

DISCONNECTION

to

RECONNECTION



A New Book by Tanya Davis
The Disconnection Coach

Disconnection to Reconnection

5 Steps to reconnect after a disconnection with a significant other

by Tanya Davis (The Disconnection Coach)

The Meaning of Disconnection

the state of being isolated or detached.

"I felt a sense of disconnection from the city environment"

the act of detaching one thing from another.

"disconnection from the internet"

Oxford Dictionary

***The Power of Awareness, what we know we can
impact, what we don't know we can't impact, it
happens to us, not for us!***

Sharon Pearson

Introduction

In this eBook, we are going to go on a journey of understanding, awareness, and acknowledgement of Disconnection, we are going to delve into the realm of positive psychology, biology, and communication both verbal and body language. By having an understanding how we think, feel, and behave we can learn about how we impact the world and therefore impact the people around us, because how we *view* ourselves, will impact on how we view and relate to the world around us.

The Hypothesis

In this eBook, the working hypothesis is that: an adult who has become estranged from their primary caregiver I.e., parents, is more likely to have had an anxious, avoidant, or disorganised attachment as a child.

How we manage our emotions (either through expression or repression) within this setting, will impact on the people around us either positively or negatively, particularly children. Young children, infants, toddlers, and preschoolers, take their cues from their caregivers, these cues are how they then interact with the world around them. If we as the caregivers, are not able to emotionally regulate how can a toddler be expected to emotionally regulate. If this status quo doesn't change and years have passed, there is now a teenager not able to regulate then an adult not able to regulate. This dysregulation becomes a destructive pattern of behaviour which can cause physical and psychological harm to that person and to the people around that person.

Attachment behaviour of the parent influences how young children feel, see, and understand about their world, the primary caregivers contribute and forms the way a child perceives and understand close relationships. We know this due to John Bowlby's (1969) attachment research in which he identifies' s what we now know as the 4 attachment styles:

1. Anxious
2. Avoidant
3. Disorganised
4. Secure

As we know our children are dependent on us, their caregivers and will seek comfort, soothing and support from us, this is a child's survival mechanism. If our child's psychical and emotional needs are satisfied, they will become securely attached to their primary caregiver, this attachment will provide them with a foundation of knowledge and understanding for relationships throughout their life.

However, if a child is attached anxiously, disorganised or avoidant, this too as above provides the foundation of how they go into their relationships as an adult, this foundation is not solid and comes at a cost to the ongoing adult relationships, as well as the persons feelings of self-esteem and self-worth.

***Hell in my opinion, is never finding your true self
and never living your own life or knowing who you
are***

John Bradshaw

Why do some Adult Children become Estranged?

Working in Child protection field for over a decade as well as many decades in other community welfare services, I have noticed that estrangement of adult children to parents happens for a few reasons e.g., parental AOD issues, abuse, neglect, or physical, psychological, and emotional abuse or trauma of some kind. Interestingly trauma can be a response to a situation that a child has perceived to mean something else. For example, a parent might have yelled at a child who has taken that yelling to mean more than it was meant to, regardless of the intent of the event, the body still treats the situation as trauma, it evokes a traumatic response for all intents and purposes the event is and was traumatic for the child. Trauma can have a long and lasting detrimental impact on a person's ability to self-regulate, mental health and issues of self-worth and self-esteem.

Stephon Porges in 1994 developed the Polyvagal theory which identifies a third type of nervous system response that Porges calls the social engagement system, a playful mixture of activation and calming that operates out of unique nerve influence. The social engagement system helps us navigate the social constructs of our world i.e., our physiological and psychological states. When we experience trauma, it disrupts our physiological state. "It distorts our social awareness and displaces social engagement with defensive reactions. Like other mammals", Porges says "humans act a particular way when frightened".

The polyvagal theory helps us to understand that the vagus nerve can help the body calm down, but in different ways, The dorsal branch of the vagus nerve has 2 ways of calming the body 1st way is to 'shut down', 2nd way is to freeze or faint. Picture a person on a roller coaster fainting over and over as the ride goes on.

