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How Parents Affect Your Love Life

By [Bonnie Bauman](#) | October 10, 2007 @ 10:40 am | (0 Comments)

Relationship woes? Blame your parents. Experts believe that the relationship you witnessed as a child may effect your romantic relationships as an adult.



Whether you are paranoid or a pushover, a jealous girlfriend or afraid of commitment, chances are that your bad relationship habits are behaviors you learned from your parents, say relationship experts. Mom and Dad are the primary role models we encounter as children, and research shows that our personalities are hard-wired by the age of four. Thus, how you saw your parents act in their relationship becomes the foundation of your own adult relationships, explains love coach Rinatta Paries, author of “The Love Coach Newsletter.”

Imagine a situation where a woman constantly complains to her children about her husbands philandering, but never confronts him. “The message to the kids is that it’s okay to let someone walk all over you,” says Scott Kudia, president of a San Diego relationship consulting firm and author of *If “This is Love, Why am I Unhappy?”*. “It lessens the importance of their own self-worth. They learn that it’s important to keep the peace, no matter what the cost to them emotionally.” According to Kudia, if the child in this theoretical scenario empathizes with their mom, they may have a difficult time trusting their significant others in their adult relationships. On the flip side, if they empathize with the parent who is unfaithful, chances are that they too will be an unfaithful partner.

Not that confrontation is always a good thing. If parents constantly argue in an unhealthy way and verbally abuse one another in front of their kids, their children might constantly initiate confrontation with or be disrespectful to their significant others. “If you come from an environment where your parents constantly blew up at

each other, and you have a disagreement with your mate, you’re going to respond the only way you know how: by flying off the handle,” says Kudia.

So are those women with parents who have a less-than-healthy relationship doomed to a lifetime of unhappy relationships? Kudia says that it is possible to break the mold and relearn behavior patterns that are more applicable to whom you want to be in your adult relationships.

“You can choose to model one or both of your parents,” he says, “or you can choose to rebel and learn the opposite behaviors.”

But it's not as easy as turning off a switch, he adds. The first step is to reflect on your parent's relationship. In doing this, it's important to resolve any negative feelings you might have toward your parents, notes Paries. Instead of being angry or disappointed in your parents, try to be compassionate, forgiving and understanding. Remember, that your parents are human beings who had their own struggles growing up and their own negative behavior patterns to battle against.

Getting past any negativity towards your parents is important because if you don't, you are destined to create situations in your relationships where you will confront the same feelings, Paries points out. For instance, if you are still angry at one parent for being unfaithful to the other, you may create a situation in your own relationship where you are irrationally jealous and angry with your partner for interacting with an old female friend.

The last step is to become conscious of how your parent's relationship subconsciously influences how you behave in your own, and make a conscious decision to break any unhealthy patterns. One tool that could be used to break the mold is to look to other healthy couples in your life as positive role models, says Kudia. Whatever the strategy, it's important not to blame your parents for your relationship troubles, but rather to carefully analyze their influence and be proactive in creating a better life for yourself.

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