

Emotional logic: the hidden imprints that influence our choices

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Mrs. Pam Stein with her husband, Dan Stein

Most everyone is unaware of the concept of emotional logic, let alone how it influences their lives. Emotional logic is real. Why do we buy a cute car when we can't afford it? Why do we suddenly give gifts? Why do we feel unworthy before an important meeting and drink a can of . . . How is it that underlying feelings can cause a person to act or behave completely normal from their own viewpoint, but in fact does not make sense to someone else?

Emotional logic is rampant in family relationships, where love lessons are first learned. Like landmines, triggers lie in wait from the minute we open the front door. Sometimes all we have to do is think of home, or the last conversation we had with our sibling(s), and we head for the nearest pint. (That would be of course in the freezer; although it could also be in the back of the fridge.) The fact is, layers of feelings, thoughts, and behaviors are developed over the years from birth to adulthood, forming the foundation for our individual personalities. Saint Paul said, "I keep doing stuff I don't mean to do; I know differently, but I just need to do it." OK. He didn't exactly say that, but when I heard his anguish over his body/mind struggle somewhere in Corinthians or Romans, I knew exactly what he meant. And actually, there was logic in his errant ways. There was a need fulfilled—emotional logic.

For instance, we tend to seek relationships in which we feel comfortable. Yet we don't examine why we are attracted to a certain person. Is it surprising that we are often attracted to people who most resemble our primary caretakers? Do you ever wonder why you sometimes instantaneously trust or do not trust someone? The person is familiar; you can breathe (or not, but at least you know it) in their presence. In fact, you can even predict their moods. This is where emotional logic comes into play.

The fact is, how we were treated in the early years has left an imprint. If we were hurt while growing up, we have an imprint throbbing in our emotional body (yes, not only do we have a physical body and spiritual body, but also an emotional body), which remains there as we grow to maturity. If we have been loved and cherished as a child by a certain type of person, then we feel glad when we meet someone similar years later. Next time someone walks up to you in the bookstore and says, "Don't I know you from somewhere?" Well, if it's not your high school crush, then it very well may be you have the look or sound of an emotional imprint.

Two Scenarios: Peggy and Janna

For instance, Peggy and Janna both came from families where the dad was gone a lot. Both fathers had successful professional careers which kept them long hours at the office. Although both dads were able to provide well for their families, they had limited time to spend with their children.

When Peggy's father came home from work, often late for dinner, even though he was tired, he took time

to speak with each of his children, giving them his attention, showing genuine interest in their comments or stories or problems. After dinner, he also took time with Peggy, the eldest, when she went to bed, reading a story to her or talking softly in the dim glow of the hallway light.

Janna had a different experience with her father who was also a good provider and had a very successful career. When Janna's father came home, he was often tired and distracted. He seemed distant at the dinner table, and he was not communicative during the evening hours. Janna was unsure how to relate to her father, and often felt lonely around him while growing up.



Then Peggy married Jim. She was proud of his success as a lawyer, and as time passed she learned that he wouldn't be home a lot. Despite that fact, she somehow felt confident in his love for her. As the years passed she arranged family time in the evenings around Jim's availability. When Jim was late over some periods of time, she stayed up for him and made sure that he felt welcomed when he came home, and she comforted him because he worked so hard. She was proud of him and wanted him to know that she was there for him. She treasured her time with Jim and didn't notice if it was more or less. Her heart was full.

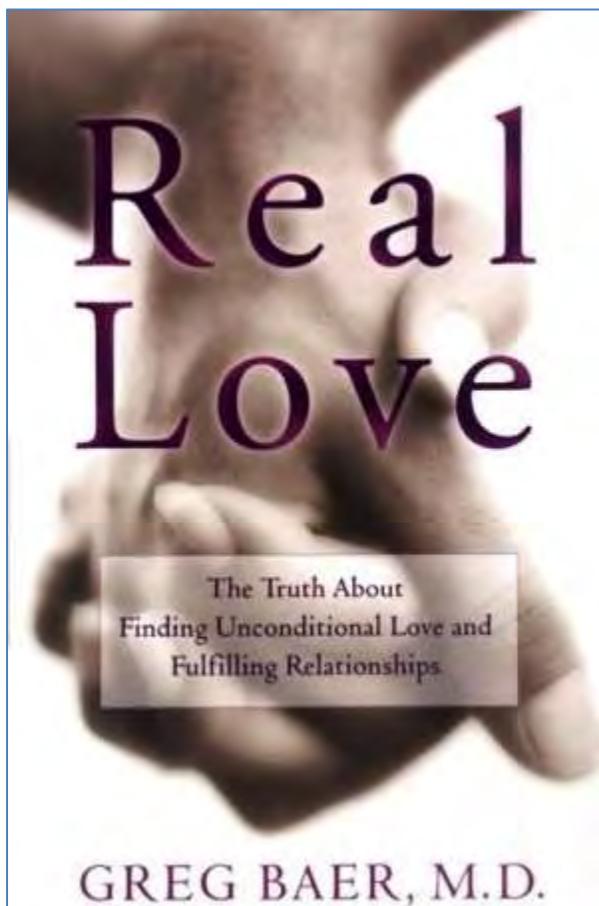
When Janna married Bob, she was excited to have her own home and become Bob's wife. Over time, she was happy that he worked hard and that he strived to provide for her and their children. As Bob's success grew, he came home late most nights, and often he was unavailable on the weekends due to his many client demands. Janna began to feel insecure. She felt left out, and abandoned, and then angry. She confronted Bob with what seemed reasonable to her, "You don't love me because you stay away from our home so much." Bob could not understand what Janna was talking about. How could his hard working success translate into his not loving her? It didn't make any sense.