The ventral branch of the vagal nerve effects body functioning above the diaphragm this is the branch that serves the social engagement system. Wagner (2016). This branch dampens the body's regular active state, by releasing chemicals that can help us in the fight - or - flight stage. If there is unresolved trauma in the past though, people may live in a perpetual fight - or - flight state, this state for some survivors feels like they are trapped in a body that never at complete rest.

To move people from constant fight - or - flight or shut down mode, there needs to be an increase in body awareness. This can be done by a trained therapist, psychologist or counsellor, this body awareness is about teaching clients to question their safety in any circumstances that make them feel shut down, fight – or – flight or freeze.

When a person is able to be in the body aware stage or using the frontal cortex, this means they are coming from their logical part of the brain and are able to hear, take things on board, talk and respond in a way that engages their parasympathetic

nervous system (social engagement) which enables them to be aware of their surroundings, question their safety and use logic to combat the trauma responses.

Given this information, if we have an adult child in a perpetual state of traumatic response, unable to completely rest, or take on logical actions, or as happens are self-soothing using unsustainable or unhealthy ways such as using drugs/alcohol to numb or pornography, stealing, video games etc. We, parents are going to be combating a significant amount of resistance, traumatic responses, and emotional dysregulation, if our children either consciously or sub consciously believe that we are at fault, the fall out of this will be significantly greater and potentially leading to disconnection.

According to our culture, we may feel shame, but we're not supposed to talk about it. As a result, many of us are out of touch with the fact that our lives are filled with experiences of shame.

Pia Mellody

Understanding You

We as humans are on a journey of discovery, for some it's about the external world and for some it's about the internal world, I would suggest that unless we all do the internal work, our external world will never be what we want it to be. Happiness truly starts with us. If you have inner dialogue that is full of Why's, Blame or Should's, then there is internal work for you to do. Example of some of the inner monologue can be ... "Why am I too emotional/not emotional enough", "why don't people respect me", "I shouldn't have said this", "I shouldn't have done that", "if only I had ..." "it's not me it's them, they are to blame", "I am too shy/embarrassed/stupid to try that". "Nothing good ever happens for me", "I should try harder" etc.

Does any of that sound familiar?

Disconnection from self and our inner dialogue can cause us to seek our self-worth, our understanding, and our perception of our reality in others, this codependency conditioning puts our emotional state in the hands of another person. How they feel about us becomes how we feel about ourselves. We become only worthwhile, enough, and lovable when we are viewed from another's eyes. We seek to be fulfilled by others wanting us, needing us, and loving us, rather than seeking fulfillment for us, by us and to us.

Coming from a codependent pathway, you are doing 2 things:

1. Undervaluing your Potential.
2. Undermining your Authenticity

Unfortunately for our children, we carry our lack into their lives, we live for them through us, we get our needs through them, shaping them into little people who are attempting to navigate the world through our lens instead of their own. It is important to note, we do this unconsciously we don't mean to, it happens because we are living in our own tribal cycle of our own parents up bringing.

As Sharon Pearson suggests *"If our Magical Big People (Parents, Caregivers) lacked self – worth, saw themselves as unlovable, didn't have certainty that they were enough, and didn't know how to own their own feelings, wants and needs, then they unwittingly projected these insecurities onto us"*. We continue this dysfunctional pattern by doing the same for our children.

This is a time of reflection of your children's childhood, think back to when they were young before 5 years old, were you completely available to them, were you able to meet all their needs all the time, what was their attachment to you like? Think back without judgment and shame and try and understand their experience of you as a parent.

If you are interested [there is an attachment survey](#), you can do to determine your own attachment style this might give your insight into how your children experienced their childhood.

I am not what I think I am, and I am not what you think I am. I am what I think you think I am.

