

Ann Kelley: So in this example, if we could take one of the defenses and really play it out, let's say forget, forgetting is a interesting defense, right? Because we all do it. My memory is not what it used to be. So we all forget, right? And so we can just stop there, just say, Oh, I'm so sorry, I forgot.

So that's a way of us engaging in a defense without self-awareness. And I don't mean every single time you. You need to do this, but if you tend to be forgetting important things or forgetting what your partner talked about, or there's a lot of forgetting happening, if you don't slow down and think about the use of that forgetting, because instead we use it as an end goal.

Sorry, I forgot. Rather than being curious. Why is it that I can't seem to remember the really important things that somebody asked of me at the grocery store? There's a good chance that you're allowing distraction and distractibility to be part of the whole process, like you're not actually present and part of the defense where we get back to the avoidance to be present might be more threatening than you think.

We stay distracted and we forget because to be present and really take you in is super overwhelming. So instead I stay distracted and then I live in the excuse that I forgot, and then nobody can get mad at me if I forgot. If I forget your birthday or forget to do something, nobody can be mad at me. But you have to like really approach your own defense system of distraction and not actually being present to begin with.

Welcome to Therapist Uncensored building on decades of professional experience. This podcast tackles neurobiology, modern attachment, and more in an honest way that's helpful in healing humans. Your session begins now with Dr. Ann Kelly and Sue Marriot.

So we're gonna jump into the last part of our series, Disarming Human Defenses. We kicked off this series by asking listeners out there, for those of you that heard it, and that was to get some feedback to think about what it is. That you can recognize in yourself as some of your go-to defenses.

Sometimes we know, right? We just really know what our defenses are. Sometimes it's not so obvious, so we also encourage listeners out there to ask questions, talk to the people in your lives. Think about what are some things that they see that are possibly your patterns of defending and protecting yourself.

We're wondering if you were able to ask that question, and what'd you find out?

Sue Marriott: For those of you that are just tuning in, don't sweat it. We're just mentioning that because we had started initially by requesting for folks to begin to do the journey of becoming conscious of some of these mostly unconscious processes, and this is why we need help disarming defenses because they're not always obvious, but whether you ask someone about it or not, the truth is just like what Anne was saying.

If you really get quiet and you really get honest, we know. I'm sure people could add to it, but we know when we're defended, when we're shut down, when we're making a move that is not a relational move when we power over. We often do have a sense of it. So it's okay, let's invite just honesty about even for you to take this moment of there is something in there that you already know that you need to do, that you could get better at relational security if you did fill in the blank.

So that already, if that works, if that little exercise works and we invite you to be, to hold onto that and to take it seriously and no beating yourself up, nothing like that. But like we're working to make the unconscious conscious, so become more aware of it, study it, learn about it, hold it lightly.

Yeah, we wanna actually move these things. We wanna actually promote more secure relating more of the time. I

Ann Kelley: like that you're focusing on the secure relating, because that's the goal. And for those of you that haven't been listening to the series, we wanna clarify that when we're saying defenses.

That doesn't mean you're being defensive, doesn't mean it's not the classic. Idea of quit being defensive. And when you said too that about secure relating, we're wanting to help you recognize when you're in the part of your nervous system that is open to connection and feeling secure in one self, which is not the same thing, by the way, is feeling confident.

Let's be super clear. But feeling secure in oneself to be able to relate to yourself and someone else. So you exist and they exist, but when we get activated by something that threatens us, things that threaten us are different. They're not the same based on our history and when we get activated. To be able to tell the telltale signs so there's activation in your body and that then you're moving to a place to protect yourself or to defend yourself.

A lot of times we know, but truth is sometimes we really don't. So that's one reason why I was really, we were really promoting what are some things that are more difficult about relating to me?

Sue Marriott: And when you ask, prepare to say thank you, not, I don't do that,

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Ann Kelley: that's what all listeners did that They were like, I'm so glad to hear this feedback.

Sue Marriott: Oh, I wasn't aware of that about myself. Thank you for sharing it, ,

Ann Kelley: and to recognize that the biggest thing that we've talked about in this series, and as we go through, we're gonna continue to integrate that. And that is, Being able to just recognize and ask yourself, Am I in my secure relating place or am I in my more primitive defensive place?

Just that question is one of the most powerful questions that you can ask. I think

Sue Marriott: totally love it. And in today's episode, we are going to continue to chip away at some of these things. This will be the wrap up episode. We've got many more things that we wanna do. So in today's episode, it's gonna be a little more rapid fire.

We're gonna move through a whole bunch of them. The reason is it's not just to give you a list. In order to be conscious of these things, we have to learn about that. We have to begin to create a scaffolding, like a structure. To be able to even identify it. So let's jump in, shall we?

Ann Kelley: One caveat up before we jump in.

My tendency as we rapid fire it, one of the things to think about in this is that this isn't a list of criticisms, although it may sound like it. This isn't just a list of bad. Personality quirks, which is really easy if you think about that. These are the things either you do or people that you love do because they're feeling activated in threat.

It is a place that our goal is to actually develop deeper compassion around it, less pointing at it, and more engagement. So if we are talking about things. Somebody struggles with passive aggressiveness. That's not the most positive quality to hear. But if you stop to think about it, and that's how we're gonna

approach these is thinking about it more as a self protection, not just an irritating behavior that has a reason, has a source, it is a protection for a reason, and we want to take the threat.

