

## Fear of Intimacy

### Fear of Intimacy - The Wounded Heart of Codependency

I mention fear of intimacy often in my writing. It seems to me that in most of the articles I write for my web site I mention it in passing or for a few paragraphs. And it is the predominate theme that I deal with the personal processing I share in my Update Newsletters - and in my personal online journal in the Joy2MeU Journal.

I have been doing some slight rewrites of several of my web pages in early 2002, to accommodate a change in the major marketing tool I use to help make my web site available to people searching the internet. In doing so, I realized that I had never really explained fear of intimacy in a simple, straight forward manner. The article of mine that people find when searching for "fear of intimacy" on the web is Grief, Love, & Fear of Intimacy - the story of my first experience of doing deep grief work. That article is really focused more on deep grieving as a way of healing fear of intimacy, than on the phenomena itself. Thus I realized the need for this article explaining why we have a fear of intimacy.

### Fear of Abandonment, Betrayal, and Rejection

Fear of intimacy is at the heart of codependency. We have a fear of intimacy because we have a fear of abandonment, betrayal, and rejection. We have a these fears because we were wounded in early childhood - we experienced feeling emotionally abandoned, rejected, and betrayed by our parents because they were wounded. They did not have healthy relationship with self - they were codependents who abandoned and betrayed themselves - and their behavior caused us to feel unworthy and unlovable.

"We exited the warm nurturing cocoon of our incubator into a cold, harsh world. A world run by Higher Powers (parents and any body else bigger than us - siblings, grandparents, hospital or orphanage personnel) who were wounded in their childhood. Gods who were not emotionally healthy, and did not know how to Love themselves. Our egos were traumatized - and adapted programming to try to protect us from the pain of emotional trauma that felt life threatening.

The people we Loved the most - our Higher Powers - hurt us the most. Our emotional intimacy issues were caused by, our fear of intimacy is a direct result of, our early childhood experiences. Our lives have been lived in reaction to the intellectual paradigms our egos adapted to deal with emotional trauma.

The part of a child's brain that is logical and rational, that understands abstract concepts (like time or death), that can have any kind of an objective perspective on self or life, does not develop until about the age of 7 (the age of reason.) As little children we were completely ego-centric and magical thinking. We did not have the capacity to understand that our Higher Powers were not perfect. We watched their role modeling, experienced their behavior as personal, and felt the emotional currents of our environments - worry, frustration, resentment, fear, anger, pain, shame, etc. - and were emotionally traumatized.

Our ego adapted itself to the environment it was experiencing. It developed emotional and behavioral defense systems in reaction to the emotional pain we experienced growing up with parents who were wounded codependents.

If you have ever wondered why it is so much easier to feel Spiritual in relationship to nature or animals, here is your answer. It was people who wounded us in childhood. It is people who our egos developed defense systems to protect us from.

I have told people for years, that the only reason to do inner child healing work is if we are going to interact with other people. If one is going to live in isolation on a mountain top meditating, it will be fairly easy to feel Spiritually connected. It is relating to other human beings that is messy."

#### Inner Child Healing - Part 16 - Reprogramming our ego defenses

Relating to animals or nature is safe because we will not be judged. Our pet will not abandon us because we are inherently defective. Nature will not reject us because we are personally shameful. People will - or at least it feels like that is what has happened in the past.

The Truth is that the ways that our parents treated us in childhood did not have anything to do with who we are - was not really personal. They were incapable of seeing themselves clearly. They certainly could not see us clearly - could not see our unique individuality from a perspective that allowed them to honor and respect us as beings separate from them. Their perspective of us was filtered through a prism of their own shame and woundedness. They projected their hopes and dreams, their fears and insecurities onto us. They saw us as the fix for their feelings of unworthiness, an extension of them that gave their life meaning - or perhaps they saw us as an inconvenience and a burden holding them back, preventing them from making their dreams come true. For some of us, a parent(s) was so caught up in their alcoholism or survival drama or career that most of the time they didn't see us at all.

