system by utilizing Microsoft® Office to produce and present RFA findings. Based on their coding system, in this study Johnson stands for the therapist Sue Johnson; Rhea stands for the wife; Matt stands for the husband; and the three digital number represents the order of speakers and number of conversation contributions. Here is the example from *Wing 1: Negative Steps and cycle*, to illustrate:

Gallery 1: Rhea's first dance step	Opening 1: 001 001: Johnson: And what do you do when you feel either - I'm using words, you help me if they are off - either somehow starved and like you don't, like you are saying to Matt, "Are you there for me? Are you there for me?" And no real clear answer comes back, and in fact sometimes he turns and maybe says something critical? What do you do then, Rhea? 002: Johnson: When that happens to you, what do you do? 003: Rhea: Sometimes I then get defensive, or I blow up.	Frame 1 Frame 2
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Figure 2: Example Portion of Wing 1

The example above demonstrates that Johnson is the first person to speak which called the first talk. After this, there is a pause, which allows 002, the second talk, to still be Johnson. 003 is the third talk and is Rhea's talk. The three digit number represents the turn of the talk. This is how the transcripts published within the DVD divided the conversations.

After coding the transcripts based on Chenail and Duffy's (2009) system, the selected EFT raw data is put into the RFA structure, Figure 1, to analyze the flow and movement of the conversations. By utilizing RFA, the researcher repeatedly observes, codes, interprets, and discusses the session with her peers. The transcripts presented in RFA structure can be found after the reference section at the end of the study.

During analysis, the movement of a session was divided into three phases: the beginning, middle, and end. Keeney and Keeney (2012) stated RFA is used to see the movement through these phases. According to RFA, a session can be viewed as consisting of three phases, in order to see shifts in the conversation and the movement of phases in the session (Kenney & Kenney, 2012; Kenney, Keeney, & Chenail, 2012). Based on the EFT's three stages, the researcher only collected three segments from the DVD to fit into RFA's three phases to illustrate the movement of the EFT model.

The three segments are called wings in RFA language. In the beginning phase of the therapy session, Johnson tracks the couple's negative steps, negative interactions, and secondary emotions. The researcher named this segment *Wing 1: Tracking the negative steps and cycle*. In the second segment, which is the middle phase of the therapy, Johnson accesses the husband Matt's underlying primary emotions and attachment needs. The researcher named that segment *Wing 2: Accessing primary emotions and attachment needs*. In the third segment, which is the last phase of the therapy, Johnson creates an enactment and constructs new interactions. The researcher named it *Wing 3: Creating an enactment*.

After deciding the wings, the researcher coded frames. After coding the frames, the researcher grouped them into galleries based on the RFA research design in Figure 1. Based on the movement of conversation, frames were grouped into specific galleries. After deciding frames and galleries, the researcher interpreted the frames and contexts in each gallery and wing. At the beginning of a gallery is an opening, which plays an important role to connect galleries. The researcher analyzed openings as well to help understand the shifts from one gallery to another, as it is important to see how Johnson performs the transition from one gallery to another.

In choosing and coding frames, Keeney, Keeney, and Chenail (2012) asserted that researchers should use clients' language to name the frame, not the interpretations of therapists. Keeney, Keeney and Chenail (2012) also stated, "RFA limits itself to analyzing the performed communication rather than non-spoken interpretation" (p. 2). Therefore, the study only focuses on the verbal communication. Additionally, Chenail (1995) stated that the choices of frames help analysts to understand certain perspectives of the talk but not to help them hear other parts of the talk. Thus, the choice of frames affected the interpretation of the data.

To easily track frames, the frames are highlighted in bold font in the coded transcripts, and the frame code indicates the number of the turns of talk. The bold words represent the frame content. For example from Figure 2, Frame 1 “**what do you do then**” and Frame 2 “**When that happens to you, what do you do?**” Sometimes, one talk can have several frames. After the frame number, the researcher adds a, b, c to indicate the order of frame in that talk. For example, Frame 14-a means the first frame at the fourteenth talk.

The researcher interprets the connections between frames and movement between galleries. For the purpose of analysis on EFT interventions and techniques, the researcher only focused on Johnson’s talks. Rhea and Matt’s talks are used to understand and interpret how effective Johnson’s interventions and techniques are. Johnson’s commentaries in the DVD also help the researcher interpret the frames and galleries.

Analysis

The researcher attempted to understand the functions of specific interventions and techniques in connecting theory with practice. The analysis can help us to see what interventions and techniques are effective for leading to change.

Based on Keeney, Keeney, and Chenail (2012)’s graphic on demonstrating the recursive relationship between frames, galleries, openings and wings, the researcher used a similar graphic to illustrate the relationship among the three wings.

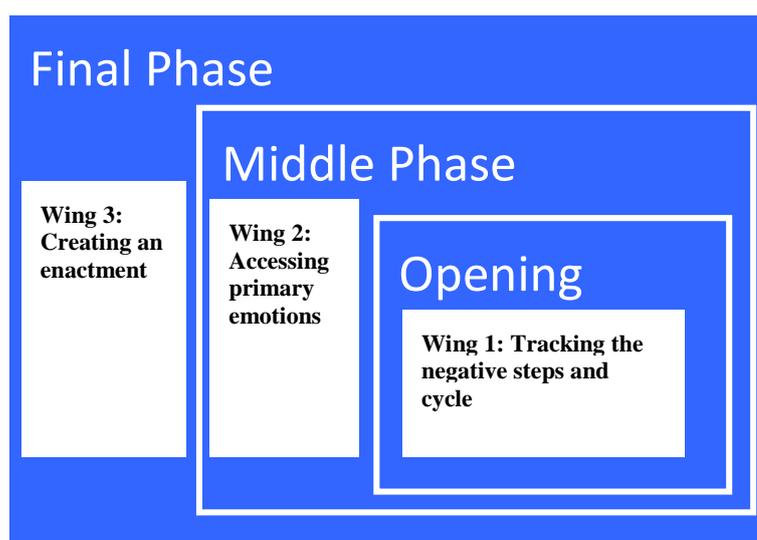


Figure 3: Recursive Interaction of the Wings

The figure above displays three phases of the EFT session and how they can be seen to fit into three RFA wings. The figure demonstrates that RFA as a research methodology is well-suited to analyzing an EFT session. The three wings have a recursive relationship. The frames in Wing 1 are integrated in Wing 2 and Wing 3. The frames in Wing 2 are integrated in Wing 3. The frames in Wing 3 will affect the couple’s interactional dance steps. The figure also demonstrates the micro- and macro-level analysis of the EFT session. The recursive relationship between phases within a session and between sessions leads to change happening gradually.

