

ACTION AT A DISTANCE: ENTANGLEMENT IN RELATIONSHIPS

We human beings (and possibly everything else in the universe) connect from a given locality—that is, from and through our body locations—

and also nonlocally through entanglement. In physics, “entanglement” refers to the way particles or molecules that arise from the same source or are part of the same quantum system connect with one another without any visible signal exchange. How? No one has the final answer to this question. Scientists simply speak of “action at a distance,” to use a physics phrase. (I explain more about quantum entanglement in chapter 15.)

As a psychologist, I use the idea of entanglement to view people as parts of psychological systems—relationships or feeling connections—and in those systems as behaving like quantum objects. If we feel connected to others, some of our experiences and signals connect regardless of how far apart we are from one another. In the quantum world, in principle, parts of quantum systems remain connected even if they are at the opposite ends of the universe.²

There is certainly much anecdotal evidence about this nonlocal connection between people. With the help of telephones and email, many people today have the experience of thinking of someone and then suddenly hearing from them. However, here I am mainly concerned with the practical aspects of entanglement. For example, some signals are reactive and caused, whereas other signals seem to be “entangled” as if they were expressions coming from the field between the two people. One possible effect is ambiguity about who did what first or second. Each partner may feel, “I did this because you did that,” but when they try, they find it impossible to tell who did what first!

Entanglement also occurs with objects. We often say, “Such-and-such caught my attention,” as if the object *made* us observe it. In previous work I have spoken of this experience as “quantum flirts.” The words move out of metaphor and into possibility when we consider the presence of a “shared field” encompassing you and the things that spontaneously catch your attention, entangling the observer and observed. Though we think we observed something, perhaps it did indeed “catch” our attention; perhaps the field itself is showing itself in terms of the observer and the observed.

THE GROUND OF BEING AND SATORI IN RELATIONSHIPS

To see what I mean, try the following innerwork exercise: When you are ready, close your eyes and relax. Then let your eyes open again on their own, and when they do, with half-open eyes, gaze around the space where you are right now. Let some one thing catch your attention. If you don't know which thing, let your unconscious mind choose. Look at that object, see it, and imagine becoming it. Can you sense that what you are looking at is somehow part of who you are? What do you share with whatever caught your attention? In what sense is this shared thing *in* you but also all *around* you, or at least *between* you and the thing that caught your attention? In what way is this shared quality an aspect of your own processmind as you may know it from previous exercises?

From the everyday viewpoint, relationships, whether between people and things or just between people, are created by people. But from the essence-level viewpoint, relationships arise in response to a shared "something" without particular locality, a nonlocal field that arises through the diversity of two or more people or a person and an object. This way to look at relationships can yield practical insights. For example, experiment with seeing a friend, a couple, a family, or a large group with which you are engaged as a field trying to show itself or to become aware of itself. You may find that you are less likely to turn against some of your friends or members of a team. If you are a facilitator this is a crucial thought. Instead of thinking, "This is a good or bad part of a group," consider the field between the participants as trying to reach awareness.

THE GROUND OF BEING IN RELATIONSHIPS

To work on relationships between people, start with what the people share and remember it while talking about problems. Allow time for them to speak about their individual experiences of the relationship's signature field. Taking your own relationships as an example, try to talk about a favorite space associated with each relationship. You might ask yourself and your partner or friends, "What relationship spot of ours do

you like the most?” Everybody has a favorite relationship locale. Get to know that area and its field. Perhaps this is what mystics mean when they speak of connecting to the “ground of being.”

For example, the German-American Christian theologian Paul Tillich said that Christ is “she or he who is no longer alienated from the ground of being.” His vision of Christ is as a part of you that is no longer alienated from this highest principle. In this sense the processmind is a “ground” in you or in a relationship. Perhaps Rumi, the thirteenth-century Persian poet, Islamic jurist, and theologian, describes the processmind of a relationship the best:³

Out beyond ideas of wrongdoing and right doing, there is a field.

I will meet you there.

When the soul lies down in that grass,
the world is too full to talk about language, ideas,
even the phrase *each other* doesn't make any sense.

