

# Bonding Goes Back to the Dawn of Cosmos

ARTICLE

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*I think I am me. But I am not.  
I am a galaxy. In fact, I am a thousand galaxies!*

Marcus Chown, *What a Wonderful World*

## ABSTRACT

Bonding is more than a lifelong process. It is a process that begins long before conception. In a broader context, this process begins with the dawn of the cosmos itself.

Bonding is the linking process that bridges the prenatal and postnatal stages and prepares the child to connect securely and meaningfully with the world and life on earth.

This article highlights aspects of bonding in the pre-conception and conception periods, as well as in pregnancy and birth, so that connections can be made to pre-, gestational, then peri-, and postnatal growth. A list of bonding support issues accompanies the consideration of parent and child development within the psychocultural, spatial, and temporal environments so that taking responsibility for personal health and growth at different stages becomes possible.

In summary, bonding is about strengthening the life-enhancing polarity over the life-diminishing polarity.

**Keywords:** bonding, preconception, conception, maternal environment, prenatal, postnatal

## 1. INTRODUCTION

There are more influences on us than there are stars in the universe. What we think of as our core identities have been shaped by millions and millions of complex interactions between us and those around us, not only in the near environment of space, but also in the distant environment of both space and time.

Billions of years ago, human beings appeared on Earth, a small planet in our solar system, part of the Milky Way Galaxy, which is just one of the many galaxies in this universe, which in turn is one of the many universes, as scientists today speak about a multi-universe. About three billion years ago, life in the single-cell stage paved the way for life in the multicellular stage, which led from fungi to

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plants, to animals, and finally to humans. Simplicity preceded complexity (Turner, Turner & Gouni 2018), allowing richer and richer forms of expression.

To our human understanding, the secret formula behind increasing complexities is cooperation, first between, then among, those who showed symbiotic qualities that allowed single identities to emerge, finding themselves crossing a critical threshold to get together and create a huge variety of expressed intelligent life forms that finally led to the emergence of human life. Certainly, even before prokaryotes, there would be some form of intelligence at work, creating the background that would enable the emergence of the next stage, and the next, and the next. An intermittent chain of events developed at critical thresholds, securing new circumstances that enabled the whole process. It is like an endless line of ants all around the periphery of our planet at its largest measurements, working with patience to overcome whatever obstacle, displaying both intelligence and humility to establish the vast cosmic theater, carrying and assembling the building blocks of life, allowing even more complex intelligent performances to be displayed.

Each one of us carries this cosmic information within us. Our preconception phase is the background environment that hosts symbiotic qualities from the present moment to the past: from the present parental environment to the transgenerational ancestral one, all the way back to the single cellular experience and further back to the dynamics of life present in the cosmic soup impregnated with all that followed. The quality of information that extends from that far beyond, as it interacts with the trillions of trillions of others met in the time-space-direction process, act as the attractor of the specific human consciousness to be conceived. Thus, the **first bonding that takes place between the meant-to-be-conceived, and maternal environment extends over billions of years, all the way back from preconception time to the zero moment of cosmic creation.** This vastness will provide the informational network and the qualities of symbiotic foundations (Bloomsbury 2012) between the one to be conceived and the maternal environment. Here, it is necessary to remember that symbiosis is for the mutual benefit (Martin & Schwab 2012) of those involved, although not necessarily of the same polarity but motivationally similar. Both parts work together to achieve their goal of maintaining existential identity. They do so through change, which will help the given system advance.

## 2. CONCEPTS REVEALED

Concepts are not only mental representations but also complete psychological entities. The mysteries of the letters that dance in chorus to the music of vowels and consonants hold their secrets. Those who can see through their eyes, both physical and mental, can get the meaning. Concepts are story carriers, narrating the human experience of the cosmos from time immemorial. They are history books and human culture encyclopedias. When decoded, they can become the building blocks of our minds, the blueprints of the architectural design of our lives and our relationships.

### 2.1 Bond(ing)

*Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary* defines bonding as "the formation of a **close relationship** (as between mother and child or between a person and an animal), especially through **frequent or constant association.**" *Macmillan Dictionary* further adds to the definition of bonding as "the development of a special close relationship between people." The Oxford dictionary adds an explanation as to what it is that leads to this close relationship. It speaks about feelings of **friendship** or **attraction, shared ideas or interests, and shared experiences.** However, the concept of "bonding" is not restricted to psychology. We meet the concept in other fields such as chemistry, economics, sociology, biology, and physics. The study of such fields will provide a more comprehensive understanding of the bonding in a relationship.