And both our parents and society taught us very clearly - through direct messages and role modeling - to be dishonest. Our parents taught us that keeping up appearances, worrying about what the neighbors think, was more important than our feelings - because it was so important to them. Or, some of us experienced a parent who went to the other extreme, where they acted like they didn't care what anyone thought - which caused us to feel embarrassed and ashamed of their behavior because it was so out of balance, and caused us to worry about what the neighbors thought. They taught us to give power to other people by wearing masks and keeping secrets.

Even more importantly, our role models taught us to be emotionally dishonest. Because it wasn't safe to be emotionally honest we lost our self - did not know how to be emotionally intimate with our self, and instead constructed a false self image to survive. We learned to wear different masks for different people.

As children we were incapable of seeing ourselves as separate from our families - of knowing we had worth as individuals apart from our families. The reality we grew up in was the only reality that we knew. We thought our parents behavior reflected our worth - the same way that our codependent parents thought our behavior was a factor in rather they had worth.

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"We live in a society where the emotional experience of "love" is conditional on behavior. Where fear, guilt, and shame are used to try to control children's behavior because parents believe that their children's behavior reflects their self-worth.

In other words, if little Johnny is a well-behaved, "good boy," then his parents are good people. If Johnny acts out, and misbehaves, then there is something wrong with his parents. ("He doesn't come from a good family.")

What the family dynamics research shows is that it is actually the good child - the family hero role - who is the most emotionally dishonest and out of touch with him/herself, while the acting-out child - the scapegoat - is the most emotionally honest child in the dysfunctional family. Backwards again.

In a Codependent society we are taught, in the name of "love," to try to control those we love, by manipulating and shaming them, to try to get them to do the right things - in order to protect our own ego-strength. Our emotional experience of love is of something controlling: "I love you if you do what I want you to do." Our emotional experience of love is of something that is shaming and manipulative and abusive.

Love that is shaming and abusive is an insane, ridiculous concept. Just as insane and ridiculous as the concept of murder and war in the name of God."

Quote from Codependence: The Dance of Wounded Souls  
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Rather our parents made us their reason for living - which is a form of toxic love in which the child is the drug of choice (causing a child to feel responsible for an adult's self worth is emotionally incestuous and abusive); or a burden to be carried, the scapegoat they blamed for ruining their lives; or treated us like we were an inconvenience in the moments when they even seemed aware of us; it wounded us. We felt betrayed - by our own unworthiness, because we were incapable of knowing they were not perfect. We felt abandoned and rejected by the gods in our lives.

We were wounded in our first relationships with other people. We were tiny, innocent, little beings who were completely dependent upon wounded people who did not Love themselves - and therefore were incapable of Loving us in a healthy way.

Feeling unlovable to the gods in our lives as tiny children was life threatening. It felt life threatening.

Our fear of intimacy is based upon painful, traumatic experience.

in to me see

The simplest and most understandable way I have ever heard intimacy described is by breaking the word down: in to me see. That is what intimacy is about - allowing another person to see into us, sharing who we are with another person.

Sharing who we are is a problem for codependents because at the core of our relationship with ourselves is the feeling that we are somehow defective, unlovable and unworthy - because of our childhood emotional trauma. Codependency is rooted in our ego programming from early childhood. That programming is a defense that the ego adapted to help us survive. It is based upon the feeling that we are shameful, that we are defective, unworthy, and unlovable. Our codependent defense system is an attempt to protect us from being rejected, betrayed, and abandoned because of our unworthy, shameful being.

We have a fear of intimacy because we were wounded, emotionally traumatized, in early childhood - felt rejected and abandoned - and then grew up in emotional dishonest societies that did not provide tools for healing, or healthy role models to teach us how to overcome that fear. Our wounding in early childhood caused us to feel that something was wrong with our being - toxic shame - and our societal and parental role models taught us to keep up appearances, to hide our shamefulness from others.