

Human development and counseling

[Life](#), [Relationships](#)



Growing up you hear about relationships and sex and you may even hear some explicit details, from there we all take this information along with some other factors and either act on it or wait on it. I was one of the many few people in my social group that decided to wait, because for me even talking about sex and opening up to a guy was a touchy subject that I also knew so little about. A lot of my friends had boyfriends and started having sex in high-school and some of them even got pregnant over the years. I graduated high-school never being in a relationship and never experimenting with sex due to simply not ever thinking about it. For me the type of relationship you had with the person you were having sex with was unclear and in my late adolescent years of sixteen I did not trust boys my age or men in general. At a younger age the man that should have been considered the “first man in my life” my father, was nonexistent. This early on dysfunctional relationship that quickly escalated to no relationship with my father at all caused me to have extreme trust issues when it came to guys and it stunted my growth on experiencing what most girls experience in high-school with having a boyfriend. There was no high school sweetheart for me.

When it comes to what a man is going to be like or what a woman is going to be like, we all have a set of expectations. As stated by Copper (2013) both women and men have a set of conscious expectations when it comes to what the opposite sex is going to be. As a woman, he also speaks on how some women may be unaware of what they want and/or expect from a man, it can definitely be found. I think the act of finding this information out is putting yourself out there and learning through both your experiences with the opposite sex and mistakes as well. I was always told that you attract the kind

of man you are attracted to but I had a very poor relationship with men at a very young age due to the abandonment of my father that I never even put myself out there to attract any kind of man. For some females it would be natural to think that one has no control over the kind of men that one comes into contact with, or to incorporate my personal self I think that all men are the same (Cooper, 2013). Whichever way you look at this, these expectations have incredible power. As stated in the article, the kind of relationships that a woman has with men whether positive or negative is going to be where they receive feedback about what they expect. This can relate to: family, colleagues, managers, and friends and in my case my father.

As a little girl and growing up I didn't have a steady relationship with my father who is the person who would be teaching me about guys and how to understand them. So when it comes to dating, I tend to have trust issues when it comes to the point where I am confronted with turning a friendship into a serious relationship because I feel as if they will leave me without giving any type of explanation as my father did. My personal defense strategy I use when I am put in this type of situation is intellectualization. Rather than deal with the painful associated emotion that this could happen, I just don't employ any emotions whatsoever to help mediate and place the thoughts into an emotional, human context. And when I am proven right instead of feeling bad about it I use the rationalization coping method to reframe the situation in my mind by saying " I knew this wouldn't last".

After graduating high-school and going into college, of course more maturity took place, but the nonexistent capacity to build healthy relationships with guys was still a struggle. I reached out to mom as I started college because I was almost five hours away from home and when it comes to relationships and what is accepted in most modern day relationships which is sexual activity, I sucked at both. She was able to give me some insight some of which was personal, but my cognitive thought process about my struggle was not challenged so the conversation with my mom was not helpful. Going into my freshman year I was interested in this guy named Chris. I knew there would never be a healthy relationship due to my trust issues and not even feeling comfortable opening up to men so I went to talk to the school counselor and expressed my concerns as an 18 year old young lady who never experimented with relationships with the opposite sex. She gave a lot of professional help and told me to start putting myself of there in social setting to build a friendship with someone first. She taught me the importance of building a solid foundation based on understanding and expectations first, then trust, honesty, etc.

I was able to use her professional help and start to feel comfortable building a relationship with Chris. A couple of months went by and I got to the point where I felt comfortable explaining my hesitation when it comes to men and relationships, for me that was a big step. Once I was able to open up to him he was able to understand my past and how it shaped my perception on relationships which clearly showed in my behavior as well. After almost six seven of talking I felt safe with him and I was able to engage with him in sexual activity as well and this was when I finally lost my virginity. By this

point my same group of friends from high-school called me the late bloomer as almost all of them had one or two children by the end of my freshman year in college. A lot changed with me and my woman hood throughout my years of college and Chris was still around. Once he graduated in 2014 I was left behind since we were a year apart. This was a true test of everything I had learned on my own as well as with the school counselor and I actually went and seen her again to gather some tips to maintain the growth I had made. Going into my senior year, Chris and I remained in a healthy relationship that has lasted up until today. A lot has changed since we were 18 and 19 years old which we are now 25 and 26 but a healthy relationship that I never thought I would be able to have has remained.

I believe a factor that had influenced my view of self being unconscious is ultimately how “ object relations theory” and how “ internal objects” shape people and their character. “ Object relations theory is the process of developing a psyche in relation to others in the environment during childhood” (Horner, 2004, p. 5). Based on psychodynamic theory, the object relations theory suggests that the way people relate to others and situations in their adult lives is shaped by family experiences during infancy. “ For example, an adult who experienced neglect or abuse in infancy would expect similar behavior from others who remind them of the neglectful or abusive person from their past which is often a parent” (Nolen-Hoeksema, 2016, p. 41) Internal Objects are formed by the patterns emerging in one’s repeated subjective experience of the caretaking environment, which may or may not be accurate representations of the actual, external others (Churchill et al., 2010).

The fact that the way we relate to others and circumstances is based off what we previous went through that proves that the images of people and events turn into objects in the subconscious and sometimes in the unconscious that the person carries into adulthood, and they are used by the subconscious to predict people's behavior in their social relationships and interactions (Horner, 2004). I also believe Jung would agree with me since he believed the big source of power in the psyche was the unconscious. Horney and Erikson are “ ego psychologists”, so they would disagree with me because they believe that the ego or conscious self was a source of power, and that will power could enable people to change their lives voluntarily.

References:

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