

Accessing Memories

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

But it also helped her defend against her painful childhood. Her "ghosts" were interfering with what she most wanted - to raise happy children.

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Few "truths" in our lives are as difficult to consider as the possibility that we may be contributing to our children's poor behaviour. And yet, if we are able to consider this possibility, our chances of resolving difficulties with our children are greatly increased.

Every aspect of our children's misbehaviour cannot be contributed to us. When the problem is related to us - our daily tensions, our past - it can be immensely helpful when we figure it out.

There are two things we can do to help us understand a little more about our own "unconscious".

#1 Accessing Memories

Pausing to reflect and trying to pinpoint the moment that the emotion became strongest can sometimes help tremendously in understanding how our past can effect the present. Very often, memories can be accessed with reflection. Accessing sad, angry, resentful, revengeful or hurt feelings is the very thing that allows the healing process to begin. When we 'know', we can often take control of our ghosts.

#2 Using Reflection

Although some memories can never be accessed, pausing to reflect can sometimes help parents get a sense of whether the emotions they are experiencing are "out of proportion" to the child's behaviour. If the parents' response and feelings do not really

match the child's "crime" very well, it may be the emotions are connected not only with the child in the present, but also with circumstances stored in the unconscious from the parent's past.

In this case, even attempting to reflect may allow us to recognize that something is going on with us, more than our children's misbehaviour. Separating our intense emotions from our children long enough to guess "the ghosts" are here may help us recuperate from our intense emotional state without seeking revenge on our children, even when we do not know what is wrong. This can help us calm down, and in turn will calm our children.

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It sounds simple, but it isn't. It takes tremendous maturity to struggle to "get hold" of this common part of functioning as a parent. "Ghosts from the past" are part of parenting. Fathers are as susceptible as mothers. Thinking about our own mental state, as well as our children's behaviour can be a very helpful technique in keeping things running smoothly in a family.

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These definitions are from "A Critical Dictionary of Psychoanalysis" by Charles Rycroft

*UNCONSCIOUS:

Mental processes of which one is unaware.

**DENIAL:

A defense mechanism by which either
a) some painful experience is denied or
b) some impulse of aspect of the SELF is denied.

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Questions:

- 1) What do you find in a pumpkin patch?
A) apples B) bananas C) pumpkins D) pears
- 2) A Good Halloween game is bobbing for:
A) lemons B) doughnuts C) apples D) watermelons
- 3) Casper the Friendly _____
A) Ghost B) Cat C) Pumpkin D) Witch
- 4) What are the colours of Halloween?
A) Red & Green B) Orange & Black C) Orange & Blue D) Blue & Purple
- 5) How do witches travel?
A) broom B) vacuum cleaner C) jet plane D) dragon
- 6) Halloween is celebrated every year on this date. What is it?
A) October 13 B) October 1 C) November 1 D) October 31
- 7) Every Halloween Charlie Brown helps Linus wait for what character?
A) Easter Bunny B) Snoopy C) Great Pumpkin D) Leprechaun
- 8) What vegetable was used as the original Jack-o-lantern?
A) pumpkin B) turnip C) radish D) potato
- 9) Pumpkins grow on a:
A) vine B) stalk C) tree D) bush
- 10) What are male witches called?
A) Morlocks B) Manwitches C) Warlocks D) Sorcerors
- 11) How did Halloween get its name?
A) evolved from All Hallows Eve B) its always been called that C) evolved from a popular greeting D) none of these
- 12) True or false, the pumpkin is technically a fruit?
A) True B) False
- 13) At a 2003 pumpkin festival in Camby Oregon the largest recorded pumpkin weighed in at:
A) 1,385 lbs B) 1,202 lbs C) 2,003 lbs D) 1,000 lbs
- 14) Who brought the custom of Halloween to America?
A) the Italians in the 1800's B) the Irish in the 1800's C) the Chinese in the 1900's D) no one as the Native People already celebrated it
- 15) Why does a witch commonly appear with a black cat?
A) for companionship B) for casting spells C) no reason D) for protection

HALLOWEEN TRIVIA CONTEST

Contest Rules:

1. Ages 0-4 answer question numbers 1-5
2. Ages 5-8 answer question numbers 1-10
3. Ages 9-12 answer questions numbers 1-15
4. One entry per child
5. Entry forms must be submitted by 8pm
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