

# 10 Steps to Better Manage Self

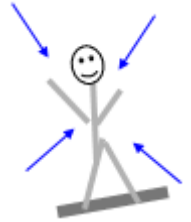
From [CenterToAwakenKindness.com](http://CenterToAwakenKindness.com)

Bowen Family Systems Theory offers a framework for managing self through the emotional reactivity that often hinders and minimizes the growth of new realities.

## 1 Explore Triggers

Be aware of self. Ask... Who am I? What are my triggers?

Become aware of self. Ask yourself... Who am I? How does emotional reactivity trigger my actions? What are my blind spots? What am I reactive toward? How do I manage self? How am I present and accounted for in relationship to my own stuff?" Learn to stop, look, and think. Ask yourself the who, what, and where of how the family system functions. Learn to remove the why questions of life. Direct your functioning to the thinking side of the brain rather than the emotionally reactive side.



## 2 Become a Non-Anxious Presence

Fully Connected and Focused.

Mentor being an "I" position able to remain fully connected, relationally focused, and neutral. Work at being "detriangled"- try not to enter the emotional field. Watch the emotional reactivity as if you are sitting in a balcony. Decide how to participate and interact. Ask investigating questions. Learn how the emotional system operates and encourage differentiation grounded in conscious choices not just emotional reactivity.



## 3 Ask What Does Anxiety Mean to Me?

Minimize anxiety, increase conscious relatedness.

Think about the function of anxiety in yourself and in your relationships. Anxiety could signal cut-off, the creation of triangles, and trigger other anxiety binding mechanisms. Discover what triggers anxiety and then try to hold the anxiety at bay, not letting it take over your thinking and actions. Use calming questions while trying to maintain an "I" position. Be conscious of the function of anxiety, the way it builds, so you can minimize triggers and increase relatedness.



## 4 Take an "I" Position

Allow for expression of thought, not emotional reactivity.

Don't say: "This is how I see it..." Rather, ask: "This is how I base it - how do you see it?" Allow expression of thought, not just agreement with one another. Ask what and when questions in order to not compromise your own position. Answer with: "I hear where you are coming from" or "I hear what you're saying." An "I" Position helps to keep you focused on the topic without taking sides or falling into emotional reactivity that increases anxiety.



## 5 Do Not Push

Allow space and time for discovery.

Change occurs in God's timing. Similarly, family systems work can be an emotional process that takes time. Allow others to work at their own pace and discover their position in the systems being explored. Take the process with ease and develop a comfortable and trusting relationship. Move as the Spirit moves. Give time for growth - nothing is instant.



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## 6 Become a System Expert

Seek understanding to see the total picture.

Encourage your own growth to become a “system expert” that seeks to understand the research project that is life. Begin to explore the larger picture and decide what is the best in this time and space. Decide how to function within the emotional reactivity created by current and forthcoming change. Enjoy seeing the interconnectedness of life and continue to discover your part within it.



## 7 Live & Teach Theory

Think Triangles. Contemplate Anxiety Binders. Learn the Predictable Responses.

Live it and Teach it! Share your knowledge. Help others to see how emotional systems operate and encourage the journey of self-discovery. Think triangles. Contemplate anxiety binders, learn to expect predictable responses, and be aware of other realities... multigenerational transmission processes, societal emotional processes, emotional shock waves, and group thinks.



## 8 Share Ideas

Plant a seed - wait to see what grows...

Encourage thinking about what is needed. Share and drop an idea into the world of possibilities, ask: “What would it be like...?” Don’t tell people to do anything, simply explore the possibilities and raise questions to think about. This encourages folks to begin to think of their own system, to process ideas, to test ideas out through various techniques, while exploring differentiation of self. Wait to see what grows in the garden of ideas.



## 9 Utilize Tools

Discover tools that help to make the mysterious more apparent and less complex.

Fact gathering tools assist to identify why particular stressors and challenges arise. Tools can help to begin to make that which is mysterious more apparent and less complex. Write a Belief Statement. Create a Family Diagram/Genogram, EcoMap, Timeline, or a Spiritual Map. There are many possibilities for examining your existence in the systematic web of life. Most of all, enjoy the journey of discovery and share it.



## 10 Enjoy!

Listen - Collect - Think - Act

Remember the journey of life is not simply about gathering data to confirm preexisting notions about how the system functions. Rather, it is about learning the system to challenge basic assumptions of human functioning that are hindering hope, peace, kindness, love, and joy. Change is possible. Listen deep within for the new possibilities. Collect the data. Think it through. Then act in the most responsible way to facilitate positive change.

