

Inner Child Healing - Why do it?

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"We are set up to be emotionally dysfunctional by our role models, both parental and societal. We are taught to repress and distort our own emotional process. We are trained to be emotionally dishonest when we are children.

This emotional repression and dishonesty causes society to be emotionally dysfunctional. Additionally, urban based civilization has completely disregarded natural laws and natural cycles such as the human developmental process. There is no integration into our culture of the natural human developmental process.

As just one blatant example of this, consider how most so called primitive or aboriginal societies react to the onset of puberty. When a girl starts menstruating, ceremonies are held to celebrate her womanhood - to honor her coming into her power, to honor her miraculous gift of being able to conceive. Boys go through training and initiation rites to help them make the transition from boyhood to manhood. Look at what we have in our society: junior high school - a bunch of scared, insecure kids who torture each other out of their confusion and fear, and join gangs to try to find an identity.

This lack of integration of the natural human growth process causes trauma. At each stage of the developmental process we were traumatized because of the emotionally repressive, Spiritually hostile environment into which we were born. We went into the next stage incomplete and then were retraumatized, were wounded again."

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Quote from Codependence: The Dance of Wounded Souls

For all of the so called progress of our modern societies, we still are far behind most aboriginal cultures in terms of respect for individual rights and dignity in some kind of balance with the good of the whole. (I am speaking here of tribal aboriginal societies - not urbanized ones.) Nowhere is this more evident in terms of our relationship to our children.

Modern civilizations - both Eastern and Western - are no more than a generation or two removed from the belief that children were property. This, of course, goes hand in hand with the belief that women were property. The idea that children have rights, individuality, and dignity is relatively new in modern society. The predominant and underlying belief, as it has been manifested in the treatment of children, has been that children are extensions of, and tools to be used by, their parents.

A very telling insight into the basic beliefs underlying Western attitudes towards children is shared by inner child pioneer Alice Miller in her book *The Drama of The Gifted Child*. She shares how the 19th Century German Philosophers who laid the groundwork for modern psychology, emphasized the importance of stamping out a child's "exuberance." In other words, a child's spirit must be crushed in order to control them.

Children are to be seen and not heard. Spare the rod and spoil the child.

It is only in very recent history, that our society has even recognized child abuse as a crime instead of an inherent right of the parent. The concept of healthy parenting as a skill to be learned is very new in society.

Any society that does not respect and honor individual human dignity, is going to be a society that does not meet the essential needs of it's members. Patriarchal societies, that demean and degrade women and children, are dysfunctional in their essence.

We form our core relationship with our self and with life - and of course with other people - in early childhood in reaction to the messages we get from the way we are treated and the role modeling of the other people in our lives. We then have no training or initiation ceremonies, no culturally approved grieving process, to help us let go of the old programming and learn a different relationship with our self and life. So, we build upon the foundation laid in early childhood.

As adults, we react to the programming of our childhood. To contend that our childhood emotional wounds have not affected our adult lives is ridiculous. To think that our early programming has not influenced the way we have lived is to be in denial to an extreme.

Because societies standards for what constitutes success are dysfunctional, many people can be pointed out who "have risen above" their past to be a success. It is those people, who are supposedly successful, that are running the world. How good a job do you think they are doing?

It is our world leaders, reacting out of the fear and insecurity of their inner children, and the dysfunctional belief systems underlying civilization, who give us war and poverty, billionaires and homelessness.

My book, *Codependence: The Dance of Wounded Souls*, evolved out of a talk that I first did in 1991. In the talk, I stated that I would like to one day make up a bumper sticker that said "Work for World Peace, Heal Your Inner Child." I did have these bumper stickers printed when I published my book. It is, I believe, an essential Truth. We will never have world peace, or a civilized society which is based upon respect and dignity - to say nothing of Love - unless we can heal our relationships with ourselves enough to learn to Love and respect our self.

We cannot Love our neighbor as our self, as long as we are judging and comparing our self to them in order to feel good about our self. We cannot have a society that meets the essential emotional and spiritual needs of it's members as long as we are reacting to life in alignment with rules of interaction that we learned in junior high school.

We are all connected - not separate. We all have worth and deserved to be treated with dignity and respect - instead of earning societies version of worth by stepping on and over our fellow humans, to say nothing of destroying the planet we live on.

It is through healing our inner child wounds that we can learn to respect and Love our self so that we can know how to treat others with respect and Love. It is through healing our inner children that we can save our planet and evolve into a society that does meet the essential needs of it's members.

Inner child healing is not some fad or pop psychology. Inner child healing is the only way to empower ourselves to stop living life in reaction to the past. We have been ignoring history and repeating it for centuries. If we are going to have a chance to reverse the self destructive patterns of human kind, it is going to come from individuals healing self. By healing our inner child wounds, we can change the world.

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