Down in your body so that you don't need that as much. You don't have to activate that. So by recognizing, Oh my God, I do that. I'm doing that thing that you, as you talked about, it must be that I'm feeling a little bit of threat rather than. I'm a jerk, and I think it's really important that we don't feel like we're just making a list of critical things and say, Stop doing that.

Stop doing that.

Sue Marriott: And that doesn't mean that we're not sometimes a jerk. Just a jerk. True. True enough. True enough. We're usually a jerk with a rhythm.

Reason. And yeah, that's a great point. A rhythm and also a reason. So a reminder self-compassion. The idea is to heal these things, not to just call you out on them.

For sure. We talked about organizing this in different ways. There's a bunch of therapists that listen and so we could really get into talking about transference and projection and stuff like that. And then also there's a whole bunch of other people that are listening that might not wanna get into some of that more clinical conversation.

So we're gonna try to hit the middle, and that's how the podcast rolls. We'll see how it goes. But the first kind of organization or framework, As we go through the detail, we'll touch on this, but there's a hierarchy of defenses from more primitive, unconscious, automated defenses that we really are not aware of.

Two more mature, somewhat more conscious thinking defenses that we. Have a little bit more control over and obviously our goal is to try to move our defensiveness up the nervous system where it goes from a little bit more of the primitive defenses to more of the sophisticated defenses that would be a win.

Ann Kelley: I like that. Let's get sophisticated in our defenses. ,

Sue Marriott: right? And it only comes with consciousness. So just very roughly, the very, very primitive ones are the ones that just literally shut out information so you're not actually struggling with the information. So things like avoidance, denial, the big ones Repression.

Repression means that we do not even conscious of it. It's not that we're thinking about it and we push it down, which is suppression, which is. Conscious repression, but that's a higher level. Suppression is a higher level defense than repression. And repression in things like child sexual abuse where you're not able to take in the information.

You cannot know what is actually happening that is repression.

Ann Kelley: So that aspect of that is, it's just too threatening. So you're unconscious self protects that information. By blocking it from your memory or your awareness at that time. But it doesn't mean it's not stored there. It is there, but your body has worked to repress it to such that you get around, don't have conscious awareness.

Where suppression, I think of suppression is where you feel it and you're consciously knocking it down Oh my God, I think I use suppression a lot in graduate school. I had a paper due and I would be there and I'm just gonna suppress that anxiety. And distract myself because I really didn't want to feel the shoulds or the woods.

And that's just maybe a, That's just a really everyday aspect of suppression, but we do it at a much deeper level as well.

Sue Marriott: And it's a good point that all of these things, we all do all those things. Caveat, , but you'll be able to just feel the difference though, like denial, flat denial.

Like it means it doesn't even get in. So when, for example, God, I only can think of a few experiences cuz when we're really in denial, we don't know it. It's like we're sleeping and it's only when you wake up, that's the most painful. Yeah. It's only when you wake up and look back that you're like, Oh my gosh, I couldn't see that.

So just going back to the sexual abuse example, sometimes let's say the non-offending parent can it's a little bit of repression too, of like just not know what's happening because it's too threatening. That would be another version of it. Or someone who's in full blown substance dependence and they think what you don't know doesn't hurt you.

Or like as far as other people knowing you're drinking or what have you. It's not just that they're really aware of the level of their disease and they're lying to

you. There really is a structure, like there really is a way that it is just blocked out and that's that very primitive being able to look at something and not see it.

Ann Kelley: That's such a good example of the chemical domain because it allows one to know that if you're in denial and you know that it's an unconscious thing. It really means that when somebody doesn't believe that they have an issue, that there's a sense of knowing and there's a sense of complete denial. And the denial is to protect the knowing.

To protect. What would I have to give up in that example? What would I have to lose if I really let it

Sue Marriott: in? You're not even asking that question though, right?

Ann Kelley: If I really brought into my awareness, there's so much threat to that I would have to lose with my addiction or my relationships. That is overwhelming.

So I'm gonna do a complete denial, and I really don't believe I have a problem, but there's an awareness under it, right? But I won't let myself feel it. It's not a conscious awareness. Later down the road, if somebody is able to break through that denial, they can go back into further memory.

Sue Marriott: They can piece together.

So another lighter exam it's not lighter all the time, but if someone's, let's say they're gay and they're flaming, beautiful, colorful, swishy gay, but they're in an environment that, that is very unsafe and it's like one of those things where that everybody in the world can know, Oh, honey Let's throw them a coming out party.

And, but because of the, whatever the reasons are, and again, some of these are cultural, some of these are biologic as far as levels of sensitivity and things like that. Some of this is related to religion. All of the stew that makes us up as individual human toddlers that we are. Come to play around what we're able to tolerate seeing in ourselves and take in and struggle with.

And when we just can't even see it, we can't even begin to reckon with it. So that just gives you a flavor for the part that is like when it's really just, if it's at the electrical switch off on. Not the dimmer switch in the house of the light. It's just like flipping it off and on. Those are those more primitive defenses that are obviously harder to get to just much more serious in nature.