When analyzing the three phases of the session, the researcher focused on interventions, techniques and their related language within each wing and between the three wings. According to Keeney (1987), he observed his students being caught in the content of therapy, and therefore he originally developed RFA is to help therapists move from stage to

stage in a session. This analysis will equally emphasize interventions, techniques and their related language that uncover the information of clients' issues (content) and those that move therapy conversations forward (process).

Wing 1: Tracking the negative steps and cycle

Wing 1 covers the first stage and the first four steps in the EFT model. The first stage for tracking the negative cycle of the couple's interaction is based on systemic theory, which believes that the couple's distress is caused by how they interact with each other (Johnson, 2004). By tracking the negative cycle, Johnson externalizes the couple's relationship problem. She helps the couple look at their distress through the analogy of an interactional dance, instead of trying to fix one another.

Frames, openings, and galleries in Wing 1 are all related to the first stage's tasks in EFT. The galleries were selected based on their "dance" or interactional steps. The galleries include

- 1) Rhea's first dance step,
- 2) Matt's first dance step,
- 3) Rhea's second dance step,
- 4) Matt's second dance step, and
- 5) Rhea and Matt's final step.

Figure 4 displays that recursive relationship in Wing 1.

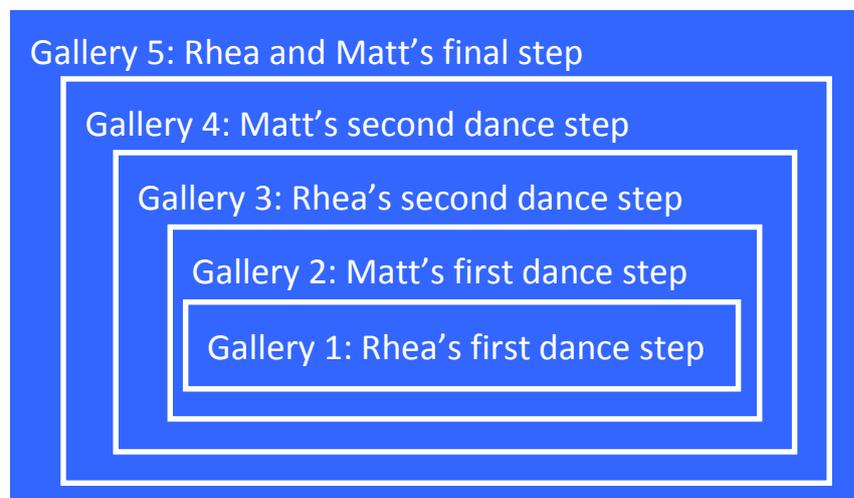


Figure 4: Recursive Relationship in Wing 1

Galleries are recursive with each other. Matt's dance step is based on Rhea's dance step and vice-versa. Rhea and Matt's first step talk is circulated in the second and final steps of their interactions. Because of the recursive relationship between Rhea and Matt's dance steps, Johnson can track and reflect on their behaviors influencing on each other. For example, in talk 008 Johnson says, "all of this hurt and resentment comes up, and it comes out. And then **what do you (Matt) do?**" Johnson is bases her question on Rhea's behavior in order to track Matt's reaction. In this manner, the frames in earlier galleries are integrated into new frames into later galleries. The recursive relationship between the galleries allows Johnson to go back and forth to address their dance steps.

Johnson is very flexible when conducting therapy. Even though research recommends that therapists engage with withdrawing partners first (Johnson, 2004), Johnson first engaged with Rhea, who is a pursuer. This was effective and still moved the therapy forward in a positive direction. Therefore, therapy is situational. While research articles can help therapists discern what practical steps to take, the most appropriate action is really situational.

In Gallery 1, Johnson asks what Rhea does when Matt turns away and says something critical in Opening 1 and Frame 1. Frame 1 and Frame 2 use the systemic intervention of tracking Rhea's responses in the dance. Frame 4 and Frame 6 show Johnson's use of the experiential intervention by reflecting on Rhea's secondary emotions and responses. Rhea blows up and gets angry when Matt turns away.

Gallery 2 begins with Opening 2 when Johnson asks what Matt's step is when Rhea gets angry. Opening 2 is also Frame 8 that uses the systemic intervention of tracking and reflecting interactions. Within Frame 10, Johnson appears to slow down their talk. According to Johnson (2004), it is important to have a slow pace, especially to unfold emotions. Frame 12 validates Matt's responses and creates an alliance between the therapist and the clients. Then, Johnson reframes their primary emotions and interactions in the context of the negative cycle in Frame 14-a. Johnson seems to use this frame as a systemic intervention so that clients can understand their relationship is interactional. In this case, Matt gets upset and thinks that when Rhea is angry, he has disappointed Rhea. After realizing that their behaviors are interactional, they each can take responsibility for their own behavior.

At Frame 14-b, Johnson uses the intervention of empathic conjecture/interpretation to see Matt's primary emotions. Empathic conjecture can be an experiential intervention and attachment interventions. Because EFT therapists understand how secondary and primary emotions work in couple relationships, they play a role on interpreting those emotions and feelings, especially with the clients who do not know how to use emotional language. Frame 16 uses reflection intervention. Reflection is to help clients turn their vague and abstract relational experience into vivid and specific experience (Johnson, 2004). In Frame 17 and Frame 19-a Johnson uses a technique by asking for clients' help, which can engage clients more and slow down the process. In Frame 19-b Johnson appears reframe the couple's behavior in the context of the negative interactional cycle. In Frame 23 Johnson seems to validate Matt's response and in Frames 25 and 27 she reflects on Matt's response. Frame 31 reframes their behaviors in the context of their negative cycle. Empathic conjecture, reflection, and validations are experiential interventions. Reframing their behavior and emotions in context of cycle are systemic interventions.

In Gallery 3, Opening 3, Frame 33 starts with Rhea's response to Matt's anger. In Frame 33 Johnson uses the intervention of tracking the steps to see Rhea's reaction to Matt. Frame 35 asks for some clarification. Johnson's clarification seems to allow her to interpret clients' talk and slows down the therapy process. In Frame 37 Johnson appears to reflect and validate Rhea's secondary emotions and response and in Frame 40 she seems to reflect and validate Rhea's primary emotions and response. Tracking the steps can be seen as another example of systemic intervention, while reflection on emotions, validation, and clarification are experiential.

