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Psychotherapy
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Group Seminar Audio Series

The Target on Your Back: Navigating Your Partner's Pain

If you ever thought you were paying the price for how your romantic partner was hurt in the past, you are not alone! It is fairly common for a partner to project his or her past hurt, injury, and pain from prior relationships onto her current partner, and vice versa. Because very little of what we go through is every fully resolved, it appears as if the mind unconsciously needs to revisit and refine the past by imbuing our current relationship with distorted and exaggerated feelings and reactions. This dynamic is especially relevant in situations where a person may be truly accountable for hurting his or her partner in a present-day situation -- yet, this hurt is further dramatized when it is linked to similar behaviors by others from long ago. *This seminar was recorded on July 21, 2018 in Laguna Hills, CA.*

Key Excerpts:

- *As we go through our lives and relationships, how we have been hurt or rejected or disappointed stays with us, remains as unresolved relational trauma. And this material needs to be psychologically digested in future relationships.*
- *And the way that that occurs is usually through one's partner who becomes a kind of a target or receptacle, a symbol of all of this past relational trauma. Some of this is due to projection and some of it is due to actual things the partner has done.*
- *However it gets constructed, the partner now psychologically represents all of the relational trauma the other partner has experienced previously. We are essentially drawn to people who we ultimately come to experience as emotionally injurious.*

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Key Excerpts (continued)

- *As these dynamics unfold, couples often pursue couple therapy. At the first session, one partner usually complains about the other, i.e., saying he or she is “over-reacting” or “projecting onto me.”*
- *Some theorists believe this is a necessary component of intimacy and a common feature of long-term committed relationships. The intimacy is deepened by each partner coming to understand in a pronounced way how the other partner has been hurt. But of course this deepening of intimacy comes at a great cost.*
- *The danger of these dynamics is that gradually over time a partner may no longer be perceived by the other realistically, and just becomes entirely distorted and projected upon.*

