

Relationships, Growth and Happiness Through Inner-Reflection

In our roles as therapists, we regularly facilitate and coach clients on the path of self-discovery and inner-growth. At times we see people who are struggling with feelings of loneliness or feeling out of place around others due to not being in a romantic relationship, or continually finding themselves in unhealthy relationships.

Unlocking the right combination to access inner-happiness can help one form healthy relationships and experience life circumstances positively.

From a relationship standpoint, we are accustomed to living in a society where being "coupled" is often expected and stressed, often silently. Therefore, individuals oftentimes feel an unspoken pressure by society, friends, family, and sometimes (perhaps as a result) themselves to "need" to be coupled with another individual.

While being in a relationship can have its many benefits including the emotional support a relationship provides, being in a relationship for the sake of being in a relationship or being in a relationship at the wrong time or with the wrong person can prove to be quite the opposite of beneficial.

First, a point that is stressed in therapy is that an individual must first and foremost be happy with him/herself. What does this happiness look like? There is no hard and fast answer to this question as individual happiness is something an "individual" must define. This is defined based on a plethora of likes, traits, preferences, strengths, and life goals (to name only a few).

Second, it is important to understand that nobody can make another happy. Many love songs on the radio refer to how another has come along and swept someone off of their feet or turned their gray skies to blue. To the contrary, happiness does not come from the outside but rather from within. Happiness is a choice as well as a process that only a person can attain within him/herself through work and self-discipline.

A relationship is not meant to "complete" someone; rather, the companionship of a spouse or partner can only compliment the other. A spouse or partner is a compliment in terms of the support that they can offer, by helping another to be all that they can be by reminding them of who they are, but not to complete the person. If one is looking to another to complete him/herself, eventually the spouse or partner will tire of feeling relied upon as a savior to the point of over-dependence.

Inner-reflection can be an avenue to give yourself the time needed to define who you are and what matters most to you presently. It is important to be patient with yourself and give yourself time to figure this out.

One technique is to quiet the mind, and listen in silence for the answers that come from within. This is a process of accessing inner wisdom and is practiced in many spiritual traditions. This wisdom can speak to any roadblocks one may be experiencing in current relationships or past issues that may first need to be resolved.

Psychotherapy can also be a tool to assist to help with this process of inner-exploration and defining oneself, and ultimately, listening to one's own inner voice. Therapy is often mistaken as a process where an expert will tell the patient what to do about their life or situation. Rather, the process involves a skilled practitioner who guides the client in finding those answers that lie within. As people get to know themselves better, they naturally attract the right people into their lives more easily.

This practice can transcend more than finding the right relationship. It can be helpful to ask yourself "What are my life goals?", "Am I happy in my career?", "Am I happy with what I have accomplished in my life?", or "What is important to me at this stage of my life?", for example. You may be surprised at how much inner wisdom you carry within yourself.

It also helps to recognize that life is not always complete "when I have that relationship", or "when I have purchased that vacation home" or "when I get that promotion." Life is a never-ending process of growth and to grow through life's changes smoothly and effectively, it is wise to listen to our own inner-voices during all stages of our lives and learn to accept ourselves where we are in the present year, month, day, and most importantly, moment.

By making a practice of listening to and honoring one's inner guidance, a person will know him/herself better and builds a stronger sense of self. A strong sense of ourselves helps us to attract the right people (and situations) into our lives (not only romantic relationships, but the right friends, careers and opportunities that compliment our own inner traits and strengths). And, although life brings adversity (i.e. difficult days, losses, and other struggles), remember that it is normal for one's happiness to be challenged during such times. However, a strong sense of self will have given you a foundation of inner-resiliency with which to more easily and successfully navigate through life's challenges.

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My private practice is located in North Scottsdale, within the offices of PsychArizona. I work with children (ages 6 and older), pre-teens, adolescents and adults. I work with individuals, couples and families with issues of anxiety, depression, trauma, grief and loss, career, academic and workplace issues, relationship issues, LGBT concerns, personal growth and spirituality.

I use various therapeutic approaches depending on the needs of the client. These approaches include developmental, humanistic, cognitive-behavioral, existential, family-systems, mindfulness-based, transpersonal, and EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing). EMDR is a model used for the treatment of trauma, and has also been found to be successful in the treatment of various other disorders as well.

I have experience providing professional counseling in clinical, business, and school settings.

Apart from my private practice, I am also a Reiki Master and have a great appreciation and respect for alternative as well as conventional treatment approaches.

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