In Gallery 4, Opening 4 (Frame 42) tracks Matt's response to Rhea's shut down. In Frame 42, Johnson uses the experiential intervention of evocative responding to see what it is like for Matt when Rhea shuts down. In Gallery 5, Opening 5 (Frame 46) she tracks their last dance step and in Frames 49 and 51 she reflects on their interactions.

Wing 1 demonstrates the order of unpacking couple conflicts in the EFT model. First, Johnson asks for their behaviors and reactions toward each other. Second, Johnson asks about their secondary emotions related to their behaviors individually. Then Johnson works on their primary emotions with interventions such as empathy conjecture and reflection. At the end,

Johnson puts their behaviors and emotions in the context of a negative cycle or dance.

In Wing 1, systemic interventions are focused on tracking the cycle. The language structure Johnson uses to track is “what do you do, when she/he is XXX (behavior or secondary emotions).” For example, Frames 1, 2, 8, 33, 42, and 46 are used to track their negative cycle. The experiential interventions such as reflection and validation are used to understand each other’s secondary and primary emotions as well as their interactions. Reflection helps clients turn their vague and abstract relational experience into vivid and specific experience (Johnson, 2004). For example, Frames 4, 6, 16, 25, 27, 37, 40, 49, and 51 reflect on Rhea and Matt’s responses, secondary emotions, their interactions, and their underlying emotions. Through reflection, Rhea and Matt can de-escalate their fighting.

Moreover, techniques such as slowing down the process can make clients engage in the session and unpack the session more effectively. For instance, in talk 010, Johnson initiates this by saying, “I am going to slow you down right now, okay?” She always uses techniques such as a soft tone and validation to slow down the process. Slowing down the therapy is a key technique in the first stage of the EFT process because clients tend to be intensely emotional then.

Johnson is very collaborative with the couple because her humanistic approach emphasizes that clients are experts on their own lives. She is constantly asking for clients’ help to understand them. For example, Frames 17, 19-a, and 35 illustrate the collaboration between Johnson and the clients. She often uses language like “you help me” and “help me here.”

Reframing is an important intervention to connect theory and practice. When Rhea and Matt gave the content of their interactions, Johnson reframed them in the context of their negative cycle. For example, Frames 14-a, 14-b, 19-b, and 31 demonstrate Johnson putting the content into their negative cycle. This kind of reframing helps clients to see each other’s perspective.

At the end of the first stage of the EFT process, it is important for clients to understand their negative steps, secondary emotions, and primary emotions. As Zuccarini, Johnson, Dalgleish, and Makinen (2013) stated about this initial stage and its four component steps, “Steps 1–4 are associated with reducing secondary reactive processing and self-protectiveness, anxious preoccupation, and emotional avoidance related to the injury” (p. 160). Johnson successfully achieved these tasks in the first stage of the EFT process.

Wing 2: Accessing primary emotions

Because Wing 1 and Wing 2 have a recursive relationship, Wing 2 continues to address the couple’s interactions. An emotional layer has been added on. EFT believes attachment and emotional needs are essential for healing couples’ distress, so Wing 2 focuses on emotional talk, including secondary emotions and primary emotions. Wing 2 covers steps 5 and 6 of EFT’s second stage. These two steps promote identification of attachment emotions and needs and integrate them into relationship interactions, encouraging acceptance of each person’s experience (Johnson, 2004).

As an example of Johnson’s interventions and techniques in this wing, the researcher selected a segment in which Johnson accessed Matt’s primary emotions and needs. This wing includes five galleries:

- 1) Matt cannot respond to Rhea’s needs;
- 2) Matt is stuck between withdrawing from and fighting with Rhea;
- 3) Matt experiences danger;
- 4) Rhea is more supportive; and

5) Matt is not just angry.

Figure 5 displays this recursive interaction in Wing 2.

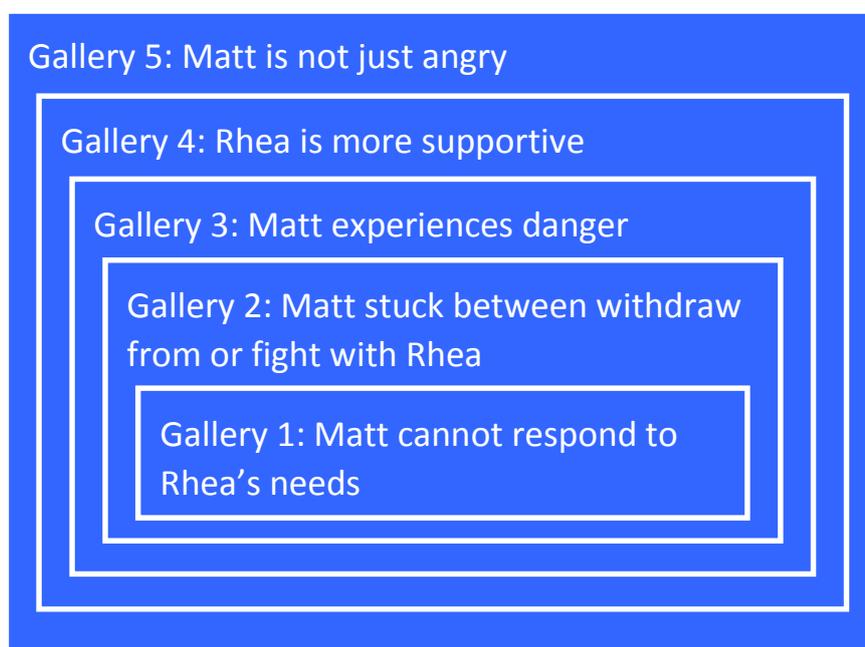


Figure 5: Recursive Relationship in Wing 2

Because there is a recursive relationship between Wing 1 and Wing 2, Johnson is able to move to the second stage and still reflect back on Wing 1. Wing 2 emphasizes emotions more than behaviors. To connect the negative dance cycle with emotions, Johnson used interventions such as evocative questions to move from wing 1 (behavior) to wing 2 (emotions). Moreover, the movement between these galleries illustrates new interactions between Matt and Rhea.

In Gallery 1: Matt cannot respond to Rhea, Johnson appears to use Frame 5-a to slow down the process Matt and Rhea seem to be escalating. Frame 5-b reflects on the process. Reflection is a skill to slow down the therapy process. Frame 5-c reframes their problem as the dance. Frame 5-d and Frame 5-e validate their emotions and responses. When a couple becomes escalated, slowing down the process and unpacking the escalating moment is a technique of EFT. Unpacking the moment is an experiential intervention.

