

Lesson 94: Unmet Emotional Needs

Within every human being, there is an innate need for acceptance and a desire for the fulfillment of love and affection. As humanity is not a one-size-fits-all, the desire to express and to receive love and affection varies by degrees and intensity, as does the need for acceptance. Because the co-mingling of these human needs seldom matches up perfectly with the individual needs and desires of those in close proximity, the degree and the intensity that drives the need for acceptance or the desire to express and receive love and affection, when denied can leave one to contend with an array of unmet emotional needs. For many people the denial of these innate needs translates into a life-long pursuit spent chasing their emotional needs down a few too many dark alleyways. As people seldom find what they are looking for, mostly because they really do not know what they are looking for or why - this internal force, unrecognized for what it truly is, drives them in search of acceptance, love and affection, usually in all the wrong places and for all the wrong reasons. Unfortunately, the pursuit of these insatiable needs and desires brings with it some very expensive costs in the form of undesirable consequences, such as a well-blazed trail of broken relationships, shattered dreams, or goals not achieved that leave behind a trail of mental and emotional debris. The illusion of failure, etched in the memory bank of the subconscious, becomes a belief that is very difficult to erase or write over. The intent for this lesson is to shed light on the matter of unmet emotional needs by bringing the underlying causes and effects to the surface, given that they span across the borders of your mental, emotional, physical and spiritual well-being.

The degree and the intensity that drives the innate need for acceptance, love and affection is a psychological process that begins setting the stage for life right from infancy. As every infant is born with its own innate personality traits, so the innate need for acceptance and the desire for love and expression, given or received, to some extent comes prepackaged too. As these emotional needs begins to unfold during childhood, the development of them is hindered or enhanced by the influence of the family, social, educational, religious and cultural environment. The degree of acceptance, deprived or withheld during infancy and childhood, as well as the freedom to express and receive love and affection carries over into adulthood as an unmet emotional need. Given that these innate needs do not dissipate into thin air, they follow right into adulthood like a shadow, always seeking a ways and a means to their fulfillment.

The emotional need for acceptance or a desire to express and receive love and affection often transforms into the hope of a dream realized, typically in the pursuit of a relationship or a goal intended to be achieved, both of which are prone to the conditional acceptance or rejection of others. Because the principle of attraction draws relationships that reflect the degree and intensity of recognized or unrecognized unmet emotional needs, the attraction is a recipe for emotional disaster, as no one can

adequately meet those needs. Thus, the relationship eventually falls apart at its proverbial seams because the foundation for a healthy relationship is missing its key ingredients – mental and emotional stability. Just as a house divided against itself cannot stand, a relationship cannot bear the burden of unmet emotional needs placed upon the wrong shoulders. Although the responsibility lies within the one seeking to fulfill those needs, the motivation seldom occurs on the conscious level of awareness. The drive is usually an unconscious reactive response to internalized unmet emotional needs, whether for acceptance, love and affection or both. When unmet emotional needs slide down the range of normalcy to abnormalcy, the results are not very desirable, as like always attracts like. The disappointments begin to stack up as the need for acceptance and the desire to express and receive love and affection fails to produce desirable or long-lasting results.

The emotional need for acceptance is not limited to the often-devastating effects of failed relationships, it manifests on the mental plane as the need to achieve a goal for the sake of approval, falsely perceived as a sure means of gaining acceptance. The emotional stakes are high and the reward is not always worth the effort. In fact, the end-result can be a significant let down, especially when the level of acceptance is not the reward desired or anticipated. Many people find themselves investing mental, emotional, physical and financial equity in the pursuit of a professional or vocational career just to please someone other than themselves or to prove a perceived necessary point, whether to themselves or to others. Unfortunately, unhappiness tends to trickle in when such pursuits, achieved or accomplished only for the sake of acceptance gives way to dissatisfaction. Thus, the reward is not as meaningful as opposed to achieving a desired goal.

The need to express and receive love and affection is an emotional driving force that often leads to much heartbreak along with the breakup of family, loss of material possessions and financial ruin, among other devastating losses. In spite of best-laid intentions, seldom is there a conscious awareness of this underlying drive, therefore, the cognitive dots are not connected, perhaps for years, if ever. Nonetheless, the mental and emotional damage piles up, as like just keeps attracting like. Even when there is a conscious awareness of this driving force, the dream of realizing it as an objectified experience seldom turns out to be a dream come true, instead it turns into an emotional nightmare. As if the heartaches and the disappointments were not enough to contend with, there are emotional scars added to the heaping pile of emotional debris that also have to be overcome at some point and time along the path of life in order for this driving force to stop wreaking its internal and external havoc.

