

Dr. Blume's Article of the Month

Women: Beware of Psychic Vampires

By Ginger Blume

Myths, folklore and fairy tales are valuable sources of information about the human spirit and psyche. These stories, passed from generation to generation, serve as literal containers for crucial lessons of mankind. One classic, mythical character is the "vampire." Want to guess what the mythical vampire represents in our lives today?

While blood-thirsty vampires don't roam our streets at night, you might be surprised to learn that "psychic vampires" do! You probably don't think you know what a "psychic vampire" is, but you've probably encountered at least one of them each and every day! Unfortunately, they can't be recognized by their physical appearance. They don't grow fangs or develop hairy bodies. However, they can be easily identified by their direct impact on other people. Psychic vampires are people who cause others to feel totally, emotionally drained after interacting with them. They seem to sap the psychic and physical energy right out of the person they're talking with. Interactions with a psychic vampire leave one feeling exhausted. True to the story of the mythical creature, a desire to escape is the most common reaction when someone has encountered a psychic vampire.

Understand, psychic vampires are typically not mean, cruel people. Oftentimes, they are totally unaware of their impact on others. Initially, they are quite charming and attractive. They draw others in with their cunning and guile. Like vampires displayed on Hollywood's silver screen, psychic vampires avoid looking at themselves in the mirror. This avoidance of mirrors signifies a psychological tendency to avoid the self. The psychic vampire avoids, at all costs, self-examination. As you know, vampires literally live in the dark. Similarly, psychic vampires refuse to become enlightened by the light of knowledge. They lurk in darkness, under cover and unaware of how they negatively influence and drain other peoples' emotional energy.

Having avoided self-reflection, these individuals naturally deny responsibility for how they affect others and how they attempt to live off the energy of others. For instance, a typical interaction with a psychic vampire might appear like this:

The PV usually begins a conversation with a complaint of some sort. If the person they're talking with chooses to respond with a solution, optimistic comment or some other positive response, the PV will literally live off that person's positive energy. Rather than do this for him/herself, the PV relies on other people to provide him/her with this type of energy. As the word "vampire" conveys, the PV saps the energy of others, which is why the other person ends up feeling emotionally drained.

Modern day language and culture have coined the term "co-dependent" to describe the individual whose life revolves around the life of another. Rather than develop a true sense of "self," the co-dependent attempts to define him/herself through another person --- usually the one s/he is in love with. There are few or no psychological boundaries between the co-dependent and the significant other. "Co-dependent" is representative of the mythic psychic vampire.

By describing the psychic vampire, I have attempted to bring new life to the worn out term co-dependent. Unfortunately, the word co-dependent has been so overly used, it has lost its impact. People are comfortable with the label "co-dependent." I see many people cozy up to the concept and almost pride themselves on being a classic co-dependent! The Bible, fairy tales such as Rumpelstiltskin, etc. remind us of the power of the "word." Perhaps, the negative connotation of "psychic vampire" will encourage all those co-dependents in the world to shed their attachment to living through and off others, and seek to reclaim a true sense of self.

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