


Think Tank October 2015

Focus: It's Not You...It's Me (*Don't Take Things Personally*)



"It's not you, it's me." Remember the Seinfeld episode in which George Costanza thinks he invented this signature break-up line? Of course, hilarity ensues when a woman he's dating uses the line first on him. But there's truth in that sentence: most of the time, it *isn't* about you and it *is* about the other person.

In his 1997 bestselling book *The Four Agreements*, author Don Miguel Ruiz takes it even further, stating that *nothing* others do is because of you. Oh, how difficult that can be sometimes to believe! As humans, our egos and insecurities do a marvelous job of convincing us that the world revolves around us when in fact, what others say and do is actually a projection of their own reality or dream. You're just a supporting actor on their stage (of course, you're the star of your *own* life story but that's another therapy session).

The problem occurs when you don't have a well-developed sense of basic self, making you constantly vulnerable to the opinions and actions of others, spending a great amount of your time trying to people-please, which, frankly, is both exhausting and depleting.

Are your feelings frequently hurt? Do you ruminate over past conversations with others, inventing "the perfect comeback" days and weeks later? Do you often wish you could change others, or control what they say? It might be time to stop taking things so personally. Here are some tips to get you started:

- Acknowledge that taking things personally is not serving you well. When you place high emphasis on what others think of you, you'll always be the victim of needless suffering. **Amie Hamaker**, an Insights therapist specializing in eating disorders, self-esteem and anxiety says, "If the goal is to be your authentic self, rather than seeking approval and



validation from others, you're able to regain power and control of your worth."

- Work on enlarging your sense of basic self. You can do this through talk therapy, reading books on the subject, writing down your feelings and generally, spending more time doing the activities and things that you like to do (and purposely avoiding those you don't).
- Spend a few moments each day thinking about accepting others just as they are, not as how you wish they would be. Those who are in 12-Step Programs practice this regularly with the Serenity Prayer, asking for the peace that comes with accepting things that cannot be changed, the courage to change things that can, and the wisdom to know the difference. Adopt this or something similar as your own mantra.

For more information on self-esteem and anxiety, contact therapist **Amie Hamaker** at ahamaker@insightstherapy.com.




Self Care Strategies: Create a Morning Ritual

Set up your day for success with a morning ritual. For some people, it's about yoga, meditation or simple stretching exercises. For others, it might include a great cup of coffee in your favorite mug out on the porch before everyone else wakes up. According to Entrepreneur.com, rituals are both important and effective because they "put the various minutiae of your life on autopilot, so that you can use your brainpower to focus on what's important: creativity and solving problems." Tomorrow morning, give it a try.



Reconnect: Create a United Front

Many parenting experts stress the importance of couples sticking together when it comes to raising kids. If one parent says "yes" and the other, "no", children learn very quickly to play parents against each other. Before you know it, the sense of unity that should be shared between parents disintegrates and couples end up arguing with each other, rather than sharing authority and responsibility. Well, the same thing can happen even without kids in the picture. As a couple, you represent (or should) a united front to the rest of the world. If someone makes a less-than-positive comment about your partner when he isn't in the room, stand up for him. Resist taking pot shots at each other especially in front of others, even




when the moment gets heated. Little things like this signal to your partner that you're on *his* team.

**Bibliotherapy: *The Strange and Beautiful Sorrows of Ava Lavender*
by Leslye Walton**

"Ava looks to the stories of her matriarchs to make sense of her own life and to understand how to navigate the world as both an "other" and a typical teenage girl. It is not until a fateful day in her 16th year that many narrative threads come to a head. This multigenerational tale examines love and considers the conflicting facets of loving and being loved --desire, despair, depression, obsession, self-love, and courage." (In other words, many of the things we talk about every day at Insights!) This story has been compared to other great narratives such as *Like Water for Chocolate* by Laura Esquivel. (review source and availability: www.amazon.com)


Time-Out: Teaching Kids Boundaries



Helping children set appropriate boundaries is an important aspect of parenting. It includes reminders not to step into others' spaces (physical and emotional) as well as not allowing them to step into their own. It could be as simple as asking your child if it's okay to borrow his iPad for a moment (yes, even though you bought it for him) or telling him you will not respond to him when he's yelling or whining. Give your kids the gift of knowing that they have the power and right to say "no" to others (even when you don't agree with them) and that others have the power and right to say "no" to them. For more insight on how these suggestions can relate specifically to your family, please contact **Laura Elpers** at helpers@insightstherapy.com to schedule a parent coaching session.

Take Two: *Meet the Patels*

Meet the Patels is a real life romantic comedy about an Indian-American who enters a love triangle between the woman of his dreams...and his parents. Fresh from a breakup with his secret white girlfriend and freaked out that he's nearing 30 and single, Ravi goes on a family vacation to India with his head spinning. Struck by the overwhelmingly happy marriages of his Patel family and friends, Ravi agrees to enter the foolproof Patel matchmaking system. Filmed by Ravi's sister in what started as a family vacation




video, this hilarious and heartbreaking film reveals how love is a family affair. (Review source and playing now: www.angelikeafilmcenter.com)

Insights Happenings:

Book Launch *Ready to Talk: A Companion Guide to Psychotherapy* by Insights Founder/CEO Mary Sanger, LPC-S, LMFT-S, LCDC, *Marriage & Family Therapist*

Have you ever wondered how therapy really works? Would you like to enhance your weekly sessions? Have you tried therapy in the past but were dissatisfied with the results? In straightforward language and an easy-to-read format, Sanger explains how to get the most out of the therapeutic process, teaching us that essentially, each of us is the architect of our own story.

Readers will learn how to challenge current beliefs that are no longer serving them well, recognize unhelpful thought patterns and self-defeating behaviors, manage emotions so that relationships are more enjoyable and understand how others' beliefs and emotions don't have to control their lives. It's an indispensable book for those seeking a more pleasurable, less painful and authentic daily life. You can order your copy from www.amazon.com



Mindful Women's Group Join us for an ongoing weekly group for women who are looking for help, understanding, and support in navigating life challenges with partners, kids, jobs, divorce, caring for others and other issues shared by women. This group discusses topics such as co-dependency, boundary setting, self-care, coping skills, enabling, love addiction, concepts of a healthy relationship, using mindfulness as a grounding technique, addiction, mental illness, parenting difficulties, struggles with low self-esteem, and being an empty-nester. The cost is \$30 a week, registration is not required. For more information email thinktank@insightstherapy.com or call (214) 706-0508.

Yoga We believe that healthy living requires an holistic approach - mind, body and spirit. We don't just treat symptoms or isolated causes. We work with you as a whole person to experience greater fulfillment and less anxiety in your life. Every 4th Saturday of the month (October 24th & November 28th), Insights will host a Yin Yoga class. Yoga for your mind -it calms, it stretches, it builds endurance. The poses in yin yoga are practiced entirely while

sitting or lying on the mat, with out the use of props. This style of practice is a restorative yoga. The fee for this class is a donation and all proceeds will go to The American Heart Association.
Instructor -Scott Murphy

Nourish -Insights offers a mixed-gender group every Monday for individuals 18 and up that struggle with eating and body image. The group will help separate food and feelings with the support of a Licensed Professional Counselor and a Registered Dietitian. The group meets on Mondays from 6-7:30pm. For more information, call (214) 706-0508 or email thinktank@insightstherapy.com

Our Time is Up: Stay tuned for our November issue...

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