In chemistry, we speak about this *strong force of attraction holding atoms together in a molecule or crystal, resulting from the sharing or transfer of electrons*. Sometimes, this chemical bond comes naturally because of natural laws that are applied without intervention. Other times heat, pressure, or another adhesive substance may be used as an *outer force, leading to the same outcome*.

I dare to think of the parent-child relationship and apply this information to the parental bond. No matter whether it is a natural or assisted conception, the parent and the child are attracted to each other or joined together, and their bonding force may be the common ground of shared ideas, interests, or experiences that are shared or transferred.

Moving a little further, we also find in the above dictionaries that in building, they use the bricks in an overlapping pattern to ensure the strength of the resulting structure, and that is a bond. Let's keep the element of security. In both chemistry and building, **what bonds together is strong**.

In law, a "bond" is a deed by which a person is committed to making payment to another. When do we make a payment to someone else? It seems that we pay for what has value. Bringing this to the parental relationship, it seems that the parent (mother or father) and the child, by making a bond, are all committed to making payment to each other for what seems to be of value. Perhaps this legal aspect of the concept relates to the South African meaning of "bond" as a mortgage, the meaning of "bond" as a certificate issued by a government or public company promising to repay borrowed money at a fixed rate of interest at a specific time, or an insurance policy to protect against losses resulting from circumstances. More questions to reflect on: *who is in the role of offering first, and who repays when. What is the value both parties see in making such an agreement? What are the risks, and how do we minimize the risks resulting from the circumstances?*

Finally, we also find another most interesting meaning of the concept of "bond": It means the ropes, chains, or other restraints used to restrict a person's movements, as well as the act of restricting another, keeping this other in captivity, "bondage," or being unable to move. **Too strong a bond that removes freedom**. Is it possible that *your attachment to security needs is robbing you of your freedom to be and act as you please?*

## 2.2. Maternal Environment

The theme of our paper is extensive. However, we will restrict this work to "the bonding between the maternal environment and the pre-nate."

When we speak about '*maternal environment*' we use it as formulated in Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological theory (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci 1994; Bronfenbrenner 1995; Bronfenbrenner & Evans 2000). Thus, when we say '*maternal*' we do not refer to the biological mother only. We refer to the extended familial, social, cultural, and other systems – parts and wholes at the same time, too – as well as the chronosystem based on his theory of Process-Person-Context-Time (PPCT). This means that each of us in Europe or Asia interacts with and influences a child conceived, gestated, born, and raised in Alaska. Each of us affects the relationships formed on a micro-, meso-, macro-, or chrono-system level. Each of us is a part of a larger whole or holon. As part, we have our integrity and identity. The whole, or holon, has its integrity and identity, and at the same time, it is part of a larger system. Finally, every part, holon, and system is part of the cosmos. That includes the baby, too, who is a part-whole in this world. And of course, that hypothetical Alaska child influences us as this child interacts with us as well.

Looking at its main attributes in the concept of bonding, we find affection, association, attachment, and relationship but also mutuality, compatibility, interdependence, and co-evolution. It can healthily manifest these attributes or move in the opposite direction and manifest the opposite conditions, those of aversion, isolation, parasitism, competition, powerlessness, and stagnation.

**Bonding always exists between the newcomer and the environment;** it is not a matter of just being strong or weak but whether it is inspirational and life-enhancing, or life-diminishing.

### **3. Bonding Starts Preconception**

Bonding (Else-Quest, Shibley-Hyde & Clark 2003; Barker, Daniels, O’Neal & van Sell 2017) starts preconception. What is the conceptual framework of the specific environment? What is its value system? What is the perception of oneself, of others, of the world, and of life? What are the survival strategies of the system; What are the visions, expectations, and adopted behaviors of each of us in the system? We think of all positive, negative, or neutral elements or information existing, as Arthur Koestler (1967) described it, in each holon, as Ken Wilber (2000) and other scientists, like J.T. Velikovsky (2014), from various fields, further developed it, calling it SOHO (Self-Organizing Holarchic Open) systems, memes, fractals, or otherwise, and as it has been integrated into prenatal psychology by Frederick Michael Farrar and other prenatal psychology pioneers. This way, we will have a good understanding of how the preconception stage can lay the groundwork for qualities manifested in the baby conceived.

