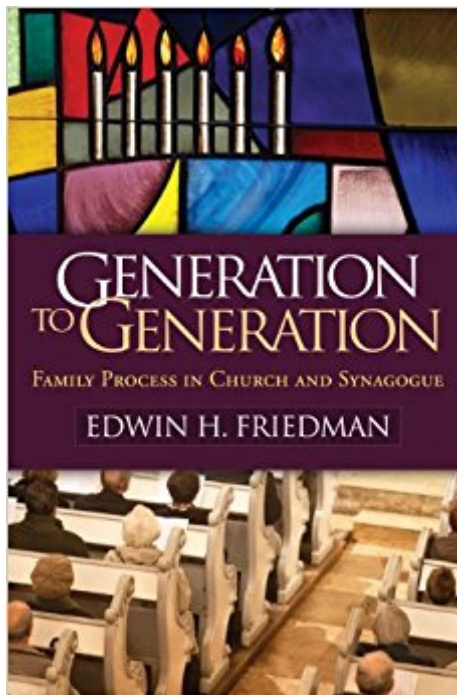




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# **Generation To Generation: Family Process In Church And Synagogue (The Guilford Family Therapy Series)**



## Synopsis

This acclaimed, influential work applies the concepts of systemic family therapy to the emotional life of congregations. Edwin H. Friedman shows how the same understanding of family process that can aid clergy in their pastoral role also has important ramifications for negotiating congregational dynamics and functioning as an effective leader. Clergy from diverse denominations, as well as family therapists and counselors, have found that this book directly addresses the dilemmas and crises they encounter daily. It is widely used as a text in courses on family systems and pastoral care.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Friedman uses his unique position as family therapist and rabbi to explore ways to be an effective agent of change in a group. He shows how ceremonies and rituals, as developmental markers in the lives of families and organizations, can be transformed into systemic interventions that spur healing and growth. In the footsteps of Murray Bowen, Friedman moves seamlessly between a leader's self-differentiation as a person and his or her role within families and other systems, giving each their due. For family therapists, *Generation to Generation* is a pioneering text that illuminates the relevance of personal spirituality and religious life to the functioning of healthy families."--James L. Griffith, MD, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, The George Washington University"*Generation to Generation* provides a needed corrective to the general tendency in ministry to focus on the individual. I have found the text to be useful in my Youth Ministry courses to

remind Catholic missionaries that the family is the domestic church. While we may see the individual in front of us, Friedman widens our vision so we may see the larger context of the individual at home and in the congregation. Insightful and grounded in reality, *Generation to Generation* is a valuable resource for those intending to minister to others."--Biff Rocha, MA, Department of Theology, Benedictine College, Atchison, Kansas

"When [this book] was originally written, learning about the emotional side of congregations was not part of the curriculum in most seminaries. Now it is the gold standard in this area, and *Generation to Generation* is a text many clergy carry with them each day....Just as the book's title suggests, Friedman's ideas continue to be passed down to today's generation of leaders."--from the Foreword to the Paperback Edition by Gary Emanuel, PhD, and Mickie Crimone, MS, APRN

"Well written and lively...required reading for pastoral counselors of every persuasion....Any therapist will find here new techniques for bringing about changes and will enlarge his or her conceptual framework of the human dilemma." --Jay Haley

"A feature throughout the book is the heavy use of story and narrative to make a point. This is very effective as the narrative often contains multi-dimensional meanings that the author then explores in an engaging way....Provides an interesting and very readable account of how to incorporate family processes into congregational life." (Journal for the Study of Marriage and Spirituality 2011-03-04)"I was shocked, surprised and disillusioned when I began to realize that hard work, sincerity and prayer weren't enough to guarantee success in pastoral ministry. I kept getting myself into tangles that I didn't understand until I read this book by a storytelling rabbi with uncommon wisdom. Friedman helped me see that the best way to engage with the factors I can't control—like the opinions and behavior of others—was to focus on the factors that I can control: my own presence, identity and behavior in the social system of the local congregation." (The Christian Century 2011-03-04)"An important contribution to...family systems thinking and pastoral care....One of the most creative aspects of this volume is the way the book is laid out. The chapters are organized around interrelated concepts that feed back on and amplify one another—a design that itself helps the reader begin to think systemically." (Journal of Pastoral Care and Counseling 2011-03-04)"A groundbreaking book in the use of family therapy....The key is not expertise, but self-definition and self-understanding." (Behavioral Studies of Religion 2011-03-04)"A must read for persons of the cloth, for it points to significant issues and considerations on the experience of living in families and working with a congregation as a family." (Review and Expositor 2005-01-03)

Edwin H. Friedman, until his death in 1996, worked for more than 35 years in the Washington, DC, metropolitan area, and was in great demand as a consultant and public speaker throughout the

country. A family therapist and ordained rabbi, Dr. Friedman was well known in the fields of mental health and pastoral education for his motivational style and his unique blend of systems thinking, humor, and common sense. He offered acclaimed workshops for mental health practitioners, clergy, business leaders, and others.