One last one that I'll mention is splitting. So splitting, and we're gonna come back and talk a little bit more about projection and things like that cuz that's, it's a very interesting concept. But, so splitting is when. You'll see it sometimes okay, so for you therapists out there for a while, you're the idealized therapist, and everything you say is so brilliant and I can't believe, and you're up and then you say something wrong and you grow Devil horns, , and the other person is I'm done with you. I can't So that, that's an example of you're all good or you're all bad. And that can also happen internally where that I'm good and then I do something and then I'm all bad.

So anything that is like black hat white, That's on the more primitive level, it's, I don't wanna keep using that word cuz it has a little bit of judgment in it and I'm not meaning it as judgemental. I mean it more neurobiologically.

Ann Kelley: It's so unconscious is what you're meaning. It's so deeply unconscious.

That's what makes it primitive because it's something that we do without any awareness. That our body needs to do it. It feels like it needs to do it because something is too threatening to be able to incorporate. So what you're saying is we move to a black and white. I'm either good or I'm bad because to be able to incorporate the badness and still feel good.

Feels almost like an impossibility. So we flip from one to the other, right?

Sue Marriott: Another way, languaging it is we split off parts of ourselves that we can't tolerate and then we can't see. So that's a splitting. And just for the therapist out there many of, you'll be aware that there's, that, there's two kinds of splitting, right?

There's, if you think of it as like horizontal splitting and vertical splitting, and I always forget which one is horizontal and which one is vertical. Wait, I remember because horizontal is like a horizon. So let's start with vertical splitting is more of like compartmentalization, where there's a part of you that kind of knows this thing, but you're gonna block it out and split it off.

Like it's accessible, but it's blocked. Horizontal splitting is when that is, when a much more serious like dissociation, even if you're trying to look at it, you can't see it. Like it's really cut off. That would be like repression. Repression would be an example of that. Like something has been repressed I mean is not an example of splitting, but I guess it is.

So the horizontal. Splitting is where you can't even let yourself know. So that's just a fun little detail there. I wanna move through this so that we can get to more of the two big buckets. And then the higher level stuff is like intellectualization rationalization stuff where we're using our minds.

Like what you said earlier about your college example of suppression, healthier compartmentalization, using humor,

Ann Kelley: healthy denial. We also Healthy, healthy denial. That's exactly true. We need to have some level of healthy denial, even healthy. So some of these things that we're talk, we do all of them.

It's do we do them to such an extreme that it's impairing our ability to be relational with ourselves or other people?

Sue Marriott: And you've heard about some of these other like compensation, which I always think of the guy in the cigar boat, . Yeah.

Ann Kelley: Say more about that. That.

Sue Marriott: Somebody who is afraid of something, then over makes it look like that they are very powerful or what have you. You know what I mean by cigar boat, right? Yes. You know what I mean? I, Okay. The big, super fast, massive,

Ann Kelley: powerful cigar boat. Oh, said that earlier. I was literally thinking of cigars in a boat.

You're talking about the huge cigar boats on the lake. Those

Sue Marriott: like overly fast. And some people don't get me wrong, see,

Ann Kelley: people love those and it has a little image for them that it isn't like everyone that's owning a cigar boat is not a, Anna's gonna take care of us

Sue Marriott: all the way through as we talk about this,

Ann Kelley: All those, but what you is cigar, we love you.

Yeah, but the need, what you're saying is that if we cannot handle possibly that part of us that may feel insecure, we overcompensate. It's the Napoleon concept, right? We need to overcompensate in a way. I don't even know if it's

Sue Marriott: called a cigar. Boats tell you the truth. I just haven't

Ann Kelley: forgotten what meant when cigar, you were saying cigar boat.

It's wait. I was literally, I was being so concrete. I was being so literal. I was like thinking of the cigar , so I'm sure there

Sue Marriott: are very powerful. Human beings that drive cigar boats and that it's not compensation at all. But I will say it's a frequent, popular thing to wink nod. When you see the cigar boat, when you see the big fast over macho boat of Yeah. Yeah, I know. We like what you mean. Okay. So anything else about that? No, I think I about those, about the general hierarchy. These

Ann Kelley: are some general hierarchy and again, emphasizing coming from a really unconscious, very self protective place. Again, we're talking about defenses and protections and what your nervous system and what your memories can handle all the way up into the conscious things of what we know.

We use my, like my example of suppression, A lot of variability along the way, and then we could also talk about it as the types of things that make us feel. And how we utilize these things in response to that. So there's those of us that feel threat in our history because in order to feel safe in our environment, we have to shut.

People or emotions or information out. So it's like this self-protective shut kind of idea, and that is stemmed by a feeling of threat. If something gets too close, we don't always recognize that. And again, when we talk about secure relating, remember it doesn't mean that you feel insecure and in fact, Through those of us out there that have learned to kinda shut things out, we often don't let ourselves even feel like the need for the cigar boat, if you will, like you, we don't feel the need of, oh my God, right?

Or maybe later in life we start to recognize it and then we can divide that out with dynamics where people on the other end to keep safe ended up having to basically internalize. How do we wanna describe the other end of that kind of spectrum?

Sue Marriott: I do wanna say something about that, but also that this is gonna sound like it tracks with our spectrum of blue and red, of avoidant attachment and preoccupied attachment, and certainly it might, There's a

Ann Kelley: relationship.