Gallery 2 describes that Matt was stuck between withdrawing from and fighting with Rhea. In Frame 12-a, Johnson uses Matt's image "cave" to describe Matt's fear and withdrawal. Frame 12-b uses repeating technique to heighten Matt's secondary emotions. Frame 12-c uses empathic conjecture to connect Matt's feelings with attachment theory. Empathic conjecture is powerful to connect clients' relationship experience with attachment theory. Frame 17 uses the client's image "copilot" to connect Matt's experience of feeling stuck. Clients' words and images serve as a good way to connect with clients, especially with their emotional level. Frame 19, by using evocative responding, invites Matt to talk more deeply and explores Matt's vulnerability. At this point, Matt begins to cry. When the withdrawer shows tears, Rhea gives more empathy and is more supportive. Frame 20 validates Matt's need.

Gallery 3 describes that Matt experiences danger. Frame 23 reflects on Matt's underlying emotions. Frame 29 uses empathy conjecture to connect Matt's primary emotions to his attachment needs. Frame 35 reframes Matt's behavior in the context of attachment

needs.

Gallery 4 describes that Rhea becomes more supportive when Matt shows his primary emotions. In the opening frame, Frame 37, Johnson verbally repeats Matt's emotions and behaviors. After that, Rhea becomes more supportive by saying encouraging words to Matt. Frame 42 validates that Matt needs comfort. Experiential interventions are used.

Gallery 5 describes that Matt is not just angry. Frame 48 and Frame 50 uses empathic conjecture to underlay Matt's struggles. In the Frame 57, Johnson reframes Matt's emotions such as anger and overwhelmed in the context of attachment needs.

In Wing 2, which is parallel to steps of 5 and 6 of EFT, experiential interventions such as reflecting on secondary emotions, validating secondary emotions, and evocative response are mostly used. By accessing to Matt's primary emotions, such as fear, during the fights, Rhea is able to be more supportive. By validating their emotions, responses, needs, such as in Frame 5-d, 5-e, and 42, Johnson created a safe place for them to talk about their most vulnerable feelings. Evocative questions created their new interactions in the session. Most of Johnson's evocative questions are structured like the following example: "When Matt withdraws, what do you feel?"

Slowing down the process is essential in the second stage because it involves more primary emotions. For example, Frame 5-a, "I'm going to slow it down" prevents the couple's arguing and allows them to fully address their emotions. In addition, the technique of using images is used to uncover clients' emotions in concrete images. For example, Frame 12-a ("I want to go in my cave") and Frame 19 ("I love the image that you need a copilot") demonstrate the fear Matt has and his needs. By using clients' own words and images, Johnson connects to their inner worlds and helps them to understand their own emotions in vivid ways. The techniques of repeating the key words to heighten clients experience and feelings are often used in steps 5 and 6, such as in Frame 12-b.

Empathic conjecture/interpretation is a unique intervention in EFT and it only happens in the second stage. Johnson uses empathic conjecture to reveal Matt and Rhea's deeper emotions because sometimes clients may not have the language to describe their primary emotions. As in Wing 1, reframing is used too. When clients showed Johnson their primary emotions, Johnson reframed them in terms of attachment theory. For example, Frame 35 addresses Matt's emotional needs that he wants to be with Rhea. Johnson often uses reframing to describe their emotions in the context of attachment needs. Reframing can also be used to "catch the bullets." These bullets refer to hurtful words and interactions used in the session. For example, in talk 002, Rhea says something critical and Johnson reframed it in talk 005 to ease tension and recreate a safe environment for Matt go deeply with his emotions.

According to Zuccarini, Johnson, Dalgleish, and Makinen (2013), in the second stage of the EFT process, couples feel comfortable about sharing their primary emotions related to attachment needs, and each partner can now show care and respond to those needs. It changes rigid and negative patterns into a positive cycle by asking for attachment needs. They also stated that significant change happens when the blamer softens. Additionally, Furrow, Edwards, Choi and Bradley (2012) asserted that, "The blamer softening event has been associated with successful treatment outcomes in emotionally focused couple therapy" (p. 39). In Wing 2, Johnson successfully uncovered Matt's primary emotions and his attachment needs. Rhea softened in response and her subsequent support was a positive change in the couple's relationship.

Wing 3: Creating an enactment

Wing 1 and Wing 2 prepare the couple for wing 3. In Wing 1, Johnson addressed the

couple's negative cycle, one in which Rhea pursues and Matt withdraws. In Wing 2, Johnson accessed their secondary and primary emotions in the context of attachment. Wing 3 demonstrates step 7 in the second stage of the EFT process: validating new interactional responses, facilitating the expression of needs and wants, and creating bonding events. In this wing—which only has one gallery—Johnson tries to create an enactment and help the couple create new, positive interactions.

Gallery 1 describes Matt and Rhea having a new interaction. In Opening 1 Frame 1, Johnson tracks and reflects on Matt's emotional and response cycle and asks Matt to tell Rhea about his cycle. By doing that, Johnson creates an enactment. This leads Matt to become more engaged in the process. Rhea softens and listens to Matt's talk. Creating a new interaction is a form of systemic intervention. Conveying Matt's feelings to Rhea is a form of experiential intervention.

In conclusion, enactments have been viewed as an effective intervention for better interactions between couples and families (Davis & Butler, 2004; Woolley, Wampler & Davis, 2012; Tilley & Palmer, 2013). The importance of creating an enactment is to unfold primary emotions first, such as fear. Through enactment, couples can express their emotions directly to each other. This direct expression is more powerful than indirect expression and is also a new, positive form of interaction for the couple.

Discussion

Connection between theory and practice in EFT

EFT theories provide a map for conducting therapy sessions. This study demonstrated that every step of EFT plays different purposes in the process towards change. Different stages and steps have their own unique markers during the therapy process. Therapists can use these markers to decide which interventions to use in order to achieve EFT tasks. For example, the pursue/criticize and withdraw/avoid pattern are markers of a couple's negative cycle. Therapists can use these markers to decide which interventions to use in order to achieve EFT tasks and thus connect theory with practice. Sue Johnson used many interventions in this DVD: systemic interventions such as validation, experiential interventions such as enactment, and attachment interventions such as empathic conjecture. This process research helps to pinpoint important interventions and techniques that lead to change.

Johnson often showed validation and empathy which enabled her to connect with clients and build them a safe space for talking about their problems and emotions. Based on Johnson and Talitman's (1997) study, this type of therapeutic alliance is most important for predicting successful therapy. In addition, Paivio (2013) stated that the relationship between clients and therapists is one of main mechanisms of change. Paivio (2013) asserted:

The two main functions of the relationship are

- 1) to provide safety so clients can explore painful material and engage in therapeutic interventions and procedures, and
- 2) for clients with severe attachment insecurity, a corrective interpersonal experience with the therapist (p. 241).

