

Workbook Chapter Thirty-Four Develop Good Social Self-Care

Self-Assessment Tools:

Transitional Relationships Barry K. Weinhold, PhD

When you are dating and you meet someone new there is a period of time where you are getting to know each other and finding out how much you have in common. The goal of this transitional period of dating is to see if you have enough in common with the other person to continue the relationship beyond the transitional period of time.

The length of this transitional period of relationship can last for some time, if you do not spend much time together during that time. Usually, it lasts between three and six months. You do need enough time together to see if you have enough in common to extend the relationship beyond this transitional time period. During the transitional dating period, you might be dating several other persons. It is not seen as an exclusive relationship.

If you find you have enough in common with each other, at the end of a transitional period of the relationship, you might decide to make this an exclusive relationship and you enter a new phase of relationship. It is also the time when, if you haven't found you have enough in common to move to an exclusive relationship, the relationship might end or be reduced to just a friendship. New social and romantic relationships generally follow this pattern.

I have rings of relationship. My outer ring contains people I met and have either a business relationship with them or a very casual social relationship with them. Then there is a middle layer of social relationships where I have a regular, ongoing relationship with these people. I might talk to them on the phone periodically and maybe have an occasional lunch with them.

I also have friendships with my adult children and grandchildren. They are in a category of their own and I make time to stay current and connected to them. Finally, there is my inner circle of friends. I call them my "anam cara" or "soul friends." These are people I can bare my soul to and know they will act in my best interests. Currently, I have four friends in that category. I believe we all should have at least several "soul friends."

Case Example

Molly, age 31, came to me for "advice." It turns out that Molly has never made an important independent decision in her whole life. She lacks a Self that could make decision. She told me, "I never felt loved." She was dominated as a child by her mother. She was sexually abused by her mom's

boy-friend's son, when she was 12. She still has to ask her mother what she should do. Growing up she became "mama's little helper."

She was put in charge of raising her little brother and had no real childhood of her own. Her mom was not there very much. They actually split up when Molly was six months old. She never again saw her father.

Later her grandma took over. She got Molly her first job as a CNA. Molly married Charlie and he got cancer leaving Molly to be his sole caregiver. She said she did not take care of herself during that time and gained 50 pounds. Her husband cheated on her and yet she stayed. His girlfriend moved in with the two of them. Finally, they moved out of state. She has been living with her grandmother since then.

I gave her the People Pleaser Self-Quiz and she had marked a "3" or "4" on 28 of the 30 items. We have been working hard on her people pleaser behavior. We located the shame-based belief that anchors much of this behavior. It is "I am not enough." I asked her to keep a journal where she is to record every time she feels like she is enough.

She made the first independent decision in her life. She has decided to move to another city, away from her family. I have been supporting her in making this move and she did it successfully and things are seemingly working better than she expected in this new city. This could be the event that helps her break out of the trap she was in with her family. She has a job and a place to live and reports that she is meeting new friends.

Additional Resources:

Films: "Through a Glass Darkly" by Ingmar Bergman