**How the False Self Gets Created**

The ***False Self***is an artificial persona that people create very early in life to protect themselves from re-experiencing developmental trauma, shock and stress in close relationships. This False or “public” Self appears polite and well-mannered, and puts on a “show of being real.” Internally, people who live out of their False Self feel empty, dead or “phony,” unable to be spontaneous and alive, and to show their True Self in any part of their lives.

The two basic needs of infants and toddlers are attachment and authenticity. Infants need attachment to survive, so if their attempts to be authentic, usually by expressing their feelings, are met with disapproval, they will sacrifice their authenticity in order to preserve their attachment.

This means they have to create a False Self as a substitute for creating their Authentic Self because they do not have enough emotional and social support to be authentic, so they trade authenticity for attachment.

This adapted Self can be either **deflated and co-dependent** or **inflated and counter-dependent. For more information read GET REA; The Hazards of Living Out of ¥our False Self. Available from Amazon.**

The co-dependent and deflated False Self

The codependent, deflated False Self is designed to please parents and maintain their conditional love.

Toddlers, by the time they have reached the age of two, have heard the word “no” over 292,000 times. As a result, the True Self which operates from a sense of integrity, personal authenticity and connection to wholeness gets sacrificed in the process..

This *False Self* is a protective defense that helps children sustain their need for comforting intimacy and attunement with their mother, and to prolong the feelings of safety associated with the codependent stage of development.

This co-dependent behavior also keeps people feeling weak and vulnerable, with strong needs to attach to others who seem stronger and more capable.

The counter-dependent and inflated False Self

The counter-dependent and inflated false self self is designed to protect children from feeling their unmet dependency needs by maintaining distance between themselves and their parents.

This*False Self* helps children block feelings of shame about being loved conditionally and from remembering painful experiences of developmental shock and trauma related to feeling abandoned, abused and neglected.

Those who use this defense typically act strong and capable, even though they do not feel that way inside.

Unfortunately children’s adaptation to their parent’s needs for them to adapt to the lack of emotional availability by parents also forces them to abandon their inner urge to develop a separate, True Self.

As a result, they are likely to grow up recreating these same kind of self-limiting codependent and counter-dependent relationships in their adult lives.

They continue to monitor and limit the expression of their authentic ideas, feelings, and behaviors to make sure they do not threaten the conditional love of those closest to them.

The False Self & Attachment Trauma

The defense mechanisms that children learn during their separation stage of development form the foundation for attachment disorders in early childhood, and can grow into serious personality disorders as people age.

Defiant and oppositional behavior that persists beyond the age of 3, for example, indicates that the unrecognized and unhealed effects of developmental shock, trauma, and stress are being hard-wired into children’s brains and personality structures.

A premature separation from the mother during the bonding stage of development because of abandonment or abuse also lays the foundation for addictions that support counterdependent behaviors.

Once toddlers begin developing language, they learn to use the fight response to disengage during a trauma to try to protect themselves. They learn to distance themselves from intimacy and closeness by adopting an I’m okay and you’re not okay stance.

Toddlers & the False Self

Toddlers may develop a whole array of upper defenses that not only help maintain this separateness, but also support the inflated False Self.

As a defense system against the need for emotional intimacy solidifies over a person’s lifetime, they can turn into a full-blown narcissistic personality disorder.

The massive number of narcissistically defended adults, particularly in the US, has also become a global problem. Because so many people did not experience healthy narcissism and go through the essential developmental process of ego reduction, they still act like entitled, grandiose, euphoric, and omnipotent 2- and 3-year-olds as adults.

Adult temper tantrums get played out through child abuse, domestic violence, road rage, religious and ethnic wars, and a full range of other protective and revenge-seeking behaviors.

Addictions & The False Self

Furthermore, the addictions associated with separation trauma (upper drugs, work, quick sex, shopping, exercise, traveling, and over-consuming) all serve as inadequate and unsatisfying substitutes for the deep emotional attachment and the experience of union with the Divine that people missed with their mother.

Unfortunately, it often takes people a long time to discover that unhealed developmental trauma is the cause of many of their problems.

Breaking Free of the False Self

The physical and psychological armoring characteristics of narcissism and other avoidant defense mechanisms can eventually become a prison.

Initially created as protective mechanisms, they can become so wired into the brain and personality structures that they require a dramatic, life-altering event to break through them.

These “cosmic two-by-four” events can not only shatter your defense system, they often trigger your very early and very dissociated memories that initially caused you to build an inflated counterdependent False Self.

When these wake-up calls shatter the False Self defenses people drop into the Black Hole, a place where they feel shattered, alone and in despair.

GET REAL: The Hazards of Living Out of Your False Self

Get Real, Dr. Barry Weinhold’s newest book, is available now.

Learn more at: https://amzn.to/2X94xUR

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