

# TROUBLED CHILDHOOD

What Constitutes A Healthy Child?

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#### WHAT CONSTITUTES A HEALTHY CHILD?

#### First year

The child begins the journey of the formation of identity and learns about trust. The child sees themself through the eyes of the parental figures and needs to see in the parental mirror that he/she is being:

- 1. Loved
- 2. Adored
- 3. Empathized with
- 4. Enjoyed
- 5. Is physically safe
- 6. Their physical needs are met when needed.



Continuation of what was given in the first year, plus the child needs to begin to separate and individuate. Through this journey, the child learns to trust the caregivers, and begins to learn to trust themselves, the world around them, that they are both lovable and competent.



Child needs lots of autonomy to understand and explore their environment and fully develop their curiosity. It is vital that the child be given words to describe their inner feelings, so they can communicate with others at this most important level. All of the child's feelings need to be accepted as true for the child without fear of punishment, judgement, blame, guilt, and shame. In addition, to love, the child requires the caregivers to show the child unconditional positive regard and faith that the child needs to go through experiences and learn from them. The child needs clear boundaries on behavior, and firm loving correction as opposed to punishment.

The word *discipline* comes from the Greek word
Disciple which means to internalize the values and skills of the teacher.

The goal of discipline should always be to teach, as opposed to control. Discipline sets limits on behavior to make the child feel more secure, and to teach the child important life lessons.

#### WHAT CONSTITUTES A TROUBLED CHILDHOOD?

#### Forms of Abuse

Neglect Physical and/or emotional
The child needs something from the parent, and the parent doesn't respond. As a result, the child feels that:

- A. It's not O.K. to need from others
- B. If I need, I am weak.
- C. The world won't respond to my needs.
- **D**. I have to be strong and take care of myself, even when I don't know how.
- E. I must find another person to take care of me.

Repression Parent says, either overtly and/or covertly, I don't know what's wrong with you; Stop crying there's nothing to be scared of; Big Boys don't' cry; Look at the bright side, etc.

Over-Control The child needs permission from the parent for their thoughts, feelings, and behavior, i.e., Stop that crying or I'll give you something to cry about; Be careful; you might get hurt; you can't trust others; Don't touch that (without giving the child an explanation).

Shaming The child feels humiliated for having had and expressed a feeling, i.e., Poor baby – Did I hurt your little psyche? Emotional health involves the ability to express the feeling fully in the moment it is felt.







The precludes all judgment. Forcing the child to act as the adult thinks they should (making the child apologize for something when they are not ready to, making the child undress, spanking, taking away the child's toys, Etc.).

#### **Intimacy**

We learn how to be intimate from:

- A Watching our parents with each other
- B. How our parents interact with us.
- How our parents interact and talk about others.

Intimacy involves the ability to come together safely with the other person, and to separate safely from the other person. Being safe with another is trusting that the other person will not intentionally harm us physically or emotionally. It also involves the belief that if our feelings get hurt, the other person will take us seriously.

#### THE TWO PILLARS OF SELF-ESTEEM

Self-esteem has two parts

- **Competency** I am good at what I do, and I can handle what the world presents to me.
- **B.**Lovability I am easily loved. When people see me and get to know me they will love me.

We learn how to treat ourselves and others through the intimacy map modeled by our parents. We learn competency when our parents have faith that our efforts to learn will be fruitful. We learn lovability by being loved and empathized with, i.e., my parents understand and accept all my feelings, both positive and negative and still love me.

#### **EMPATHIC BREAKS**

When a parent empathizes with a child, the child feels accepted and safe. When a parent judges a child, the child thinks there's something wrong with him/her and gets confused and scared. From the position of fear, the child does not learn the lesson that they need to learn, and walks away believing that they are bad or incompetent. We cannot self-reflect and grow when we are being judged. An empathic break occurs wherever the parent stops seeing things from the child's point of view and judges the child from the adult's point of view. Severe empathic breaks can create psychotic disturbances.

"We cannot self-reflect and grow when we are being judged"

The opposite of judgment is faith, faith that the child is going to get the lesson without the parent having to beat it into them.

Judgment is like taking a picture of a person at a certain moment, and them holding up the picture as being the whole person. For example, taking a picture of someone crying, and then showing them the picture, and saying *This is proof that you are a sad person*. Healing comes from eliminating judgement and staying curious about causes and conditions.



Empathizing allows us to show our vulnerability knowing that the other person cares enough about us to not judge. It allows us to be authentic, and to realize that we are all much more alike than different.

#### HEALING

# Elements of Healing:

- ① Courage To self-reflect openly and honestly nature does not reward fear when the fear immobilizes. To become a person of wisdom, you must be willing to risk others' judgment.
- 2 Surrender -To the feeling that arise, and the truth attached to those feelings the more damaged we are, the more our ego believes that it is in a battle to survive (fear). When we fight that battle, we cannot heal, since all our energy is diverted and directed towards survival.
- 3. Faith, that our authentic loving true self can replace the fear Belief that going through the pain with increased awareness, will ultimately create the freedom and love that we desire.
- 4 Loss of Ego letting go of who you believe you are, or need to be, in order to survive and opening to a new self-concept as it transmutes from survival consciousness to love consciousness, i.e., from ego to spirit.
- 5 Self-Observation Letting go of all self-judgment as to good or bad, right or wrong, and instead staying curious and open to the truth of whatever surfaces at the moment. Discovering the part of ourselves that is unaffected by fear and loss, i.e., our soul.
- 6. Love of Truth Seeing the love of truth as the only lifeline The truth can, does, and will set us free.