Therefore, interventions such as validation and using soft tones for building good therapeutic relationships are crucial.

In the second stage, Johnson fully addressed the couple's primary emotions.

Emotional processing has been proved to be another important mechanism for promoting change. According to Paivio (2013), emotions have been used as the target and primary mechanism of client change. Primary attachment-related emotions shape emotional responses to each other. Zuccarini, Johnson, Dalgleish and Makinen (2013) compared resolved with unresolved EFT couples and discovered that the shifts from secondary emotions to primary attachment-related emotions play an important part in resolving conflicts and promoting forgiveness. It is essential for the therapist to clearly identify and access partners' primary emotions.

Also, Johnson used experiential interventions such as enactments to create an emotional learning experience. Moser and Johnson (2008) asserted that "these experiential techniques highlight how EFT uses emotions as both the target and agent of change. Change does not occur through insight, but rather through shifts in partners' attachment-related affect, such as panic at the threat of rejection, their emotional exploration, and new disclosures in key interactions" (p. 271). Additionally, Paivio (2013) claimed that one of the intervention principles is to help clients experience feelings and meanings to create change. Moser and Johnson stated that "experiential techniques help individuals to articulate their new emotional experiences and systems techniques guide individuals to express these emotions to their partner" (p. 272). Therefore, therapists intentionally create emotional experiences and process experiences that can lead to change.

Johnson showed collaboration with clients, such as asking for their help and using the clients' own language. Even though EFT is a modern therapy model which views therapists as the authority in therapy, therapists are also collaborative with clients in the EFT model. In this view, clients are experts of therapy content while therapists are experts of therapy process. Collaboration gives clients more power to take individual responsibility.

RFA application in EFT

The theory of RFA, especially the idea of recursive relationships in language, helps to understand that in the EFT practice there is a recursive process too. Because of the recursive relationship between Rhea, Matt and Johnson's language and steps, Johnson can move back and forth between the three wings. The very fact that language is recursive—and therefore, the therapeutic conversation is recursive, as well—enables Johnson to guide therapy sessions through the three stages and nine steps of the EFT process. In her language, Johnson refers to conversation content found in earlier stages and steps, which enables therapy to move forward and lead to change.

The connections between frames, galleries, and wings show the recursive patterns within the EFT model. For example, accessing underlying primary emotions is connected with secondary emotions; secondary emotions are, in turn, connected to the couple's reactions. Therefore, Johnson always connects their reactions and secondary emotions to address their primary emotions and needs. All these concepts have recursive relationships. When translated to the RFA structure, it can be seen that individual frames for these concepts construct a larger context through recursive relationships.

This research also demonstrates that RFA is well-suited to analyzing an EFT session, specifically within stages and between stages. RFA in this study served as an organization tool for analysis, giving the researcher a clear structure to analyze frames and galleries based on EFT theories. As Cotton (2011) asserted, "RFA involves perspective at both the *micro* (specific discourse frames) and *macro* (larger themes) level that includes a framework for viewing, exploring, understanding, and re-viewing communication moves" (p. 23). Cotton (2010) viewed wings as macro-level; frames, on the other hand, are viewed as micro-level. Analyzing the frames and larger themes such as negative steps and cycles offered the

researcher understanding on specific interventions and techniques and their functions. It also offered the researcher a big picture of how to understand the flow of the EFT model, which is movement toward change.

Limitations

This process research has several limitations. First and foremost, the researcher is an international student and English is her second language. Her interpretation and understanding can be limited by her language background.

Another limitation is the three segments only represented the first and second stages and were limited from demonstrating the model fully. The segment of EFT stage 3 is lacked due to the single session on the DVD. The third stage is about consolidation and integration that are used for later when couple figure out their dance and have new interactions built. It has two steps: facilitating new solutions, and consolidating new positions and new cycle of attachment behavior. However, the interventions and skills from stages 1 and 2 can be used at this stage, also.

The third limitation is that the video was record for consolation and publicly learning. Therefore, the pace of the session was too fast to cover fast to comprehensively cover all the stages of the EFT model. As Johnson (2011) said in the end of the DVD, she talked more than she would in a normal session for learning purposes.

Finally, this research focused mainly on verbal language in the session, even though the researcher did mention the importance of non-verbal language such as voice tone. As stated before, this is due to the preferences of the RFA model. However, Johnson (2004) stated, “The congruence of the therapist—the match of the therapist’s nonverbal messages and verbal messages—is of supreme importance in EFT” (p. 108). This is worth observing in the same DVD session because Johnson does demonstrate powerful non-verbal language as well as effective verbal language. For further research, analyzing nonverbal language within the EFT process would be most valuable.

Conclusion

This research demonstrated the application of RFA as a research methodology in analyzing an EFT session. RFA is well-suited to analyzing an EFT session, specifically within stages and between stages. By analyzing a therapy session on DVD, the researcher has drawn a correlation between these two models. This article explains how EFT’s three stages and nine steps can be alternately viewed as RFA’s wings, galleries, and frames. EFT stages can be translated as separate wings; EFT steps are galleries within wings; specific interventions and techniques are frames. RFA’s structure consists of both the macro- and micro-levels, hence assisting connections between theory (macro) and practice (micro). This process research hopes to help therapists build a link between theory and practice.

The researcher also learned that RFA as a method can serve well for note-taking during EFT sessions. Likewise, Chenail, Somers, and Benjamin’s research (2009) affirm that RFA has proven to be a useful tool for note-taking and interpretation of sessions. The researcher suggests that therapists can profitably use RFA for these purposes because its clear structure emphasizes the micro-level of specific talk, while tracking movement between stages and steps in the EFT model.