It is one thing to express the need to give and receive love and affection and to be accepted, but it is another thing to understand its underlying cause, which tends to go unnoticed when it is not blatantly apparent or does not appear on the cognitive radar.

Thus, the perceived innocent and otherwise seemingly normal human need turns into a fire-breathing dragon that literally destroys relationships and creates all sorts of personal dramas. In spite of best intentions, neither the person seeking the fulfillment of their unmet needs or those whom they expect will fulfill those needs; the inevitable result is that both will surely fail in their equally well-intended desire to accomplish this goal. The affects are often devastating because it opens the door wide to the feeling of having failed the other or that of being a failure, which leads to even more damaging feelings and emotions that supports destructive thought patterns, sets disabling beliefs in place, distorts perceptions and contributes to unrealistic expectations.

The unrealistic attempt to fulfill unmet emotional needs sometimes requires the expertise of a psychiatrist or other professionals to help unravel its many layers. While it may seem that these unmet emotional needs are out of sight, in no way indicates they are out of mind just because they fell off the radar of conscious awareness and have taken up residency in the subconscious where their affects are mentally, physically and even spiritually felt in various forms of manifested experience. The pursuit of unmet emotional needs are not only mentally taxing, they sap you of your physical strength and drain your spiritual energy. Not only do unmet emotional needs unbalance your mental, physical and spiritual equilibrium, they are the cause of many physiological and psychological disorders.

Life becomes a struggle to maintain the constant need to pursue these unmet emotional needs. The further down the rabbit hole they send you scurrying to seek their fulfillment, the more they threaten to undermine your sanity. As your serenity, peace of mind and tranquility fly out the window every time you fail to achieve acceptance or to express and receive love and affection, as these internal insatiable needs and desires drive you to places you end up regretting later down the road of life, the result is the displacement of your own priorities. The things in life that should be a priority give way to the pursuit of your unmet emotional needs until you recognize them for what they really are and not what they appear to be. As your life becomes more and more unmanageable, the consequences also become unmanageable because the undesirable effects are not limited to the destruction wreaked on the human plane. The destructive effects of unmet emotional needs wreak just as much havoc on the spiritual plane, felt and visually seen in the condition of the chakras, as well as in the auric layers. Thus healing does not only need to occur on the mental, emotional and physical planes, it must also occur on the spiritual plane.

Just because the need for acceptance and the desire to express and receive love and affection are necessary to function on the human plane of being, they are no less subject to the human condition, especially when they become a driving force rather than just a normal human need or desire. They tend to create unrealistic conditions that adversely influence others. The mental and emotional manifestations appear as attempts to

control, change or influence the will of others, often accomplished by way of guilt as a means to get these needs and desires met. When these insatiable needs and desires, inflicted upon others, refuse to step up to the plate of expectancy and meet these needs because they are neither mentally or emotionally capable of doing so, conflict arises. Of course, these conflicts take on many adverse and undesirable forms, such as arguments, dissatisfaction with the relationship, regardless of the nature of the relationship, as well as a long list of irritants that often result in fractured or broken relationships.

As there are no quick fixes to getting unmet emotional needs met, anymore than there are any temporary fixes, there is a permanent resolution that comes by way of very honest self-introspection, which generally occurs after enough mental and emotional havoc has been wreaked and the price has been paid. Although the debris lies scattered about you, sometimes in close proximity, the passing of time does not always allow the consequences to be undone. These unfortunate consequences are best accepted in the light of truth and integrated into the field of human experience. Although remorse and regret is a natural inclination, neither serves a valid purpose. The process of self-introspection traces all the consequences back to its initial cause, which for many people occurred as the result of not being accepted on the level they required or not having the freedom to either express love and affection or receive it, at least in an equal measure if not more.

Chasing down acceptance, love and affection for all the wrong reasons also results in a lack of trust, in you and in others. Rebuilding trust in your ability to seek such emotional fulfillment in ways that do not harm you or others in the making is not usually an overnight success story. If it took years to get where you are today, it is likely to take a fair amount of time to rebuild lost trust. As there is no internal switch that instantly flips to the off position when it comes to dysfunctional thought patterns, established after years of acting and reacting from force of habit, these well-etched thinking patterns require some degree of reprogramming, which for most people is no easy feat. Seldom does anyone stop dead in the midst of a well-established habit and instantly or spontaneously switch over to a life-changing habit. The fact that switching habits is a cognitive process, all by itself lends to the factor of time needed to process the dysfunctional mindset that got you where you are today and the time needed to switch to a new way of thinking. Not only does the process require a new way of thinking, or at the very least making necessary alterations, it also requires the examination of long held related beliefs that also took years to establish themselves in your psyche. Inevitably, the cognitive process immediately extends, which means additional mental work added to the challenge of changing or altering habitual thought patterns, all of which requires being more consciously aware of your behavior patterns, especially the reactive ones that you seldom gave thought too previously. A dramatic change in your reality does not come easy or without effort, at least not without the investment of mental and emotional sweat equity. You can only process new information as you are able to digest, assimilate

and integrate it in the timeframe you are cognitively able to do so, nor more can be expected of you.

