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***Editors' Note:*** *The following article is the first in a two-part series. A future article will explore more about working with individuals' relationships outside of themselves.*

In this article, I would like to show you how Attachment Theory can guide our experiential work with individual clients. The EFT therapeutic stance and all interventions can still be used for creating alliance, accessing and reprocessing emotions and restructuring interactions. Additionally, two key elements are needed to transpose the validated Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy model into an Individual EFT model. These are: (a) identifying disparate parts within an individual and (b) directing enactments between these parts.

From the beginning of the therapeutic process, we attune deeply to attachment themes in the individual’s story of distress: Abandonment, loss, rejection, lack of safety and support and so on. We identify the disparate parts or “internal partners”

functioning in opposition to one another in these themes. We track the patterns of interaction that block opposing parts from being accessible and responsive to one another. Following primary emotions of each part caught in a negative cycle, we validate how this inner battle is likely to be the best attempt at survival. By

choreographing enactments between opposing parts, we facilitate integration or bonding moments between internal parts, restructuring models of self and other. This creates a safer haven and more secure base in the client’s internal and interpersonal

world.

**Identify opposing parts caught in a negative attachment cycle:**

To track a negative cycle of interaction between two opposing internal parts, we need to first identify the disparate parts. Opposing parts of self may be experienced in one of several ways: an internal pursuer and an internal withdrawer, two different attachment strategies working in opposition, or a sense of self in opposition to a representation of an attachment figure. Len’s critical domineering part that pushes him to take on increasingly more challenging career opportunities is caught in a struggle with the anxious “little Mickey Mouse part” that panics and seeks to escape from responsibility and visibility. The more one part pushes, the more the other part

freezes. The cycle escalates into an attack-attack dance where both parts of self are unbearably harsh and effacing, to the point of depression and despair.

Simone, unemployed, depressed and anxious feels hostile towards her previous employer and fed up with family and colleagues. Part of her longs for contact with others who would validate and understand her and the other part says, “I am

better off alone.” She experiences an internal battle between an anxious bodily felt tension in her chest, described as “a little cartoon guy, swinging his arms blindly trying to make contact” and the bodily sense of a rejecting cold hand holding her back. An anxious attachment strategy battles against an avoidant strategy. By separating the two internal parts, she is able to own each part’s position: “I do

panic and flail frantically.” “I do freeze and judge you for doing this. I either ignore you or try to stifle you.” Isolating and unpacking the opposing parts within individuals is not unlike getting a clear sense of each side of the “infinity loop” in couple therapy.

Each part has its own idiosyncratic attachment strategies, such as freezing the other out or criticizing relentlessly. Each part also has its own attributions and secondary reactive emotions that