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Take Off the Rose-Colored Glasses When Dating

By Susan Dunn

Take Off the Rose-Colored Glasses When Dating by Susan Dunn, MA, certified Emotional

Intelligence Coach

Robin was giving me an anatomy of her divorce. "There were signs," she said. "Plenty of them. I just ignored them."

"The counselor told me to ignore how he treated other people," said Manuela, "and concentrate on how he treated me. But one day I became `other people.'"

It's typical to do this in the early stages of dating and falling in love because, first of all it's an exciting and complex process getting to know someone, and secondly, there are all those wonderful dreamy chemicals bathing our brains.

It's also a time when we're prone to be "optimistic," to assume everything's going to be marvelous. Nobody starts a new relationship hoping it will be a disaster. We invest a lot of time and energy into it, and we can begin to see what we want to see, not what's really going on.

This, by the way, is one of the catch points about Emotional Intelligence, and about learned optimism. It's recommended in many daily situations, particularly performance situations (like giving a speech or pitching an account), but it is never recommended in situations of great consequence. At those times, we need to take off the rose-colored glasses. Dating is surely one of those times.

While you're enjoying the chemical bath coming from the brain-stem and limbic brains, stay in touch with your neocortex - the thinking brain - and process just exactly what it is you're seeing and experiencing. Working with a coach, BTW, can help you with clarity.

"No hay casualidades," say the Spanish. Roughly translated it means, "nothing happens by accident" or "there are no coincidences."

Each of these things happened early on in someone's dating career and were ignored:

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- We were sitting at the kitchen table at his folks' house and heard a mousetrap go off. Edward sprang to his feet, ran over to the trap, freed the mouse and then beat it to death with a fly swatter. Somehow I didn't think that related to anything else but the mouse, though it made me sick at the time.
- Stanton was a good doctor. He had taken a contract and was working from home and made plenty of money and that blinded me. Turns out he'd had a couple of partnerships that had failed because he was so demanding and impossible to work with. Boy did I find out about that later. It's very strange for a doctor to work out of his home. Somehow that never registered on me.
- Leo was always very relaxed with me, but whenever a waiter came around, or he talked about someone from his past, he was so critical, it was like he was examining them with a magnifying glass. Came the day I fell under the magnifying glass and was found to be `wanting' just like everyone else, in tiny, little inconsequential, fly-speck ways.
- Eino always called his divorce "leaving home." I'd never heard a grown male talk that way, but I

ignored the implications. My friends said he was like a kid, but I just couldn't see it until I became the surrogate "mom."

- "You know how those fraternity parties are," said Nita, referring to her college promiscuity as if it were common place. I had no idea what she meant, but I found out later on. She assumed casual sex with just about anyway was, `well, you know how it is.'
- Though she was always on her best behavior when we were together, Dalida referred to her secretary, her maid, and her hairdresser as "the help," and demeaned them in front of me.
- Our dates were frugal, because I'm on a budget and Annie seemed to enjoy them. I missed that all her conversation was about how much things cost, and how she noted, as people passed by, the Gucci purse, or the Rolex watch, or the nasty "fake" jewelry.

Hard as it is, try and keep your head about you - that is, don't get "flooded" by those wonderful chemicals to the point where you aren't paying attention to the little things. That's all it is - little things. Watch how they treat all the other people in their life. The Spanish also say, "What goes around, comes around."

You will have learned, or will be learning, that it's best to nip things in the bud. Yes, people can change. And yes, at middle-age we've all had our `learning experiences.'

Be mindful. Observe. Ask questions. It can save you from looking up one day and saying, "It was there all the time. Why didn't I see it?"

"Choose your life's mate carefully. From this one decision will come 90% of all your happiness or misery." ~ H. Jackson Brown, Jr., "Life's Little Instruction Book"

©Susan Dunn, MA Clinical Psychology, The EQ Coach™, <http://www.susandunn.cc>, helping people like you negotiate the turns of midlife transition. We bring the power of Emotional Intelligence to your life through coaching, distance learning, eBooks and Special Reports. Susan is the author of "How to Live Your Life with Emotional Intelligence" - <http://www.webstrategies.cc/ebooklibrary.html>.
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Being Optimistic v. Wearing Rose-Colored Glasses

By Susan Dunn

DEFINITIONS

Being optimistic – Believing the doctrine that this world is the best possible world; having an inclination to put the most favorable construction upon actions and events or to anticipate the best possible outcome

Rose-colored glasses – Putting the most favorable construction upon actions events and people and expecting the best possible outcome when common sense dictates this isn't possible or the reality is that it isn't happening. Refusing to take action when you should and just hoping for the best. Denying what you're experiencing.

COMPARISONS

Taking action to make things change vs. Hoping things will change

Demanding respect vs. Wishing someone would treat you better

Making your dreams come true vs. Just dreaming

EXAMPLE

Randolph approached his sales job with optimism and enthusiasm. He expected to close sales and didn't let rejection get him down. He considered each rejection one step closer to a sale. If he didn't get a sale, or had a big disappointment, he distracted himself, did something fun, and didn't consider it anything personal about himself or his capabilities. Then he tried again. He attributed a failure to something not personal, not permanent, and not pervasive. He had an optimistic attitude, especially in performance situations, but he worked on his skills too. He was in touch with reality.

When Melanie got sick, she just hoped it would go away and didn't see a doctor. When someone mistreated her she wished it away, or convinced herself that she was misperceiving, or pretended it wasn't happening. When it became apparent her company was failing and that most would be fired, everyone started to interview for a new job except Melanie. She kept thinking it wouldn't happen and everything would work out well. This was flying in the face of reality.

KEY POINT

"Attitude is more important than the past, than education, than money, than circumstances, than what people do or say. It is more important than appearance, giftedness, or skill." ~ Charles Swindoll

BENEFITS

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When you use learned optimism instead of rose-colored glasses you know when to continue and when not to. Learned optimism is the facilitator of all the emotional intelligence competencies and makes your life work better. Wearing rose-colored glasses keeps you out of touch with reality, and unable to be proactive or responsive when you need to.

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Contact Lenses: See The World Through Different Lenses

The Single's Guide To Online Dating

What to Expect When You Are Dating Online

Examples of Emotional Intelligence from Popular Songs

My Online Friends – Dating Website Script

Online Dating Secrets Revealed!

The Ultimate Rose Garden– Neighbors envy, owners pride!

How to keep up the SPICE in your Love Life.

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



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