

Article #4, FB #2 The Bridge.11-19-07

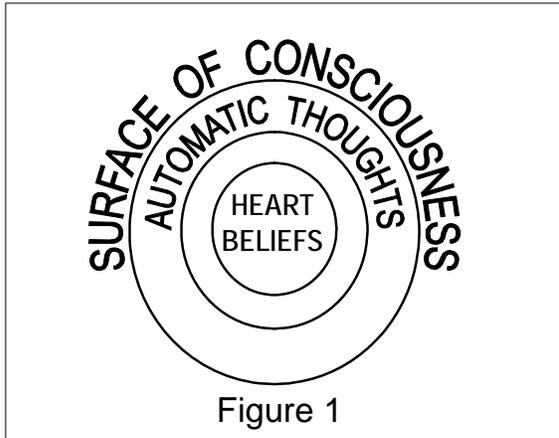
Escaping Approval Addiction

Our deepest psychological need is to be loved and to feel that we have value. We have a deep need to BELONG and to be ACCEPTED by others. Our deepest fear according to national surveys, is the FEAR OF REJECTION.

Because we live in a fallen world, in a body of sin and death, our heart is prone to believe lies. We have all been programmed from birth to believe the following lie known as;

The Approval Trap:

" I MUST HAVE THE APPROVAL OF CERTAIN OTHERS IN ORDER TO BE LOVED AND TO FEEL GOOD ABOUT MYSELF."



This lie is at the core of approval addiction. It is embedded deep in our hearts and reinforced from childhood to present. It contaminates our thinking, causing us to FEAR REJECTION and go to great lengths to GAIN APPROVAL from others. However, because it is below our surface of consciousness, this lie is seldom exposed or challenged (see figure one).

Everyone on the planet loves approval. As children we glowed when we received it from parents and loved ones. As adults, it still makes us feel good and gives us a feeling of self worth. We desire approval from **certain others**, who often include:

- parents
- spouse
- coaches
- employer/boss
- children
- employees
- pastor
- friends
- co-workers
- boyfriend/girlfriend
- church
- family
- God

WHAT DO WE WANT FROM CERTAIN OTHERS? Approval, love, attention, affection, fellowship, time together, fun, validation, respect, encouragement, support...

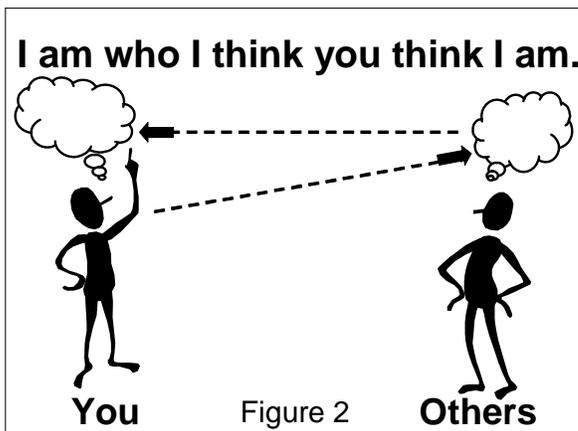
HOW OFTEN DO WE WANT IT? On an ongoing basis, 24 – 7! It would be difficult if someone we cared about withheld love from us for just one week.

WHAT DO WE OFTEN GET? Disappointment, rejection, needs not met, loneliness, isolation, hurt, guilt, shame, anger...

The problem is that we will never please all of the people all of the time; and some people are impossible to please. In fact some may reject us purposely. Plus, it is sometimes difficult to figure out what others expect of us, and their expectations may change. Further, to please one person may mean displeasing another. These things can make us feel unloved and inadequate.

WHO CAN GIVE UNCONDITIONAL LOVE 24/7?

Of all of those listed above only one can love us unconditionally, all of the time. GOD is the ONLY source of UNCONDITIONAL LOVE. WE CAN CHOOSE to rely on God's unconditional love for us, or try to get it from others. WE CAN GET IT 24 - 7 FROM GOD. No other human being can love us as perfectly as God does.



Unfortunately, human nature causes us to try to determine what others are thinking about us, and then use this perception to evaluate ourselves (see figure two). For example, "I think Bill thinks I'm dumb. What is wrong with me that he would think that? It must be my many defects." Thus, we fear Bill's rejection and try to figure out how to gain his approval.

SO, OUR FEAR OF REJECTION EXISTS because we value the opinions of others over the opinion of GOD!

When we trust in others' opinion of us rather than God's, we become an EASY TARGET for satan and those who would use others for their own selfish gain. I find the following quote helpful in overcoming this.

“To tie my self-assessment to the opinions of others is to put myself at their mercy and give them control over my emotions and behavior.”

The bottom line is summed up nicely by Paul in the following scripture:

Galatians 1:10 *For am I now seeking the favor of men or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were trying to please men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.*



Scripture clearly tells us that when we accept Christ as our personal Lord and Savior and repent from our sins, we are fully pleasing, deeply loved and totally accepted by God (1 John 4:1-9; Colossians 1:21-22). This frees us from the fear of rejection and approval addiction.

By Marty Miller, Licensed Professional Counselor
Director of the Healing Heart Counseling Center
HealingHeartCounseling.Org