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**The Value of One: consulting
to family enterprise**



“When any key member of an emotional system can control his own emotional reactivity and accurately observe the functioning of the system and his part in it, and can avoid counterattacking when he is provoked, and maintain an active relationship with the other key members without withdrawing or becoming silent, the entire system will change in predictable ways.” / Murray Bowen

Murray Bowen’s often repeated quote certainly creates a challenge when consulting to family businesses. Can one thoughtful person really make a difference in the outcome of a disturbed family enterprise? The prevailing strategy and wisdom in family enterprise consulting today would have us believe the contrary, that the group itself must address and solve the problem. Questions abound: does the systems thinking embodied in Bowen’s statement hold true when consulting to family enterprises, families of wealth and family foundations? Can one person thinking in systems’ terms, make a substantial difference in an evolving enterprise? Does Bowen’s assumption hold up when assets are involved, and the group must manage to a shared future? This session is an opportunity to examine in depth the possible application of Bowen Theory to family business consulting.