

Possessive Relationships VS Love Relationships

Some Characteristics and Some Contrasts

People in 'possessive' relationships.....

Believe that 'love' should have to be earned and is therefore dependent upon the characteristics of the 'loved' one. They believe that if you give 'love' as an unconditional gift you will lay yourself open to being 'used'.

Prize, desire, seek and work towards, being loved and well treated by their partner as a basis for their own happiness.

Value external security above internal peace and happiness.

Have difficulty in accepting their own rights without having to justify them to their partner and expect their partner to have to justify their rights to them as a condition for giving regard and acceptance. Their non-verbals show their insecurity about their own rights.

Manipulate partners through conditional regard - giving or withholding love and regard depending upon expectations fulfilled. They value what they 'get' more than what they 'are'.

Keep a 'psychological balance sheet' of how much they're giving and how much they're getting as a basis for perceived fairness. They take more responsibility for what they get than what they give. They experience 'hurt' (pity for self) at perceived injustices or when the partner's conditional love is withdrawn.

Generally perceive they are giving more than they are getting, as they rarely miss what they give, but often miss what they get, as it does not fit into their expectations

Begin to reduce the 'giving' to balance the 'getting' in order to maintain perceived justice and equity (and if both partners do the same you have a downward spiral with less and less giving and more and more discontent).

Trust only to the degree that their expectations and predictions are fulfilled. They reward with 'love' only if they can trust on their own conditions.

Feel trapped.

People in 'love' relationships.....

Recognise that true love is a gift not a reward and therefore depends upon the characteristics of the giver not the characteristics of the receiver. They understand that love not given as a gift is simply manipulation and that love given as an unconditional gift benefits the giver even if it is never appreciated.

Prize, desire, seek and work towards, loving and enhancing the happiness of their partner as a basis for their own happiness.

Value internal peace and happiness above external security.

Understand that the ability to assume one's own rights without justification depends upon accepting the partner's rights without seeking their justification. They offer 'information' rather than 'explanation' or 'justification'. Their non-verbals indicate the difference.

Give love and regard as a gift and are therefore not open to manipulation by their partner. They give because that's the way they wish to be. They value what they 'are' more than what they 'get'.

Throw away the 'balance sheet' because they recognise that it is the love they give and not the love they get that really makes the difference to their well-being - so they can't be 'taken'. They take responsibility for what they give, not what they get. They may, however, experience 'grief' (pity for another) if their partner is unwilling to enter a relationship based on love.

Having no expectations (not needed) are never disappointed and perceive what they do get as a 'bonus' no matter how little.

Having a different view of relationships, they simply don't feel 'unjustly-done-by'. Their continued giving carries the relationship through the 'dry' times.

Trust because they love without expectation. They love to love.

Feel free.

See their partner as their precious possession and their marriage certificate as their certificate of ownership. They often attempt to force their partner to demonstrate that they love them even if what they get is mere 'plastic' compliance. They never feel genuinely secure or loved for they never know whether their partner treats them well because they genuinely desire to do so or because they simply wish to avoid the pain of what will happen to them if they don't.

Seek to convince their partner that they are bound to them and therefore in lifelong *obligation* to love them. Of course, love given in the face of expectation and obligation soon loses its freshness and becomes sour and servile.

Lose sight of the 'joy of giving' that they experienced when they began their relationship and hence feel more and more trapped in a reciprocal cycle of compliance and pressure. Their focus of attention is upon acting in such a way as to avoid feeling guilty and condemned by their partner. They build two-way barriers that not only guard against hurt and guilt but also prevent real learning and growth toward maturity. In their unwilling yielding to manipulation they reward their partner for such manipulation and so keep their partner tied to the sub-conscious use of such mechanisms.

Look outside the relationship for the fresh experience of the kind of love that they once briefly experienced before possessive love took over. They rarely gain much from their 'affairs' however, due to the continuing fact that they view relationships in terms of being 'served' rather than 'loved'. Affairs serve mostly as 'diversions' from the pain of feeling trapped in an empty relationship (some people, however, seem to get themselves trapped into affairs through the operation of the same principles by which they conduct their own relationship [as outlined above] - 'hoisted on their own petard' - they are manipulated into affairs through a tune played on their emotional needs).

Are constantly on the alert for possible innuendo and put-down and become obsessed with their partner's behaviour. They see their partner's obnoxious behaviour as deliberate and intentional but their own obnoxious behaviour as being caused by their partner's behaviour. Because they see their partner's behaviour as intentional they see themselves as the victim and seek revenge on the 'victimiser'.