Yeah. And so remember audience that we are really working to get away from categorization so you're not blue and you're not red, right? We go into blue states and red states and things like that. Roughly, we could imagine the two things that Anne's talking about, one being the feeling of being overwhelmed by the other.

Sue Marriott: Needing to block them out for safety. And then the other being, one way of talking about it is like an there's an in, there is another there and there is some access, but it's an insufficient other. Then that ends up being internalized is we can't, of course our little baby brains can't think, Oh, I'm this whole worthy person, but my mother is depressed and distracted.

Instead, we internalize it into our body of our worth and our. So we're getting carrot at half mass because that's exactly, that matches exactly who we are and what we deserve. So we internalize this deficient other, right? The deficiency becomes us. So then you'll see a cluster of defenses and symptoms around that, more internalized, deficient self.

And then you'll see a cluster around the. No, I'm fine, but I've gotta manage people. And this tracks with the adult attachment literature on avoidance. What's the other one? Approachability. Let me not get distracted. . Okay. But the shaver and hi his on the two continuums from the social science research and attachment, this tracks that certainly well too.

So how about we first start with the general bucket again, not labeling anybody, not categorization, but the general bucket. If you roughly had to keep people out and that you don't trust people and you've learned they're not gonna be there for you, zip up, take care of yourself, be independent. That there, the cluster of defenses that kind of rotates around that.

All the avoidance stuff, right? Have different types of strategies of avoidance. Just that in of itself is staying distracted, constantly busy. Forgetting the kind of things that says I can't take in all this information and so I'm too busy, I have too much going on. And keeping yourself distracted is one way of avoiding and keeping yourself by keeping other things out.

Ann Kelley: And what you're keeping out is a threat that comes with other things, right? If I'm too

Sue Marriott: busy but you're not feeling the threat. It's so confusing. Sorry, I forgot. I forgot exactly. I

forgot. That's a good one. And I don't know if about you, but as a therapist, I've certainly seen a ton of people, and I've probably done it as a client truthfully, but where that they fly into the seat and it's okay, it's almost as if I've gone to their door and knocked and interrupted them and it interrupted their day.

And I have to remember you called me you set the appointment you're paying good money for this time, but there it is almost like this feeling of I'm intruding right off the bat. Do you know what

Ann Kelley: Yeah, absolutely.

Sue Marriott: I know that. I'm sure I have done that.

But that's that flavor because we can get so used to just being on our own that we really do forget why we made the appointment and why we're walking into the therapist's office and we're a little put out because we have to do it and it interrupted our, something we were doing.

Like we forget, like I'm just going back to the words you used our need and we forget wait, I've hired you to help me with something. And that is a much, that's a harder feeling state to get to from this

Ann Kelley: cluster. And that's part of our reason for it being a defense. Because to slow down and go, Why am I here?

Why do I need you? I've hired you because I want you to help me with either my relationship or myself or And so for me to slow down and already be prepared for what I need from you when I come in the office could be, we could feel really threatening because then I'd have to acknowledge that I.

So if I come in too busy and a little distracted, I don't have to acknowledge and need, then I have to, then I can ask about you or, So all of that are very obviously very humanizing, right? We all do all of these things so hear that there's a way that we do it at different levels, but some of us do it a lot more than others or do different parts of this.

So if you find yourself like, I don't need therapy. I don't need to go in like I'm just doing this cuz somebody asked me my wife said, Need to come in eye roll, and then I'm too busy for it. Then I'm gonna give you the impression that I don't really need you and that you're putting me apt. Like this is a burden to me.

And so it's so important to recognize part of this whole concept is how do we disarm this? How do we disarm it in ourselves and how do we disarm it when we recognize it, right? If we don't recognize that we're using distraction and forgetting, Oh, I forgot the appointment. I keep forgetting the appointment, and we're not recognizing that, that's a pattern for us.

There's no way to disarm it. So if you stop to think about it when you go in, do you are, can you go into your therapists office or can you sit down with your partner and actually literally be present, be aware what's going on, ask for help, not doing the forgetting. What happens when you think about doing that?

For

Sue Marriott: those of you that kind of are feeling touched by this part or identifying with that part, there are things like think about the therapy session before you go in. Like just make your, or think about it between sessions. Think about your close, others, your favorite people, let them occupy some of your internal cognitive space.

If there was a pie chart, if their piece of the pie of the way that you think about them, the way you hold them in mind if it's smaller. Like maybe theirs is too big and they're oriented all around you. We're gonna get to that in just a minute. But for those of you that are identifying with the avoidance, with the distraction, and again, our whole civilization is set up to distract us from psychological states.

Like we have a menu and we are assaulted almost with these ways to distract ourselves from going inside. So anything in that area, your move to disarm is going to be to get. Curious to get more aware, to leave more space. To not know, To not be so certain. To soften.

Ann Kelley: Define curiosity. Exactly,

Sue Marriott: Exactly. And curiosity about psychological state.

Curiosity about your close people's inner life. Curiosity about your inner life. Curiosity about your

Ann Kelley: history. So in this example, if we could take one of the defenses and really play it out, let's say forget, forgetting is an interesting defense, right? Because we all do it. My memory is not what it used to be.

