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## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT PEOPLE PLEASING?

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People-pleasing refers to the tendency or behavior of constantly seeking approval, validation, and acceptance from others. It involves prioritizing the needs and desires of others over one's own, often at the expense of personal boundaries, values, and well-being. Time and again people-pleasers go to great lengths to avoid conflict, confrontation, and disapproval, feeling an intense desire to make others happy.

Common traits and behaviors associated with people-pleasing include:

- 1) **Excessive need for and motivated by approval:** People-pleasers are primarily motivated by a strong desire to seek external validation as they potentially struggle with self-validation. They may feel a constant need for approval and praise from others to boost their self-esteem and feel accepted.
- 2) **Difficulty saying no:** They struggle to set boundaries and tend to overcommit themselves, often taking on more responsibilities than they can handle, and frequently find it challenging to say "no" to requests or favors, even if it inconveniences them or compromises their well-being.
- 3) **Fear of disapproval and rejection:** People-pleasers have a deep fear of disapproval as well as being disliked, criticized, or rejected by others. This drives their efforts to please others and avoid confrontation or disagreement.
- 4) **Overcommitment and neglecting personal needs:** Due to their difficulty in saying no, people-pleasers tend to overcommit themselves, prioritize the needs and wants of others, and regularly neglect their own needs, desires, and self-care in order to accommodate others.
- 5) **Difficulty making decisions:** Since pleasing others is a priority, people-pleasers may find it challenging to make decisions for themselves. They may excessively seek others' opinions and guidance before making choices.
- 6) **Difficulty expressing opinions:** People-pleasers may suppress their true thoughts and feelings and opt to go along with the crowd by conforming to the opinions and preferences of others to avoid causing upset or rocking the boat. They may outwardly agree with others rather than assert their own individuality and unique perspective even when they have a different viewpoint. Maintaining harmony and avoiding conflict can lead to a lack of authentic self-expression and a diminished sense of personal identity.

- 7) **Emotional exhaustion and burnout:** People-pleasers may experience exhaustion, stress, and burnout as they prioritize others' needs over their own. Constantly trying to please others can be mentally and emotionally draining.
- 8) **Imbalanced relationships:** People-pleasers can attract individuals who take advantage of their accommodating nature, leading to imbalanced and one-sided relationships. This can perpetuate a cycle of seeking validation through others' approval.

It's important to note that while wanting to make others happy is generally a positive trait, excessive people-pleasing can have negative consequences on one's own well-being and relationships. By learning to set healthy boundaries, prioritize personal needs, and assert oneself in a respectful manner, individuals are more likely to strike a balance between meeting their own needs *and* maintaining healthy relationships with others.

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## HOW DOES SOMEONE BECOME A PEOPLE PLEASER?

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Becoming a people-pleaser can be influenced by a combination of factors including upbringing, life experiences, individual personality traits, and societal expectations. Following are some common factors that can contribute to the development of people-pleasing behavior:

- 1) **Childhood conditioning:** People-pleasing tendencies can stem from early childhood experiences. Children who grow up in environments where their self-worth is closely tied to meeting others' expectations may develop a strong desire to please others as they associate it with their way to gain love and acceptance or avoid punishment.
- 2) **Approval-seeking:** Some individuals have a natural inclination to seek external validation and approval. They may have a deep-seated need for others' acceptance and believe that their worth depends on meeting others' expectations.
- 3) **Fear of rejection and conflict:** People-pleasers often have a fear of being rejected, disliked, or facing conflict. They may go to great lengths to avoid confrontation or disagreement, choosing to prioritize harmony and approval over expressing their own needs and opinions.
- 4) **Low self-esteem:** Individuals with low self-esteem may believe that their own needs and desires are not as important as those of others. They may seek external validation to compensate for their perceived lack of self-worth.
- 5) **Cultural and societal influences:** Family dynamics, societal norms, and cultural expectations all play a role in shaping people-pleasing behavior. Some cultures emphasize the importance of prioritizing collective harmony and avoiding conflict which can reinforce people-pleasing tendencies.

- 6) **Previous negative experiences:** Past experiences of rejection, criticism, or disapproval can influence individuals to become people-pleasers. They may develop a belief that if they constantly strive to meet others' expectations, they can avoid negative outcomes and maintain positive relationships.

It's important to remember that people-pleasing behavior is not a fixed trait and can be unlearned. With self-awareness, self-reflection, and intentional effort, individuals can develop healthier boundaries, assertiveness skills, and a stronger sense of self-worth. Seeking support from a therapist or counselor can also be beneficial to address the underlying causes of people-pleasing and learn new ways to build healthy relationships.

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## WHY IS BEING A PEOPLE PLEASER UNHEALTHY?

