

THREE RED FLAGS

THREE RED FLAGS OF DYSFUNCTIONAL BEHAVIOR ["FOG"]

When your Primary Emotional Motivation is:

1. Fear

- If I don't (or do) ..., they will *reject* me (and that would be scary, terrible, disastrous or intolerable)
- If I say/do ..., they will get *mad* or *angry* (and that would be scary, awful, bad or intolerable)
- If I say/do ..., I will *hurt* their feelings or *disappoint* them (and that would be *mean* of me and/or will ruin my reputation as a nice person - which would be awful)
- I am afraid I'd be *imposing* on them if I ...

2. Obligation

- I am the *only* one who can...[→ Messiah Trap, Burn-out, & Rescuer/Victim/Persecutor Δ]
 - I *have* to...
 - This is absolutely *necessary, essential, etc...*
 - I *must* ...
 - I *should* ...
 - I *ought to* ...
 - I *need* to...
 - I *owe* it to them, after all they've done for me.
 - It's my *duty* to ... [It is dysfunctional when duty is applied to an improper sense of responsibility.
- False Responsibilities:** turning optional uses of time and energy into imperatives; staying loyal to people who abuse me; remaining committed to people who are not committed to me; helping others when they do not ask for it (ie. unsolicited advice)
- VS. True Responsibilities:** to take care of my children, stay true to my spouse, maintain my own health and well-being, be ethical in my dealings, show up for work when I am well.]

3. Guilt

- I would feel *bad* or *be bad* if I...or if I didn't...
- How dare I make my needs equal to others' ...
- I would *let* this person/group *down* if I...
- I am *responsible* for this other person's happiness, feelings, behavior, or reactions.
- They *need* me to ...
- If I don't, no one else will ...
- God will be displeased with me if I don't...
- No one else seems to think there is something wrong with this picture. I must be off-base.

THREE GREEN FLAGS OF HEALTHY FUNCTIONING ["FREE"]

When your Primary Emotional Motivation is:

1. Freedom

- I can choose to... or choose not to...
- I have *options* that I can explore
- I am not responsible for another person's responsibilities or happiness.
- I am responsible for my own: life / feelings / choices / self-care / direction / happiness / family / lifestyle / health / time
- I am responsible to treat others respectfully without disrespecting myself in the process.
- It is good for me to honor, respect and be true to myself, even if it displeases others.
- I am not obligated to "help" when it is detrimental to my own peace of mind or well-being or that of my family.

2. Rest

- It's OK for me to notice my own needs and honor them by making them known or by taking care of myself.
- It's good for me to believe I count or matter in the equation. I can voice my preference.
- I am responsible to honor my own integrity and values, no matter how others respond.
- Just because this makes another upset, does not automatically mean I am wrong. They are responsible for their own feelings & reactions.
- The world will not end/fall apart if I don't...
- Humility: "It's no big deal if I do, and no big deal if I don't"

3. Energized

- I *want* to...
 - I'd *like* to...
 - I *choose* to...
 - I *prefer* to...
 - I would feel *good* or *relieved* if I...
 - I *feel* like...
 - I am *energized* by...
 - I feel *called* to...
- Of course "desire" and choosing must be guided by a healthy code of ethics and not violate the rights of others.

4. Empowered

If I function from my own center, rather than the agendas of others or my own diseased conscience, I will be empowered to fulfill God's best for my life. Walking in humility and boldness brings freedom.

--Linda J. MacDonald, M.S., LMFT