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Q&A Forum - Review

Avoiding Feeling Smothered

[21-Oct-2002]

Fellow Q&Aers,

I am fresh back from a beautiful, restful week of vacation in Maine. I would like to welcome Arlene Lacerenza to our staff. Arlene is a recently graduated Marriage and Family Therapist who is working on becoming licensed. I hired her just before I left for vacation and will be working out the details in the next few days. We hope to have her picture and bio on our web site soon.

We currently have 127 on our Q&A list - can you help us grow the list to 160 by Dec 31st? Please tell your relatives, friends, neighbors, peers and co-workers about us and encourage them to check us out at www.personalgrowthconcepts.com and sign up in the Q&A section.

I thank all of you who have sent me emails with bonus materials in them - I am saving them and, perhaps you will see them soon. I will continue to welcome them and any questions you have - there are 2 more in the hopper right now.

My staff and I are currently in the process of setting goals for Personal Growth Concepts, Inc. for 2003. If you have any ideas for consideration, please forward them to me via email before November 6th. Suggestions can include anything from office improvements, staffing, services, marketing, procedures, web site and Q&A. We welcome your input. Now onto the Q&A for today, and a quote and 3 bonuses!

Q: Dear John, This question regards relationships: I met a wonderful person 5 months ago. Having been burned before, I am somewhat cautious now. Sometimes I feel smothered in this relationship. I am not sure what the clinical term for "smothering" is. How can I avoid feeling smothered?

A: One remembers the old adage: once burned, twice wary. Being cautious is wise. Feeling smothered means that the other person wants more of a relationship than you are comfortable with at this point. Keep your boundaries and hold your ground as the relationship develops. I believe the clinical term for "smothering" is enmeshment. Enmeshment is where you and the other person's identities get blurry. The way to avoid "feeling smothered" is by using boundaries and "I" statements - do not give up sharing what you think, want, feel or need for you to be ok. This will keep you in touch with who you are and having a clear picture of the other person. If you lose the sense your self, or your life gets so entwined around the other that you can't see them clearly as separate from you, then double dose on the I statements and put some distance between you and they, at least until your boundaries are respected. The healthiest of relationships are where two "I"s come together, neither are lost and there develops a third entity called "we." All three must be present at all times - 2 "I"s and a we. Hope these thoughts help. Peace, John

Quote: "Progress always involves risk. You can't steal second with your foot on first."—Unknown

Bonus 1

To those of us who have children in our lives, whether they are our own, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, or students...here is something to make you chuckle.

Whenever your children are out of control, you can take comfort from the thought that even God's omnipotence did not extend to His own children.

After creating heaven and earth, God created Adam and Eve, and the first thing he said was "DON'T!"

"Don't what?" Adam replied.

"Don't eat the forbidden fruit." God said.

"Forbidden fruit? We have forbidden fruit? Hey, Eve,we have forbidden fruit!"

"No Way!"

"Yes way!"

"Do NOT eat the fruit!" said God.

"Why?"

"Because I am your Father and I said so!" God replied, wondering why He hadn't stopped creation after making the elephants.

A few minutes later, God saw His children having an apple break and He was ticked! "Didn't I tell you not to eat the fruit?" God asked.

"Uh huh," Adam replied.

"Then why did you?" said the Father.

"I don't know," said Eve.

"She started it!" Adam said.

"Did not!"

"Did too!"

"DID NOT!"

Having had it with the two of them, God's punishment was that Adam and Eve should have children of their own. Thus the pattern was set and it has never changed.

BUT THERE IS REASSURANCE IN THE STORY! If you have persistently and lovingly tried to give children wisdom and they haven't taken it, don't be hard on yourself. If God had trouble raising children, what makes you think it would be a piece of cake for you?

Bonus 2:

The statistics on sanity are that one out of every four Americans is suffering from some form of mental illness. Think of your three best friends. If they're okay, then it's you. -Rita Mae Brown

Bonus 3:

Speeding

Sitting on the side of the highway waiting to catch speeding drivers, a State Police Officer sees a car puttering along at 22 MPH. He thinks to himself, "This driver is just as dangerous as a speeder!" So he turns on his lights and pulls the driver over.

Approaching the car, he notices that there are five old ladies -- two in the front seat and three in the back - eyes wide and white as ghosts.

The driver, obviously confused, says to him, "Officer, I don't understand, I was doing exactly the speed limit! What seems to be the problem?"

"Ma'am," the officer replies, "You weren't speeding, but you should know that driving slower than the speed limit can also be a danger to other drivers."

"Slower than the speed limit?" she asked. No sir, I was doing the speed limit exactly... Twenty-Two miles an hour!" the old woman says a bit proudly.

The State Police officer, trying to contain a chuckle explains to her that "22" was the route number, not the speed limit. A bit embarrassed, the woman grinned and thanked the officer for pointing out her error.

"But before I let you go, Ma'am, I have to ask... Is everyone in this car ok? These women seem awfully shaken and they haven't muttered a single peep this whole time." the officer asks.

"Oh, they'll be alright in a minute officer. We just got off Route 119."

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We wish you peace in who you are and in all that you do!

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