

*Ps 139:23-24 Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts.
Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life. NLT*

Stages of Emotional Development

Emotional Infants

- ✓ Look for others to take care of them
- ✓ Have great difficulty entering into the world of others
- ✓ Are driven by need for instant gratification
- ✓ Use others as objects to meet their needs

Emotional Children

- ✓ Are content and happy as long as they receive what they want
- ✓ Unravel quickly from stress, disappointments, trials
- ✓ Interpret disagreements as personal offenses
- ✓ Are easily hurt
- ✓ Complain, withdraw, manipulate, take revenge, become sarcastic when they don't get their way
- ✓ Have great difficulty calmly discussing their needs and wants in a mature, loving way

Emotional Adolescents

- ✓ Tend to often be defensive
- ✓ Are threatened and alarmed by criticism
- ✓ Keep score of what they give so they can ask for something later in return
- ✓ Deal with conflict poorly, often blaming, appeasing, going to a third party, pouting, or ignoring the issue entirely
- ✓ Become preoccupied with themselves
- ✓ Have great difficulty truly listening to another person's pain, disappointments, or needs
- ✓ Are critical and judgmental

Emotional Adults

- ✓ Are able to ask for what they need, want, or prefer – clearly, directly, honestly
- ✓ Recognize, manage, and take responsibility for their own thoughts and feelings
- ✓ Can, when under stress, state their own beliefs and values without becoming adversarial
- ✓ Respect others without having to change them
- ✓ Give people room to make mistakes and not be perfect
- ✓ Appreciate people for who they are – the good, bad, and ugly – not for what they give back
- ✓ Accurately assess their own limits, strengths, and weaknesses and are able to freely discuss them with others
- ✓ Are deeply in tune with their own emotional world and able to enter into the feelings, needs, and concerns of others without losing themselves
- ✓ Have the capacity to resolve conflict maturely and negotiate solutions that consider the perspectives of others

John 8:31-32 NIV

To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

Expectations

We expect other people to know what we want before we say it (especially if they are invested in the relationship).

The problem with most expectations is that they are:

- ✓ **Unconscious** – we have expectations we're not even aware of until someone disappoints us
- ✓ **Unrealistic** – we may have illusions about others
- ✓ **Unspoken** – we may have never told our spouse, friend, or employee what we expect, yet we are angry when our expectations are not met
- ✓ **Un-agreed upon** – we may have had our own thoughts about what was expected, but it was never agreed upon by the other person.

Expectations are only valid when they have been mutually agreed upon.

In order for expectations to be established, they must first be:

- ✓ **Conscious** (I have to become aware of the expectations I have for the other person)
- ✓ **Realistic** (I have to ask myself if my expectations regarding the other person are realistic)
- ✓ **Spoken** (I have to speak my expectations clearly, directly, and respectfully to the other person)
- ✓ **Agreed upon** (in order for my expectations to be valid, the other person must be aware of and agree to them; otherwise it is simply a hope)

Phil 3:13-14 NIV

Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

Emotional Allergies

An emotional allergy is an intense reaction to something in the present that reminds us, consciously or unconsciously, of an event from our history. What happens most often in an allergic reaction is that we end up treating the person with whom we are in a relationship now as if they were someone from our past. We treat them like an “IT”.

"Wiping the slate clean" --- a healing exercise:

- **An emotional allergy you trigger in me is ...**
- **When this allergy happens, what I think or tell myself is...**
- **When this allergy happens, I feel...**
- **When this allergy happens, what I think and feel about myself for even having these feelings is...**
- **When this happens inside me, the behavior you then see from me is...**
- **What this allergy relates to in my history is...**
- **When this allergy happens, you remind me of...**
- **The price we are paying for this in our relationship is...**
- **The words from the past that I needed, the words that I wish had been said to me, are...**

Many people realize through this exercise how much they still live in the past and project it into present relationships. Once we begin to see this connection, we can begin making different choices that are more loving, emotionally adult responses rather than *allergic reactions*.

1 Peter 2:16-17 Live as free men, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as servants of God. Show proper respect to everyone: Love the brotherhood of believers, fear God, honor the king. NIV

respect - high or special regard: ESTEEM

Respect

Respect is not a feeling. It is how we treat another person. Respect means I give myself and others the right to:

- **Space and privacy**
- **Be different**
- **Disagree**
- **Be heard**
- **Be taken seriously**
- **Be given the benefit of the doubt**
- **Be told the truth**
- **Be consulted**
- **Be imperfect and make mistakes**
- **Courteous and honorable treatment**

from Emotionally Healthy Spirituality by Peter Scazzero