

Highly Functional Versus Highly Dysfunctional

Today's podcast is about the terms highly functional versus highly dysfunctional.

Many people have heard the term "highly functional." Highly functional can happen in all kinds of ways. Someone with high functioning anxiety or depression battles their disorder, yet is also able to hold down a job & have relationships. Someone who is high functioning with a physical condition similarly performs at a higher level than others with the exact same condition.

Interestingly, recently when I was praying, God mentioned the term "highly dysfunctional." I assumed this would mean someone who is very dysfunctional, but it isn't exactly what He meant. Highly dysfunctional means someone who is intensely dysfunctional, continues to avoid facing their own issues, hurts others & himself or herself because of it, yet lives a rather normal life.

An example of a highly dysfunctional person can be that coworker who everyone likes because she is always willing to go over & above, take on extra shifts, & cover for coworkers who need last minute time off while rarely taking time off for herself. Another example can be the guy whose family treats him poorly, yet he defends them fanatically to his wife when she objects to their treatment of him.

People like this aren't the type to cause other people pain deliberately, yet they hurt themselves & other people all the time. That coworker I used as an example can spend so much time focusing on her job that she has no time or energy left for herself or those who love her. She ends up resentful & exhausted, possibly also with physical & mental health problems because she hasn't achieved balance between work & her personal life. The other example? That man causes his wife tremendous pain because although it isn't intentional, his behavior continually proves to her that his family is much more important to him than their marriage.

Highly dysfunctional people usually have no idea that what they are doing is such a problem until they are faced with undeniable proof of the problem, such as her health problems or his divorce. And sadly, by then, the damage is often irreparable.

They also usually don't understand why anyone complains about their behavior since usually, it doesn't look bad. Consider my examples again. The woman in the example could be seen as having a good work ethic & the man could be seen as a loving son to his aging parents. The highly dysfunctional don't recognize that the truth is that the woman was raised to be a doormat by her abusive parents, or that the man in the example is a grown man who is still trying to gain the approval of his narcissistic parents that have made him believe he is only worthy of their love when he does what they want him to do.

If you are a highly dysfunctional person, there is truly hope for you! You are going to have to face the truth about your life & what has made you dysfunctional. I know this

is hard, but it really is possible! I believe a close relationship with God to be vital in all areas, but in particular with emotional healing. Ask Him to help you to be strong & courageous enough to face whatever you must, to show you what areas you need healing & how to work on that healing. Also look to Him for validation, not other people, & ask Him to help you to learn to validate yourself. Doing these things will help you to become so much healthier & happier!

People in relationships with highly dysfunctional people also need to take care of themselves, especially if the highly dysfunctional person doesn't recognize their dysfunction. Highly dysfunctional people may not do it intentionally, but they still gaslight their loved ones by normalizing their behavior & criticizing healthy behavior. You need to have a firm grip on what you know is healthy, right & true so as not to fall for their gaslighting. They are very convicted in what they think, & it can be hard not to believe what they say, especially if that person is someone close to you like a spouse.

It's also important to remind yourself often that it is their right to function out of their dysfunction. You can't force them to get healthier. That being said, you don't have to validate it or tolerate what hurts you. Have healthy boundaries & cling to the truth. Give this person consequences rather than excuse their dysfunctional behavior. Excuses won't help anyone. Consequences encourage change without being controlling. And never forget to pray about how best to handle your situation & ask God for any help you need. He will be glad to help you.

Thank you for listening to my podcast!