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Appendix A:
Transcripts of Emotionally Focused Therapy in Action presented in RFA Format

Wing 1: Tracking the
negative steps and cycle

<p>Gallery 1: Rhea's first dance step</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Opening 1: 001</p> <p>001: Johnson: And what do you do when you feel either - I'm using words, you help me if they are off - either somehow starved and like you don't, like you are saying to Matt, "Are you there for me? Are you there for me?" And no real clear answer comes back, and in fact sometimes he turns and maybe says something critical? What do you do then, Rhea?</p> <p>002: Johnson: When that happens to you, what do you do?</p> <p>003: Rhea: Sometimes I then get defensive, or I blow up.</p> <p>004: Johnson: So you blow up?</p> <p>005: Rhea: I just get mad, or I launch into the whole other stuff that I have put down and pushed down and kept out of the conversation and don't talk about.</p> <p>006: Johnson: So you get angry.</p> <p>007: Rhea: I get angry, and then it just kind of, blergh, and it comes up. Because I can only keep so much in and keep losing so much that I finally am like -</p>	<p>Frame 1 Intervention: Tracking</p> <p>Frame 2 Intervention: Tracking</p> <p>Frame 4 Intervention: Reflecting Rhea's response</p> <p>Frame 6 Intervention: reflecting Rhea's secondary emotions</p>
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	<p>this. What I'm going to do is I just want to go off into my cave."</p> <p>We talked about compartmentalizing is a real skill you learned in the military. Right? 020: Matt: Yeah, right. 021: Johnson: That saved your life a thousand times in the military, that ability to compartmentalize, right? 022: Matt: Yes. 023: Johnson: So it's natural that that is a place you go. You say, "I'm going to shut down and move away and go in my cave." The tricky part about that one is, of course, when you do that, she is going to feel shut out. Or, you say, "The other way of dealing with it when I hear that I am disappointing is, the other way of dealing with it is to fight - is to say, "No, you're wrong." 024: Matt: Yeah, flip it. 025: Johnson: "You're wrong. You shouldn't - I'm going to flip it. You're wrong." 026: Rhea: "It's not me, it's you." 027: Johnson: "It's not me, it's you." So, we have a fight about who it is, right? 028: Matt: "Yes, right." 029: Johnson: Who's the bad guy here? 030: Matt: Right. Exactly.</p>	<p>Frame 23: Intervention: Validating present response.</p> <p>Frame 25 Intervention: Reflecting interactions</p> <p>Frame 27 Intervention: Reflecting interactions</p>
	<p>031: Johnson: But in fact there's really no bad guys. You are both caught in this dreadful dance and you are both hurting. 032: Matt: Mm-hmm.</p>	<p>Frame 31 Intervention: Reframing their behavior in the context of the cycle</p>
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Gallery 3: Rhea's second stop</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Open 3: 033</p> <p>033: Johnson: So you flip it. And I just want to say with the dance for a minute and then I want to come back and talk about your feelings, because you are saying, "I don't understand them." So, if you flip it, and so, if he withdraws or flips into anger, which is the only way he knows how to deal with that message from you that he is disappointing you, what do you do? What's the next step in the dance? What do you do there? 034: Rhea: Well, the past couple of times it got a little ugly. It got a little physical, and that kind of scared me. A couple of night ago when we got into it I just tried to stop. I said, "I don't want to fight anymore. I don't want to do this, I'm not going to get into this, I'm going to go to bed." And he pursued me.</p> <p>And I mean pursued, came looking to keep getting into it, to keep getting into it, to keep getting into this fight. So it depends on what the situation is. Sometimes I feel like my points are very valid. So I'm going to –</p> <p>035: Johnson: So hang on with me, hang on with me. Sometimes - you help me - I'm hearing, sometimes you will stand and fight because you really want to be heard. 036: Rhea: Yes, because I don't believe it. I don't believe that you can actually stand there and tell me that this is a problem and that I did this, and this, and this, and this and all the while all this over here is not going on. There is nothing here that is filling up any good part of me. And you are going to actually criticize this part of me? 037: Johnson: Right, so you are saying, "I am standing here all by myself, needing your reassurance that you love me, and now you turn and criticize me. I can't bear it, and I want you to hear that I can't bear it." So, you will stand and fight, but now you are saying, "Actually Sue, now sometimes I am getting really scared that it might even get into a physical fight, so I am starting to withdraw." 038: Rhea: Because it is not going to get anywhere. That is what I am realizing. It doesn't get anywhere. 039: Rhea: Matt has his opinions. I have my opinions. I know what I feel is right. I'm sure he has what he thinks is right. Or maybe he doesn't. But I just can't win. I cannot get that point across. There is no, "you know what, Rhea, I'm sorry you feel that way." Or, "I don't know what to tell</p>	<p>Frame 33 Intervention: Tracking the negative steps</p> <p>Frame 35 Technique: Ask for help</p> <p>Frame 37 Reflecting secondary emotions</p>

	<p>you, but I love you.” There’s no defusing statement. It’s always about me.</p> <p>040: Johnson: Right, and so you end up feeling so hurt, and you feel hopeless, and there’s no way out. So you’ve started to shut down and withdraw, too, right?</p> <p>041: Rhea: Yep. And I’m not that way. I’m not - I don’t do that. That’s not my way. I like to face things. I like to get it out. I’m fixer also.</p>	<p>Frame 40 Intervention: Reflecting underlying emotions and response</p>
<p>Gallery 4: Matt’s second dance step</p>	<p>Opening 4: 042</p> <p>042: Johnson: Can you hear where Rhea goes with this, that she goes into that sense of hopelessness that she can’t reach you? And so she moves away. What’s like for you when she starts to move away?</p> <p>043: Matt: But I don’t think she moves away. She doesn’t move away. It just crescendos, it just escalates.</p> <p>044: Rhea: Inside me.</p> <p>045: Matt: It just escalates. I’m not seeing what’s inside of her.</p>	<p>Frame 42 Intervention: Evocative responding</p>
<p>Gallery 5: Rhea and Matt’s final step</p>	<p>Opening 5: 046</p> <p>046: Johnson: Okay, I guess what I am saying is how does it end up, guys? Do you just decide - do you just get to exhausted to fight? How does it end up, this dance? Do you just, somehow somebody gets tired and falls asleep, or somebody walks away, or how do you bring it to a close?</p> <p>047: Rhea: The other day he ripped the sheets off the bed and took them into the other, extra room and wouldn’t let me get other sheets. And that’s how it ended.</p> <p>048: Matt: We just retreat to -</p> <p>049: Johnson: You retreat. You both retreat. You have the clash of the titans, everyone feels hopeless. I’m presuming you feel hopeless in that moment, too, do you?</p> <p>050: Matt: Yeah, totally.</p> <p>051: Johnson: Okay, so both of you feel hopeless. You are caught up in this sort of dreadful firefight, trying to prove, “Well, it’s your fault. I’m not the wrong.” And then there is a retreat, and then what? There is a sort of pause, and then it all starts up again? Are we getting it?</p> <p>052: Rhea: And then get up, go to work. We get up in the morning and Matt had to go to work, and I went to work, and so our daughter needs to get ready. And we just did our thing.</p> <p>053: Matt: And then there’s just the mechanical actions of life after that.</p> <p>054: Johnson: And that’s incredibly demoralizing, right? That argument that you are getting - but you know guys, when I look at the things you have been through, I mean, you were deployed, and you were in constant danger, as I understand it. Right?</p>	<p>Frame 46 Intervention: Tracking the cycle</p> <p>Frame 49 Intervention: Reflecting interactions</p> <p>Frame 51 Intervention: Reflecting interactions</p>