#### **3.1. How Can We Inspire the Life-Enhancing Polarity Versus the Life-Diminishing One?**

Affection, as a feeling of liking and caring for a mother or parent but also for the world, is one of the most significant characteristics in the process of healthy bonding. As it starts preconception, the question asked is what are qualities attracting kindness and caring for the other? Perhaps Plato could answer, saying that the “Good, the True, and the Beautiful” are. Social scientists may have their observations on peace, social justice, and equality; biologists may speak about neurotransmitters at play, and lay people would just say, ‘love!’ Despite differences, affection is the force that brings people together—a unifying force, not conflict energy, the kind of which we observe when opposing forces are at play to secure survival. Certainly, our understanding of the study of holons (and the world consists of myriads of holons as it, the world, is also part of an even bigger holon) makes it obvious that every holon has this dual tendency to preserve and assert its individuality as a quasi-autonomous whole and to function as an integrated part of an existing or evolving larger whole. Peace, security, and nurturing lie in the common ground where both needs are met, and individuality, autonomy, and integration, as in co-existence and co-evolution, are honored. It is part of our human responsibility to work in ways that respect self-autonomy and integration. These are qualities that serve the growth needs of all involved. And this is a lifelong process and a decision to be made by all players on the universal theatrical stage.

Perhaps, the estimated 48.5 million couples worldwide who are unable to become pregnant after five years, according to research data (Mascarenhas, Flaxman, Boerma, Vanderpoel & Stevens 2012), could also be understood in the context of how attractive or not our living experience is for newcomers. It might explain why despite hygiene improvement and medical as well as technological advances, infertility statistics remained the same over the last twenty years. Perhaps the question to be asked is, “Why newcomers do not wish to come?” or, “why do already living humans not invite any?”

How would it be if each one of us could see the living miracle unfolding in front of our eyes, giving rise to a variety of life forms? What if we could embrace all life forms with respect, appreciation, and recognition of the million years of a continuous process of the unseen energies to manifest? The same on the micro level: recognizing and appreciating the ancestral line that leads to us, treating ourselves and transgenerational information with respect, learning from the choices made, the successes and the failures, far from condemning ourselves as not enough, or not appropriate, or even life-threatening, but cultivating a background of trust.

## 4. PRENATAL BONDING

### 4.1. Bonding at Conception

The origin of the term "association" is medieval Latin, coming from the mid-16th century. It means to "unite" or "ally" for a common purpose with something or somebody else, making a mental connection. The question asked here is, "What is the mental connection between the newly conceived and the maternal environment?" And what is the *common* purpose served?

At conception, there is a first affirmative relationship. It takes the form of a connection, established between the newly conceived and the world. The newly-conceived has taken the first step toward manifesting in the world and becoming part of it via the specific maternal environment. *Merriam-Webster* enriches our understanding of the relationship by adding the element of *kinship* and the element of *existing affairs or dealings between the two parties*. My clinical experience has shown that **there is always a good reason why each baby is conceived in a specific family, as familial or parental information holds the key to the next stage of the specific baby's life process**. What lays the groundwork for life-enhancing bonding is:

1. the element of compatibility (kinship), as well as
2. the recognition of mutual benefits for co-evolution (through resolving common issues or dealings) of the entire system and the individual systems, respectively.

We could say that **each conception represents the healing dynamics of the whole system**.

### 4.2. Bonding during Pregnancy and Gestation

Unfortunately, unhealed traumas (Turner & Turner 1992; 1993) and/or shocks (Raffai 1997; 1998a; 1998b; Turner 1988), which still exist in the individual or familial and social systems, detract from the possibility of relationships that could evolve at all. Pain and fear steal affection. They add to aversion because they trigger the fear of losing individuality, autonomy, and personal thriving if integrated into the new relationship. As a result, there is a separation tendency with conflicts that can result in high levels of aggression and violence. A climax seems to appear when, in the maternal environment, some weeks after conception, pregnancy is discovered. When she learns the news of her pregnancy, she may experience anguish over losses, a sense of powerlessness and terror, or feelings of inadequacy and insecurity. Sometimes, this can lead to abortion thoughts or failed abortion attempts. John Sonne (2002), Athanassios Kafkalides (1995), and many other pioneers have described the tragedy of abortion survivors.

The inner maternal environment recognizes conception dynamics, that is, the meaning involved as well as the higher purpose served. It makes use of nine months of pregnancy to prepare the pregnant woman for life's experiences. Reality shows the way to what can lead to life-enhancing bonding (Verny & Weintraub 2000; Verny 1981) during pregnancy and beyond (Janus 1997). Among the ways to support that kind of bonding are in a list form:

- **Welcome the baby to the world.** Welcoming a baby is very different from wanting a baby or expecting a baby. The primordial Health Advancement program "**WELCOME**" (Gouni 2009) focuses on the pre-nate although it works with the whole maternal environment, and it aims to empower the pre-nate so that (s)he can create a healthy bond with the world. There is a small number of Health Advancement programs that work in this direction.

