

### Some of the more probable cross generation patterns:

1. parents in conflict. The child develops symptoms which bring them together. Look for a parentified child.
2. one parent fuses with a child, which renders other parent distant.
3. in-law remains fused with grown married child, which keeps spouse distant. This may follow a same gender pattern or an opposite gender pattern.
4. Loss of a third may upset balance in the dyad, whether through death, divorce, separation, abandonment.
5. Replacement of an emptied slot may call for realignments. It may well be a new stepparent.
6. Adoption, especially with death, or loss of custody.
7. Sibling rivalry over the favor of one parent or the other.
8. Siblings against the parents. Male coalitions. Female Coalitions. Order of birth.
9. Triangles resulting from affairs. Ex-spouse attachments.
10. Violence, crimes against the person.
11. sexual abuse, incest, rape
12. Workaholics, caretakers
13. chronic illness, aging.
14. casualties of accidents, war, bankruptcy, fire, earthquake, flood. Neighborhood or school dangers.
15. victims of crime, or prosecution.
16. sudden good fortune. One wins the lottery.
17. any addiction
- 18 religious involvement not shared by others in family
- 19 political or sports rivalries.
20. insistence on one kind of music.
- 21 the management of money
- 22 family moving. Away from or toward?
23. fired, or involuntary transfers, conflicts of interest.
24. pets, allergies.
25. physical ailments and other symptoms

### The Role of Roles in the Search for Interlocking Triangles

Roles may provide a key, because the same person plays many roles involving other persons.

Roles may be reciprocal, the one requiring the other, or complementary, cooperating with the other. A few are antagonistic, seeking to obliterate the other. A few may bypass other roles, operating in a different sphere. Or some roles function elsewhere in time and space, apparently indifferent or at least distant from each other.

The protagonist's roles are of special interest when he participates in more than one triangle, and especially when at least one of the three persons of a particular triangle belong in a generation removed from the protagonist's family of origin and/or nuclear family.

Usually a triangle consists in two insiders and one outsider. Outsiders like to become insiders if the opportunity presents itself, even if it means that one of the former insiders thereby becomes an outsider in his stead.

When the insiders are of the same generation, this suggests that the third is functioning to protect their relationship. This is OK as far as it goes, but when this is done at the third's expense, interfering with differentiation, the price of peace for the third is too high.

As a matter of fact, this is the position of a couples therapist. When he lets himself get over-involved with the couple, he becomes an enabler to their fusion, and the therapy is doomed. In some instances 'therapy' has gone on for years without progress for this very reason.

Not only therapists, but a child may well be the third, reaching to each parent individually, and minimizing the conflict or distance between the parents.

But when the parents fight over the child, the child may develop symptoms. Conflict fades as they concentrate their energies on the welfare of the child. The more common symptoms are somatic or psychosomatic, or, particularly with teens, school or social maladjustment, including delinquency.