

Understanding Society, How It Affects Us, & Learning to Make Communication Changes

Adapted by Amanda Pasciucco from writing by [Lisa Romano](#) and [Francesca Gentile](#)

Once an individual has had their **emotional set-point** “baked” into them, and as they grow up into older children, teenagers, young adults, and parents themselves, they have hopped onto the conveyor belt of an unconscious life.

Their subconscious programming, stress-wired neurological pathways, learned behaviors, and emotional conditioning essentially **run the show**, dictating not only their emotional, physical, and mental reactions from then on, yet... also their unfolding **external experiences with others**.

What we believe we see and what we think is true becomes our reality.

What happens in a culture populated largely by individuals whose emotional set-point was hijacked by unpredictability and stunted in childhood?

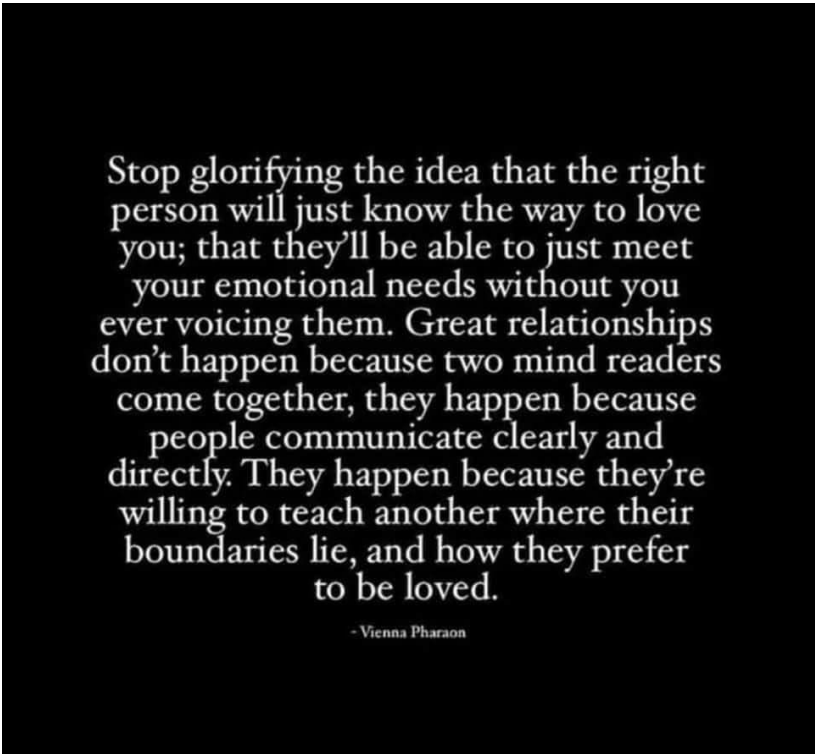
What kinds of romantic relationships, families, systems, and societies are established by people who are trapped in their habitual unconscious fears and their own codependent reactivity?

Because our emotional set-point governs on a personal level how we think and behave, and because this emotional set-point derives from how well we were able to process and integrate our feelings as children, who we are has an impact on our life and how we impact those around us.

What most of us were raised with models that the most powerful person gets to control, manipulate, coerce or force those who are perceived to be less powerful.

Rianne Eisler calls this the “Dominator Model of Culture” which produces a “Dominator Model of Parenting.”

When we raise our children to obey us, respect us, even if we do not respect them and their opinions, it is disrespectful to the child. Therefore, we are actually training the child on how to either become the perpetrator once they are in a position of power OR we are training them to be the powerless victim to those they perceive have power over them.



Stop glorifying the idea that the right person will just know the way to love you; that they'll be able to just meet your emotional needs without you ever voicing them. Great relationships don't happen because two mind readers come together, they happen because people communicate clearly and directly. They happen because they're willing to teach another where their boundaries lie, and how they prefer to be loved.

- Vienna Pharaon

It traps children in a binary of there are “good” and “bad” people, and it further emphasizes that what they see in movies about characters being “Prince Charming” or “The Wicked Witch” as real life.

The nuance of relatedness is much more complex than someone being “all good” or “all bad.”

Seeing the world with a lens of either or thinking creates systemic problems within relationships and family systems.

WHAT IS THE DOMINATOR MODEL OF CULTURE?

Most of us were raised in a DOMINATOR MODEL of parenting, where we train children to dominate others or be dominated unconsciously as the way to be a “good member of society.” In this model, only the parents have the rights and power.

Many of us were trained AWAY from knowing our truth. We did not learn healthy boundaries or learn to negotiate with grace. We had COMPLIANCE, submission, fitting in, and being “nice” YELLED, shamed, denigrated, or even beaten into us.

Enculturation is a process of creating norms from generation to generation.

Parenting a child enculturates them. So does school.
Or religion. Or TV. Music. News. Social media.
Or what is happening politically at the time.

Whatever way we are raised becomes normal, right, or
“the way” it is done.



It is so important for EVERYONE to question cultural norms.

- Was the way I was taught really healthy? (Example: “The facts don’t care about your feelings”)
- Does this “belief” or “way I was raised” truly nourish me, my friendships, and my community?
- Does what I was taught to believe about communicating facts with other humans come off as responsive (versus reactive) and collaborative (versus controlling)?

