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Decoding Divorce

Finding the power beneath the pain

BY OLGA SHEEAN

Divorce can be one of the most dramatic wake-up calls of one's life. But unless you're equipped with decoding information to decipher the myriad of emotions, resentments and apparent failings of one partner or another, the true underlying reason for the break-up may never be known. Without a deep awareness of what is really going on, the wake-up may be no more than a heightening of emotional pain, without any lasting breakthrough.

Because divorce is often defined in terms of circumstances or an outcome (e.g., the sex wasn't great and we just drifted apart; worry over money destroyed our relationship), it's rarely seen for what it is: a collection of symptoms that specifically relate to what is going on subconsciously. Circumstances can be distracting, particularly when drama is involved, and tend to keep us focused on what's happening on the outside rather than what's going on deep inside ourselves. This constant distraction prevents most of us from contemplating the possibility that we might have played a role in creating our circumstances. It casts us, instead, in the role of victim, with little control over our lives.

Rethinking that concept could be the bravest and most empowering thing you ever do. If you have tried everything else, you have nothing to lose—and probably a great deal to gain—by decoding the deeper mysteries of your inner self.

Our Missing Pieces

As toddlers, we are blissfully unaware that there are any limitations



in life. With time, however, we learn that there are certain emotional securities that we cannot have—such as acceptance, respect, trust or whatever our parents themselves were missing and were unable to give us. We try to compensate for these missing pieces by developing complex coping strategies or survival mechanisms. We cope ... until something happens to blow our cover.

If we don't wake up to this distortion of ourselves, we are destined to lead a life of disappointment, disillusionment, and dysfunction. At the very least, we will fail to be personally fulfilled. In relationships, when we are unaware of the existence and significance of our own missing pieces, a break-up is often the inevi-

table outcome.

As a result of our missing pieces, we come to certain subconscious conclusions about our lovability which, in turn, determines how much we are comfortable receiving in terms of money, love, or recognition. If we lacked acceptance as a child, we may consider ourselves to be unlovable as adults, even if we do not consciously realize it. And if we lacked respect, we may try to justify abusive behavior, somehow feeling we deserve it. More importantly, however, our missing pieces cause us to attract partners who have the same missing pieces. That person is perfect for triggering our deepest issues and re-opening old wounds. Once you understand the power of your miss-

ing pieces, your relationships start to make sense.

The Purpose of Relationships

We naturally tend toward wholeness and the realization of our potential, and our subconscious minds are very powerful in attracting whatever we need in order to do this. That is why we often see recurring patterns in our lives. We may keep attracting abusive men or needy women, who leave us emotionally exhausted or unfulfilled. Our subconscious is just doing its job—attracting the very partner who will trigger our deepest

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issues so we can (with sufficient self-awareness) address them, resolve them, and move on to what we ultimately want. For it is only by filling in our missing pieces that we can make ourselves complete. Once we do, we automatically attract a similarly complete partner.

Relationships are one of the most powerful ways for us to become whole. Without other people in our lives to trigger our issues, we would not experience the full range of human emotion. Nor would we know our individual strengths or weaknesses, unless someone else reflected them back to us by accepting us, rejecting us, or causing some kind of reaction within us. And since our reactions are the result of what we subconsciously

in your relationship, perhaps stopping you from having the intimacy you want, you will begin to realize how powerful you have been in attracting the perfect partner to mirror your subconscious, negative beliefs about yourself.

Look at the ways in which you currently do not give yourself (or others) the qualities you seek. Then find practical ways to fill in what's missing—in yourself and in those around you. If acknowledgment is missing, for example, look at the ways in which you do not acknowledge yourself for your achievements, no matter how seemingly small, and for simply being you (which, after all, nobody else can do). Make sure you acknowledge yourself whenever you do something well and

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think of ourselves, it is only when these issues are triggered that we can become aware of them.

In this context, then, all relationships are opportunities for self-discovery and growth. If we can see them as such, understanding that we attracted our partner in order to learn something specific about ourselves, our relationships take on new meaning. Rather than being the problem, relationships can become the solution. How you deal with the issues triggered by your partner determines whether you graduate to a more wholesome relationship or whether you stay stuck in a cycle of dysfunction. Once you figure out your missing pieces, you can start the exciting and magical process of making yourself complete so that your relationships become the wonderfully rewarding and loving experiences you always dreamed they would be.

catch yourself when you put yourself down, in your mind as well as out loud. Go out of your way to acknowledge others for who they are and what they do, particularly if they do not acknowledge you. Once you fill in what's missing in you, you will start to attract people and situations that will complement your enhanced self-worth.

