

Relating Interdependently

As part of normal development, we are born as highly vulnerable and dependent babies, reliant on our parents for food, shelter, protection, and love. As we grow up we learn to cope with things for ourselves and develop elements of independence. Developing independence is an essential ingredient in finding ourselves and being a separate and distinct being. Without independence we will not fully realise who we are, own our thoughts, feelings, desires and other aspects of ourselves, and will be limited in our capacity to be self-responsible. Interdependence becomes available to us once we have matured through independence. Then, we are able to choose to engage with others in relationship and consciously place trust and reliance in them, and retain our sense of who we are. From that place the relationship we experience is powerful and freeing.

A common experience when romantic relationships end is to experience significant fear, even terror, of being alone, a driving desperation to have someone else as a partner. You may fear that you are not lovable, that you will be forever alone, or that you cannot cope on your own. These indicate that you feel dependent on someone else for care and protection. From this place any relationship formed will have the dynamic of neediness (I need you so I feel loved etc.) and it is rare for one person to enter a relationship with another person who is not also exhibiting complementary dependence issues, leading to a co-dependent relationship where the fears of each are the basis for keeping them together. They feel good when they can rescue the other, and when they are rescued, a repeated reinforcement of 'I need you; you need me'.

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Abstract

Discusses the maturation process of a person relating to others, working from dependent, through independent, to interdependent, and some of the work required in each phase.

Keywords

02 external relationships, dependence, independence, interdependence, fear, personal growth, relationship change, relationship with self, self-responsibility

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When you are between relationships, it is a marvellous time to strengthen and mature your independent capacity. Then, face your fears of loneliness, inadequacy, your sense of being unlovable, and learn from within, from your own sense of self. Get to experience that you are okay and you can be independent and experience love, protection, and take care of yourself from within your own being. You do not 'need' the other person to meet the hungers of fear within you. The quality of the relationship you form is one of choice, trust and love. You know you contribute, that you are responsible for yourself, and you are choosing to draw close to and

Interdependence

External Relationships

Dependence

Independence

Maturing as a being that can relate to others

rely on the other. This choice is not born of fear and desperation, and leads to an expansive experience. Fear leads to contraction, limits possibilities, and stifles opportunity. To enter a relationship without fear is to be fully open to the potential that exists, and step into a new space.

That is not to say that you won't have moments of fear. You will meet situations that warm you up to past hurts, fears, and in those moments your responses are likely to be patterned after those from the past, be reactions. Being vulnerable and trusting of someone else when we hit those moments, and relying on them to still love

us, is an act of courage that comes from having already developed your capacity to be independent, and then choosing to be independent. In those moments fantastic healing of the past can occur, and trust in each other deepened further.

If you find yourself outside a relationship, and feel some degree of desperation to be back in one, take some time to be alone and learn to be independent. However, some people choose to then stay independent, preferring this to exposing themselves to more hurt, and in that they miss some precious opportunities to experience life that only come from loving, trusting relationships.

For more information related to themes in this article, refer to chapter 2 (Life is a Journey ... Enjoy It!) of: Harrison, S. G. (2012). [Appreciate the Fog: Embrace Change with Power and Purpose](#). Auckland, New Zealand: Xlibris Corporation.

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