



## **FAMILY STORIES FROM REAL LIFE**

*Presenting*

### **Friday Bowen Family Systems Shorts**

by Selden Dunbar Illick, Founder of Princeton Family Center for Education

#### **#1. Managing Self in the Face of Coronavirus**

April 10, 2020

No doubt, the coronavirus, COVID-19, is presenting challenges with ramifications in all aspects of our lives. These days of social distancing, social isolation, and recommendations to stay home all contribute to living life differently from our accustomed, taken-for-granted ways. As challenging as this is, we also have an opportunity to learn some things about ourselves that are not always fun but could be useful in the long run.

Bowen stated: "The effort to become a better observer and to learn more about the family reduces the emotional reactivity, and this in turn helps one to become a better observer."

By applying Bowen family systems theory, people can find ways to distinguish between thinking and feeling. People can learn to use the intellectual system to observe the emotional system. This effort, in turn, can make the difference between thoughtfully-directed action and emotionally-driven reaction.

For your consideration:

- While many of you are having this time at home with your family, how are you managing yourself? And, if you are home alone, how are you managing yourself? What are your goals for yourself?
- What if we actually took this time, this sheltering-at-home, social-distancing time, to work on managing ourselves better? How are you managing your automatic responsiveness to others—at home, on Zoom, Facetime, Facebook, and on the phone?
- The more aware any of us can be to our reactivity to others, the better we can manage ourselves and become better, more respectful members of our family, work, and social systems. This, in turn, can contribute to calmer environments which benefit everyone.

Thoughts or comments? Please email [selden.dunbar.illick@gmail.com](mailto:selden.dunbar.illick@gmail.com).