

REJECTION

BY DR. BRANDY REID, LMFT

The logo for SoCal Therapy Center features the text "SoCal" in a serif font, flanked by decorative green vine-like flourishes. Below "SoCal" is the text "THERAPY CENTER" in a bold, sans-serif font. The entire logo is enclosed in a white rectangular box with a thin pink border, which is set against a blue background with a subtle floral pattern.

SoCal
THERAPY CENTER

“A REJECTION IS NOTHING
MORE THAN A NECESSARY STEP
IN THE PURSUIT OF SUCCESS”.

– BO BENNETT

Businessman, author, programmer, philanthropist, martial artist, motivational speaker, and amateur comedian,

WHAT IS REJECTION

- Rejection can be defined as the act of pushing someone or something away. One may experience rejection from one's family of origin, a friend, or a romantic partner, and the resulting emotions can often be painful.
- Rejection can be experienced on a large scale or in small ways in everyday life. While rejection is typically a part of life, some types of rejection may be more difficult to cope with than others
- According to IQ Matrix, the fear of rejection is an irrational fear that has you convinced that people won't accept or approve of you due to your opinions, looks, personality, values, beliefs or behavior.

COMMON TYPES OF REJECTION

- **Familial rejection:** Rejection from one's family of origin, typically parental rejection, may consist of abuse, abandonment, neglect, or the withholding of love and affection. This form of rejection is likely to affect an individual throughout life, and it may have serious consequences.
- **Social rejection:** This type of rejection may occur at any age and can often begin in childhood. Social rejection can include bullying and alienation in school or the workplace, but it can also extend to any social group. Those who challenge the status quo or who live what is considered “outside the norm” for their society may be more prone to social rejection.
- **Rejection in a relationship:** People may experience rejection while dating or in a relationship. For example, an individual may refuse to share an event or experience with a partner, withhold affection or intimacy, or treat a partner as if that person were no more than a casual acquaintance. When an individual decides to end a relationship, this can also cause the other partner to feel rejected.
- **Romantic rejection:** Rejection can occur when a person asks for a date and is denied. While this may also be known as sexual rejection, the person who is romantically rejected may not always be interested in a sexual relationship.

HOW SOCIAL MEDIA ENABLES REJECTION

- Dr. Winch says, “It used to be hard enough to get through a day or a week without some incident or another hurting our feelings. But now we have Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, Pinterest and other social media platforms, and while they enrich us in many ways, they provide just as many opportunities for rejection as they do for connection”.
- The kinds of rejections we experience on social media can vary in their severity, just as they do offline. And just as in "real life" even relatively minor rejections (such as when friends fail to "like" or to "retweet" our posts) can really sting.
- Indeed, we often experience any lack of reciprocity on social media as a kind of shunning. Shunning is such a painful form of ostracism that historically, it was used as a vehicle of severe social punishment (e.g., *The Scarlet Letter*).
- One of the reasons rejection hurts so much is because the same areas in our brains are activated when we experience rejection as when we experience physical pain.



MENTAL HEALTH DIAGNOSIS ASSOCIATED W/ REJECTION

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Personality Disorders
- PTSD
- Eating Disorders
- Panic Disorder
- ADHD

FEELINGS ASSOCIATED WITH REJECTION

- Shame
- Sadness
- Inferiority
- Isolation
- Fear
- Worry
- Self Criticism

REJECTION SENSITIVITY

- Fear of or sensitivity to rejection that causes someone to pull away from others can lead to chronic feelings of loneliness and depression.
- Rejection sensitivity can co-occur with many mental health issues including social anxiety, avoidant personality, and borderline personality, it is not an official diagnosis.
- Many people isolate themselves or hold back from connecting to others because they're afraid of being rejected.
- Rejection sensitivity or Fear of rejection may occur so regularly in individuals with ADHD that some refer to it as rejection sensitive dysphoria. Some common signs of rejection sensitive dysphoria in those with ADHD include self-criticism, anxiety in social situations, and extreme sadness after a perceived rejection.

