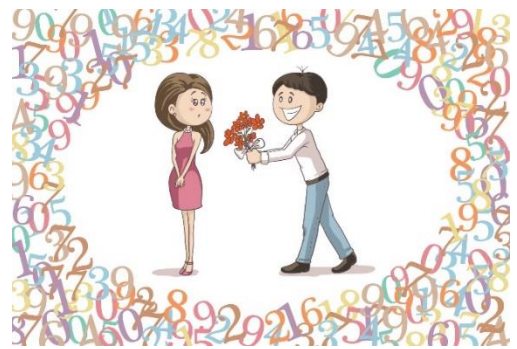


Intimacy by the Numbers

Couples come together out of an equal fear of intimacy.

This is the answer to many questions about how people end up with each other.

“I want to be in an intimate relationship, so why do I keep choosing emotionally unavailable partners?”
“Why do I keep finding great guys who live somewhere else?”
“Why do all the women I meet want me only for my money?”
“Why do all the partners I meet turn out to be addicts?”



So how does it happen that a person who says he or she wants to be in an intimate relationship has such difficulty? Part of the answer to that is in my book, *Addict America: The Lost Connection*. Here is an excerpt:

They both have that inner child who holds on to the messages of “I’m not good enough,” “I’m a failure,” “I’m a bad person,” “I’m worthless,” and so on. Each person subliminally recognizes that the other will come so close and no closer, matching each other’s comfort level. They will unconsciously strive to keep that distance. For instance, when they are close sexually, they will be emotionally distant. As they become emotionally close, they will pull apart sexually. They will employ any number of mechanisms to maintain the status quo.

When we are children, we personalize everything, which is where those messages come from. Whether it’s from something obvious, like being abused, that leads to the belief of being a bad person or being worthless; or something more subtle, like bringing home a B instead of an A on a report card, which leads to the belief of not being good enough; we grow up with that sense of having to maintain a certain distance from others. If they get too close, they will see our inner selves and run away.

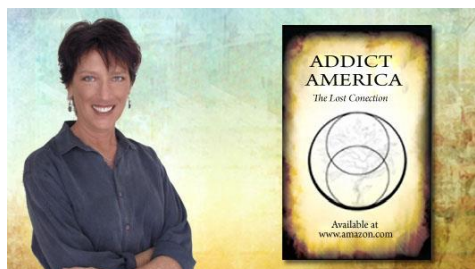
Of course, this is happening on an unconscious level. The Limbic System (what I call the Caveman Brain), where our emotions reside, is motivating much of our behavior without us even realizing it. Our Prefrontal Cortex (Enlightened Brain) is where the thinking takes place. This is also the part of the brain that says “I want to be close, intimate, and Connected!” Meanwhile, the Caveman Brain is pulling back in fear.

So let’s give this fear of intimacy a number. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being the farthest away you can be emotionally and 10 being completely Connected, let’s say you are a 5. Maybe your parents got divorced and you hardly saw your father after that. You waited in vain for him to show up but he never did. You took in the message that you are not important. You say you want to be in an intimate relationship with a man, but you don’t trust that any man will really be there for you. If you meet a man who is a 7, he will be trying to get closer than you feel comfortable and you will be (unconsciously) pushing him away. If you meet a 3, you will be trying to get closer to him and he’ll be pulling away until one of you gives up. Generally, when numbers are mismatched, they won’t even get together. The vibe just isn’t there.

So what happens when you meet another 5? It will work for a while. You will both feel comfortable with being so close and no closer. The problem is, we are spiritual beings who are innately Connected to each other and the Universe and our Enlightened Brains want us to be as close as we can get, so we are always striving for real Connection. We want to be known and accepted fully as we are and yet we are scared to death of that. We engage in the dance of Power and Control as we try to maintain the status quo even while growing and evolving.

We need to recognize our fears and then take responsibility for them. We can make that decision to not bring the past into the present. Therapy can help with this. We can take the scary risk of being open to intimacy. We can believe that we are lovable. We can each choose to be a 10!

*Be In Light,
Carol*



Dr. Carol Clark, author of *Addict America: The Lost Connection*