

Freudian Slip

C S B / S J U

CELEBRATING ALL RELATIONSHIPS BY EMILY TRAPP

MEET THE NEWSLETTER STAFF

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With Valentine's Day looming, there tends to be a lot of focus on relationships, especially on intimate ones. From buying balloons, flowers, and chocolate for your special someone to how to plan the most romantic evening possible – Valentine's Day is everywhere! But why is there so much focus on just that significant relationship, when in reality people have far more relationships than just that one. Obviously people have relationships with friends, family, coworkers, and other people they interact with, why is there not a holiday to celebrate those relationships, which can be equally important in a person's life?

Throughout history, psychology has focused greatly on the individual and why he or she may act in a certain way, from psychological disorders to behavioral studies. As psychological research has progressed, it has not just included the individual, but also relationships. Regardless of whom the relationship is with, it has been found that relationships are important. Throughout the 1990s, research on social support has

come to the forefront, examining how people interact and on relationships developing in hard times. Studies have clearly demonstrated that during stressful situations social support is very beneficial for a person's health and well-being (Gable et al, 2004). It seems to be obvious that during difficult times in a person's life, support is needed and it is a perk in being in a close relationship, but have you ever wondered how sharing good things with someone may impact your relationship?

Research has very rarely focused on how support during a positive event affects one's relationships, however Langston plunged into this research in 1994 when he looked at what he called "Capitalizing on a and coping with daily-life events: Expressive responses to positive events." This general notion of capitalization is the process of telling a person about a personal positive event and therefore drawing further benefit from it (Langston, 1994). Not only has it been found that capitalization prolongs a feeling of happiness and well-being, but also this abil-

ity to share in a partner's personal achievement or positive event adds to a person's emotional well-being and relationship satisfaction.

Overall it has been found that positive events truly benefit a person, from decreasing depressive symptoms to increasing self-esteem (Gable, 2001), but it leaves to question exactly how reacting to positive events impacts one's well-being. Based on several different investigations it has been proposed that actually the capitalization process is a key factor in using positive emotions to increase a person's physical, intellectual and social resources (Fredrickson, 2001).

Gable et al. (2004) felt it would be important to study the affects of capitalization further in three separate studies that would look at life satisfaction as well as the views of a close relationship partner's usual response to capitalization. It was found that life satisfaction is greater when a person shared their positive events of the day with someone else. This means in basic terms, if you want to get the most out of a happy event, you should

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CYBER-AFFAIRS

BY MICHELLE FLICKER

The internet today has the capabilities to perform and search for almost anything your little heart desires. One can buy and sell products, advertise business, conduct research; the list goes on and on. Another use of the internet in the past decade or so has been to subscribe to online dating services and to chat online with other local singles in the area. We have all seen the commercial for e-harmony. Single people connect and find love over the internet. Seems innocent enough, right? Consider this scenario: a man is not single, yet is chatting with a woman that is also in a committed relationship. Is it cheating? How does one determine the line between casual friendship and infidelity?

In 2004 Beatriz Lia Avila Mileham sought to find an answer to this question and to delve into this confusing realm of love, lust and the internet. Mileham defined the term *cyber affair* as "any chat room contact that the individual feels must be kept hidden from the spouse due to its sexual and/or emotional nature" (Mileham). Her study consisted of 86 married participants. The average age was 42 years old, but ages varied from age 25 to age 66. Par-

ticipants took part in open-ended in-depth interviews. Through the study, Mileham discovered that Yahoo and MSN have conveniently made chat rooms geared specifically for married people: Yahoo's *Married and Flirting* and MSN's *Married But Flirting*. This is where she recruited her participants from. Her study revealed three theo-



retical constructs that represent married individuals' chat room experiences: Anonymous Sexual Interactionism, Behavioral Rationalization, and Effortless Avoidance.

The first theoretical construct, Anonymous Sexual Interactionism "refers to these individuals' dilection for anonymous interactions of a sexual nature in chat rooms. The allure of anonymity gains extra importance

for married individuals, who can enjoy relative safety to express fantasies and desired without being known or exposed" (Mileham). Having the aspect of anonymity is helpful for the married individual because "they can remain unknown and unexposed while exchanging steamy content in chat rooms" (Mileham). The following is an excerpt from the study when a participant was asked why he joins chat rooms such as *Married But Flirting*, opposed to participating in other activities:

Well, I think it's the complete freedom to explore and yet be safe – that is what gets me. I am married and never never cheat. Yet this is an outlet to be younger and have fun, like reading a book or watching a porn movie. I truly enjoy making a woman feel good for at least an hour - just write and flirt – and if you enjoy, that is my bonus (48 year old male).