Wing 2: Accessing primary emotions

<p>Gallery 1: Matt cannot response to Rhea's needs</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Opening 1: 001</p> <p>001: Matt: I hear what you're saying. I hear that. My immediate reaction is "Nobody is doing that for me and I'm putting forth one more effort. My finger is in the dam and the water is lapping over. And I've got to do one more thing?"</p> <p>002: Rhea: Because nothing gets done for you at home and I don't try to make us -- I don't try to do my part in our life? I don't understand what that means?</p> <p>003: Johnson: Guys, I'm going to--- Guys.</p> <p>004: Matt: That is a conflict. That is a conflict, what goes on at home.</p> <p>005: Johnson: Guys, I'm going to slow it down, okay? I want you to notice what we are doing here. You have only been with me a few minutes. You don't know me. We have already outlined the dance you get caught in. It's a real regular dance. All kinds of couples get caught in it, especially when one person is dealing with the echoes of war. All right?</p> <p>I want you to notice you have talked about the dance, and it is not all your relationship. At times it looks like it is all your relationship. We are already doing this. You both are amazingly honest. You are both amazingly willing to risk. You are being incredibly open with me. So now we have talked about the dance. And you were very honest. And you said, "I do get angry. I do tell you I'm disappointed. But actually what this is about is I really need reassurance that you love and you need me." Right?</p> <p>And you were very honest there, and you are talking now about what happens to you when you hear her telling you that you are really important to her, that somehow you to the place where you don't hear it was an invitation or a gift,</p>	<p>Frame 5-a Technique: Slow down the process</p> <p>Frame 5-b Intervention: reflection on the process</p> <p>Frame 5-c Intervention: Reframe the problem as the dance</p> <p>Frame 5-d Intervention: Validating their response</p> <p>Frame 5-e Intervention: Validating their secondary emotions</p>
	<p>where this lady is telling you, " you are the most important person in my life. You are the most important person in my life, Matt. I just need your touch, you smile and your caring." You don't hear it that --- you hear it as a demand, right? You hear it --- somehow there is something that gets in the way. What do you hear? Because I am interested in the emotional signals she sends and the music you hear that makes it so hard for you to help her step out of this negative pattern and help you step out of the negative pattern and learn how to create trust and safety again.</p> <p>Because that is what we are doing here. We are going to help you guys create trust and safety again, all right?</p> <p>006: Johnson: Are you all right?</p> <p>007: Rhea: Mm-hmm.</p> <p>008: Johnson: Rhea, are you with me?</p> <p>009: Rhea: I'm with you. I just have something else to say after he's done. I would like to.</p> <p>010: Johnson: Okay, here's what I want you to do when I'm asking this question. I understand you have something else to say.</p> <p>011: Rhea: You want me to listen.</p>	

<p>Gallery 2: Matt stuck between withdraw from or fighting with Rhea</p>	<p>Opening 2: 012</p> <p>012: Johnson: Yes, I want you to just put it on the shelf for a minute. I will come back to you, I promise, all right? Right now I just want you to be with him, okay? So, what I am hearing is that this lady says to you, “Even when we are caught in this dreadful pattern that scares the hell out of both of us, there is this moment when all I really need, Matt is the reassurance that you love me.”</p> <p>And you are saying to your lady, you are saying, “Somehow in these arguments I hear that I am disappointing you. Somehow in these arguments I just get to a place where I want to retreat. I want to go inn my cave. Or I want to fight and take control and stop the fight. I want to fix it be taking control. And when you turn and tell me after all this tension in the relationship, when I am hearing that I am not doing what you want me to do, you are trying to tell me you need me to say I love you, I’m stuck. I am stuck, I can’t do it. I’ stuck here.” Right? “Somehow that response that would pull me back to you and reassure us both that there is a connection between us, I can’t do it. I’m stuck. I’m stuck between running in my cave, fighting you. I’m stuck.” Is that what you are telling me? Help me, Matt. Is that what you are telling me?</p> <p>013: Matt: Yeah. Because I think what happens for me is I hear everything she says. And I take that and I put it into a compartment because I really, I almost need a copilot to turn to and go, “Hey, what would you do about this?” You know? But I don’t have that copilot, so I have to compartmentalize it. And I have to really process my own conflict of nobody is doing that for me. Nobody is helping me. So how can I give that up? How can I --- I don’t know how to respond. I can’t do that.</p> <p>014: Matt: I hear you, but I can’t do that.</p> <p>015: Johnson: I need to understand this, so I want you to help me understand, okay?</p> <p>016: Matt: Mm-hmm.</p> <p>017: Johnson: I love the image that you need a copilot</p> <p>018: Rhea: We’re good at the analogies.</p> <p>019: Johnson: Yeah, In a way I really understand you, because we all need a copilot, don’t we?</p>	<p>Frame 12-a Technique: Using images</p> <p>Frame 12-b Technique: Repeating</p> <p>Frame 12-c Intervention: Empathic conjecture/interpretation</p> <p>Frame 17: Technique : Using image</p>
	<p>Yeah? You are saying, “you help me.” This is hard to talk about, yeah, for you? This is hard to talk about?</p> <p>020: Matt: I always had a copilot. During the war---</p> <p>021: Johnson: Someone you could lean on and turn to who was your -- - you could check, right?</p>	<p>Frame 19 Intervention: Evocative responding</p> <p>Frame 20 Intervention: Validating his response</p>
<p>Gallery 3: Matt experiences danger</p>	<p>Opening 3: 022</p> <p>022: Matt: When things got really hard. Really dangerous.</p> <p>023: Johnson: Right. But suddenly your experience is you are in danger again. You are in danger again. Your lady is upset with you. You don’t know how to fix it.</p> <p>024: Rhea: We also had ---</p> <p>025: Johnson: Hang on.</p> <p>026: Rhea: I’m sorry.</p> <p>027: Johnson: You don’t know how to fix it. You are hearing she is disappointed, right? And suddenly you are in danger again and you don’t have any copilot and you don’t know what to do right, yeah?</p> <p>028: Matt: Yeah.</p> <p>029: Johnson: And that is overwhelming for you, Matt? That’s overwhelming, yeah?</p> <p>030: Matt: Yeah it’s overwhelming.</p> <p>031: Johnson: I hear you.</p> <p>032: Matt: Because I want to know what to do. I need to --- I want to fix this. I want it to be better. I want ---</p> <p>033: Johnson: You want to be with this lady?</p> <p>034: Matt: Yeah. Yeah, I do</p> <p>035: Johnson: Right, and that is the irony, isn’t it? That you do want to be with this lady and the reason that you are getting so overwhelmed maybe is actually, ironically, she does matter to you. That’s why you are freaking out, right? When you hear that you are not giving her what</p>	<p>Frame 23: Intervention: Reflection on his underlying emotions</p> <p>Frame 29 Intervention: empathy conjecture</p> <p>Frame 35: Intervention: Reframing Matt’s behavior in the context of attachment needs</p>

