

## ENMESHMENT: TANGLED UP IN YOU!

*I am he as you are he as you are me and we are all together. I am the Walrus... The Beatles*

### WHAT TO KNOW!

- ❖ Enmeshed people don't have clear ego boundaries that separate one from another
- ❖ They cannot identify the differences between their needs from the other person's needs
- ❖ They don't see where they begin and end and the other person begins and ends
- ❖ Enmeshment is not true love but the loss of identity, freedom, and self worth
- ❖ Typical descriptions of enmeshed people include: "joined at the hip", "momma's boy", "they finish each other's sentences", and "they can't live without each other"
- ❖ Enmeshment is the opposite of independence and can range from mild to extreme
- ❖ Enmeshed people often blame each other for their unhappiness and one person's issues becomes the other person's issues and vice versa
- ❖ In enmeshment, there is no sense of emotional health, personal identity, individuality, or control over one's life
- ❖ They look to their partner to fix them, to solve their problems, and to make them happy
- ❖ Enmeshed people will often text or call their partner many times a day and need to know where they are at all times and who they are with
- ❖ In enmeshed families, everyone knows everyone else's business and triangulation among family members often occurs
- ❖ Enmeshed families are so intertwined that when one person gets depressed, eventually all will get depressed or will try to rescue that person
- ❖ Enmeshed partners can also include boss and employee, co-workers, parents and children, and whole families
- ❖ As in codependence, enmeshed people mutually rely upon and need the other person to meet their needs and "complete them"
- ❖ Many love songs are written about enmeshed relationships including "Can't Live if Living is Without You", "Tainted Love", and "With or Without You"
- ❖ In enmeshed relationships, there is a great fear of abandonment or losing the other person as that would be similar to losing part of oneself or one's identity
- ❖ Enmeshed parents try to be friends with their children or hover over them to rescue and protect them but actually deny them the opportunity to develop their own strengths
- ❖ Enmeshed adult children often feel a burden to make their parents happy or to take care of them or to be a surrogate partner
- ❖ In a healthy relationship, people maintain their identity and are respected for it
- ❖ In a healthy relationship, people do not change who they are to just to please the other
- ❖ People in healthy relationships value their own abilities to solve their own issues
- ❖ People in healthy relationships **want** to be with their partner not **need** to be with them
- ❖ People in healthy relationships can be alone and not fall apart without their partner

### WHAT TO DO!

- ❖ Be aware of your negative feelings about your partner, co-worker, or family member
- ❖ Recognize when the relationship becomes one of need not love and when it becomes suffocating or controlling
- ❖ Understand your personal boundaries and how to set limits to maintain them
- ❖ If enmeshment persists and leads to depression or anxiety, seek professional counseling

## **WE CAN HELP!**

Call us at **954 755-2885** or email us at **DrKimmel@aol.com**.

**Joel I. Kimmel, Ph.D. P.A. and Associates**  
**5551 N University Drive**  
**Coral Springs FL 33067**