

**NY Think Tank:** **Autonomy and Attachment:**

**Creating Foundations for Bridging Israeli and American Jewry**

April 10th, 2018

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**Act II: Autonomy and Attachment**

**Exercise #1 - Identification**

You will be divided into one of two groups; Israel or the United States.

* Spend a few minutes empathizing and identifying with the community you are representing.
* First, advocate for strong and full attachment with the other community. Then switch perspectives and advocate for autonomy. In each case, what are the justifications and reasons for the desirability of attachment or autonomy (for both sides)?

**Exercise #2 – Well, what I feel is…**

In your group:

* Brainstorm positions that reflect your assigned position. Why is this type of relationship desirable and beneficial to both sides in the relationship? What has led you to this position?
* NOTE: you do not have to personally believe this position. We are asking you to imagine yourself in it, enter into a different perspective, and empathize with it.
* Use the group to help each person prepare a justification for the position you are embodying.
* Make sure to speak in the first person, as if you are “Israel” or “US Jews” – “I want us to be autonomous because …” “When we are attached I feel …” etc.,



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**Act IV: Differentiation**

**Definition**

[In the context of relationships] Differentiation is the dynamic process through which you can live in close proximity to a partner and still maintain a separate sense of self[[1]](#footnote-1).

One of the most important things in life is becoming a solid individual. And another important thing is to have meaningful relationships. Two of the most powerful human drives are our urge to control our own lives (autonomy), and our urge for relationship with others (attachment). One of the biggest tasks of adulthood is being able to balance these two urges, and one of the most common problems is having too much of one, and not enough of the other. People often feel claustrophobic or controlled in committed relationships, or feel like they can't be their true self in their relationships, or feel like their sense of self is starting to disappear and they don't know who they are any more. Others are constantly worried about "abandonment," or "safety and security," and constantly press their partner for "commitment," and "unconditional love."

The ability to balance our needs for autonomy and attachment is called differentiation. Differentiation is a scientific process that occurs in all species. For humans, it is about becoming more of a unique individual and a solid person through relationships with others.

*From:* [*www.crucible4points.com*](http://www.crucible4points.com) *by Dr David Schnarch*

**The 4 Points of Balance**

* Solid Flexible Self – the ability to hold onto one’s own sense of self at the same time as making room for others
* Quiet Mind and Calm Heart – the ability to handle one’s own emotional inner world, including self control and the ability to self soothe
* Grounded Responding – involves making modulated responses to people and situations
* Meaningful Endurance – is about tolerating pain for growth, being resilient and sticking with it

**Exercise**

* In your group, discuss, unpack, and reflect on the three first points of balance. You needn’t necessarily start with the first… and you might not get to all of them.
* Consider how this point of balance contributes to people in a relationship, and what it does a relationship in general.
* If America/Israel had the capacities to act on each of these, what would happen?



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**Act V: Epilogue**

If we asked you to prepare a detailed report summarizing your insights and conclusions from the day, and send them to the UJA Federation of New York, what would you report on?

Of this imaginary report, please write out following components:

1. **Title of the Day**

In retrospect, what title and sub-title most accurately describe our work today?

1. **Executive Summary**

Please write a one-paragraph summary of the most important learnings/ insights/ conclusions from today’s work.

1. **Recommendations**

Suggest, in bullet-point form, 2-3 recommendations for action-based next steps.

1. See the work of Dr David Schnarch [↑](#footnote-ref-1)