Only it did make sense. Emotional logic—an imprint from childhood—told her that she was not significant, that the most important man in her life—her father—didn't care for her as much as he did his job. In fact, even when he was home, he was too tired to be with her. Bob's absence validated Janna's emotions of lack: lack of love, lack of value, lack of belonging. She had covered up the emptiness with acceptance that she had to be a good girl to stay connected to her parents, and that she shouldn't bother her father with her distant adoration of him.

But now as an adult, Janna couldn't bear the feelings of being unwanted and unloved, which were very much alive inside her. It was logical to her that the reason Bob was spending so much time away from the home was because his job was more important to him than she was. No matter that Bob tried to reason with her—and she knew with her own reasoning that he loved her; after all, she had married him. But she couldn't shake the feeling that she was unloved. Her heart seemed empty.

Unconditional Love is Everything



Dr. Greg Baer states in his bestselling book *Real Love*, “We can’t love unconditionally until we have felt unconditionally loved ourselves. We can’t give what we don’t have.” From the way they grew up, Peggy’s emotional logic is one of security and belonging, while Janna’s emotional logic is one of disconnect and uncertainty. Each woman’s imprint of love is the result of the parent-child relationship, so they each have a completely different response for the same situation of the absent husband.

Peggy is full and able to give, anticipating to be loved. Janna is empty and fearful, starting a conflict to try and get the love she is missing. She is chronically unhappy. Because of her buried pain, Janna will settle for imitation love, and create drama to fill the void.

The real cause of unhappiness is a lack of unconditional love. Janna never experienced what Peggy did: intimate moments of attention with the most important person of all. If Janna could experience, even in her present life, the healing of ongoing unconditional love, she could fill the emptiness in her heart. If she could heal her past fears and pain, she could see the true wealth of her loving husband. Like Peggy, she would feel full in

her heart and she would see that Bob’s hard work was his expression of love for her and their family.

When our emotional bank account is full, we do not fear situations of lack or inadequacy, but face them with confidence and the energy to fill in the gap, also known as cheerful giving. When we have it, we can give it.

The Family is the School of Love

Emotional health is the result of how much unconditional love a person has experienced in life. Like growing up with a healthy diet, real love is the diet for the heart. Healthy/unhealthy is not just about right/wrong or good/bad—those values are measured by our life decisions. There is a real logic for the capacity of giving and receiving. Emotional Logic can explain our foibles, and can offer redemption.

The family as the school of love is the perfect fertile soil to experience all the different stages of real love beginning with birth in the discovery of someone all powerful, to sibling adoration, to belonging to the one-and-only; and to finally discovering the co-creator experience of God through rebirth again and again; and multiply happiness to create a world of peace.

The family where God is an integral member offers the most exciting journey for emotional growth. It is the family that holds the key to the power of healing past hurts, the power to create new and happier memories every single day, and the power to realize a prosperous and love-healthy future. It takes skills and thoughtful intention to create emotionally healthy people, and there is no better school or teaching institute than the God-centered home and family that we are each divinely entitled to create during our time on earth. It is, in essence, our purpose in life.

WFWP co-founders, Rev. and Mrs. Moon teach about the Four Realms of Heart. Growing through the four realms of heart occurs by (1) receiving unconditional love as a child; (2) learning the politics of relationships through sharing and negotiating with siblings and peers; (3) creating conjugal love with an eternal spouse to create a new family; and finally (4) becoming parents and grandparents who resemble the full creative heart of God, able to love unconditionally.

Creating a true family for God is the great holy work of our faith, for this is where God lives, and this is our destiny. Now is the best time possible to invest in our emotional health. Tending to our emotional wellness is a priority in all that we do each day, and is paramount to a heavenly peaceful world. If we cannot find the love we need within the family, then we can seek Wise Women and Wise Men of God who will validate our worthiness and true hope to become full and loving.