What is your personal definition of cheating and infidelity in marriage? Is chatting in this manner cheating? To read more on this study and to learn about the other two theoretical constructs that Mileham investigated her study is available online at www.sciencedirect.com. The study's title is *Online infidelity in Internet chat rooms: an ethnographic exploration*.

RELATIONSHIPS CONTINUED . . .

share its occurrence with someone else, however it is important to note that this is different than bragging; capitalization is a form exclusively of sharing.

In the second study it was found that how a person perceived their partner's reaction to sharing a positive event, directly reflected the quality of their relationship. Here are the ranges of responses – where do you and your partner in friendships or other relationships fit?

Active-Constructive

- My partner usually reacts to my good fortune enthusiastically
- I sometimes get the sense that my partner is even more happy and excited than I am.
- My partner often asks a lot of questions and shows genuine concern about the good event

Passive-Constructive

- My partner tries not to make a big deal out of it, but is happy for me.
- My partner is usually silently supportive of the good things that occur to me.
- My partner says little, but I know he/she is happy for me.

Active-Destructive

- My partner often finds a problem with it.
- My partner reminds me that most good things have their bad aspects as well.
- He/she points out the potential down sides of the good event.

Passive-Destructive

- Sometimes I get the impression that he/she doesn't care much.
- My partner doesn't pay much attention to me.
- My partner often seems disinterested.

Overall people that responded in an active-constructive manner tend to have better relationship quality. So if you are looking for ways to improve the strength of any of your relationships, one simple and actually fun thing to do is simply support them and rejoice with them in any good thing that may cross their path. Not only will it make your friend happy, it may make you feel happy too!

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MEN WHO LOVE THEMSELVES... IS THIS FREUDIAN? BY ALICIA REIF

We all have heard of the Oedipus complex and the Electra complex. The common terms associated to Freudian development theory are hard to avoid in the psychology field. In 1998, however, Stephen Gross postulated a new complex that may be afflicting men, called the Orsino complex, based on Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* character The Duke Orsino. Narcissistic in nature, the Orsino complex focuses on men who find their own selves as a love object, not others. "The nature of the complex is that, as a result of the relationships with their own narcissistically wounded and unfulfilled mothers, some men develop a love relationship with their own internalized image of themselves as the love object of a woman" (Gross, p. 205).

As is always the case in Freudian theory, the mother is at fault. According to this complex, the mother is frustrated and angry about the oppressive nature of the patriarchal society in which she coincides. The antithesis of this feeling of oppression is when she gives birth to a son, whom she detests because he is a male and in possession of all the advantages she is not able to enjoy. Gross coins two aspects of this complex, maternal phallic projection and maternal withdrawal, both of which have significant influences on the son. Maternal phallic projection, says Gross, happens when a mother unconsciously

puts her feelings of inadequacy onto her son. So, the son becomes the source of hatred and contempt of the mother, but the mother, fearing these feelings for her son, will over-control him, needing to reclaim him as a lost part of herself (Gross, 1998). The second concept is maternal withdrawal, in which the mother can not give her son the love and attention that he craves. She withdraws,



leaving a feeling of loneliness in the son who longs for the maternal attention and love and looks for a mate so he can believe that he is loved by her. He is not in the relationship for the relationship, but for the belief, rather, that she loves him.

The inadequacy and jealousy the mother feels for the son and for the male sex in general is reflective of what many feel is the reason behind Feminism. But there is a legitimate argument behind this. Due to the son feeling the

need to protect his masculinity, since this is all he knows, the Orsino – male upholds the more traditionalist viewpoints. He then may limit the opportunities he presents to his daughters and expects his loved ones to fulfill the traditionally female roles. In this way, the Orsino complex becomes cyclical. Gross places the weight on the father to mediate the experience his daughter has and can then determine whether or not she subjects her son to the Orsino complex in his development. The author also calls for a redefinition and understanding of the role of the husband and father in the child's development. Since he places an increased emphasis on the fatherhood role, Gross insists that the range of what a father is considered to be must be widened (1998).

