



Desperate Mary

Contributor: *Ned Herrmann*

Company: Neighborhood Family

The challenge: Businesswoman estranged from her family

Purpose:

Resolve a family issue by discovering ways for Mary to understand herself in relationship to her family, and for the family members to learn and accept Mary's differences.

Existing conditions:

Mary grew up as the only child of a loving couple both of whom were business oriented. Her mother was a bookkeeper and her father was a CPA. Mary did well in math and science and especially well in accounting and home economics. She loved numbers and structure. She was good at organization and developed a special affinity for planning. She was reliable and disciplined, and for her, being on time was a badge of honor.

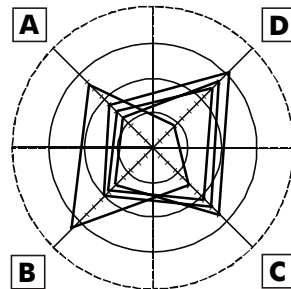
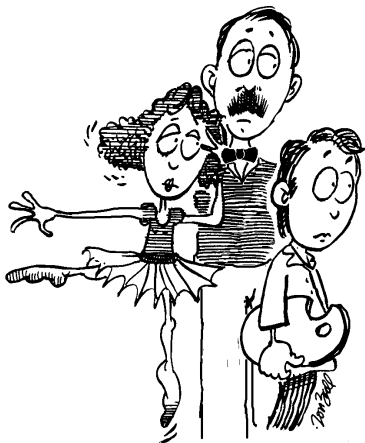
She married her opposite, her husband Bill, who taught Social Studies at the local high school and also served as the drama coach. Their two children, a boy and girl, were like peas in a pod, which included Bill, their father. The boy was naturally artistic and pursued studies in art and creative writing. The daughter excelled at dancing and aspired to be a ballerina. At dinnertime the conversation was always about Bill's day at school and the children's activities—never Mary's. As a matter of fact, Bill and the children teased Mary about her job and her appearance. They joked about her briefcase and her business suits. Meanwhile, Mary had to own up to being a little embarrassed by how her family looked when they went out for dinner. What started out as casual differences began to evolve into open criticism, including disparaging remarks and unpleasant feelings. Mary became, to a degree, estranged from the family.

Desired outcomes:

Short term: Find ways for Mary to more fully understand herself and at the same time understand more about her husband and each of her children. In parallel, this same process could lead to the family members understanding each other and how they relate to each other as a family, particularly the differences between Mary, the mother and wife, and Bill, and the two children. These understandings on the part of Mary and her family should lead to the conclusion that there is nothing wrong with anybody, they just are just simply different. These differences should be looked upon as impersonal characteristics rather than personality defects.

Long term: Understanding the nature and source of differences that provide the basis for the family members accepting each other and becoming an integrated family unit. It will take time, but ultimately the children and Bill will come to understand and honor Mary's unique characteristics as elements that made the elements complete.

Whole Brain intervention methods, processes and strategies:



The first step was to introduce Mary and Bill to the HBDI as a tool that could be used to help them understand themselves and each other. The two resulting profiles were mirror image opposites. Mary was strongly left mode oriented with a visible preference for the B quadrant. In contrast, Bill was strongly right mode oriented with an emphasis for the C quadrant. Even though they had been married for nearly 20 years, they were visibly affected by the sharp difference between their profiles. It was as if they both thought to themselves, "Oh, you're different, you're not doing any of these things on purpose". They quickly decided to ask for HBDI survey forms for the children. While waiting for the results, they speculated on the children's profiles and both agreed they would be similar to Bill's and not Mary's. As soon as the four profiles were available for diagnosis and interpretation, a family report was written and sent to Mary and Bill along with a set of models, including the Whole Brain model, the Four selves model, and the Strengths of Each Quadrant model. The package included a proposed discussion scenario and a set of coaching tips to help the family optimize the results of this set of profiles.

Summary of outcomes:





This set of family profiles and the resulting discussion produced almost immediate results. It was as if everybody knew the answer ahead of time, but had not previously had a way of thinking about it and talking about it. Suddenly the tribe consisting of Bill and the children became clear, and at the same time, Mary's lonely position as a mental opposite of this three-person tribe also became clear. Without knowing it, and in their ignorance, the family had ganged up on Mary. In the absence of

having a method of diagnosing this situation, Mary made do with an increasingly unpleasant family situation. At the conclusion of the family meeting, there was a general feeling of having a weight lifted off everybody's shoulders. Mom was OK, the kids were OK, and Bill and Mary were OK.

Success measurement criteria applied:

The success measurement process allows up to 100 points to be allocated to each of the four quadrants of this Whole Brain process. The success measurement points for this case are allocated as follows:

- A quadrant: Data analysis
- B quadrant: Honoring Mary's work
- C quadrant: Relationships improvement
- D quadrant: Creative application

<u>Metaphors</u>		<u>Success measurement points</u>	
A 	D 	A 50	D 75
B 	C 	B 90	C 100