It’s important to remember that just because something is considered common or normal does not mean that it is not traumatic or abusive (example - in parts of Africa, clitorectomies are considered normal. Within America, circumcision is normal. Yet, as an AASECT sex therapist, I would consider this NON-consensual for the child, and I have had clients as adults tell me they perceived the cutting of their foreskin as abusive).

It is considered normal in the USA to have parents or adults say things like:

- Children should be seen not heard.
- Spare the rod and spoil the child.
- It is my house. You will do it my way.
- I brought you into this world, and I can take you out.
- It's my way or the highway.
- Because I said so.
- I'm your parent (church official, adult, teacher, caregiver), therefore, I know what's best for you.

When we are children, we are literally trapped and powerless..

Our caretakers **make** us sleep, feel trapped, and they make up powerless.

One of the things to realize as an adult is to QUESTION current reality.

Am I living in an abusive system as an adult, and thus trapped and powerless? Or... am I free to make my own choices as an adult?

As I look around my adult life, maybe I am not trapped, as I was taught to believe as a child, and maybe I have the answers inside myself, yet I feel trapped and powerless because I do not like my current choices.

The bigger the emotional response in the present... the more the emotional intensity may relate to your past.

The Dominator Model of Parenting, while typical, does not model nor teach important skills for our future relatedness in friendships or partnerships such as:

- Negotiation and respect
- Authenticity
- Learning to listen to one's own inner truths
- Compassionate Communication
- Healthy Boundaries
- Emotions as the messenger, yet NOT the message
- As an adult, I collude in crossing my own boundaries when someone asked for too much from me, yet I said yes anyway, when I utilize covert language and say someone "was making me" (if we are children and if we are in a place of violence, someone is in fact MAKING you), or when I colluded in crossing my own boundary. If I do not own my part in this, I may be walking through the world unconsciously.
- Awareness and consciousness is where we can transform our lives, rather than pointing fingers at someone else or self-shaming, I can become empowered through noticing what my choices actually are by learning skills in therapy or through reading about healing.

Skills:

- To develop inner parts of me that are resilient, self-regulating, and collaborative to co-create.
- Relax the jaw, relax the belly, feel the feet on the ground.
- Breathe in the nose (belly in) and breathe out the mouth (belly out)
- STEP OUT OF LIMBIC RESONANCE and step into relational response in the polyvagal nervous system by practicing a calm tone of voice while speaking to yourself on the inside.
- Many of our cultures raise children with a lot of command voices, creating a response of hypervigilance in the body. Part of what we are wanting to repattern in our psyche, or in therapy sessions, is that we are consciously choosing to be our own dominant limbic system, utilizing the music of attunement, reparenting and helping with distress tolerance.
- We can go from unconscious victim, once we are safe and able to resource ourself, to the empowered server. The suffering that we went through helps us live a life in contribution and in service.

Communication Strategies:

- Communication Empathetically
 - People say “communicate” but if you don’t learn each other’s style and work with that there will always be issues
- Learn the other person's communication style. Like truly LEARN it, because most often, we make assumptions about our partners and what they are saying, and these assumptions are often wrong.
- Respect is key. No need to prove a point just to win an argument. Winning cannot be more important than your relationship. It doesn’t matter who is right or wrong in the end. You are arguing over strategy. The needs are pure intention.
- Caring. Care for yourself, your lover, and your relationship.
- Use Nonviolent Communication.

NONVIOLENT COMMUNICATION (NVC)

@TheSexHealer

COMPASSIONATE COMMUNICATION



REFLECTIVE LISTENING:

- what I think I hear you saying is that...
- A part of you ____ and a part of you _____.
- Is that close?

WHAT THE TRULY SELF EMPOWERED DO:

By Francesca Gentile

- Utilize new ways of listening to others
- Discuss things they are passionate about calmly
- Look to negotiate for a win/win
- Listen with curiosity
- Appreciate the best in the other person
- Assume POSITIVE intentions and that it was a mistake, until proven otherwise
- Ask questions with a curious tone (not judgmental)
- Reveal courageously and vulnerability of themselves to those they care about
- Face their problems and the tragedies in their life and look to serve from those places once they have done their own healing.
- Love with positive action and compassion
- Live with a vision in mind
- Own thoughts, feelings, and triggers as your own.
- Believe that the emotions are the MESSENGER. Not the message.
- Take time outs, and ask often “How can I express this from my heart?”
- Stay creative and collaborative, by asking themselves questions like:
 - How could it work
 - What else is possible
- Notice their breathing. In the nose and out the mouth.
- Check in and lean in, verses checking out and leaning out of relationships
- Stay present or request conscious pauses
- Use personal responsibility as a form of healthy power
- Forgiveness of self and others
- Listen to critical feedback with an open mind, and take in what they are saying with discernment. Some of what others say may be about you, some may not be.
- Listen to the compliments from others with an open mind and heart. Some of what others say may be about you, some may not be. Use discernment!
- Express limits or boundaries with clarity and with consequences if needed.
- Express requests around their needs and desires with clarity and compassion
- Learn to look for where they have choice, even if they feel powerless
- Keep agreements and negotiate collaboratively
- Practice boundaries with compassion, and compassion with boundaries.
- Provide and follow through with boundaries that you have set.
- When necessary, transform the relationship if needed.
- Allowing do overs, with corrections in place on how it could work better.
- Speaking the truth with grace and authenticity
- Recognize the interconnectedness between heart, mind, body, and soul
- Make time for things that they say matter to them (such as love, sex, health, community, balance, integrity, pleasure, and passion).