

## **Satir's Family Systems**

Satir viewed self-esteem and its enhancement as one of the most important family functions, if not the most important one. Satir believed in the inherent goodness and growth potential of the individual. She felt that individuals are not always in touch with their (growth) potential, in that all human beings carry within them resources they need to grow.

Our family of origin, including past generations, has a significant influence on our attitudes and behaviors. I see the parents as architects of their present family. They bring together what they have learned in their own families, blending it both consciously and unconsciously to form the context of their current family.

Satir saw the family as a hierarchy in which there are inequalities, power imbalances, disharmony, conformity, and the loss of a sense of uniqueness and personhood. Someone dominates and believes that there is a “right way” to which everyone must conform. When this is the case, there is loss of self, as all the members—including the dominant ones—must give up some of their true selves to accommodate to the system.

### **Dysfunctional Communication**

Families with poor communication are families in which the communication is indirect, unclear, vague, dishonest, distorted, and incomplete. These same families are not as adept at nurturing each other, due to inability to communicate. Given 140 MODELS OF FAMILY THERAPY that these families are low on the nurturing scale, low self-esteem is often a result. In essence, poor communication results in low self-esteem, which can trigger individual or familial maladaptive responses, especially in times of high stress.

Satir viewed functional families as having clear, complete, congruent communication in which there are clear roles and rules to govern family processes. These family rules are few in number, relevant, flexible, developmentally appropriate, and consistently applied.