So we all forget, right? So we can just stop there. Just say, I'm so sorry, I forgot. So that's a way of us engaging in a defense without self-awareness. And I don't mean every single time you forget you need to do this, but if you tend to be forgetting important things or forgetting what your partner talked about, or there's a lot of forgetting happening, if you don't slow down and think about the use of that forgetting, because instead we use it as an end goal.

Sorry, I forgot. Rather than being curious. Why is it that I can't seem to remember the really important things that somebody asked of me at the grocery store? There's a good chance that you're allowing distraction and distractability to be part of the whole process, like you're not actually present and part of the defense where we get back to the avoidance to be present might be more threatening than you think.

We stay distracted and we forget because to be present and really take you in is super overwhelming. So instead I stay distracted and then I live in the excuse that I forgot, and then nobody can get mad at me if I forgot. If I forget your birthday or forget to do something, nobody can be mad at me. But you have to like really approach your own defense system of distraction and not actually being present to begin.

Sue Marriott: So another example in that same vein is humor, which is the same thing as good, I'm just joking, but a big one. And then I said that we would go back to is projection, and this is an important one to understand because every single human does this. As a matter of fact, we start out. Doing it like a baby believes that they think they cry and they get fed.

There's an early state where there's not even two people. There's just one person, and somehow the needs are being met. It's a developmental stage to like orient into, You have two others, two selves together. So projection is natural, it's normal, it's fine. But can you think of some examples of projection because it's such a fundamental part of what goes on all the time.

Ann Kelley: And projecting what I'm feeling. Yeah. I can personally relate how I use projection. Oh, good. That's ju Yeah. Yeah. I think I might even mentioned in a, one of our earlier episodes on this, but the projection of people having a need that they don't have. From our conversations, I think, and please

don't let me speak for you, even though of course I will, but I was thinking that where you were going was.

Sue Marriott: That you're projecting into the other person that if you don't do this thing for them, they're gonna feel the way you felt when you were young and you weren't getting

Ann Kelley: your needs met. No that's the example. I was trying to find the sort of the concrete example of when I do that, but that's the underlying source.

The underlying source is I'm gonna project into people that maybe they're feeling left out or maybe but they're, I'm gonna project into them some experience of difficulty and it's the feeling. I likely had. And so instead of letting them have and being differentiated, I will project into them and then fall into the caring role of trying to help when I haven't even been asked for that help.

So that's a projection. I

Sue Marriott: love you sharing that. Yes. I think that's really great and that's, I don't know if you all can feel it, but there's just such a vulnerability in really recognizing and projection and then pulling it back inside of ourselves and not projecting. The reason we're projecting is we're projecting something painful.

Ann Kelley: So one of the ways to get, like when we're, again, returning to the disarming idea, one of the things that I struggle with and that what I have to do in order to disarm that is to name my own need for it. If I'm imagining that somebody. Is having a need for something, I might jump and do something for somebody because I believe they're that they aren't for right and they're not asking for that.

And instead saying, I'm having a need to go get that blanket for you cuz you look cold like I'm having this knee, rather than I'm gonna jump up and get the blanket. Cuz I imagine you're cold and I know exactly where the blanket is, right? Like instead, I'm gonna have to acknowledge that I want to go do that because I'm gonna feel more comfortable.

So a lot of disarming of this process, as we're talking about, is moving it from the more primitive. If I don't even let myself know that I have that need and that tendency to project, then I just think everybody's really ungrateful if they don't receive my care. And what it leads to is control. . And so part of the disarming that is, I have to be aware, I have to bring my unconscious into my conscious

awareness that what I experienced and what I might have wanted more of and what I felt when that happened is really in my journey and ha in me being able to not split that off.

And all of a sudden I'm. Care taking other people, which is an example that we were speaking of without being aware of my own, that's me acting outta my defense, and I could easily be left of feeling like, Oh, I do stuff where People don't see it. There's all sorts of things that we can go in the next step of that.

The disarming of that is to be aware of why do I have that need to see the need in the room and take care of it.

Sue Marriott: Yeah. I call that like crossing the gap, like to fill in a space and I'm glad that you're saying this and just, it's just such a sweet but also vulnerable example cause it's just really does go to this very early place.

But that it also, that there's an identity that's a built around this. So even if we just explored a little bit more, like you can see someone that you perceive to be uncomfortable. Let's even add stress that you're very comfortable and you're whatever, eating the big ice cream cone that they don't have and they're looking at you Oh yeah, that would drive me crazy and Right, I'm already getting up and getting my bowl.

is right and you're gonna split it. So if we just go into that example a little bit, that like your capacity to. Having your own resource and to hold the resource and to keep taking it in and keep enjoying it. The other person we don't know if maybe they are envious. Maybe they're really wanna bite of your ice cream.

Maybe they're lactose intolerance, We don't know. But I think the point here though is that. Bearing the feeling because if you didn't know, then it would be easy to say Would you like some, or it would be easy to wait or it would be easy to wait for them to ask. That's another version of disarming.

Ann Kelley: If I'm going go from an unconscious place, is what you're talking about then, and that's what I would do is I'm already imagining the need, the desire, and that they can't get their own ice cream. There's somehow I'm more functional, and competent about this ice cream. So if I have this ice cream and I see they don't, it's a great example because on one level, again, I love to point this out cuz on one level it can seem like, Oh, so caring and loving, right?