- **Recognize the individual identity** of the baby. One of the indicators of high-quality prenatal bonding is when the maternal environment refers to the baby using an appropriate name showing respect and honor, reflecting positive qualities already discovered in the silence of maternal traits so that the baby can manifest and express them.



- **Respect the gender of the baby during pregnancy.** Sex preference, which is usually an unhealed issue, can entrap a lot of sadness, anger, and frustration; it can lead to hiding strategies or adopting the behaviors of the preferred sex; it can also lead to dissociation and distancing from one's true self.

- **Communicate the virtues of other family members, the intellect manifested in the social or national group, and those of humanity.** Stories of people and the ways they added value to our quality of life and civilization are a great help. Visits to temples of wisdom, past and present, like museums, galleries, concert halls, theaters, etc., but also places or sites and buildings that represent such a spirit, are part of the process.

- **Communicate (Chamberlain 1994; 1998) the understanding of how scientific work can help remove prejudice and fear of natural phenomena and cultivate healthy curiosity,** which drives exploration, discovery, advancement, invention, and pioneer thinking.

- **Frequent, almost daily, exposure to fine arts** (Gouni 2017; Dutton 2003) in whatever form is available in the mother's surroundings can nourish the unborn's emotional body.

- **Provide space for silence** so that the voice of the baby can be heard.

- **Prioritize** again and reschedule routine options and activities.

- **Include your baby** in everyday experiences, always paying attention to his or her presence and providing answers to whatever is part of this world of ours.

- **Recognize that a baby is not a powerless entity but an intelligent one,** able to interact with the environment and make decisions to solve specific problems or provide new answers to old problems.

- **Respect the baby's autonomy and individuality** without burdening the baby with personal expectations and preferences.

- **Maintain calmness; cultivate trust** that everything will be okay at the end of the day.

- **Nourish the baby** not only physically by providing nutrients for bodily development but also nourish the soul with joy and acts of kindness, the mind with a constant quest for truth and justice, and the spirit with personal cultivation and the practice of ideals and virtues. **Exposure to philosophy, art, and science,** as well as frequent encounters with **nature** and other gentle people or like-minded groups, can do miracles for the baby.

Such dynamics will allow the maternal environment to thrive. Aristotle, in *Politics*, so wisely says: "Parents have the opportunity to grow just because they are parents." The maternal environment allows you to see the world through new eyes. Pregnancy is a process of mutual growth and maturity. Unfortunately (Gouni 2008; Gouni, Sekulic, & Topalidou 2016), we often fail to see that. We are conditioned, and we see the maternal environment as only a giver and not a receiver. When listing the blessings of pregnancy, we see that the list consists of concepts like attention, support, and care. Sometimes, people put themselves in the position of the prenaté—a position they have never had in their own postnatal life. This can deprive the baby of energy without even realizing it. Life-enhancing prenatal bonding will lead to perinatal bonding, directing the birth experience toward healthy relationships for both parents and baby.

## 5. PERINATAL BONDING

Labor is not a solely maternal process. The baby gives birth to himself or herself as well. In our clinical experience, we have heard of many stories of babies resisting birth. Most of these babies are afraid of the unknown. In fact, we would be more accurate if we spoke about the fear of the "known". The information that comes from the maternal environment in the wider meaning is perceived as threatening; full of conflict, cruelty, mistrust, or death. Having already lost trust in their power, having already dissociated and lost connection of themselves, they resist the natural forces that push them

toward birth, creating challenges for their health, suffocating problems, exhaustion, and the like. As they fight what they wrongly perceive as lethal (labor), they create a threat to themselves. If they are successful in resisting birth, they will die for sure. They may cause, at least, some kind of "death" to the maternal organism due to interdependence. To make matters worse, their resistance might lead to medical interventions. These may be perceived as violent and disrespectful. This, in turn, will give rise to a whole range of inimical or defense-oriented behaviors directed at anything mirroring such interventions later on in life (Emerson 1997). The paradox is that what supports life is considered to be death. Life-saving intentions are interpreted as aggression. Maternal environments will not manage to inspire life-enhancing bonding. This may lead to challenging labor experiences and disrupted relationships that ask for more energy to be invested just to balance and move away from self-destruction or life-destruction. In adult life, depression seems highly possible. The unhealed birth traumas are behind the conflicts and wars that are staged to relieve the tension they cause (Lloyd deMause, 2002).

