FAMILY OF ORIGIN ISSUES—What is in YOUR Basket?

This chapter explores our family of origin and the stuff” we learned living with that family. We will look at the way our family taught us patterns of being with someone. We will explore how the dynamics of the family in which we grew up affects our current relationships as an adult.

I know, I can just hear you say ”Excuse me!! I am NOTHING like my family!” Mostly, that may be true. Living with your family taught you behaviors and ways of expressing or NOT expressing in a way that may not have been so obvious.

You may have said, I am not going to be that way, or do that”. Unless we give ourselves an alternative behavior we will revert to what we know and what is familiar when we are stressed or at our wits end. YOUR “STUFF”

I would like to start this Level with an exercise. Think of each person in your life....well in the whole world, each person has his or her very own basket in front of him or her. Each basket contains this person’s “stuff” or personal issues. Couples have a relationship basket and/or family basket also. So here is how it works.

MOM calls and says- you never call me, you don’t love me, I am the only Mother you have.....yada yada yada”. This means she is feeling alone, selfish, angry...we are not sure. BUT this is stuff in HER basket. She is throwing her stuff in YOUR basket. If you are quick your lid goes SLAM and it bounces back into her basket WHERE IT BELONGS!!!

You are not in charge of taking care of others feelings and/or their “stuff”. This works for couples too. Your job is taking care of your issues. You may choose to take care of others stuff or them at times”,

but this is still NOT your job.

Maybe your partner is a neat freak and you really are more comfortable with the lived in” look. Relationship baskets can become more complicated. You love your partner, you love being with your partner, and it is really nice when they are happy....so maybe you give the neat thing a try. BUT it is really in your partner’s basket. You can add it to yours if you wish and it is definitely in the couple’s basket. I will explain that later.
Your basket contains your issues, things you care about, patterns of behaviors, personality preferences, learned behaviors, family of origin patterns, that sort of thing. If you have codependent tendencies you may put others issues in your basket. If you are co-dependent your good feelings” come from taking care of others. You take care of others instead of taking care of your needs-routinely. That is the co-dependent tendency and not a healthy dynamic for you and others.

Relationship baskets will contain the issues that are in your Relationships-the neat freak/lived in issue will be in the couple’s basket. This issue will be there to discuss, together, to come to some happy outcome for you as a couple.

Parenting issues will be in a couple’s basket. Your parenting issues from your family of origin are in YOUR basket. Your partner’s issues are in their basket. MOM/or DAD’s need to control your life and tell you how to raise your kids.....those issues are where?? IN THEIR BASKET!! SO, when they call to tell you there opinion of your parenting....you say... “I know you feel that way” this comment puts there “stuff” RIGHT back into their basket. This kind of comment is called reflective listening. You can learn more about that is Chapter One on Communication.

YOUR Family of Origin

We learn to be together in our family of origin, or the family where we grew up. The way anger was expressed, the way pain was shown, how stress was handled, communication patterns, respect or disrespect of others and their rights, honoring or NOT personal boundaries, all were taught without actually talking about them, in your family of origin.

We learn about anger and communication invitro..before we were born. We are aware of the outer world while we are being formed inside of our mother. What happens to our Mother while we are still in her uterus can have a profound effect on US. For instance, if a Mother has a life-threatening event while she is pregnant, the child may develop Reactive Attachment Disorder after birth. There is a theory that if the Mother has a life-threatening event during pregnancy the child may be predisposed to homosexuality.
SO, we become who we are in a very complicated environment. Parents-
genetics, family patterns, school influence, peers put in their part, the world
at large, and our own personality and emotional resources-make us the
“who” that we are today.

Our basket contains all of this. The contents in our basket is not permanent,
by that I mean WE can change the “stuff” in our basket. WE are in charge of
taking care of the issues in our basket. If we had abuse in our family of
origin, or our growing up world, we can change how we are functioning
around that with counseling and information. We can change our view of
parenting with classes and reading about good parenting techniques.

The bad part of all this there is NO specific class for Relationships. No one
to teach us to be together “right and functional.” We are at a loss on how to
“do” relationship well if we have not learned that in our family of origin.
Where do we learn to be a partner or lover? TV gives us all kinds

of relationships to consider From SIMPSONS to LEAVE IT TO
BEAVER…So we get to choose a style to try on. Maybe we spend a lifetime
trying on styles of relationship. We need our own personal relationship
dresser” to help us with what fits for US.