Here the processmind is literally described as a “field” where the “soul lies down.” As Rumi says, here even the term “each other” doesn't make any sense.

EXERCISE 7A: THE GROUND OF BEING AROUND US

Choose a relationship on which to focus. This can be a present, past, or a potential future relationship. Identify one of its challenges, problems, or potential problems and make a note of it in #7a on the collage page. What do you, or might you, look like when you are caught in a problem situation with that person? Make a face, a gesture, and a statement to express that look. Make a note about the problem and sketch the face at the top or in a corner of 7a. 😊

Now let's find the relationship's ground of being, or processmind. What room or even spot in a room is, or could be, the most characteristic spot of that relationship? Let one room or spot pop up. Depending on how formal, casual, or intimate the relationship is, it might be a place in an office, in your home, at a favorite restaurant, and so on. Now feel that space and get in touch with its nature. What is it like? What are the walls and furnishings made of? What does it smell and feel like? Can you see outside? If so, what do you see? Feel the atmosphere of that room, and when you are ready, let it move you a little bit.

As the atmosphere moves you, try to sense, imagine, or associate an earth spot, real or imaginary, that best corresponds to the atmosphere of that room. It might be the land area where that room is, or it may be elsewhere on earth. Once you know this area, go there in your imagination and feel its presence and power. Let that presence and power move you. That is, shape-shift and become this earth spot, its field and processmind. How is this field characteristic of that relationship? Make a note about this and a quick energy sketch of the field in 7a to remember it later on.

While being that field, let it move or even dance you, whatever that means to you. Use this processmind experience to meditate on that relationship, following your inner experiences. In what sense could this field be the "ground of being" of that relationship, the processmind "field" beyond right and wrong? When you are ready, as your processmind, look back at your normal self, at the face and gestures you made to typify you in the midst of that relationship problem, and give your ordinary self some relationship advice. In the future, you can return to this ground of being when you need to do relationship "housekeeping."

I used this exercise to work on my relationship with Amy. Sometimes she gets into an unhappy state because of what she calls her inner critic, a “demon” that criticizes her. After a while, I too get into a poor mood because I just don’t agree with her critic’s viewpoint, and I criticize the critic. I used to argue with her inner critic. As you can imagine, that approach rarely helped much!

So how did I change? I found the signature room of our relationship to be the living room in our house at the Oregon coast. From that room you can look out at the sea. Before the house was built, a radar station stood on the land, looking out over the coast. So the energy of looking out over the sea characterizes that room. The view and space and earth there make me feel like sketching the symbol for infinity (see figure 7.2). When I am in that room, on the hillside overlooking the coast, and look back at myself in the midst of problems, my processmind suggests this: Rather than getting caught in the moment, remember and flow with the rising and falling sea, splash in the waves, relate to the spirit of that relationship. Sense the wonders of the shared ground and let the sea do the rest.

When you work alone, just getting to the earth spot associated with the room will be helpful. When working face-to-face with your friend, allow time for each of you to first find the relationship’s processmind individually. Each of you will have your own view of that earth spot. The important thing is to remain aware of it while you are with the other person.

Remembering the processmind while you are in relationship calls for being “half in, half out,” that is, remaining connected to your pro-



Infinity

Figure 7.2.

cessmind while relating to the everyday reality of yourself and the other person. This is the essence of deep democracy. When you are half in and half out, you are more congruent and will give fewer confusing double signals.

EXERCISE 7B: VECTOR WORK IN RELATIONSHIPS

For those who are interested, here is another approach to the relationship's processmind using the relationship's vectors. This approach reveals more about the relationship's diversity. (You may want to review the vector walking material in chapter 6.) You can do this exercise individually or with your friend.

Meditate on your general sense of the earth for a moment. Now mark the starting point of your vector walk with a (+) on the ground. Feel your own being, sense the earth, and let the earth turn you until it shows you the direction in which *you* should move. Take a few steps in that direction; your body will know how many.

From this new point, imagine and feel the other person, and let the earth turn you again to show you *that person's direction*. Take a few steps in that direction and mark your ending point on the ground with a (*). (See figure 7.3.)