So I'm jumping up and I'm getting, I'm already getting the bowl and sharing my ice. Now stop to think about it. Since I haven't asked. I haven't checked in. I've

acted. I've acted and what I'm acting on in this defense, I'm acting on what's going on inside of me without awareness and I'm going to get, and now I feel better because this person's not suffering.

right? Don't have ice cream's a silly example, but it's not cuz I can see doing it. And so now I'm not dealing with what I would project, and honestly, in this example, I would be projecting the experience when I was younger. Seen some people that I love really struggle and suffer where I couldn't help.

That was really hard. Now, all I wanted to do is get 'em and get a ball, right? Man, all of that is solved, but, and it

Sue Marriott: seems like nothing, so it seems like nothing. It seems

Ann Kelley: like nothing, but let's think about that Now, like you said, it could be lactose and tolerant, or it could also be, Now I've put them in a position that they have a half a ball of ice cream they didn't ask for, and how rude are they to say no, thank you.

Now all of a sudden I've imposed my need on them and I feel better. Like I'm all fit, I'm all better, right? But I've imposed my need on them. And so if we take about the disarming, the defense defenses don't always look horrible. They can look overly nice. They can look overly caring. Oh yeah, we're gonna talk about that in the

Sue Marriott: other bucket.

Ann Kelley: Yes. We're already like So it can be overly caring and it can be in this bucket too, actually. So for in this instance, my bucket would be more. The bucket we're about to talk about. But if we stay in the avoidance bucket, let me make this example. Okay, so if I'm in the avoidance bucket, I'm gonna go split my ice cream cuz I don't wanna deal with that person's complaint.

Exactly. It's, I love it Here, have the damn ice cream. I don't even want ice cream. My God, if I don't do that, they're gonna feel put out. They're gonna feel, Oh my God, of course. And I'm soon you can't get your own ice cream. I'm so competent. Let me get you the ice cream. Or, so I wanted to keep you from having the complaint.

So in my example, I'm keeping myself from feeling that projected need in the avoidance. I might be more likely to be avoiding me feeling. Do you see what I'm saying? Like it's a different type

Sue Marriott: of avoidance, right? Put upon, right? That's, It's still a

Ann Kelley: projection. It's still a project. Now I'm having to deal with your emotions of you're gonna be disappointed.

You're gonna think I'm selfish cuz I didn't give you the thing like I, in my bucket, I'm not thinking, you think I'm selfish in the avoidance bucket. If I don't give it to you, you're gonna have a complaint and you're gonna think I'm selfish and I'm just gonna avoid that altogether. Cuz if you have a complaint, I don't wanna deal with that.

So there's a way of keeping people out by giving them the ice cream or bringing them two in. See, I'm bringing them two in through my ice cream thing. But the avoidance is, I'm gonna keep you out. You can't complain. Does that make sense?

Sue Marriott: Yeah, that's what I was just gonna say, like slightly higher level.

So what we're talking about again is projection and care taking. What we're saying is look deeply at the motivation. At the intent. And so just like Anne said, we can care take in order to get rid of. Here, have a Kleenex, and clean that up. That's not really caring. It's like move away. Or if somebody wants a donation you write a small check and go move on.

Ann Kelley: Or let me be compliant even if you don't think they're gonna hear complaint, so that I feel so better than you, or so much better. I'm gonna be, I'm gonna be the giver because damn I need to be the giver because it fits with my identity. Do always be the giver

Sue Marriott: that gets us into the second part of this bucket of.

It's not the avoidance bucket, but It's like when you need to block people out, when you need to block people out. So avoidance and all the stuff that we've talked about and then there is on that side of things tends to be a power that another thing, another move, another defense is related to power.

And that's what you just began to talk about was going one up being the know it all, be intellectualization, rationalization, the mansplaining, Like all of those things fall in this. It's a defense. What it does is it serves to keep people out like it, it preserves your sense of self identity. I'm not saying that's the conscious intent, but the actual intent is then people are like okay then like they don't come towards you.

It does. It's not a connecting move. They

Ann Kelley: might come towards you out of need. They don't come towards you out of intimacy. If I'm always the giver, it's a one down place. And if we think about it, it's also, let's talk about the feelings that you're avoiding inside you. If you tend to have fall on that end, that the threat is to keep people out, that is to be in touch with your own needs.

And to need other people is to feel somehow lesser than or weak. And that's intolerable. So if I'm always in the position of the provider, I'm always in the position I'm gonna give you my ice cream cuz I'm more competent to getting ice cream. So I wanted to use the ice cream as an example. It's a great one because it can, me giving the ice cream could have different types of threats and defense.

So what we're talking about is not the behavior, it's about the threat. So if the threat is people come too close, I'm not going to be vulnerable because nobody be there for me. I gotta take care of myself. I might then over identify with, but I am so damn confident I can take care of the world. I don't have any needs.

The world does think what that defense says. I don't have any needs. I'm totally competent and capable. It's the world that I need to help. You're avoiding your own sense of vulnerability. Inside yourself. So slowing down and that defense and going, Why is it that I'm giving the ice cream? I've gotta ask cuz it's a different story for me.

But if you tend to be the more one up position you might be giving the ice cream because the satisfaction of always being the one up. Avoid your feeling of what is it like to be equal level. Content with somebody and really mutual. And if that feels threatening, if you can't take receive just as much as give, then you're probably struggling with this defense.

