

The Need to Feel Special

by: Margaret Paul, Ph.D. From the time Jennifer was a little child, she was demanding of attention, especially from her mother, Sarah. With two older brothers, Jennifer had a "special" place in the family as the baby and the only girl. She made sure to establish a "special" relationship with her mother, who relished the connection since she didn't have much of a relationship with her emotionally distant husband. It was easy for Jennifer to control her mother's attention. Because her mother was needy for emotional connection and afraid of not being liked, all Jennifer had to do was get angry at her mother and Sarah would capitulate, giving Jennifer the attention she craved. Jennifer learned early to control her mother by becoming angry, critical and withholding love when her mother didn't do what she wanted. Unwittingly, Sarah contributed to Jennifer's neediness, entitlement issues, and the belief that happiness was dependent on approval and attention from others. Jennifer, now in her late 30's, finds herself continuing the pattern she started with her mother - attaching to others in needy and demanding ways. The result is she has not been able to have a successful relationship with any of the men she has dated. We all have a need to feel special. It is not the need that is dysfunctional, it is how we go about getting the need met that can be either dysfunctional or healthy. It is dysfunctional when we make others responsible for making us feel special. When others have to give us attention, compliment us, seek us out, and attend to our wants and needs in order for us to feel special, our behavior is dysfunctional. **HEALTHY SPECIAL-NESS** You will stop pulling on others to make you special only when you accept the full responsibility of making yourself feel special. This means learning to give yourself all that you may be trying to get from others – treating yourself in the loving ways you desire from others. There are many ways of making ourselves feel special. Instead of trying to get others to give you what you want, you can: **TAKE EMOTIONAL RESPONSIBILITY:** Attend to your feelings throughout the day and explore what you may be doing that is causing painful feelings, rather than making others responsible for your feelings. Attend to your own needs rather than expecting others to meet your needs. Accept yourself rather than judge yourself. Validate yourself, approve of yourself – tell yourself the things you want to hear from others. Value your talents and gifts. Value your intrinsic worth rather than just your looks or performance – your kindness, compassion, creativity, caring. Behave in ways that you value – being loving, kind, integreous, compassionate, understanding, caring. Pursue work you love, work that fulfills you, if possible. **TAKE PHYSICAL RESPONSIBILITY:** Feed yourself well to maintain health and appropriate weight. Get enough rest and exercise. Create balance between work and play and creative time. Make sure you are physically safe such as when riding a motorcycle. **TAKE FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY:** Make sure you are financially independent rather than dependent upon another, if physically able to do so. Spend within your means to avoid the fear and stress of debt. **TAKE RELATIONSHIP RESPONSIBILITY:** Stand up for yourself and speak your truth rather than complying, defending or resisting in the face of others' demands or criticism. Don't be a victim. Refrain from blaming others, with anger and criticism, for your feelings and behavior. Don't be a victim. **TAKE ORGANIZATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY:** Do what you say you are going to do regarding time and chores. Make sure your living space and work environment are clean and tidy, and esthetically pleasing. **TAKE SPIRITUAL RESPONSIBILITY:** Take the time to connect with the love and truth of God/Higher Power. Take time throughout the day to bring the love down to the level of your feeling self – your Inner Child. Treating yourself in these loving ways will eventually result in feeling internally special rather than needing others to make you feel special. As Jennifer practiced making herself special, she discovered that her relationships with others were becoming stronger and more fulfilling. People were no longer pulling away from her, resisting her, or defending themselves against her demands for attention. Her behavior naturally and gradually changed with others when she was treat herself as a special person.

About the Author

Margaret Paul, Ph.D. is the best-selling author and co-author of eight books, including "Do I Have To Give Up Me To Be Loved By You?" She is the co-creator of the powerful Inner Bonding healing process. Learn Inner Bonding now! Visit her web site for a FREE Inner Bonding course: <http://www.innerbonding.com> or <mailto:margaret@innerbonding.com>. Phone sessions available. margaret@innerbonding.com

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