Your unmet emotional needs are not going to vanish in spite of self-introspection by way of taking a personal inventory. However, the intensity of them will be less troublesome over time as you come to terms with the source of them and bear witness to the evidence of the havoc they wreaked in your life, as well as in the lives of those entangled in the fulfillment of those needs. The extent of the ground covered while attempting to chase down your unmet needs is a field of mental and emotional destruction that spread wider than you realize. As the evidence begins to surface, you will find that there were many adversely affected aspects of your reality, all of which will likely require a healing and a new way of looking at the related and even the seemingly unrelated circumstances and events experienced along the path of your life. They not only include any fractured or broken relationships, shattered dreams or goals not achieved, but even the goals achieved that really were for naught.

The insatiable need to fulfill your unmet emotional needs placed a mental and emotional burden on your self-worth, which in turn affected your ability to be honest with yourself and others due to your blind sightedness, however, these unmet emotional needs did not stop at undermining your self-worth and displacing your honesty, they gave way to an array of fears. They activated the fear of rejection and the fear of not being accepted for who and what you were, whether with respect to your talents, skills or abilities or any other aspect of your personality or the fear of not having the love and affection you desired reciprocated in equal measure, if not more. As the continuation of the original cause led to a string of many more causes and effects that opened the door wide to the emotions of anger and resentment, as well as the need to justify your actions, which you had to do time and time again. The mental effort it took to get your unmet emotional needs met required some degree of control over the actions and reactions of those whom you sought out to fulfill these needs. Each time a perceived failure occurred, whether the collapse of another relationship or acceptance denied, the failure provoked a false sense of guilt and shame, as pride and ego stood between illusion and reality.

Strings of failed relationships tend to have a rather adverse affect on the psyche. With the passing of another failed relationship, it gets progressively harder to open up to intimacy or to be receptive to trust regardless of who violated the trust. As Pandora's lid falls off the proverbial box, out spills a host of obsessive and compulsive behaviors that perpetuates feelings of inadequacy, frustration, desperation, anxiety and sometimes-even envy. As martyrdom leads to self-pity, intolerance and impatience, there is often a need to judge, criticize or blame as a means of controlling or manipulating, as well as the need for defensiveness, denial and the unwillingness to take responsibility. In addition to all these less than admirable behaviors and unpleasant feelings, there is also the loss

of hope, which leads to loneliness, isolation and depression and the all time favorite – the victim.

Self-introspection, conducted with an attitude of honesty, not only traces back the many affects to their causes and finally to revealing the original cause, it requires taking responsibility for the harm not only caused to others, but the harm caused to you, which above all means forgiving yourself. As the root cause of unmet emotional needs do not always lie on the surface where they are clearly visible and are easily detected, it is nearly impossible to not suffer their devastating consequences when driven by unseen forces that in actuality are provoking unacceptable behaviors to begin with. However, it serves no good purpose to blame yourself for a condition you were not aware of or were not aware that the condition was adversely affecting you in such a way as to send you futilely chasing down your unmet emotional needs, while undermining your integrity with inappropriate behaviors. Likewise, there is no need to blame anyone else, as no one really has a firm grip on the human condition, save but a few. However, this condition does not have to plague you any further once you identify the emotional blocks and remove the mental debris accumulated from your habitual reactionary behaviors, dysfunctional thought patterns, disabling beliefs, distorted perceptions and unrealistic expectations. The removal of these mental and emotional obstacles will clear the path that leads to the promise of new experiences and new potentials.

In the context of limited space, we covered as much important ground as we possibly could with the hope that even if the battle of unmet emotional needs waged a war against you, this discussion helped you to realize that not all is lost, but that there is much to gain. There is the realistic promise of a revived spirit, the re-establishment of trusting yourself and trusting others and the ability to be receptive to new potentials and possibilities. As these potentials and possibilities manifest into objective experiences, they will exceed your expectations, just as they exceed the expectations of those who blazed the same trails and made similar discoveries about themselves too. As always, we encourage you to share your thoughts, comments or personal experiences.

Many Blessings,

Linda, Z and the Collective We