

Reflections - Just does not "get it" when it comes to the needs of others

From: Rorschach_List@yahoogroups.com [mailto:Rorschach_List@yahoogroups.com] On Behalf Of Pamela Olsen Sent: Wednesday, March 04, 2009 18:39 To: Rorschach_List@yahoogroups.com Subject: Re: [Rorschach_List] Re: Fr + rF > 0

That makes sense (i.e., some narcissistic people not sensitive to criticism).

I just used sensitivity to criticism as one example of the kinds of issues I bring up with people with only one reflection. I might also ask them what kinds of complaints they get from others in relationships, e.g., [is it sometimes difficult for them to empathize without others](#) specifically reminding them of the need to, etc. Ideally, I like them to come up with the issues. But sensitivity to criticism is one that most people are willing to talk about without being defensive about it because, like folks on this list, they consider it an issue most people have, and it gets them talking about themselves.

It serves as an opener to talk with them about how they are perceived by others in relationships, and how they perceive themselves in relationships.

One of the cases I recall from way back years ago was from a couple I was seeing. The wife seemed quite borderline to me, histrionic, angry, devaluing, etc. I don't recall whether she had reflections, but I think she did have several S. He had one reflection, and as I recall, it was a fairly typical one, as I recall. His overall protocol was pretty normal. He was a bright guy who did construction work for a living, but wasn't your typical "redneck". I recall that he had a college education, just liked building things. She received a hefty inheritance, and he used it to remodel a couple of buildings before they were divorced, ostensibly to sell them and make some money, since he didn't have a "real" job. He bankrupted her. Her words ring in my ears, "J...just doesn't get it." I didn't really know what she meant. I perceived her as an angry, complaining person.

A couple of years later, he did some construction work for a friend of mine, and also for a local business that sold windows. He did some beautiful work of installing several sample windows on a main drag where impressions were important.

He bankrupted both my friend (literally) and the business, which closed and left town shortly after he finally completed the work. Why? Because his own needs always got in his way! He showed up for work at ten, left at three to get his kids, charged for many activities that weren't in his original bids (e.g., stopping off to get supplies and carrying them into the house, prep time, clean up time, etc.). Thus, costs and time estimates were very far short. It took him months to do jobs that others could have completed in weeks.

He was a very nice, very bright and seemingly together and talented guy. But my final impression, after hearing these stories was, hmmm, she had a point. [He just doesn't get it.](#) He doesn't get the extent to which his own needs get in his way in his relationships with others. She might have been a histrionic angry complaining wife, but she wasn't seein' nothin', as my professor used to say.

Since then, I'm careful not to minimize a single reflection. I wish I still had his protocol, so I could look at the full protocol. At this point, I don't even remember his last name. But I

remember distinctly thinking, oh, it's only one reflection, that's within normal range. I don't see any clinical evidence for it, she actually seems more self-centered than he, the rest of the protocol looks good, etc....

I'm sure this doesn't mean that everyone with a single reflection is going to not "get it" when it comes to the needs of others. It just reminds me to not dismiss an issue simply because it doesn't show up (to my satisfaction, at least), in the small window of an assessment. Or perhaps the lesson should be, just because someone is an angry complaining person doesn't mean that the one they're angry at hasn't contributed in some major way to the situation. His complaints about her were much more evident in the clinical setting than were hers about him (after all, she was an angry complaining person). But in the "real" world, over time, a pattern emerged that supported her assessment of him.

Unfortunately, too often we don't have the benefit of seeing patterns over time. We have a very short time in which to formulate our impressions. In this fairly small community, where I do have the advantage of following people over time long after they come in for an assessment, I have the opportunity to check out my original impressions, running into people again, assessing them again years later, hearing about them from others, or just calling them up to see how they or their kids are doing, etc.

Without such follow-up, it's easy to think we're right because we never get any evidence to the contrary....

Pam

On Mar 4, 2009, at 9:33 AM, James Livingston wrote:

Hi Pam Speaking of narcissism, (as opposed to reflection responses) I've known some who really aren't very affected by the opinions or feelings of others, in the failure of empathy sense. I'm tempted to say maybe it is consistent with some folks at Mayo who were writing a few years ago about hyper-vigilant and oblivious narcissists, but as I think about it, I think I've known some oblivious narcissists who were sensitive to criticism. Maybe whether it is wounding has to do with the source of the criticism, which leads me to wonder if reflections have to do with a particular kind of narcissism. Ah well, back to work. Jay James Livingston, Ph.D. Clinical Services Manager Center for Survivors of Torture Asian Americans for Community Involvement San Jose, CA

From: Rorschach_List@yahoogroups.com [mailto:Rorschach_List@yahoogroups.com] On Behalf Of Pamela Olsen Sent: Wednesday, March 04, 2009 12:27 AM To: Rorschach_List@yahoogroups.com Subject: Re: [Rorschach_List] Re: Fr + rF > 0

I have had couples where one individual had a reflection, one didn't. Invariably, the one with a reflection is more sensitive to criticism. I've had quite a few people say that criticism doesn't bother them much. The only time I've had that happen where there is a reflection is in a custody evaluation when they're quite defensive about everything. The responses that really make me curious: the person is about half way through the cards, and then says something like, "why are all of these mirror images?" But then they go on to give a non-

reflection response....they might make a comment to that effect a couple of times, but as a DR, not as a true response. Sometimes never give a reflection response. Intrigues me

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