HOW TO RECOGNIZE SIGNS FOR FEAR OF REJECTION

The fear of rejection creeps up on us unexpectedly and often hides behind a veil of excuses is a significant stronghold in many lives.

According to IQ matrix, the following symptoms of the fear of rejection and assess how many of them are currently manifesting in your life.

- You lack assertiveness while interacting with other people.
- You lack the courage to speak up and raise a different point of view.
- You lack a sense of personal identity.
- You're dissatisfied with life, but instead of vocalizing it openly, you tend to internalize your sadness and anger.
- You're consistently wearing different psychological masks to please others.
- You feel as though other people have a kind of superiority over you.
- You're obsessed with acting and looking like other people.
- You're incredibly conscious of what other people think of you.
- You're afraid to say no and express what you truly want.

How many of these symptoms are prevalent in your life?

FEAR OF REJECTION

According to IQ Matrix, the primary reason the fear of rejection is prevalent in your life is often due to a lack of self-esteem. You fear rejection because you have a low value and opinion of yourself. As a result, you look to others for cues to help you feel better about yourself. Often, low self-esteem stems back to childhood experiences. Other factors are often lack of confidence, lack of social skills, and engagement in constant comparison.

FEAR OF REJECTION

- I believe it is important to note that the fear of engaging in the risk of rejection keeps you bound from experiencing the things that will allow freedom and resilience.
- According to Good Therapy, the feeling of rejection is believed to have developed as an evolutionary tool to alert early humans who were at risk of being ostracized from the tribe they belonged to. A painful rejection from others in the tribe was likely to encourage an individual to modify any problematic behavior in order to avoid further rejection, or ostracism, from the tribe. Those who were able to avoid further rejection were more likely to survive, while those who did not find rejection to be particularly painful may not have corrected the offending behavior, making them less likely to survive. In this way, humans may have evolved to experience rejection as painful.
- According to Good Therapy, it means that emotional pain is a natural response to rejection. This may also explain why we tend to avoid situations in which we expect to be rejected. Consciously or unconsciously, we stay away from people, places, and events that we have associated with rejection either through experience or based on expectation. And that fear and the subsequent avoidant behavior can have a serious impact on the goals we seek to accomplish and the life we aim to build.

SURVEY

I sent a survey to 40 people within community to inquire the following about rejection:

- 1. Have you experienced rejection?
- 2. What do you believe is the most common type/
- 3. What do you believe is the most painful type of rejection?
- 4. What are one or two ways you have overcome/dealt with rejection?

20 respondents provided truthful and bold recollections about their experiences.

IMPLICATIONS FROM THE SURVEY TAKEN

EVERYONE HAS EXPERIENCED
REJECTION!
IT CAN NOT BE ESCAPED!



COMMUNITY FEEDBACK ON HOW TO OVERCOME REJECTION

From the survey taken this week, I learned the general themes surrounding overcoming rejection are:

- Spirituality/ Religion: Prayer, Chakra Cleansing, Sage Cleansing, etc.
- Introspection
- Venting with others
- Remembering mantras like “this too shall pass”
- Remain Optimistic
- Resilience

