

Discovering Self In Relationship

As a Psychotherapist, I have encountered many people who have struggled in relationships. The most common complaint has been that they feel unfulfilled, devalued or unappreciated in relationship with others. It is my professional experience that when we get caught up in what others can do to make us feel good about ourselves, we are likely to become angry and resentful.

3 Tips to Avoid the Resentment Trap:

1. Ask yourself... am I being realistic with my expectations?

Perhaps due to unmet needs, you project your disappointments onto people who are incapable of meeting up to your standards. No one person can meet all of your needs. If this is your framework, you will ultimately set yourself up for feeling unfulfilled and empty. Friendships, work relationships, family and partners all participate in your life in meaningful ways. But in the end, it is up to you to love yourself the way you deserve to be loved.

2. Remind yourself... you are a valuable, lovable human being.

No one person can make you feel good all of the time. You can feel loved in another's presence but if you choose one person to define how you feel in a relationship, you will be setting yourself up for disappointment. If you don't feel good about yourself all of the time, begin by acting as if you do by creating a loving mantra and reciting it each morning in front of the mirror before the day begins. Examples may include "I deserve love" or "I am lovable". Say it often enough and you will begin to believe it!

3. Focus on Self-care.

If you deplete yourself to the point of exhaustion, it is far more likely that you will be vulnerable to wanting your needs met by others. You may possibly go to a child-like place and demand that you get your needs met immediately. I see this sort of thing in my work with clients who are struggling in love addicted or codependent relationships. So what is the best remedy for healing the vulnerable child within? Replace your expectations with gentle guidance and nurture yourself through a walk, a yoga class, journaling or meditation. You deserve loving care... and who better than yourself to give it to you.

"When will we become lovable? When will we feel safe? When will we get all the protection, nurturing, and love we so richly deserve? We will get it when we begin giving it to ourselves."
Melody Beattie, Beyond Codependency



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