

Differentiation versus Fusion

Qualities of Fusion

1. Losing oneself in close relationships. Second-guessing, monitoring one's behavior to please others, and worrying what others think of you.
2. Having one's self-esteem/mood infected/affected by others' anxieties and worries.
3. Measuring one's self-worth by external validation - praise, grades, money, status, looks, weight, etc.
4. Reacting unconsciously, out of childhood conditioning, teachings, or trauma. Having a stronger emotional reaction than the current situation warrants.
5. Blaming others, not seeing your part in the dramas and problems you experience.
6. Defensiveness in the face of criticism, different ideologies, approaches, or beliefs.
7. Needing to be right or always believing you are wrong.
8. Being dependent on others to comfort and soothe me.
9. Having difficulty giving to others, or giving with an agenda.
10. Bonding in righteousness, pain, or as "victims."
11. Engaging in compulsive and addictive behavior.
12. Changing your persona or behavior to please or control others.
13. Rescuing people, worrying for them, being overly dramatic about problems.
14. Staying in harmful, painful relationships out of fear and dependency, or fear of being on one's own.

Qualities of Differentiation

1. Maintaining one's center in relationships. Able to define one's self, knowing one's own feelings and able to articulate these. Truthful even when it's difficult. Able to care for one's self.
2. Having one's self-esteem and mood remain constant in the presence of others' anxieties and worries. Able to remain a loving witness; compassionate and supportive without entanglement.
3. Knowing that one's value is a given. One's self-worth remains constant, not challenged by circumstances or others' beliefs.
4. Developing a set of values through reflection, awareness, learning, and experimentation.
5. Feeling comfortable or fascinated by different theories, belief systems, and perspectives. Secure enough in your own values and beliefs that you are not threatened by differences and allow yourself to be curious.
6. Recognizing seduction, control, and manipulation - yours and others. Not trusting blindly but based on reality.
7. Being able to self-reflect and self-confront. Owning responsibility for your choices, mistakes, and decisions.
8. Asking for and receiving support without feeling weak or compromised. Accepting your humanness and fallibility.
9. Giving without an agenda or the feeling you are giving away a part of yourself. Giving from a place of abundance.
10. Seeing others clearly, not categorizing others. Not having preconceived beliefs or expectations of others.
11. Learning to comfort and soothe yourself when faced with stress or difficulties. Not responding in haste to defend or react.