

## The Power Of Relationship Games

We all play games. No I'm not talking about football, cards or tiddlywinks. I'm talking about the games we play with ourselves and others.

The 'I'm not going to listen to what you have to say - even if it makes perfect sense, because if I do it will mean that you are right and I'm wrong' game

Or the

'I won't tell you what I really want or need. You should notice without my saying anything and when you don't I'll feel hurt, rejected, frustrated and/or angry. I'll play the martyr' game.

Or the

The 'poor little me ñ no one understands how hard it has been; it is alright for everyone else' game.

Or the

'When people ask me to do things I always say yes even though I really don't want to do it. But then I feel resentful or angry because I don't feel as if I have any choice or that is the only way I feel I have any value' game.

Or the

My parents didn't/don't love me because they are always telling me what to do/don't give me enough attention/gave my brother or sister a better deal' game.

Or the

'My boss is a B----- he's always on my case' game

The games we play are as numerous and varied as there are people. In essence, the games are always based on the stories we tell ourselves about the things which happen in our lives. These stories keep us stuck in a pattern of beliefs and behaviours which is great if they are empowering, but all too often they are destructive and limiting.

Once we create a story we then start to look for evidence to support our story. If you look hard enough you can ALWAYS find evidence to support any belief. As time goes on we stack more and more evidence to support the story.

Is it based on truth? It is based on our perception of the truth which is an entirely different precept. In reality our perception of the truth can be empowering, neutral or destructive. You can choose to see your partner as neglectful and uncaring or as someone who is driven to work unreasonable hours because of the needs which drive them.

The amazing thing is that as soon as you give up the need to play the game, magic things can then begin to happen. If you can give up the need to be right or the need to position yourself as the one who has been treated badly you can begin to see your

situation through fresh eyes. As soon as you do that, solutions which had previously been hidden from view begin to emerge.

So think carefully about the 'games' you play. Until now they will have generally been unconscious (but are no less destructive because of that). Think carefully about the patterns of behaviour you run in your life. If they are empowering to you and those around you keep them going. Where you are left feeling a victim, a martyr, angry, resentful or depressed, where there are winners and losers look for the 'game' which underpins the process.

You will need to be extremely honest with yourself and you may not like what you reveal. Imagine yourself as an independent observer watching and listening to what you do and say, the tone of voice, the body language, and to what you leave unsaid or done. Be conscious of the feelings which precede your actions and how you feel in the aftermath.

Acknowledging that you play games is the first step. Identifying what they are is the second. The third, and probably the most powerful stage, is to tell the person you play the games with what you have been doing and say you are sorry. We'll deal with that step in the next newsletter as it is so powerful. Completing these stages offers you the opportunity to redesign existing relationships with your partner, your parents, children and your boss.

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