### "Who am I, and who am I in this relationship?"

Heart To Heart Counseling is proudly introducing a non-pathologizing way of raising self-esteem and eliminating 'stuck-ness' in your most important relationships...!

#### Multi-Dimensional Relational Therapy (MDRT)

Based on our many decades of research and clinical experience, we have designed a new model, which we have named Multi-Dimensional Relational Therapy (MDRT). Our objective is to assist you in transforming the inner core of your being, to create high self-esteem, lasting love, connection, and intimacy, both with yourself, and between you and your partner.

#### Dimension 1 - Ego Functioning and Defenses

Before we grew up and developed an adult intimate relationship with another person, we were all individuals who were learning about ourselves and the world around us. This learning took place through the culture we were raised in, and through childhood life experiences. These experiences gave us both positive loving, and/or negative interactions and connections, which left us with feelings of being loved and cared for, or the lack thereof. How do those experiences shape and form our personality, and affect our ability to create intimacy later in life?

#### Dimension 2 - Spiritual Transcendence

What most couples say they want when they come to counseling, is to achieve a 'more fulfilling relationship'. What we have found is that this usually has to do with one or both partners not feeling loved in the way that is meaningful to them.

How does spirituality and the embodiment of spiritual values inform our ability to have high self-esteem, and to give and receive love in the way that is most meaningful to us and our partner?

#### Dimension 3 – Sexuality

How happy are you with your sexual life? Has sex with your partner become routine and/or unfulfilling? Is sexual desire an unresolved issue between you and your partner?

Can you say exactly what you want in bed, or let your partner really see you during an orgasm (or do you have orgasms)? How inhibited do you feel in bed? Do you have sexual questions that remain unanswered? Have you stopped having sex altogether? Have you attempted and tried to use sex to get non-sexual needs met in your relationship? Do you fantasize or act out your desires to have sex outside your relationship?

#### Dimension 4 - Attachment and Childhood development

When we care deeply about another person, we form an emotional attachment to that person. This is ubiquitous in human development throughout the world. One dictionary definition of attachment is that attachment is a deep and enduring emotional bond between two people in which each seeks closeness and feels more secure, when in the presence of the attachment figure. How we attach emotionally in our romantic relationships is a vital area to be both explored and understood if we desire true intimacy to develop.

There are three basic attachment styles:

- 1 Secure attachment
- 2 Anxious, Ambivalent attachment
- 3 Avoidant attachment

Understanding how these develop, and which style you utilized can help you to co-create the secure attachment style that everyone needs and wants.

#### Dimension 5 - Trauma and the loss of the authentic true-self

Many individuals enter into a relationship with one another while having many unexamined traumas as part of their unique life histories, which have impaired the formation of their self-esteem, interpersonal skills, and ultimately the formation of their authentic true-selves. We call this impairment the 'adapted-self', or the 'co-dependent-self'. Many marital conflicts are the end result of these unexamined and unresolved traumas they carry with them. This dimension's primary focus will be on the impact of trauma on the individuals' authentic true-self, and by extension his/her relational-self. Gaining a deeper understanding of this will allow us to transcend these traumatic experiences and help form positive loving relationships within ourselves and with our significant other.

#### **Dimension 6 – Communication**

How we express ourselves to our partners often informs how our partners respond to us. Do we focus on the negative, i.e., say what we are not getting (you never hug me when you come home from work) or do we focus on the positive and ask for what we want more directly? (i.e., I really appreciate you coming home on time, and if you would give me a hug when you enter you would make my day!).

What makes communication so vitally important to longlasting romance, and what are the secrets to having intimate communication with your partner? Do you listen to each other in order to understand, or do you listen to respond, and to be right?

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Robert B. Jaffe, Ph.D., LMFT, has been working as a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist and Ericksonian Certified Hypnotherapist, with over four decades of clinical experience in Encino, California. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Philosophy from California State University, Northridge - Northridge, California, a Master of Science degree in Counseling Psychology from the University of LaVern, LaVern California, and a Doctoral degree in Philosophy and Hypnotherapy from the American Institute of Hypnotherapy, in Anaheim California. He concentrates his practice focusing on the treatment of addictions, trauma, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, and couples counseling. He further specializes in the treatment of childhood trauma, sexual abuse, neglect, and emotional/physical abandonment. His many years working in the community and his extensive academic and in field training have established Dr. Jaffe as a seasoned and experienced psychotherapist. In addition to his clinical responsibilities, Robert is an unwavering and dependable friend, cherishing deep connections with his loved ones, embracing the joys of travel, and nourishing his body with a commitment to healthy eating.

Mitra Rashidian, Ph.D., LMFT., CST, ABS., is a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT) in full-time private practice in Encino, California. In addition, she is a Certified Sex Therapist through The American Association of Sexuality Educators, Counselors and Therapists (AASECT). Also, she is Board Certified Diplomate by the American Board of Sexology (ABS). Further, she is a Certified Hypnotherapist via the Ericksonian Foundation in Arizona. She was trained at The Valley Trauma Center in Van Nuys, California, where she worked extensively with sexual assault survivors.

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In addition to her clinical and research pursuits, she possesses a remarkable talent in the culinary arts, an enduring passion for painting, a fervent dedication to gardening, and a strong commitment to maintaining a healthy lifestyle through mindful eating and regular exercise habits. Further information about her clinical work and focus can be obtained at Psychology Today, trfsq.com, and ResearchGate.

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