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Learning From All Our Relationships

By Margaret Paul, Ph.D.

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LEARNING FROM ALL OUR RELATIONSHIPS

By Margaret Paul, Ph.D.

All of our issues come up in our relationships – our fears of domination, rejection, abandonment, of being wrong, embarrassed, or humiliated. Relationships bring up our deepest fears of loss of self and loss of other, which triggers our deep learned protections – anger, judgment, withdrawal, resistance, and compliance.

While our dysfunctional patterns emerge most clearly in primary relationships with a partner, these patterns are certainly activated in friendships, work relationships, and relationships with our parents and children. Therefore, if you are not in a primary relationship with a partner, do not despair! You can still be learning from and evolving through all your relationships.

Craig, one of my clients, has not been in a committed relationship for about seven years. Yet most of the work we do together revolves around the problems he has in his work relationships and friendships. Craig is a person who hates to be controlled by others. As soon as he feels someone wanting something from him such as time, attention, or approval, he feels smothered and withdraws.

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He is highly sensitive to people coming to him from an inner emptiness and "pulling" on him to fill them up. However, his withdrawal doesn't work well for him. When a "puller" comes up against Craig's resistance, the other person tends to pull even more. Craig, who doesn't want to appear rude, ends up giving himself up and caretaking – giving the person what he or she wants. He then feels angry and finds himself not even wanting to be around that person any more. This same dynamic occurred in both of his marriages.

Craig is in the process of developing a powerful adult self who can speak his truth when feeling pulled on rather than withdrawing or complying. He is learning that it may be loving to himself to be open to learning with the other person and say something like, "I feel there is something you are wanting from me. What is it?" He is learning that it may be loving to himself to say, "When you pull on me for approval (or time or attention), it doesn't feel good. I would like to have a caring relationship with you,

but I don't want to be responsible for your good feelings."

Every interaction we have with others is a reflection of our beliefs about ourselves, and we have the opportunity to learn from each difficult interaction. For example, if we believe we are inadequate, unlovable, not enough, or unimportant, we will tend to take personally others' cold or judgmental behavior toward us. We may feel rejected and alone, and respond with anger, resentment, hurt or withdrawal. Our painful feelings and reactive behavior can alert us to the fact that we need to explore our limiting beliefs about ourselves. If you know you are a caring and compassionate person, and your definition of your self-worth is based on who you are rather than on what you do, how you perform or how you look, then you will be much less likely to take other's cold or judgmental behavior personally. You might respond with understanding, compassion or with gently removing yourself from the situation, but you would not feel hurt by other's behavior, nor would you get angry, resentful or withdrawn.

All our relationships and our reactions to them provide fertile ground for our personal and spiritual growth. If you are willing to notice all painful interactions and feelings – even to people with whom you are not involved, such as the person who cut you off on the freeway or the clerk at the market who was rude – you can learn much about your false beliefs about yourself and about what you can and cannot control. Your feelings such as anger at the person who cut you off on the freeway or resentment toward the rude clerk are red flags that let you know it's time to look within and explore the beliefs that are causing your difficult feelings. When you recognize that your feelings are coming from your own beliefs rather than from the other's behavior, you are on the road to personal responsibility and the personal power that comes with that.

Margaret Paul, Ph.D. is the best-selling author and co-author of eight books, including "Do I Have To Give Up Me To Be Loved By You?", "Do I Have To Give Up Me To Be Loved By My Kids?", "Healing Your Aloneness", "Inner Bonding", and "Do I Have To Give Up Me To Be Loved By God?" Visit her web site for a FREE Inner Bonding course: <http://www.innerbonding.com> or <mailto:margaret@innerbonding.com>

Breaking Your Relationship Pattern, Part 1

By Rinatta Paries

When you were little, you looked up to your parents. You imitated their mannerisms, words, and actions as you learned about life by watching them. This applies to relationships as well – you leaned about relationships by watching them.

Not all you learned about relationships came from your parents; your learning has continued throughout your life. But what you saw your parents do in relationships, how you interpreted what you saw, and how you felt about it, is the foundation of your adult relationships.

That's not to say that your parents were wrong or bad parents, or even that they had a bad relationship. The only thing that can be said is if intimate relationships are problematic for you, the source is inevitably your foundational learning.

If a great relationship, a great partner, is what you are after, you must see, understand, and deconstruct your foundational learning about relationships. To take apart a foundation of something is a delicate thing. Imagine trying to remove or change the foundation of a house while leaving the rest of the house standing intact. Not an easy task. But in order to have a great relationship, you need to reconstruct your foundational learning while leaving you intact.

To begin, you must get complete with your parents. If you still have negative feelings about what they did to you or each other, you will create situations in your intimate relationships where you will confront these same negative feelings. To see an illustration of this in you own life, take the PatternTracker™ Quiz at

To be complete with your parents means to be both free of negative feelings and to feel compassion toward them. Can you say both are true for you?

If you can, congratulations. You are a member of a very small minority. If you are not free of negative feeling toward your parents or/and if you do not feel compassion for them, you have some completion work to do. That is if you want a long-term, healthy, thriving relationship.

The question is, how do you get complete?

The first thing to know about completion is that it is not just a feeling that will one day appear. There are steps that can be taken to generate a feeling of completion. What stands between you and having a great relationship is taking these steps. Watch for these steps in my newsletter over the next few weeks.

Your Relationship Coach,
Rinatta Paries

Do you know how to attract your ideal mate? Do you know how to build a fulfilling relationship, or how to reinvent yours to meet your needs? Relationship Coach Rinatta Paries can teach you the skills and techniques to attract and sustain long-term, healthy partnerships. Visit www.WhatItTakes.com where

you'll find quizzes, classes, advice and a free weekly ezine. Become a "true love magnet(tm)!"

Breaking Your Relationship Pattern, Part 1

Top 10 Beauty of Being In Love

Make the Most of Your Mentoring Relationships

Lessons About Marriage Learnt From Riding A Bike

The 10-24-7 Rule – Learning Piano Music The Easy Way!

How to keep up the SPICE in your Love Life.

Online Dating Secrets Revealed!

How to Gain and Retain More Customers

How Nice Guys, Shy Guys and Good Guys Finish First!

How to play a Guitar



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