Charles Horton Cooley

5 Steps to Reconnection

Disconnection of the child – parent relationship is called estrangement; this is when an adult child chooses to disconnect from their parent. This disconnection can be because of some form of abuse or trauma and the adult child needs to disconnect to be able to heal and move on with their life. However, the disconnection that is less understandable is the disconnection that occurs when an adult child disconnects because of their behaviour, or their unwillingness to accept boundaries from the parent. This disconnection happens when an adult child is no longer supported to live a lifestyle that is detrimental to their health i.e., drug or alcohol use, poor spending habits, a party lifestyle, untreated mental health issues etc.

How do we bring about reconnection to a disconnected child?

There needs to be a full awareness by you the Parent of: Does this child want to reconnect?

Does this child have untreated Mental Health, AOD or other significant factors that could impact on the reconnection?

Are You the Parent Ready for the reconnection? Then let us begin

The Steps in Summary

1. Acknowledge the disconnection
2. Bring awareness
3. Validate the emotions yours and theirs
4. Create an environment of change
5. Do the work

Step 1

Acknowledge the Disconnection

Before the reconnection can take place, you as the parent need to acknowledge why the disconnection happened, what part you played in this disconnection and how are you going to do things differently?

To acknowledge the disconnection is to look within your own self and own your part, to accept that at times, you might have said, did / not said or not did things that could have made a difference. Whether that be in childhood or teenage years or later. As part of this you need to be willing to apologise for those things, you need to be willing to hand on heart tell your child that you got it wrong.

Also, part of acknowledgment comes from our internal world, what does this disconnection mean for us in our body, emotions, and our triggers of this disconnection. Create a routine around understanding ourselves in this space, doing deep listening to our emotions, our thoughts, and our body whilst in the space of the disconnection.

Finding quiet time every day to understand our hurts, triggers and working out what our boundaries are for this reconnection to happen.

Emotional regulation – check in with us, in a rational way and we feel our emotions fully in a healthy and mindful way.

1. Be Aware of the emotion – are you feeling an emotion Can you Name it?
Raise your level of awareness to your emotions.
2. Acknowledge the emotion - name the emotion, where in the body is this emotion, has it a colour to it, what does it look like.
3. Action – once we feel and experience our emotion, we need to move it through our body, we are energetic beings, and we need to move the emotions through us, or it will find a place to stay within us. Breathing, walking, or doing a conscious form of movement will work to move the emotion through us. Kerwin Rae suggests using the breath work 6, 4, 6 which is breath in for the count of 6, hold for the count of 4 or 6, and release for the count of 6.

Surrender is the byproduct of resistance. Surrender preexists, what's in the way is My Own perspective of how I want things to be.

Peter Crone

Step 2

Bring Awareness

This step all about bringing awareness to the situation. Look outside yourself and see what has happened, why it happened and that it is a tragedy that your child for whatever reason thinks they can't have a relationship with you.

When we bring awareness to the situation, we need to be honest, and open about what has occurred, we need to understand the implications of the situation for ourselves and others. Without Blame, Judgement, Guilt or Shame.

As stated by Sharon Pearson, Shame loves Shadows now light your candle by acknowledging your mistakes, your shame, stop denying your experience of it, give up the need to be right about you, your situation, your past, your views, and your beliefs – allow yourself to feel all of this to heal yourself. Acknowledge the vulnerability and have the courage to speak about it, write about it and help it led you to connection with self and others.

If you have had addictions issues, emotional issues, family cycle impacts or if you feel you weren't always there for your child there is work to be done to heal yourself and heal the relationship, one can does not happen without the other.

To bring awareness, you can keep a journal, talk to a trusted person - a life coach, psychologist, or counsellor, you can join a group and start a conversation with your adult child by letter, write to them (you don't have to send it) and let things come out in your own time, and level of understanding. It's a journey... a personal journey that takes time, understanding and work.

As you do this...

You will fill intense emotions, it's ok to cry, rage, or feel. Give yourself time to adjust and integrate this new world and allow yourself to think what you think and feel what you feel.

