

DON'T TRUST, DON'T TALK, DON'T FEEL

COPING IN CHILDHOOD AND ADULTHOOD WITH THREE "INJUNCTIONS" (UNCONSCIOUS BELIEFS).

Injunctions are early learnings that children practice to handle dysfunctional families. When kids have unsafe lives, they cope by not trusting, not talking and not feeling. It begins with not trusting, since the environment is felt to be unsafe and unpredictable. These injunctions are easy to see in kids and sometimes easier to see in adults. For married couples, not trusting, not talking and not feeling lead to very difficult relationships.

● DON'T TRUST

Children want and need to trust those around them. Not trusting is a behavior learned from the repeated experience of having that trust violated. When parents are emotionally untrustworthy (e.g. belittling, raging, critical, comparing and shaming) children learn that the world is not a safe place.

Children can grow up to become adults or teens that are narcissistically independent or hyper-dependent; angry and shaming of others or phobic of any negative comment. These bi-polars are common in people who have not learned to trust others.

● DON'T TALK

Hiding hopes and ideas, faults and feelings keeps one's identity intact while violating the trust that is necessary for friendship and community.

Not talking is a kind of self-excommunication from relationships. Disconnected, lonely, wallflower – these are the images of the “don't talk” child that often carries on into adulthood. Not talking can also produce resentment, acting out and violence to others.

● DON'T FEEL

Hurt, fear, anger, happy, hope (and all feelings under these categories) are squashed when you can't trust and can't talk. Shutting out pain means closing down on all the other emotions – suppression is no respecter of emotions.

Not feeling leads to a difficulty connecting with others, social awkwardness or anxiety, lack of confidence in understanding and articulating feelings, and often self imposed isolation.

Adult couples where one does not feel, leads to a passionless and / or conflictual marriage. These relationships usually end early and, hopefully, without children.

● AND THIS IS NORMAL (TO YOU)

These beliefs are learned in childhood and felt to be “normal” – just the way life is. So you don't know that your injunctions are out of sync with the way it could be, or should be, or the way that others experience the world.

Until you meet someone you can trust, and you do talk to, and you begin to feel. Then, your life changes and sometimes for the good and sometimes for the not so good.

You discover that you are out of sync with your friends or lover and perhaps most of the world. You might not realize this until you are in a relationship with someone who loves you and you think (but perhaps not feel) that you love him or her as well. You just don't know your feelings. But you guess that maybe you do.

● SO WHAT NOW?

The “so what now?” is about change. Learning to trust, talk and feel, and to do this for the first time. A couple of ideas:

1. Find a counsellor or pastor or someone else you accept and that accepts you. Learn to talk, and talk about how hard it is to trust. It will seem pointless and painful for a while... but your soul will learn how to connect.
2. Write a journal daily. Write your thoughts and feelings. Write poetry, paste in cartoons that make you laugh. Write down how you did trust today even when you think you didn't.
3. Set a slope for change -- 5-10% difference each day is great. Write down what you would like to do and to be. Start on the path. Craft a contract for change (see the articles page on this web site).
4. Speak to yourself as if you liked you. Write some new injunctions, record them in your journal and say them to yourself, daily and often. Things like, “I can think as well as anybody else”; “It's okay to have feelings and to express them.”
5. Experiment with life. Start living a bit. Give up on being so snookered.