Now go back to the beginning point (+) and walk directly and slowly from there to the end point (*). As you walk that U line, notice any tiny sensations, fantasies, or feelings that arise. Catch the meaning of that direction. Walk that path a few times to discover and feel the meaning of this U direction. This entire process can be noncognitive in nature. Just trust your experience.

Walk that "big U" path as many times as you need to feel its meaning. Notice what it tells you about the relationship.

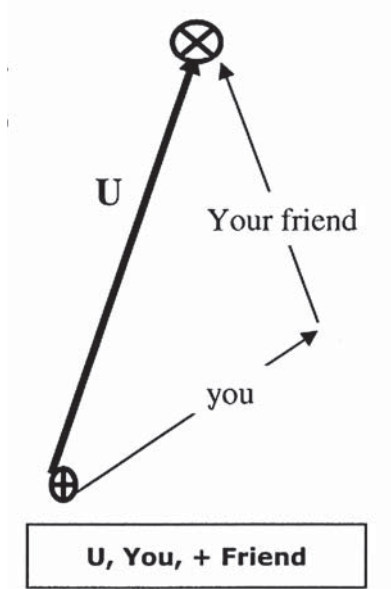


Figure 7.3.

While walking that line, imagine or feel what kind of earth-based place might be associated with it. This could even be the place you are going toward while walking the U line, or it could be another.

Go to that earth spot now in your imagination now, and feel it as a field of power and presence. Let it move you. Let it move your hand and make an energy sketch on the collage pages in square #7b. Add a couple of words describing this field. Take time to experience this field, the processmind of the relationship. Notice the difference between this relationship processmind and your everyday self. Let this signature field of the relationship's processmind move/dance you about, and then use that processmind field for a few minutes to follow your own body signals. Make a sketch and notes in section #7b in the collage pages.

When I did this exercise together with Amy, the resultant big U went straight to Kenya. The U line and Kenya were associated in my mind with shamanistic experiences Amy and I had in Kenya many years ago. The land most characteristic of these experiences, however, turned out to be not in Kenya, as I might have expected, but on that Oregon coast hillside again, the place where we now live. Why was the U line associated with the field of the Oregon coast? Perhaps because of the shamanic experiences we have had in this amazing spot. In any case, the infinity symbol appeared again in my sketch, the same as in exercise 7a.

Once you have done this exercise, alone or with your friend, meditate together, remembering your earth-based processmind experiences. They will tell you what to do and when. I suggest first sharing your processmind experiences. Then, while you are each in your own experience of the relationship's signature field, let your processmind follow and flow. Stay with your processmind, being half inside, half outside, while flowing with your own and the other's signals.

If you get distracted, go back to the processmind's signature field of that relationship and let it deal with the distractions, or just continue to notice signals, double signals, and so on. The two of you will know when you are done. Finally, your bodies will know when it's time to discuss things. As you begin to talk in a more or less normal state of consciousness, stay close to your processmind experience. When you are both ready, make a sketch together in 7b that represents what you have experienced. Add a few words to describe it.

The important point about this exercise is that it does not call for much signal awareness because your processmind perceives and facilitates signals before they reach your everyday consciousness. From the viewpoint of your processmind, confusing signals and double signals arise because of fixed identities. It's normal to have a fixed identity in consensus reality, but this identity does not contain the totality of your relationship abilities. Remember the Roshi and his severe teacher almost rolling over because they were laughing so hard. In that moment they no longer self-identified as either student or teacher. In fact, the Roshi, who

was the student, in that moment became, as it were, his teacher's teacher. The processmind is free and unpredictable!

What if you have a deep relationship feeling for somebody, but for one reason or another you cannot live it out? Perhaps exterior constraints limit the actualization of the relationship. Of course, there is no single answer to such a question. However, from the processmind's viewpoint, the relationship always exists, regardless of how it is realized in everyday reality. . In this sense, you are always in relationship to others, even those you don't like very much! In a way, you can't "do" relationship work; you can only practice relating, that is, being familiar with and then becoming the relationship's field.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Relationship is a dreamlike field experience and a consensus reality experience expressed by two or more separate individuals.
2. You don't have to follow words or signals when you are close to the processmind. It follows signals almost before they arise.