



RESENTMENT

What You Feed Grows



AGENDA

What is Resentment?

Causes of Resentment

Resentment vs. Anger

Functions of Resentment

Workbook



WHAT IS RESENTMENT

Resentment is a feeling of angry displeasure at something regarded as a wrong, insult, or injury. It can be described as a mixture of disappointment, disgust, and anger.

Inherent is a perception of unfairness (from trivial to very serious) and a generalized defense against unfair situations.

Resentment is a tertiary emotion that comes after rage (secondary) and anger (primary). For many, resentment is a way to stand up for themselves.



SIGNS AND FEELINGS

SIGNS OF RESENTMENT

- Recurring strong feelings such as anger when thinking about a specific interaction or experience.
- Inability to stop thinking about the event that triggered the strong emotions.
- Feelings of regret.
- Fear or avoidance of conflict.
- Tense relationships.

FEELINGS

- Most powerful when felt towards someone whom the individual is close to.
- Touchiness, edginess when thinking of the person resented, including anger or denial of anger towards that person.
- Lack of personal self care such as self-disclosure, vulnerability, and ability to discuss feelings.
- Trouble trusting yourself and others.

CAUSES OF RESENTMENT



Usually from a variety of situations mostly involving a perceived wrongdoing from an individual including expressions of injustice and humiliation



Publicly humiliating incidents such as accepting negative treatment without voicing any protest. Feeling like an object of regular discrimination or prejudice.



Interactions with another that involve emotional rejection, denial, deliberate embarrassment, belittling, putting down, or scorn.



RESENTMENT VS. ANGER

Resentment is anger directed towards a perceived higher-status individual. Anger is directed towards an equal-status individual. Contempt is directed towards a lower-status individual.

Anger is a “fire extinguisher” designed to “put out and get out.” Resentment is more like a smoke alarm that is “always on” and requires constant energy to feed.

They differ in the way they are externally expressed. Anger is expressed during the interaction, whereas resentment is expressed after the interaction has occurred. Both can be expressed aggressively or passively.

Anger is usually about a singular incident, while resentment is rarely about a singular incident, but rather a culmination of events.

FUNCTIONS OF RESENTMENT

HEALTHY FUNCTION

What we resent reveals what it is we value.

HEALTHY FUNCTION

Resentment reveals what we have come to expect from others.

HEALTHY FUNCTION

Resentment reveals what we see ourselves as entitled to.

UNHEALTHY FUNCTION

Used as a form of distrust has a strong component of self-punishment. The strong appeal of self-punishment is that it “seems” to keep us safe when in reality it is hurting the resenter not the resented.

UNHEALTHY FUNCTION

Resentment can be seen as an act or form of protest against the offender’s action. However this can quickly develop into malice or a desire for retribution.



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WORKBOOK EXERCISES

LIST OF RESENTMENTS

List the names of people, institutions, or principles with whom we were angry and now harbor a resentment.

**LIMIT TO 3 PEOPLE,
PLACES, OR THINGS**

WHAT HAPPENED?

List out (from above 3) up to three incidents that made you angry and why (what happened).

WHAT DID IT HURT?

For each instance, list out the part of you that was hurt or threatened. For instance, your pride, emotional security, ambitions, self esteem, etc.

WHAT VALUES DO I SEE?

What values do I hold that were aggrieved or offended? How strongly do I hold these values?

SUMMARY

Resentment often functions in a downward spiral. Resentful feelings cut off communication between the resentful person and their support system due to possible feelings of guilt, shame, frustration, or being misunderstood. These can be dangerous to live with, and resentment is often a major obstacle for emotional healing. Coming to terms with what your resentments are and accepting their presence in your life are a necessary first step.

THANK YOU

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