PAIN VS SUFFERING

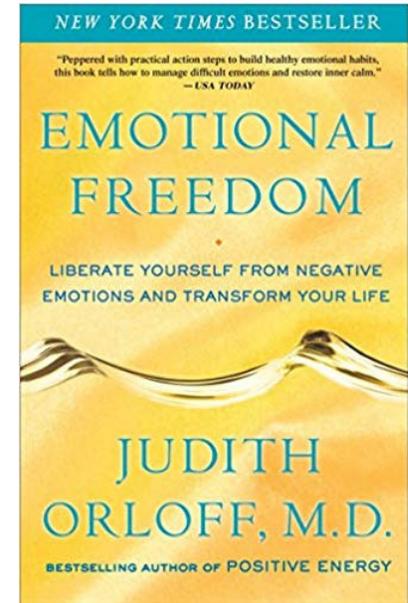
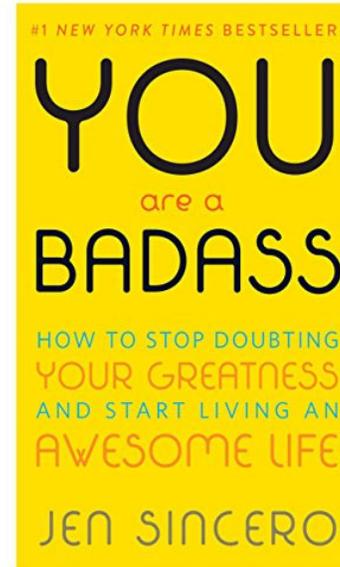
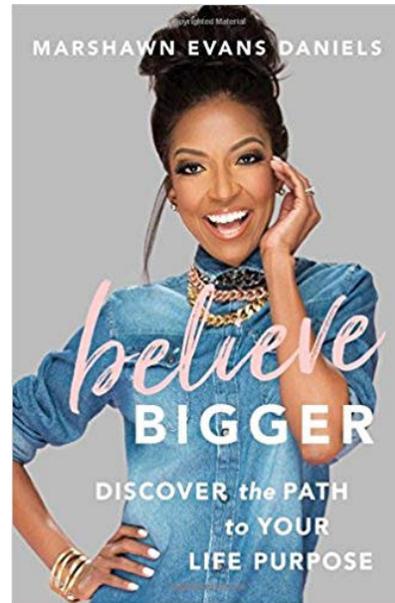
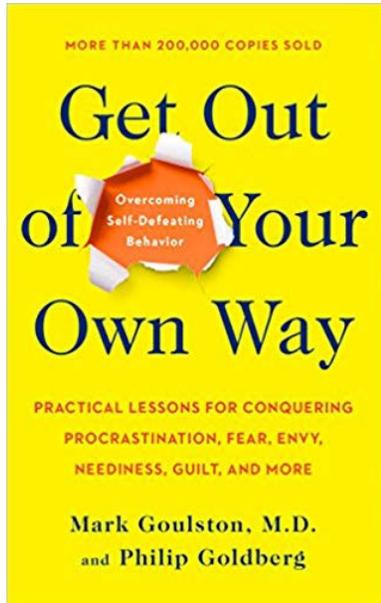
- According to habits for wellbeing, pain is the physical sensations or signals (within your body) that tells you something is happening within your body in relation to an event or situation. Suffering is the interpretation or story that you tell yourself about the pain (i.e thoughts, judgements, beliefs etc).

Suffering is a choice we can engage in or not!

HOW A THERAPIST CAN HELP YOU DEAL WITH REJECTION

A therapist or other mental health professional may be able to help an individual work through and cope with rejection and the distress that can result in the following ways:

- A compassionate therapist can help individuals who feel rejected learn to deal with perceived or real rejection and build social skills that may help them connect more easily with others.
- Understand childhood traumas that are rooted in your fear of rejection.
- Building resilience and self efficacy to combat the effects of rejection.
- Help you develop boundaries and insight to oppose the effects of rejection.
- Reflect how day to day experiences with rejection can be overturned.
- Develop strategies with you to combat distortive thoughts or negative self-talk.



RESOURCES

- <https://www.amazon.com/Emotional-Freedom-Liberate-Yourself-Transform/dp/0307338193>
- <https://www.amazon.com/Get-Out-Your-Own-Self-Defeating/dp/0399519904>
- <https://www.amazon.com/You-Are-Badass%C2%AE-Doubting-Greatness-ebook/dp/B00B3M3VWS>
- <https://www.amazon.com/Believe-Bigger-Discover-Path-Purpose/dp/1501165674>

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