

Terry Hunt, EdD
158A Belmont Street
Watertown, MA 02472

Notes on an Effective Family Culture

- First and foremost healthy families are learning organizations and therefore welcome mistakes. Learning is trial and error, not trial and success. We self-correct without blame, shame, or recrimination. Mistakes are just another “oops” we can learn from.
- We willingly ask for help, knowing that it is a gift to others to connect with them. The assumption is that generally no one needs rescuing, so “help” generally means listening and “being there” rather than doing anything for the other person.
- We value connectedness: a sense of belonging and being appreciated for our presence in the family circle. We encourage each other’s fulfillment and look forward to contact with each other.
- We search for clarity in our discussions and are careful not to force the “rightness” of our point of view. Instead, we aspire to develop a consensus about how to proceed. We are committed to mutual benefit.
- We believe that intelligent people can disagree and say “No” to each other. We encourage each other to have individual taste and preferences. We are fundamentally curious about each other’s individuality and celebrate diversity within our family.
- We handle power, authority, and agreements in the spirit of partnership rather than having one person exercise power over another (the dominator paradigm). We realize that sometimes we disappoint each other and strive to keep our agreements with each other. Although we may become angry about a broken promise, we strive to not punish or withhold contact from the transgressor.
- We strive to be real and not “codependent” with each other. The truth can hurt but we are committed to not harming each other. Therefore, we take time to process any difficulty or conflict. We are codependent:
 - 1) When our self-esteem is dependent on the other’s view of us.
 - 2) When we deny or hide our truth because we don’t want to cause or deal with stress in the relationship.
 - 3) When we deny or hide our truth because we don’t want to suffer withdrawal, abandonment, or the threat of either.

- We tell our truths in ways that are effective with each other. We respect each other's ways of thinking and speaking. We make sure that personal feedback is "Food for the Hungry" : digestible, Bite-size, A balanced diet of positive and constructive information; Timely (the other is hungry for it), Nutritious(useful),

We strive for mutual benefit in all our transactions with each other both inside and outside the family circle.