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Being a people-pleaser can have negative effects on an individual's mental, emotional, and social well-being. Following are some reasons why being a people-pleaser can be unhealthy:

- 1) **Neglecting personal needs:** People-pleasers often prioritize the needs and desires of others above their own. They may consistently put their own well-being, interests, and goals on the back burner, leading to the neglect of their own self-care and fulfillment.
- 2) **Lack of authentic self-expression:** People-pleasers often suppress their true thoughts, feelings, and opinions to avoid conflict or disapproval. They may conform to the expectations and preferences of others, leading to a loss of their authentic self and a diminished sense of personal identity.
- 3) **Resentment and burnout:** Constantly striving to meet the expectations of others can lead to emotional exhaustion and burnout. People-pleasers may feel overwhelmed, stressed, and subconsciously resentful when their efforts to please others go unrecognized or when their own needs are consistently overlooked.
- 4) **Difficulty establishing boundaries:** People-pleasers often struggle to set and maintain healthy boundaries in their relationships. They may have a hard time saying "no" or asserting their own needs, which can result in them being taken advantage of or feeling overwhelmed by excessive commitments.
- 5) **Disrupted relationships:** While people-pleasing behavior may initially help foster positive relationships, it can create an unhealthy dynamic over time. People-pleasers may attract individuals who take advantage of their accommodating nature which ultimately leads to imbalanced relationships and a lack of mutual respect.

- 6) **Low self-esteem:** The constant need for external validation and approval can be detrimental to one's self-esteem. People-pleasers may develop a sense of inadequacy and believe that their worth is dependent on meeting the expectations of others, leading to a diminished sense of self-confidence and self-worth.
- 7) **Lack of personal growth and fulfillment:** By consistently prioritizing the desires and expectations of others, people-pleasers may hinder their own personal growth and fulfillment. They may miss out on opportunities for self-discovery, pursuing their own passions, and setting and achieving personal goals.

It's important for individuals to find a balance between caring for others and caring for themselves. Learning to set healthy boundaries, prioritize personal needs, and communicate assertively can help those afflicted break free from the negative patterns of people-pleasing and cultivate healthier and more fulfilling relationships.

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## HOW CAN PEOPLE HEAL FROM PEOPLE PLEASING?

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Healing from people-pleasing requires self-reflection, self-compassion, and intentional changes in behavior and mindset. Following are some steps that can aid the healing process:

- 1) **Increase self-awareness:** By reflecting on their patterns and identifying the underlying reasons behind them, people-pleasers can explore how people-pleasing has affected their life, relationships, and well-being and thus, create a foundation for change.
- 2) **Identify needs and values:** A people-pleaser should take the time to analyze and understand their own needs, desires, and values. By connecting with their authentic self and prioritizing what truly matters, a sense of self-worth and decision-making guidance will be established.
- 3) **Practice self-compassion:** When a people-pleaser is learning to heal, it is crucial that they be kind to themselves. They should recognize that breaking free from people-pleasing is a process, acknowledge that it's okay to prioritize their own well-being and that they deserve to have their needs met.
- 4) **Set healthy boundaries:** A people-pleaser must learn to establish and communicate boundaries that protect their well-being. They should practice saying "no" when necessary and expressing thoughts, feelings, and preferences assertively and respectfully. Remember that setting boundaries is not selfish but rather essential for self-care.
- 5) **Challenge limiting beliefs:** Any beliefs that contribute to people-pleasing tendencies should be explored and challenged. Replacing self-limiting beliefs with empowering thoughts affirm self-worth and autonomy.

- 6) **Prioritize self-care:** Self-care must be made a priority in life. Engage in activities that bring joy, relaxation, and fulfillment. Physical, emotional, and mental well-being must be fostered in order to replenish energy and build resilience.
- 7) **Seek support:** Consider seeking guidance from a therapist or counselor who can provide tools and strategies to overcome people-pleasing patterns. They can offer objective insights and support for a journey toward healing and personal growth.
- 8) **Practice assertiveness:** People-pleasers must nurture the development of assertiveness skills, such as conveying needs, setting boundaries, and voicing opinions. These skills should be practiced in safe and supportive environments, gradually building confidence and learning self-expression.
- 9) **Celebrate progress:** Successes should be recognized and celebrated, no matter how small they may seem. Each step taken toward breaking free from people-pleasing is a significant achievement worth acknowledging.

**Healing is possible;** it is a journey that takes time and patience. Anyone on the odyssey should be gentle with themselves as they navigate the process, remembering to celebrate progress along the way. With self-awareness, self-compassion, and intentional changes, people-pleasers can break free and heal from unhealthy patterns. Embracing an authentic self and learning to prioritize an individual's own needs, boundaries, and well-being will lead to healthier, more authentic, balanced relationships and a greater sense of personal fulfillment.

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