



First Differentiation-based Approach to Marital and Sexual Therapy

Crucible® Therapy started out as an integrated treatment for sex, intimacy, and relationship problems developed by Dr. David Schnarch (also known as Dr. David). This is the approach studied by clinicians around the world and taught in Crucible® Workshops for therapists. It is the heart of our Crucible Intensive Therapy Program.

Crucible® Therapy is unlike prior sex therapies and marital therapies. It is the first core integration of these two fields (which actually developed completely separate from each other). As a result, Crucible® Therapy differs from the basic theories, philosophies, and practices of conventional sex therapy and marital therapy.

First, **Crucible® Therapy** stands apart from sex therapies developed by Drs. Masters and Johnson to treat sexual dysfunctions, and Dr. Helen Singer-Kaplan's approach to sexual desire problems. There are no "sensate focus" exercises, no homework assignments, and no "bans" or proscriptions. There is no concept of "client resistance," and no focus on unconscious processes. There's more focus on helping you reach your sexual potential by increasing your capacity for intimacy and passion, in the process of resolving sexual problems. Rather than telling you what to do or how to do it, Crucible Therapy uses your spontaneous sexual behavior as a window into yourself, your partner, and your relationship. In contrast to Masters and Johnson's famous "Use it or lose it" philosophy, the Crucible Approach says most people are better in bed in their 40s, 50s and 60s, than they were as young adults. (*"Cellulite and sexual potential are highly correlated!"* according to Dr. David)



Second, **Crucible® Therapy** differs from conventional couple's therapy by emphasizing personal growth ("differentiation") rather than communication skills, empathic listening, or compromise and negotiation. Couples *can't stop* communicating--their problem is they can't stand the messages. Differentiation-based Crucible Therapy teaches you to tolerate the anxiety of hearing and saying difficult things, and soothe your own emotions. It focuses on helping you change your relationships by growing and changing personally. **Crucible® Therapy** differs from many other therapies wherein the intensity level is often greater and the pace of treatment is faster. Treatment focuses on helping you and your partner become less emotionally "fused," rather than trying to get you more "attached."

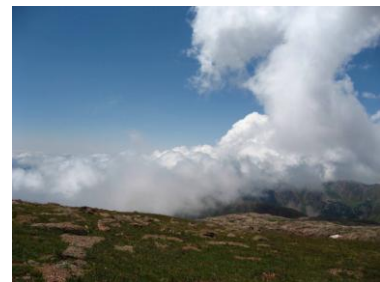
Dr. David first identified a natural pattern of repeated conflict in love relationship which transcends culture, race, religion, gender, and sexual orientation. He coined the term *emotional gridlock* to describe it. *Emotional gridlock* is not resolvable by conventional conflict-resolution methods such as enhanced communication, compromise and negotiation, or agreeing to disagree. It's not caused by lack of communication. And the hallmark of gridlock is you can't agree to disagree and you don't feel you can compromise any further. **Crucible® Therapy** is specifically designed to address emotional gridlock.

Crucible® Therapy is based on *differentiation-the ability to hold onto yourself while maintaining relationships with others*. It applies Bowen differentiation theory to sex and intimacy in ways Dr. Bowen never did. **Crucible® Therapy** single-handedly introduced differentiation-based treatment to the field of sex therapy. It is based on a non-pathological view of common difficulties, like sexual dysfunctions, sexual disinterest, emotional estrangement, and stalemated conflict. It embraces a healthy view of human resilience, personal growth, and life-long sexual development.

After years of development, Dr. David published *Constructing the Sexual Crucible: An Integration of Sexual and Marital Therapy* (W.W. Norton & Co., 1991). It was hailed by therapists as a groundbreaking book and the first major innovation in sex therapy in three decades. Other experts called it the most sophisticated integration of sex therapy, couples therapy, intimacy, spirituality, and personal development, developed to date. Dr. Dave coined a vocabulary of terms to describe the intricate relationship processes he discovered. These include:

Emotional gridlock	Two-choice dilemmas	Anxiety-regulation through accommodation
Sexual potential	Collaborative alliance	Collaborative confrontation
Normal marital sadism	Self-validated intimacy and other-validated intimacy	Intimacy need vs. intimacy tolerance

Crucible® Therapy is more than fascinating integrated concepts, Crucible Therapy involves a methodology. Talking about differentiation isn't the same as becoming more differentiated. Likewise, conceptualizing treatment in differentiation terms isn't the same as a therapist "working the process." **Crucible® Therapy** has a unique set of differentiation-based *tools for connection* that can enhance intimacy and sexuality, promote self-regulation, and improve relationship stability and individual functioning.



- Hugging 'till Relaxed
- Eyes-Open Sex and Orgasms
- Heads on Pillows
- Feeling While Touching
- Foreplay as a Language

Crucible® Therapy harnesses the normal-but-difficult growth processes and inevitable conflicts of love relationships. Emotional gridlock, sexual boredom, lack of intimacy, and desire problems are just a few examples. These natural developments regularly push couples outside their comfort zones. When misunderstood and mishandled, as they often are, they often lead to divorce. Crucible Therapy helps you develop new comfort zones by becoming more emotionally mature.

Today, we continue to be a leader in sex and marital therapy. The effectiveness of our **Passionate Marriage® Couples Enrichment Weekends** has been empirically demonstrated by independent research. We're developing better research tools to permit more sophisticated evaluation. Preliminary research on applications we're developing support what clients tell us: Crucible Therapy applies to all aspects of your life. We continue to innovate comprehensive programs that are **Your Guide to Emotionally Healthy Living.™**

The **Marriage & Family Health Center** and the **Crucible® Institute** are devoted to advancing the art and science of differentiation-based health care.