Michel Odent (2014) has lately spoken about the importance of the first hour after birth (Klaus & Kennell 1982) for the establishment of a healthy relationship between child and mother. This first look will enable them to recognize and receive love and to act on love. Wilhelm Reich extensively spoke about "eye armor," what it is caused by, and its impact on experiencing a quality of life. Looking someone in the eyes is like connecting with their soul, their deepest depths, and their core. Pain, guilt, shame, or hatred may avert us from connecting at that deep level, and this can lead to later non-authentic relationships.

Sometimes, it is the maternal environment in the form of health professionals present at childbirth that creates such distance. There are health protocols that do not allow or do not facilitate parental perinatal bonding, fathers are not welcome (Jomeen 2017), the mother is anesthetized or facing challenges; there is noise, stress, etc. in the environment. In such cases, the newborn (Klaus & Klaus 2000) comes to terms with the most unwelcome beginning, which is full of stress, sensory disrespect, cold, isolation, neglect, or pain. A welcoming world, on the other hand, can provide healing after the stress of birthing oneself. It can strengthen trust, and empower safe attachment (Sullivan, Perry, Sloan, Kleinhaus, & Burtchen 2011), as first described by John Bowlby (Bowlby, 1969/1982; Bretherton, 1992). Touch is very important for perinatal bonding. The way the new-born baby will be touched is an introduction to what the world feels like. With high statistics in caesarean births (Odent 2004), the first touch today is not of the best quality, especially when it is an emergency caesarean.

Researchers have extensively spoken about the importance of tender skin-to-skin contact, gentle caressing, kissing, or touching of the mother's hands or arms. This contact can establish a safe connection with reality. It is the beginning of a healthy body connection for all intimate and personal relationships. The first contact with the maternal microbiome has also occurred.

But certainly, touching is not something that we do with our hands. We touch the world with our voice, with the melody or noise we make, with our eyes, and with our actions of compassion and kindness. We radiate thoughts with which we touch the world and create realities and deeds.

Also, part of the bonding process is immediate and prolonged breastfeeding. Breastfeeding is a very intimate and private act based on closeness and connection. The quality of breastfeeding (Zetterstrom 1999; Cernadas, Noceda, Barrera, Martinez & Garda 2003), goes beyond what we usually read in the reports. It is not just an act of feeding to satisfy bodily hunger and thirst. It is not what triggers hormone release. It is not what supports the immune system. It is all of them, of course. But

beyond all that, it is an opportunity to enhance bonds between mother and infant by promoting the development of maternal behavior and adding value to the dyad, which can inspire the belief that the world can be a nourishing place to be.

## **6. POSTNATAL BONDING**

Bonding does not end at birth, and attachment does not end in childhood. Bonding is a lifelong process. Once it is established as a life-enhancing relationship, it continues as such. It provides the basis for a creative life that leads to growth and healthy living. In the few months (Lafuente et al., 1997) and the many years and decades (WHO, 1986) that follow birth, the same factors that have been presented above are at play. The scenarios may differ to match new needs and new circumstances, but the core themes remain the same.

The following are opportunities for mutual progress and co-evolution: Response to the child's needs.

- Learning and developing ways of interacting with the child at different ages.
- Taking responsibility for our personal health and growth.
- Building ties with the neighborhood, the place of birth, the native country, and the human community.
- Facilitating that process for the child.
- Connecting and doing things together.
- Having fun together, but also sharing significant information and inspiring ethos.
- Participating in activities that promote peace and civilization.

Life-enhancing bonding is what provides the human beings with information that will keep them free from mental pathologies like schizophrenia, mania, or depression (Ohoka et al. 2014; Meltzer-Brody 2011), maybe even post-partum depression (Taylor, Atkins, Kumar, Adams, & Glover 2005), or from physical pathologies.

To support life-enhancing bonding and contribute positive environmental cues in the world, we must open our defenses and support the healing of our deep prenatal and perinatal traumas and shocks. That's where prenatal psychology can help.

## **7. EPILOGUE**

As more and more of us make steps to heal ourselves, that healing energy impregnates the environment in which it appears, touching whoever is in the environment. Personal healing becomes universal. Primal Health Advancement Programs, educational modules, conscious parenting, and therapeutic work can do miracles. As we develop, mature and evolve, we can change the way we receive our children. Baby steps at the beginning can make for giant strides at the end. Just as a musician can develop his theme and lead it to a triumphant crescendo, we can all transform the way we give birth to our children. We can learn to approach the pregnant couple with no discrimination of any kind. We can look at them with our soul's eyes. We can join forces so that we can be present and hold hands with them as they heal their own pre-, peri-, and postnatal traumas; we can open up their consciousness and hearts to welcome, recognize, appreciate, and honor the invaluable gift of new life as encountered in the unborn child.



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