***We can't heal our past. We can't change our past,
we can't alter what happened, we can't remove how
we were shamed: but we can heal ourselves.***

Sharon Pearson

Step 3

Validation

Noun

recognition or affirmation that a person or their feelings or opinions are valid or worthwhile.

"They have exaggerated needs for acceptance and validation"

Validation is not problem solving – it is giving someone your time, energy, and presence. This experience is to help them understand, feel and be present to their own emotions. To have space to sit with their emotions, and feel them, to be able to express their emotions fully, without fear of judgment, reprisal or worry that information will be shared. Validation of someone helps you build connection and can help clarify a 'vibe' of a particular event, situation or circumstance.

Always go into this sharing of feelings, emotions, and life with someone with deep respect, care, and love. Not as a problem solver, good friendship is not built on your ability to problem solve or caretake for them.

Whilst we are validating someone it is important NOT to make it about you, not to bring your 'stuff' into what is been talked about, this is a moment for them.

Sentences you can use to help validate someone else

- I am sorry that you are experiencing this ...
- That sounds really hard what you are going through tell me about how you are managing?
- That sucks, and it must make you feel mad/sad/bad/frustrate etc...
- You must feel devastated?
- I understand why you feel so lost it sounds like ..

When someone shares something of their 'in here world', you acknowledge it fully and be honoured they share it.

Sharon Pearson

Step 4

Create an environment of change

When we truly want to create an environment that is different to the one, we had, we need to take stock of what has worked and what has not worked in our life.

To do that we need to be honest about the way that we view the world, how we have been raised, or treated as we come into childhood, teenage years, and adulthood.

Questions to ask yourself

- Do I take feedback well?
- Am I clear on my boundaries, wants and needs?
- Am I able to have a conversation and remain emotionally regulated?
- Can I talk about times when I got it wrong?
- Am I able to reflect on my mistakes and own up to them?
- Have you acknowledged your vulnerability and allow yourself to heal

Own your part of the Disconnection

For there to be disconnection there must have been connection: think about times when you had connection, remember the good times, write them down, or share them with others, so you have good memories to fall back on, when times are tricky or hard.

Remember that we all have free will and understanding where the other person is in their journey is an important part of the process, however, start a conversation and talk about how 'one day' you would like to be reconnected.

Be respectful to where they are at, this needs to be on a mutually respectful timeline.

Remember: Just because you want to reconnect this may not be their journey.

Be ok with their part of the journey.

***The definition of insanity is to do the same thing
over and over again and expect a different outcome.***

Albert Einstein

Step 5

Do the work

If you can't love, respect and be honest with you, then you need to do repair work with you.

To truly love yourself is to accept all parts of yourself, the good, the shitty, the bad, the shameful, the thoughts, the wants, the kinky, the compassionate and kind.

If you are thinking "I am waiting for things to get easier" or "they need to come to me first" you are not ready for reconnection to happen. We need to learn about us, appreciate us, before we can expect others to see, understand and accept us for who we are.

If you go about with the belief that You are Right, they are Wrong... Then you are a black and white thinker, nothing in this world is black and white, there are all sorts of other colours in between.

What you focus on is what you get!

Another way to think of this is to picture a torch and its beam of light. Everything outside of the light is black and unseen, yet everything within the light is known and seen. We people do the same with what we are experiencing in our lives. We simply are not aware of what is unseen or not in our focus. Yet if we take a moment to bring awareness to the situation, we will be able to explore the unseen, ask ourselves some questions about what we are experiencing and if it is as I am seeing it?

- What am I seeing is it real or what I want to see?
- What lens am I looking at it with?
- Is my thinking black and white?
- Am I shutting off my emotions around this topic?
- How is this thinking impacting on others in my life?

Change your actions

What if I could change my actions? To change the action, we must change our thinking. To change our thinking, we must be willing to challenge our own built-in desire for the 'status quo' our old patterns of thinking and doing which is driven by our desire for certainty in an uncertain world.

Most people fail to achieve their goals in life for one simple reason: They never take the first steps.

Anthony Robbins