Sue Marriott: And so I'm imagining all these listeners that, like right now, they're like clipping that part and then they're gonna forward it to somebody that they know

So that's really good. So let's move to the other bucket if you're okay with that. Absolutely. So this issue of compliance. Complying. We touched on that a little bit with the ice cream, but now let's move it on the other side. So what we, just as a reminder, the other side is the experience when you're young of an insufficient other.

It's not that nobody's there and you can't trust anybody. There's somebody there, but you just, you can't rely on them. You know that secure place is you're okay on your own and you're okay close with people. This would look more I don't quite feel adequate, so I need to grab on. And even when somebody's there, I don't quite let it in because I'm pretty sure they're gonna about to leave or something bad's gonna happen, or the other shoe's gonna Dr.

Something like that will happen. So that's an example of. Internalizing that I'm insufficient, people are gonna abandon me. Like you can feel the different of the, If it was a keyboard, it's a different note than the other side of self. And keeping people out, it's deficient self and longing to get people closer.

Ann Kelley: That's a great way to say it. And it's longing that's very hard to feel satiated as you keep working in this way of keeping people close. So I think if we try to divide it in two buckets, We clearly talked about the point of keeping people at a distance, but this part of, I need people. If I don't have people right there, then I feel alone abandoned or judged.

So I'm very activated in these activities of how so that ice cream giving, or if you're the one at home, like if your kid has a need, you have to meet it right then. Maybe part of what that is that you can't tolerate the distance. That you might have to tolerate by a child feeling unsatisfied. If a child feels unsatisfied, that would be so painful to you and you, unconscious defense may be that they'll judge you or reject you or not be able to handle that.

So there's a way of overcompensating in that way as well And related to again, like an internal state of insufficiency. And the kicker here is on both sides. When these patterns get set up, then they get reinforced. So on this side of things, we would be likely to self sabotage. So we think that we're just trying to get closeness and so we're scanning for signs of approval and for, honestly, for signs of disapproval that then will really get our attention because we're Oh,

signs of disapproval,

Sue Marriott: right?

Yeah. We're primed for abandonment, which is self sabotaging cuz we end up. It's like the soap, If you squeeze it too hard, it slides right out of your hand. You know what I mean? It's not a holding of the other. It is there's too much intensity and pressure on that desire to be. In proximity and close and almost like a merged feeling state.

And so then the care, Let's talk about care taking on that side. So I think that's more what you were describing around that, the disavow of your authority. So this is a just a different example. It's oh, you must know it's the seating. Remember we talked about that in another episode? It's the tendency to see the self and to go one down that we've talked about that as well.

Because that is an effort to maintain closeness in a diet or in a relationship. And again, it's familiar, It's, this is what we do is like the other person knows more, their needs are more important. You're gonna hand it over. And that's where we get also like the whole super niceness, the compulsive kind of sickly sweet like over, over niceness, which again is related to disavowing your own authority and being able.

Trust people to let yourself be, eh, not that excited or maybe even disappointed or this is the last of the ice cream, I've been saving it. No, you can't have it. That requires the sense of self and trust in the other person that like, they'll be like, Oh dang man. They'll be fine.

Ann Kelley: That's a great point. Yeah. You have to trust that they're gonna be fine, right? Yeah. Like you have to trust or you

Sue Marriott: have to trust. Trust other people and then they're gonna stay holding onto. .

Ann Kelley: And yet that's I think, important to remember that this is not an intellectual process. We're not trying to talk you into, Oh, just quit doing that.

This part about disarming these defenses is to bring them more into your awareness, and then the next important step is also to be able to have the feelings that go with it. Like you can't skip over that. So if you're seating. If we think about what the threat is,

Sue Marriott: can you say what seeding means?

Because when we did this last time, we never quite said it. What? What do you mean by seed? Yeah, that's

Ann Kelley: right. There's probably a hundred definitions of,

Sue Marriott: I keep thinking of like a plant seed, so not so giving seeding with a sea. Yes So

Ann Kelley: it's like instead of holding self where you have to experience the distance between you and somebody else, that tension of that distance is activated.

For you in this side of it. And so rather than deal with that tension, that could mean. I'm gonna be judged. Left or abandoned. Seating is a way of giving over of self, right? Like I'm gonna seed a point. So it's a way of giving up self. So if I'm happy cuz you're happy. As long as you're happy, I'm happy.

That's an example of seating. It's certainly one I can relate to. If you're happy, I'm happy. So it isn't what makes me happy. If you're happy, I'm happy. And so if, and so then I'm gonna be really pissed at you if you're not happy. Because I need you to happy. Oh, amen to

Sue Marriott: that

Ann Kelley: So don't you love it when I use a real example, And Sue loves that. She's Amen. Amen. . So if you're happy, I'm happy. So think about that dynamic. That is a seating, that's a seating of my own needs. Into somebody else's. So I'm either gonna be agreeable or if you think about not being able to say no to your child, maybe you've said no, but you have to tell them why you're saying no.

Because you need them to agree with you. Yeah.

Sue Marriott: Really into it and negotiate. Let me talk you

Ann Kelley: into why said you agree with me. Cause if I say no, when you have a negative feeling and I don't try to talk you into not having that negative feeling by agreeing with me, then I have to give myself up. So all of those.