I never fail to get something new out of this book. The insights are tremendously useful both in personal and professional life, which really aren't that different. I'm still terrible at being self differentiated but not as terrible as I used to be. And that mainly is because of the insights gained from this particular book.

This book is brilliant and one to keep nearby. I reread it carefully in prep for teaching a class, and in - but the 10 years between last digging into it, it had "rewritten" itself. With 10 more years of clinical experience, I see more clearly how wise his perspectives are. Others may write great things - and they do - but they all tend to be embellishments of what he and Bowen have laid down. Bowen obviously is great as well, but the unique addition that Friedman brings is his work with religious communities, providing rich information of how family systems bleed into other systems as well.

Friedman's book is a great compliment to any text on family systems theory/therapy and for those studying organizational leadership. He offers his own evidence as a religious leader of a congregation and as a father, but his work as a therapist lends deep insight in managing people toward healing and self-actualization. A leader's establishment of their own identity outside of a family/organizational system is almost radical in 1982, and yet the concept has not caught on as the world obsesses over sacrificing happiness and martyring oneself for more materialistic gains, overcoming competition or to fulfill the narrative that a happy family is one that is heavily interconnected. I cannot imagine what Friedman would think of parents friending and monitoring their children on Facebook or the tethering of technology and the resistance to Results-Oriented Work Environments.

Friedman's expansion of Murray Bowen's Family Systems Therapy, as Friedman it applies to Church organizations, is a ground-breaking work that will cause you to look at conflict and change in a whole new way. Unless you are a family systems therapist, this book will allow you another angle for resolution of issues. While some of the techniques explained seem as if they are applied to disconnected portions of the "family" system, his evidence for results seems uncontestable. The

only issue is his neutral approach to the outcomes, which in the context of certain faith systems might be undesired (divorce for example, is seen as a desired resolution). That aside, and if one does not take this as scripture but as a flexible way to look at dynamics of human interaction, then this is a great book to buy and keep as a reference for pastoral care.

"Friedman has shown, with his well-sourced bibliography and readable book, why the fights and unresolved issues in your family of origin have such tremendous impact on your life. The fact that 'a self is more attractive than a no self' when humbly received is a game changer. Generation to Generation: Family Process in Church and Synagogue lends perspective and insight for those of us who are willing to confront, study and learn from the root and present situation.

An excellent overview and application of family systems theory and differentiation of self. Helpful for anyone looking to learn more about how we can develop and mature as humans.

This is a book to be absorbed slowly. I don't think I can summarize this book any better than Friedman himself does on page 1: "It is the thesis of this book that all clergymen and clergywomen, irrespective of faith, are simultaneously involved in three distinct families whose emotional forces interlock: the families within the congregation, our congregations, and our own. Because the emotional process in all of these systems is identical, unresolved issues in any one of them can produce symptoms in the others, and increased understanding of any one creates more effective functioning in all three." "This book will invite you to take a good, hard look at your own functioning. "There is an intrinsic relationship between our capacity to put families together [or, Friedman would also say, to put congregations together] and our ability to put ourselves together" (page 3). Friedman looks at family issues and congregational issues from a systems perspective, arguing that when a member of a family (or a congregation) is demonstrating "symptoms," it is necessary to look at the whole network of relationships that that individual is involved in -- because the root cause of the problem may lie in a completely different part of the system. Friedman illustrates in detail how clergy can positively effect change in a family system or a congregational system. He also (somewhat indirectly) stresses the critical importance for clergy to resolve their own lingering family-of-origin issues. The book is heavy reading -- full of terms that may be unfamiliar (and that, unfortunately, he doesn't directly explain, which can be confusing at first), such as "identified patient" and "self-differentiation" and "detriangulating." Frankly, I think he could have used a good editor, so that the book would be more accessible to people who are new to the concepts of Bowen

family systems theory. But don't miss this book. Read it, slowly. Digest it. Read a few pages at a time, then put it down and process what you have read before trying to proceed further. It took me months to work through the book. But I'm a heck of a lot stronger and wiser than I was when I first started. This book will help you grow. Then, if you want to keep learning and applying the concepts in this book, read Friedman's unfinished manuscript, *A Failure of Nerve: Leadership in the Age of the Quick Fix* (available through the Edwin Friedman Trust), and/or do a Google search on The Center for Family Process in Bethesda, Maryland.

Lengthy read with lots of information on how family relationships through generations can impact households and congregations.

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