	<p>she wants and she is disappointed, right? 036: Matt: Yeah.</p>	
<p>Gallery 4: Rhea is more supportive</p>	<p>Opening 4: 037</p> <p>037: Johnson: Because she matters so much that you are freaking out. But let's go back here. You are overwhelmed. You are overwhelmed in that moment. You are saying, "I want to fix it, I don't want to lose this lady, I am overwhelmed here, I don't know what to do. And I don't have any copilot. I don't have anyone to turn to tell me what to do now," yeah?</p> <p>038: Matt: Which is a long time. Like my parents, I never could turn to them and say, "I need some advice." They never would do that. And so it has been this long thing, you know.</p> <p>039: Rhea: We had our dogs, too. I think Matt needs --- we had two dogs that we had for 14 years. And Matt would get a lot his own, I think, personal therapy from that.</p> <p>040: Matt: I would walk them every day.</p> <p>041: Rhea: I don't think he has quite the outlet that he used to have.</p> <p>042: Johnson: You get lots of comfort from you dogs?</p> <p>043: Matt: I did.</p> <p>044: Rhea: They both---</p> <p>045: Johnson: Yeah, well, I hear you because that is a place that lots of us go, right? Dogs are always pleased to see us. Dogs love us no matter what.</p> <p>046: Johnson: Dogs comfort us, yeah.</p> <p>047: Rhea: Everything lost its focus on being able to fix itself, I think, around the time that we lost the dogs. And then we were moving, and there was just, you know, moving stresses. And we bought a house and we fixed it up. There wasn't a lot of outlets for Matt other than going ---</p>	<p>Frame 37 Technique: Repeating Matt's primary emotions</p> <p>Frame 42 Intervention: Validating Matt's need.</p>
<p>Gallery 5: Matt is not just angry</p>	<p>Opening 5: 048</p> <p>048: Johnson: And now when you get overwhelmed, it's tricky, right, because maybe you could have turned to your dogs or you could even have gone to this lady and said, "I would like a hug." But now you can't do that because she is the one who is saying, she is the one who is creating the tension and you don't know how to fix it. Right?</p> <p>049: Matt: Yeah.</p> <p>050: Johnson: She's the one who is saying, "There's something wrong, Matt," and you are hearing that you are disappointing and that is so overwhelming for you that you end up, your brain just says, "I don't know how to fix this. I'm feeling like she is asking me for something. I'm overwhelmed. I don't even know how to give. I don't even know how to turn back to her. I just want to run off in my cave. Or I want to take control and tell her to stop."</p> <p>051: Matt: Yeah.</p> <p>052: Johnson: Then of course the tricky part is if she just hears you---</p> <p>053: Matt: It's anger then.</p> <p>054: Johnson: --- she just sees you as indifferent and angry.</p> <p>055: Rhea: Totally.</p> <p>056: Matt: Mm-hmm.</p> <p>057: Johnson: but in fact --- you help me, Matt --- actually you are not indifferent. And you are not just angry. You are desperately trying to grab control. In fact, what you are if we just go down in the elevator a little bit to the emotions underneath, is you are overwhelmed and really scared. Is that all right? Is that all right, what I just said?</p>	<p>Frame 48 Intervention: Empathy conjecture</p> <p>Frame 50 Intervention: Empathy conjecture</p> <p>Frame 57 Intervention: Reframing Matt's behavior in the context of attachment needs</p>

Wing 3: Creating an enactment

<p>Gallery 1: Matt and Rhea have new interaction</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Opening 1: 001</p> <p>001: Johnson: But what I'm hearing is, right here, right now, when we are talking about this and I am helping you put it together, you can turn to your lady and say, "you know what, Rhea, I do love you. And I don't want to lose my copilot. I'm just caught in this dreadful place. By the time that we get to this place where you say, "how come you just can't reach for me?" I'm caught in Immediate Action Item. I'm overwhelmed. And I don't know what to do."</p> <p>002: Matt: But I don't think Rhea believes in this place. I think she thinks it is an excuse.</p> <p>003: Johnson: Okay, hang on. Let's just stay here for a minute because we covered a lot of ground. I want to be here for this. Have I got it right?</p> <p>004: Matt: I hear that you need me, but I'm caught in this cycle that I can't break out of. I don't know what to do. I used to know what to do for us and with us, but it is different now. It's just ---</p> <p>005: Johnson: I'm overwhelmed.</p> <p>006: Matt: I'm overwhelmed. It's not just us. It's everything in my life. And I'm overwhelmed. And I don't know what to do.</p> <p>007: Johnson: "And I'm so scared in that moment that I'm going to lose you." That's the bit that I think maybe is important.</p> <p>008: Matt: I'm scared I am going to lose you. It's not just because of another divorce. It's because of our relationship. I love you. We have been through a tremendous amount of things together, but can't I not know?</p> <p>009: Rhea: Yes, I hear you. I just don't know why then you pick on me. Why do you pick on me?</p> <p>010: Matt: It's a defensive mechanism. My anger is the way, is a different way. It's either this or that.</p> <p>011: Rhea: Okay.</p>	<p>Frame 1-a Intervention: Restructuring interactions</p> <p>Frame 1-b Intervention: Creating an enactment</p>
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Author Note

Yanqun Peng finished her undergraduate degree in Label and Social Security back in China. She has been in the United States almost five years for studying Master degrees of Marriage and Family Therapy and Christian Ministry. She is also an MFT intern at Marriage and Family Institute and Hendrick Home for Children at Abilene, TX. She also loves doing research. Currently, she is involved three research projects with her team: Journaling and rhetorical analysis: Developing as therapists within a clinical training setting, The rhetorical aspects of joining in the Masters Series Videos, and A rhetorical analysis of a Milton Erickson's hypnosis session. She hopes to get into Ph.D. in Marriage and Family Therapy and become a professor and researcher in this area. She may be contacted at pxy09a@acu.edu.

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