Are guided by expediencies. They seek any means to bring about what they believe to be the outcome they want for the satisfaction of their expectations. For them 'the end justifies the means even if the means are not what they would prefer at the time'.

Value their own love as a precious gift but recognise their partner's right to either accept or reject that gift. They do not attempt to force their gift upon their partner nor whip it away when it is not appreciated. They also view their partner's love to them as not something earned or obtained by right but as a gift (even in the face of any evidence to the contrary!), and hence tend not to unwittingly reward manipulative love.

Seek to convince their partner that they want them free and under *no obligation* to them, in order that their partner may always find opportunity to give their love as a gift, hence keeping it fresh and healthy; a source of life to the giver and a 'breath of fresh air' to the receiver.

Grow more mature and deep in their love as the years go by and are able to learn from their mistakes without feeling guilty and without having to blame their partner for having 'caused' them to act inappropriately. They also allow their partner to learn at their own pace and in their own way. In not being open to manipulation they do not reward their partner for inappropriate behaviour and hence provide the opportunity for change without attempting to bring it about directly. They do not censure their partner nor point out their mistakes and failings. They love their partner enough not to notice!

Don't need to look outside their relationship to experience the freshness of a love relationship for they are in one. (All behaviour, legitimate and illegitimate is the attempt to fulfil legitimate needs.) Because they give their love as a gift (only 'getting' desires are frustratable) they feel no need to seek outside their relationship for the joy of loving. Giving their love as a gift they naturally feel free from entrapment.

View obnoxious behaviour, not as being directed at themselves or 'caused' by themselves, but rather as the defensive symptom of a fragile self-concept. They seek to assist their partner in building up their sense of self-worth, firstly, through the gift of unconditional love and regard and secondly, by not being manipulated into counter-manipulation they provide no reward for the obnoxious behaviour and so help it to extinguish.

Are guided by principles. They better understand the real processes that lead to long term happiness and well-being. For them 'the appropriateness of the means justifies the ends even if those ends are negative due to causes beyond their control'.

Are often plagued by a subconscious awareness that they have acted inconsistently with their ideals and therefore feel self-condemned. They seek to alleviate this self-condemnation by the projection of blame onto their partner for having 'caused' them to act this way.

Believe that their negative feelings - anger, hurt, sulks etc are caused by their circumstances, particularly the behaviour and emotions of others. They see their emotions as the natural and automatic response that any person would have in like circumstances. Because they feel that others are responsible for their emotions they naturally feel responsible for the emotions of others, hence being forever locked into emotional standoffs and emotional blackmail.

Exchange short-term gain for long term pain. In forcing compliance they reduce their partner's desire and willingness, when desire and love are what they really crave.

Experience life as always potentially threatening and uncertain.

Tend to experience 'serial relationships', but never really feeling accepted or secure, and often emotionally stunned when the thing they always fear most occurs - the partner leaving.

See crises as further threats to their insecurity, and further evidence of personal failure and low personal worth. They come out 'bitter' people.

See life in a more narrow perspective and a shorter time-frame.

See personal change and improvement as a matter of trying harder. They continue in the motivation of 'fear' and self-preservation that they were born with. When they do see a need for personal change they usually ask 'how' rather than 'what must I let go of' - the 'cost' of change.

Because they act from principle and conscience rather than from expediency they may feel sorry when they blunder, but, knowing that their basic intention and motive was consistent with their ideals, they are free from self-condemnation and the debilitating sense of guilt that plagues the manipulative.

Recognise that such negative feelings are acquired coping and control behaviours that they have learned from others during their earlier socialisation. They understand that these negative coping mechanisms are not effective for long term handling of interpersonal conflict and, being learned, can be 'unlearned' and replaced with more effective and appropriate coping behaviours.

Are willing to accept possible short term pain in exchange for the potential long term gain in the quality of their love relationship. They really only desire from their partner what they are willing to give as a genuine gift. They value being loved more than being served.

Experience life as being an ever expanding journey of discovery with endless opportunities to grow and understand without feeling threatened or needing to continually prove self-worth.

Are more likely to see new vistas in the growth and development of a continuing relationship, but are much more able to cope should their partner choose to exercise their right to leave the relationship.

See crises as—although not what they would prefer—yet further opportunities to grow and learn. They come out 'better' people.

See life in a wider perspective and longer time-frame.

See personal change and improvement as more a process of 'dying' to narrow self-interest and self-preservation and being 're-born' into a wider perspective of love and concern for others. They see the change as primarily a change of internal motive not just external behaviour and hence the difficulty in change is always more a question of 'cost' than technique.

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