Even though many of the Freudian concepts have been discounted, there are some good ideas that can come out of this thought process. The recognition of the need for the father to be present in the child's life is very important. Also understanding the psychological impact a birth can have on a mother, in many different ways is also a key understanding one can glean from this idea. The Orsino complex is purely theoretical and has not been revisited by other investigators but it does challenge us to look at the impact of parenting can have on a developing child in a new way.

Source: Gross, S. (1998). The Orsino complex: Men who love themselves as love objects. *Psychodynamic Counselling*, 4(2), 203-220.

FORGIVENESS CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE BY NATALIE THOMPSON

Our country has many admirable qualities. However, not all qualities are admirable. The United States has the highest violence rates as compared to other industrialized countries. Murder, rape, and spousal abuse have the highest occurrences in the U.S. However, physical abuse is not the only type of abuse that can happen. Emotional abuse can be just as devastating.

Approximately 35% of women report emotional abuse from a spouse or romantic partner during

their lifetime. According to psychologists Gayle L. Reed and Robert D. Enright (2006), from the University of Wisconsin, "...women often demonstrate negative psychological outcomes long after this [emotional] abuse has ended" (p. 920). Other researchers have identified 7 categories of spousal psychological abuse: criticizing, ridiculing, jealous control, purposeful ignoring, threats of abandonment, threats of harm, and damage to personal property (Reed & Enright, 2006). Threats of abandonment severely

frighten an abused woman because she does not want to be alone.

Threats of harm leave an abused woman in a heightened state of anxiety since they never know if their spouse will hit them. "Follingstad et al. (see Reed and Enright, 1990), found that 72% of participants reported that emotional abuse had a more negative impact than physical abuse" (p. 920).

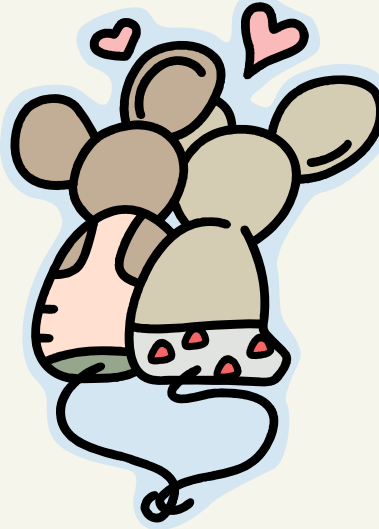
Reed and Enright wanted to find out the best ways to treat these types of women. Their study compares forgiveness therapy (FT)

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F O R G I V E N E S S C O N T I N U E D . . .

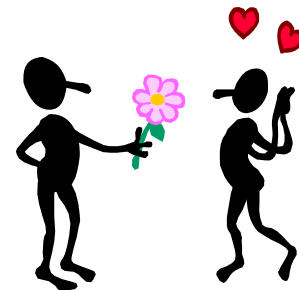
with an alternative treatment (AT; anger validation, assertiveness, interpersonal skill building) for emotionally abused women who had been separated for 2 or more years from their abusive spouse. What they found was that FT participants experienced a vast improvement over the AT participants in depression, trait anxiety, posttraumatic stress symptoms, self-esteem, forgiveness, environmental mastery, and finding meaning in suffering, with gains maintained at follow-up (p. 920).

The protocol for the FT sessions were the following: defining forgiveness and explaining the difference between forgiveness and reconciliation, examining psychological defenses, understanding an-

ger, examining abuser-related shame and self-blame, understanding cognitive rehearsal, making a commitment to the work of forgiving, grieving the pain and losses from the abuse, reframing the former abusive partner, exploring empathy and compassion, practicing goodwill, finding meaning in unjust suffering, and considering a new purpose in life of helping others (Reed & Enright, 2006).

What this shows is that forgiveness is an important quality to have when it comes to psychological health. Everyone knows that forgiveness is stressed. This is evidence that being able to forgive lets people move on with their lives and helps heal the pain. The next time someone betrays your trust, remem-

ber what forgiveness can do for your health. It is better to forgive and move on with your life than to hold a grudge and dwell in the past.



Source:

Reed, G. L. & Enright, R. D. (2006). The Effects of Forgiveness Therapy on Depression, Anxiety, and Posttraumatic Stress for Women after Spousal Emotional Abuse. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 74*(5), 920-929.