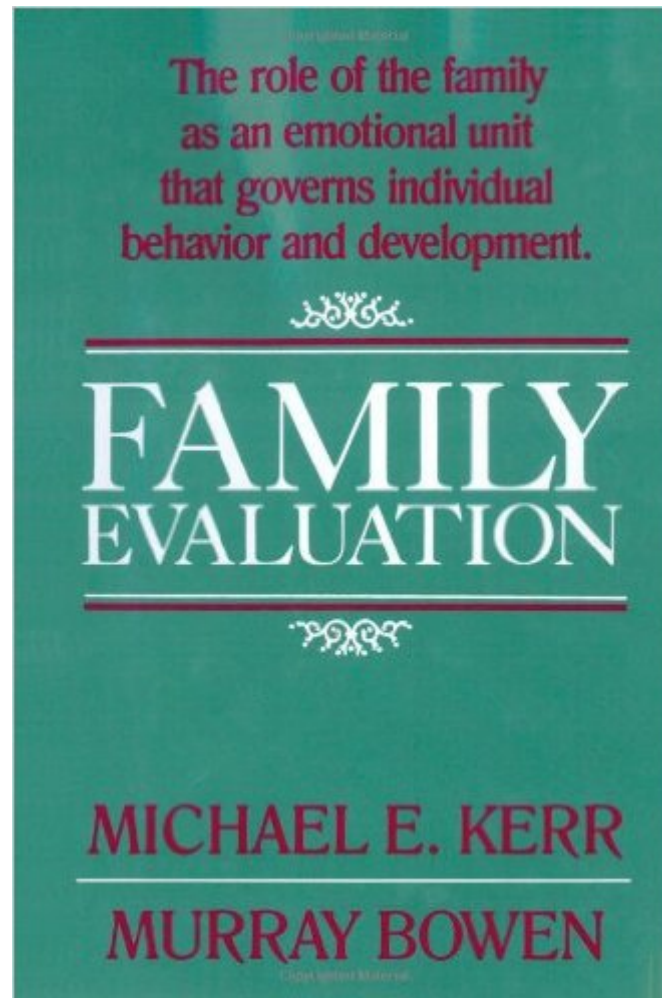


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# Family Evaluation



## Synopsis

The concepts of Murray Bowen, one of the founders of family therapy and the originator of family systems theory, are brought together here in an integrative fashion. Michael Kerr (who worked with Bowen for many years) and Bowen propose that the enormously complex task of evaluating a clinical family can be orderly when it is grounded in family systems theory. Using family diagrams and case studies, the book is devoted to an elegant explication of Bowen theory, which analyzes multigenerational family relationships and conceptualizes the family as an emotional unit or as a network of interlocking relationships, not only among the family members, but also among biological, psychological, and sociological processes. Bowen's persistent inquiry and devotion to family observation, in spite of obstacles and frustrations, have resulted in a theory that has radically changed our ways of looking at all behavior.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

A rich introduction to Murray Bowen's natural systems theory. Explains relevance of the theory to clinical work with families, couples, and individuals. Also, briefly explores and contrasts the relationship of Bowen theory to sociobiology, evolutionary neurology, and analytic theory. Case illustrations are clear and helpful. Would recommend to social workers, psychologist, biologists, and those interested in a natural systems approach to human behavior. Although strong on evaluation and descriptions concerning emotional processes in human families and groups, there is less attention to therapy techniques. More of a book about thinking on relationships, than one of the clinical "how to" kind of presentations that have become standard fare in the family therapy field. I

have read through Dr. Kerr's text several times and have studied its chapters separately. Each reread reveals additional applications and insights into the theory. Surely, a book that can grow with you! Dr. Bowen's epilogue is an added gem in which he offers perhaps his last written description of the development of the theory and his belief in the relevance of theory to the future. Personally, the book has influenced both my private and professional life.

This book explains Bowen's Extended Family Therapy Theory. This is one of the most important family systems theories in the history of family therapy and it is still one of the most widely used theories for working with families. Anyone that is studying family therapy should read this book as it is the seminal work on Bowen Therapy. Essential ideas such as triangling, emotional fusion, and intergenerational transmission are well explained. One of the best things about this book is that it is highly readable. This book can be beneficial to anyone interested in learning more about families. It can be helpful to the lay person as well as to the professional family therapist.

Family Evaluation by Mike Kerr and Murray Bowen has helped me to understand why I have acted as I have in the past and how I can change by breaking the hold of misguided bonds with my parents and with other people. I used this book for a seminar in Bowen Theory a few years ago. I really learned a lot about how I needed to become who I am and not who my parents and others want me to be. The book and those of Peter Steinke, the late Rabbi Ed Friedman, and Ron Richardson have helped me to keep from becoming enmeshed in parish conflicts in which I didn't need to have a role other than as builder and peacemaker. It also helped me to understand how my family's multigenerational transmission system needed to be changed in my life to help me minister in the 21st Century. If you have trouble with evolution, this theory stands on its own without evolution. It has also led me to pursue a Ph.D. in Education working in adult moral and faith development for leadership. I heartily recommend this book, as empirical studies have borne out much of what Murray Bowen theorized some 40 years ago.

Of all the theories of human behavior and therapy, this one is the closest to Science that I know. The book is based on Bowen's 50+ years of study of individuals and families. In it, he demonstrates a very clear connection between his observations and the vast amount of science he studied to piece together a coherent understanding of how we get to be who we are and how to apply this knowledge to oneself and to our families. Bowen was a genius at exploring the complexities of relationships; Kerr is probably as good or better in explaining the concepts. Together this is "the

book" for serious inquiry, and certainly should be required reading for anyone who takes on the title of "Therapist" or "Coach".

Excellent book and numerous examples of Bowen Family Therapy Systems Therapy which every Mental Health Profession should have in their Library. Specifically, the author Michael E. Kerr was a Psychiatrist at Georgetown who had the opportunity to work with Murray Bowen the founder of this Therapy and one of the giants in the Family Therapy field. Especially like the chapter on Differentiation and how couple can take on various roles and anxiety symptoms. Nestor Mantilla

Classic. I was assigned readings for undergraduates courses in 1992 and sold the book back to the university. I had to buy the book again for my graduate social work coursework. This time I am keeping it!

I have read and been involved with Bowen theory for over 30 yrs. Somehow I missed this book. Having Mike Kerr and Murray Bowen in "dialogue" is a helpful book in looking at how Mike puts Bowen Theory to work.

This text is great to increase overall awareness of family dynamics to clinicians and families. I highly recommend it on a professional and personal level.

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