



Affective Center for Therapy

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Rejected

Rejection really hurts. In fact, we can hurt so much emotionally that we will actually hurt physically.

"It's like someone took a knife and ran it into me. I feel discounted, angry, put down. I feel hurt and mad." Joe's girlfriend had rejected him.

"What kind of things do we reject?" I asked him, "Do we reject valuable, precious, important things or do we reject garbage?"

"That's easy," he said, "Nobody would reject something that is valuable."

"So when your girlfriend rejects you, what is she saying about you?"

"That I'm garbage," came the answer.

I thought a few moments. "You know, in one of my 'previous lives,'" I said kiddingly, "I worked in a fruit shed. There were three kinds of fruit that we processed: Solid fruit that would be ripe in three or four days which was just right for packing. Then there was the fruit that was ripe and ready to eat at that moment which, if we packed it, would be rotten in a day or two. That kind of fruit we would put under the table and eat at lunch break or would take home with us. The third kind of fruit was the one which, when picked up, would run through our fingers -- yucky.

I noticed that the packing shed owner would pay the county disposal unit good money to come by daily and pick up his culls. Then one day, the owner had a bright idea. He drove a couple of miles down the road to where a pig farmer lived. The next day the pig farmer showed up with his truck and paid the packing shed owner big bucks for his "garbage!" You see, in this case, rejection had more to do with the person's perception of value. We don't reject things that are "garbage," we reject things that we see as value-less. When somebody rejects you, perhaps the problem is that they are too blind to see how neat you are."

But that is not the only reason people reject, there are others. For thousands of years, people threw away diamonds. They were just hard crystals that would shatter if you tried to break them. Does that mean that diamonds are not valuable? Hardly. Sometimes people reject things because they don't know how to treat them, or how to make them into something that is precious.

Let me suggest two more reasons why people might reject someone. I've noticed that almost every summer, one of the large department stores here in town has a big fur coat sale. It's usually held during August when it's 110 degrees outside and there are all those fur coats lined up along the aisles. During one of these sales, I watched women walk right past the fur coats, rejecting them. Does that mean that the fur coats are not valuable, or that the women saw no value in buying a fur coat for themselves at that time? If you have a mate that you are really excited about and who is meeting all your needs, then you would probably "reject" the offer of a second one. That doesn't mean that the second person is not valuable. It is simply that you don't have a need for two mates.

A couple of years ago, a young man came to my office who had recently learned that he had been adopted as a baby. Up until then, this sixteen-year-old lad had done well in school and sports, and was quite outgoing. However, his grades had recently begun to go down, he was skipping school, and didn't want to participate in sports anymore. As we talked, he shared with me the fact that he had been adopted and that his "real" mother had "rejected" him. As a result, he saw himself as having no value. Why else would his mother have "rejected" him? I began talking about the Rolls Royce dealership here in town and asked if he had ever been there.

His eyes lit up. "Yeah," he said.

"Well, the other day I was out there and saw this beautiful silver colored Rolls Royce. They only wanted about \$70,000 for it." We both laughed. "How about if you and I went out there and looked at it? Would you think that car is valuable?"

"Oh, yes," he answered, "I would love to have a car as valuable as that."

"When it came time to leave the lot," I continued, "would you tell the salesman that you were going to buy the car?"

"Why, no!" he responded quickly.

"Why not?" I asked, "Isn't the car valuable?"

"Yes, but I can't afford it."

I thought a moment. "You know, maybe your mother saw you the same way. Maybe the reason she "rejected" you wasn't because you were not valuable, but because you were too valuable and she couldn't afford you or thought she couldn't give to you all the things that you needed." His face changed as I watched him.

Yes, rejection comes in lots of different forms and can mean a lot of different things, but it truly doesn't mean that what is rejected is valueless or garbage. It simply means:

- (1) The person doesn't see the value in you,
- (2) That he/she doesn't know how to treat you as the valuable person you are,

- (3) He/she already has one and would probably get into trouble if he/she brought home another,
- (4) Maybe you are so valuable that he/she doesn't think that he/she deserves you or could afford you.

Rejection can mean a lot of things, but it never says anything about you. It just says something about the person doing the rejecting.

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