

Extreme Independence Is A Trauma Response

Today's podcast is about how extreme independence is a trauma response.

Many of us who have been abused have turned out to be extremely independent. Although we have relationships in our lives, we try not to rely on other people at all, often even when we really need some help. And, we often end up angry & resentful because people are so willing to let us help them while they rarely help us. This makes us withdraw & maintain our independence or even become even more independent. This behavior reinforces our lack of needing help to others in our lives, so they help or offer to help us even less, & the dysfunctional cycle continues.

Extreme independence is a trauma response in many people, & it happens for valid reasons.

When you grow up with abusive parents, you learn people can't be trusted to help you. Abusive parents fail to meet many of their children's most basic needs. Even if they provide food, clothing & shelter, they fail to provide emotional support, to teach their children basic life skills & more. Instead, they teach their children not to expect them to take care of them, becoming angry with them if they do. Such treatment teaches children that if they want to avoid other people's anger, disappointment or being hurt, they need to rely only on themselves when they have needs.

Narcissistic parents are possibly the most effective abusive parents when it comes to creating extremely independent children. They are too self absorbed to notice let alone care about their children's needs. Many also expect their children to take care of them instead of them taking care of their children. Children in these situations aren't allowed needs, only the parent is allowed to have them, so children learn to meet their own needs quietly without inconveniencing their parent. These children also have learned a very painful lesson. That lesson is when they "bother" their parent with their needs, they are a burden & disappointment to that parent. Overt narcissistic parents often rage at their children for having the audacity to bother them with their needs. Covert narcissistic parents are quieter, but still make sure their children know they shouldn't inconvenience their parent with their needs. They act disappointed in their child, making the child feel guilty or even ashamed of themselves. Many narcissistic parents also twist the situation around to return the focus back on the parent. They may claim they work so hard & sacrifice so much for their child, yet all he or she does is want more. Or if the parent doesn't want to meet the child's need, that parent may claim they are unable to do anything about meeting this need, & even make their child feel badly for them.

Other abusive relationships can cause someone to become extremely independent, too. Consider the significant other who is too busy with other people to help you when needed or the friend who constantly asks for your help but never helps you.

After being disappointed by these people repeatedly, most people naturally will pull away from them & ask less of them & other people.

If you are extremely independent, learning to be more balanced isn't easy. I know, because I struggle with this too. I also can tell you there is no magical fix for this problem. It takes time & a willingness to change. Asking God to help you is the best place to start in my opinion, then do whatever He says to do. Following His lead will put you on the right path. Also ask the safe people in your life for help sometimes. They will be very glad to help you, even if that help is simply to encourage you. Doing this will help you to gain confidence in the area of asking for help.

Lastly, always continue to learn & grow. The healthier you become, the easier it becomes to lose toxic habits & mindsets, & also to have a more balanced view of independence.

Thank you for listening to my podcast!