

Relationship Rehab Show

Episode 27: Loving Your Inner Child

I hope you have seen or heard the interview with Jennifer Prado about the Inner Child work that has brought her significant freedom from stress. (Episode 26) This free download will add to the information beautifully shared by Jennifer and outlined in the free download from that episode.

Your Inner Child is the repository for all of your memories. She (or he) compiles your experiences and to the best of her limited ability, turns them into rules for survival...or more accurately, rules that will help her get the love she craves.

But without the model of a healthy, well-balanced human parent who models unconditional love with reasonable expectations for responsible behavior, the Inner Child's methods for trying to earn love may be distorted...divided into two opposing forces that, rather than working cooperatively, are constantly at war with each other.

Aspect #1: The Perfectionist Child believes that the only way she will ever be loved is to be perfect. She exerts an enormous amount of energy trying to discern what those around her want from her, and then give it to them perfectly in order to earn their love. When she is in control, she is relentlessly self-critical and self-judgmental. The proof that she isn't perfect enough is because she isn't given (or more accurately, can't receive) the love she craves.

Aspect #2: The Rebellious Child also believes that the only way she will ever be loved is to be perfect. But the Rebellious Child is exhausted and fed up with the constant barrage of criticism from the Perfectionist Child, so in retaliation she chooses rebellious behaviors to give herself some relief from the pressure. These rebellious behaviors are things the Perfectionist Child despises, creating even more self-judgment. For example: spending sprees, smoking, drinking alcohol, eating disorders, addictions, creating a messy environment, hoarding, excessive exercise, etc.

The Rebellious Child's escapes are followed by even more self-judgment and energy spent by the Perfectionist Child's efforts to subdue and control the Rebellious Child.

Both the Perfectionist Child and the Rebellious Child, when in balance, provide healthy service to their human. The Perfectionist Child brings order and discipline to life...reminders to brush your teeth or lock the door and remembers instructions such as how to drive the car, or run the washer. The Rebellious Child helps us relax or sleep when needed. She loves fun and laughter. When both aspects are in balance, they create an orderly, healthy experience for their human.

But what if you don't know what healthy balance is? What if you are never able to relax and have fun without feeling guilty? What if you're a workaholic? Or addicted to behaviors that when out of control bring chaos and unhappiness or poor health to your human?

Aspect #3: The Loving Parent is what both aspects of the Inner Child desperately need. If you didn't have a model of a physical parent that provided loving, balanced parenting, then your challenge is to re-parent yourself by learning how to develop an inner Loving Parent who can moderate between the Perfectionist and the Rebellious aspects.

The Loving Parent forgives all, understands the painful struggles of the Inner Child to earn love, but offers lavish love unconditionally. While loving and reassuring both aspects of their value and total acceptance by her, she also sets reasonable boundaries for their behaviors.

She stops all self-judgment, self-criticism because it isn't productive. It only brings discouragement and triggers the need for rebellious behaviors that are not in this human's best interests. So, when the Perfectionist aspect is beating herself up for doing a less than stellar job on a work project, (at home or at the job) the Loving Parent stops that downward train of thought with reassuring words and comfort **before** the Rebellious aspect decides to go on a spending spree to get some retail comfort.

The stronger the Loving Parent becomes, the more secure and balanced both aspects of the Inner Child feel until they relax into the assurance that they are loved and provided with safe boundaries for their behavior. They become allies that love each other's roles and cooperate with each other's jobs for this human.

This is not a new concept. Originally identified and taught by Carl Jung, then John Bradshaw and continued with transactional analysis, this model of the Inner Child is a way to understand and moderate your thoughts and feelings so that they serve you with better emotional, psychological, and ultimately physical health.

My book, [Your Inner Child: A Path to Healing and Freedom](#), will give you many practical illustrations and ways to develop a Loving Parent who will eventually stop the war between the Perfectionist and Rebellious aspects of your Inner Child.

These concepts and skills drew me out of a deep depression and continue to be how I work with myself to maintain inner balance.

I wish you the best as you learn to love your Inner Child instead of being afraid of the havoc she may wreak when she doesn't know she is loved!

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