It is important to also say “no” to whatever is not working or is unhealthy for you. Only by rejecting compromises and needy relationships can you generate greater self-acceptance and, consequently, an unconditionally loving and accepting partner. The upgrade comes from inside; whatever you subconsciously consider yourself to be worthy of receiving is what you will get. Enhance your internal self-worth and the quality of your relationships will be similarly enhanced.

Filling in Your Missing Pieces

Think of your marriage or last relationship and ask yourself what emotional qualities you would have liked to get from your partner but did not. Your answer may be acknowledgment, support, trust, honesty, commitment, intimacy, or any other aspect of human interaction that is an expression of love.

These are, in fact, your missing pieces. If you can see how they have caused you to behave in certain ways

Filling in your missing pieces creates rapid, positive changes and puts you powerfully back in control of your life. It also takes the mystery out of the love puzzle, once you realize that the missing piece was the real you. #

Olga Sheean is an applied kinesiologist and relationship coach based in Vancouver. She is also the author of Fit for Love — find yourself and your perfect mate, available at olgasheean.com, [Banyen Books](http://BanyenBooks.com) and amazon.com.

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Smells Can Make You Sick

Ever walk into an empty elevator and collide with the overpowering smell of perfume, obviously the lingering residue of a former elevator passenger? Or unwrap the newspaper and have the pervasive odor of a detergent or fabric softener sample hit you before the headlines do?

For most of us, this is just an annoying little tweak, but for a growing number of others, these smells, called “emissions of volatile organic compounds,” can be a form of torment that throws their bodies into reactive overdrive. One whiff of a chemical cocktail—coming from not only perfumes and detergents, but also construction materials, fabrics, furnishings, cleaners, adhesives, paints, caulks, and paper—can result in a vast array of debilitating symptoms.

Consider Mary, for instance. She was healthy, athletic and worked as a graphic design artist for 20 years. But 13 years ago, at 37, she suddenly developed hypersensitivity to the chemicals she used in her graphics business. Today, her reaction to the thousands of man-made chemicals in our environment is so profound she can't stand to read a newspaper, due to the chemicals in the ink and bleach in the paper. When coming in contact with these and other synthetic chemicals, she immediately becomes ill with symptoms of burning and tearing eyes, swelling, skin rashes, bleeding sinuses, and respiratory failure.

She ventures outside, hooked to an oxygen tank, only when she must carry out what she calls “activities of daily living,” such as buying groceries or going to the doctor. “It doesn't matter where you go, because if they freshly waxed the floor, you're sick. You can go to the bank, and if they just refinished the brass on the outside of the building and you walk by [and smell] the lacquer-thinner solvent, you become sick ... you've got to get home and go to bed.”

Hers is not an isolated case. The number of people plagued with multiple chemical sensitivities (MCS) is growing rapidly. And worse, our mainstream medical community, for the most part, doesn't acknowledge that the condition exists, even though studies consistently indicate that as much as 36 per cent of the population may have MCS.

Dr. Marsha Vetter, MD, holds a PhD in microbiology and immunology and is one of the premiere physicians in North America specializing in environmental illness. What Vetter



BY REBECCA EPHRAIM, RD, CCN

treats are those MCS illnesses that frequently arise from cumulative exposure to the more than 80,000 synthetic chemicals circulating in our environment. Patients who find their way to her suburban Chicago office have generally seen a multitude of other physicians for symptoms. “Multiple chemical sensitivity is a valid illness,” Vetter says. “What tends to happen is that you start out being sensitive to one thing ... such as auto exhaust, diesel fumes, cigarette smoke, and perfumes, ... and then it [the sensitivity] spreads, ... and you start becoming sensitive to all sorts of different things.”

As far as treating MCS, Vetter fortifies her patients with a whole-foods diet and various nutritional supplements—particularly those that support liver function. It's the liver that takes the extreme stress of processing the toxins coming from these chemicals. Interestingly, many MCS patients have difficulty tolerating drugs, so Vetter usually sticks to herbal and nutritional supplements.

She also recommends reducing what is known as “total load.” “Total load,” she says, “would be everything your body has to deal with that is putting a burden on the immune and detoxification systems ... [for example] being in places where there is mould, pollen, dust, cigarette smoke, or where there are people wearing perfumes. Do anything you can to lower the total load and then you can handle the chemicals a lot better.”

For more information, check out this respected website on chemical sensitivities: fpinva.org. #

Living healthy should be a no-brainer, but it's not. So send your nagging questions to health editor Rebecca Ephraim, registered dietitian and certified clinical nutritionist, at health@dragonflymedia.com.

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