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Q&A Forum - Review

## Difficulty Expressing Emotions, 2005-04

Fellow Q&Aers,

Wow! It's been a couple of months since my last Q&A. A lot has been happening.....

I am currently looking for a master's level clinician or two to help us out part-time in both our Stratford and Naugatuck offices. If you know anyone, please have them fax their resume to me at 203-375-3048 and ask them to mention your name.

My Couples Growth Group has successfully completed its 10 sessions with positive results. All four couples who participated enjoyed it and grew from it. Each participant has a deeper and clearer understanding of themselves and their role in their relationships. I am considering running another Couples Growth Group in the Fall.

Next, my Naugatuck support/therapy group is getting started this week with four, maybe five ladies.

My Monday evening, every other week Men's Group is doing ok - we could use another man or two, if you know anyone who is interested, please let me know

We also have a daytime ladies support/therapy group that meets Wed late mornings. We are currently filled on this one.

Finally, I am seriously considering a 10 session group in the Fall entitled: "Rebuilding, a Divorce Recovery Seminar" for those who are divorcing or recently divorced.

The following question depletes the hopper. If you have a question you would like me to answer, now would be a good time to email it to me. As always, I appreciate your feedback on my Q&As. Peace, John

**Q:** My husband and I have been married for eight years. I have always been the talker in our relationship and express my feelings very well to him. It seems he is an empty soul at times. He never seems to express his emotions unless it's about sex or money. I would like my husband to be more expressive about his life and dreams. Any advice??

**A:** Perhaps you could become the listener in the relationship for awhile and see what happens. The silence may be deafening initially but the uncomfotability may prompt some interesting comments from him. Try listening for the feelings - quietly taking whatever he says, giving him some feedback that you heard what he just said, and ask quietly about his feelings. Accept whatever he says as his best effort to communicate them to you.

It may be that, since you have been the talker, he hasn't had a chance, or need, to express his thoughts, much less his feelings. Perhaps, because of a dysfunctional childhood, he learned to "stuff" his feelings or never learned about what to do with them. He may be looking for a mother figure who can handle his feelings for him. I would encourage you not to fall into that

trap and, if you already have, to get out of it. An adult relationship can not be based primarily on getting childhood needs met.

I doubt seriously that he is "an empty soul," particularly since he seems to express his feelings about sex and about money. Both sex and money issues in a relationship often have to do with power and control. As such, they often mask the insecurity which lies beneath them.

Finally, gender-wise, men tend to have a more difficult time accessing and dealing with their feelings. I would let go of any expectation that he will be as expressive of his feelings as you, or, as you hope he will be. Try accepting him for who he is, someone different than you. If you are unable to do that, then you may need to examine your self and the relationship for alternatives.

Peace, John

quote: "Life does not always come out 'perfect' so you might as well DANCE to the tune it plays."

bonus 1

## PORSCHE CAR

A fifteen year-old boy came home with a late-model Porsche and his parents began to yell and scream, "Where did you get that car????!!!"

He calmly told them, "I bought it today."

"With what money?" demanded his parents. "We know what a Porsche costs."

"Well," said the boy, "this one cost me fifteen dollars."

So the parents began to yell even louder. "Who would sell a car like that for fifteen dollars?" they said.

"It was the lady up the street," said the boy. "I don't know her name---they just moved in. She saw me ride past on my bike and asked me if I wanted to buy a Porsche for fifteen dollars."

"Oh, Mercy," moaned the mother, "she must be a child abuser. Who knows what she will do next? John, you go right up there and see what's going on."

So the boy's father walked up the street to the house where the lady lived and found her out in the yard calmly planting petunias! He introduced himself as the father of the boy to whom she had sold a Porsche for fifteen dollars and demanded to know why she did it.

"Well," she said, "this morning I got a phone call from my husband. I thought he was on a business trip, but it seems he has run off to Hawaii with his secretary and doesn't intend to come back. He asked me to sell his new Porsche and send him the money. So I did!"

bonus 2

## EXPLANATION OF GOD

It was written by an 8 year old, Danny Dutton, of Chula Vista, CA, for his third grade homework assignment. The assignment was to explain God.

"One of God's main jobs is making people. He makes them to replace the ones that die, so there will be enough people to take care of things on earth.

He doesn't make grownups, just babies. I think because they are smaller and easier to make. That way he doesn't have to take up his valuable time teaching them to talk and walk. He can just leave that to mothers and fathers."

"God's second most important job is listening to prayers. An awful lot of this goes on, since some people, like preachers and things, pray at times beside bedtime. God doesn't have time to listen to the radio or TV because of this. Because God hears everything, there must be a terrible lot of noise in his ears, unless he has thought of a way to turn it off."

"God sees everything and hears everything and is everywhere which keeps Him pretty busy. So you shouldn't go wasting his time by going over your mom and dad's head asking for something they said you couldn't have."

"Atheists are people who don't believe in God. I don't think there are any in Chula Vista. At least there aren't any who come to our church."

"Jesus is God's Son. He used to do all the hard work like walking on water and performing miracles and trying to teach the people who didn't want to learn about God. They finally got tired of him preaching to them and they crucified him. But he was good and kind, like his father, and he told his father that they didn't know what they were doing and to forgive them and God said O.K."

"His dad (God) appreciated everything that he had done and all his hard work on earth so he told him he didn't have to go out on the road anymore. He could stay in heaven. So he did. And now he helps his dad out by listening to prayers and seeing things which are important for God to take care of and which ones he can take care of himself without having to bother God. Like a secretary, only more important."

"You can pray anytime you want and they are sure to help you because they got it worked out so one of them is on duty all the time."

"You should always go to church on Sunday because it makes God happy, and if there's anybody you want to make happy, it's God. Don't skip church or do something you think will be more fun like going to the beach. This is wrong. And besides, the sun doesn't come out at the beach until noon anyway."

"If you don't believe in God, besides being an atheist, you will be very lonely, because your parents can't go everywhere with you, like to camp, but God can. It is good to know He's around

you when you're scared, in the dark or when you can't swim and you get thrown into real deep water by big kids."

"But...you shouldn't just always think of what God can do for you. I figure God put me here and he can take me back anytime he pleases. And...that's why I believe in God."

bonus 3

Two Wolves

One evening an old Cherokee told his grandson about a battle that goes on inside people. He said, "My son, the battle is between 2 "wolves" inside us all. One is Evil. It is anger, fear, envy, jealousy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, and ego. The other is Good. It is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion and faith."

The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asked his grandfather: "Which wolf wins?"

The old Cherokee simply replied, "The one you feed."

end of bonuses

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