Are really important examples of seating itself. The last time when we talked about seating is when we were talking about the power over dynamic and we were saying, so those individuals that have to stay on the power up because it's too scary to feel the vulnerability. In this case, we said we'd come back to the seating.

There are those of us that like will stay more in a position this way of seating. In order to avoid our own empowerment, like nobody's gonna leave if they're always happy. So if I, if somebody can blend in and make you happy, then nobody's gonna leave or nobody's gonna judge you. So the tension that you have to experience inside your own body for this disarming of this defense is

the differentiation of, as I differentiate, and maybe you're happy, I'm gonna eat the whole damn ice cream because it's the last one.

And I'm sorry. You're gonna have to have feelings about it. And I'm gonna give you puppy dog guys and everything. My god, my daughter's so good at this puppy. Dog. Dog, guys, right? It worked used to. Anyway But by saying, No, I really want, this is a really important point. I have to accept my own inner desires and my own greed and all of these things that may have been disavowed as a child.

Is that part of us that are, that wasn't allowed. We're always, when we talk about this side, we often talk about that the parent that is inconsistent maybe because of depression or all these other things. But I also wanna identify sometimes if you have parents or caregivers out there who felt too threatened by you having a separate self, like you either need to mirror me. That's right. You need to mirror me because if you separate from me and you don't mirror me, and I'm not. Greatest thing next to slice bread that I might get angry or I might withdraw. Whether it's a narc parent that suffers with narcissism, lots of different things that can also create this experience.

It's not just one thing in our history that can create it. So if you've had to reflect to people in your life that they're okay and so therefore you can't separate without feeling that they're gonna get angry or rejecting or withdraw, like you need to follow them, then you don't get to build this part of you.

That says, Are you kidding? I can't stand that. So that's another reason that we will seed, because if we don't seed, we may actually literally have gotten rejected and pushed away or rageful anger. So there's a good reason we learned to seed some

Sue Marriott: other concepts that we've also talked about in the series.

This goes back to disarming aggression. I'm sorry, disarming aggression. That's so funny. Disarming defenses. But I was gonna say about aggression. Aggression is gonna be a key, and getting aggression right inside of you is a key on both sides. So again, there's a whole episode on this, but this healthy aggression, you eating the ice cream, you have to be a little aggressive. You have to be comfortable with your aggression and say, no. You have to be comfortable with telling the child no and having them upset and feeling, I love how you're talking about this tension, that there's the other person. Then there's a gap, and then there's you or me.

And being able to hold that tension that we are two different people. We can experience things differently. That's where healthy aggression comes in. And we have another series called Holding Your Own, and that's about dealing with difficult personalities. So if you even hear in the language, holding your own requires a little muscle, it requires healthy aggression to find this middle space of both connection with yourself and connection with the person across.

So just, you had mentioned passive aggressive earlier, so when we do funky things with aggression, like we can use. To shut people down and we can also disown it again compartmentalize it, disown it, and then everybody else looks giant and big aggressive. So getting our relationship with aggression right, is a really excellent one of the tools to get out of either that space that you're talking about in where that it's too hard to have the space in between people.

It's like healthy aggression, which includes I trust the other person to be okay with their feelings. I don't have to jump over and take care of it, and I'm not gonna project that you're gonna feel like I did when I was a kid, that kind of thing. So I like the idea of putting aggression here at the end around healthy aggression so that you can hold yourself and you can hold your own and healthy aggression in the sense of stopping yourself from shutting people down.

Like it's like setting your own boundaries internally of no. Jane, you said that you were gonna do this with your wife, so you need to stop what you're doing right now. Close the computer, like that's holding your own too, of No, you said you were this is important to her. You agreed to it, and then you're gonna hold her more in your mind like, this is gonna hurt her if I don't do this.

I don't know if aggression exactly is the right word on that. I think it is. Towards yourself, like setting boundaries with yourself. You don't get to just be comfortable, pleasure alone all the time when you're in a close relationship that we wanna be able to fluidly move back and forth.

Ann Kelley: That's really well said.

I really like that. And to tap onto that, the love, the idea of aggression, both with other and self holding yourself in an aggressive way to say, Whoa, wait a minute. Why am I feeling like I have to be the knowing one here? Why do I feel like that's an aggressive way of holding yourself? And to wrap it back in.

to we've talked about the ideas of the protective system, right? Sooner, often, like the focus of, are you in your protective system, Are you in your connective system? And there are two systems they're different ways of accessing your

body. So we've been talking in this whole series about our activating our defense system.

So as we end this session in the series, let's end it also with. To get into your connective system, that the real goal, the reason we're talking about this is to be aware of these strategies. Hold yourself with aggression, both to stand up for yourself and not seed or to challenge yourself. And the next question is am I in my protective self?

Or am I in my connective self? I think that is how I'd really think we could end the series in a really caring way and to challenge ourselves if we are in, even if we're if we're in conflict or we are struggling with our own defenses, or maybe we're struggling with our partners or our children's defenses, right?

We're starting to have more compassion. We recognize it and instead of going, Look, I see you're doing that. Not the goal to go, Okay, wait. How am I gonna get myself? To calm my defensive system down and get more in a secure relating self.

Sue Marriott: Yeah, no, I love ending with this and I really love that you wrapped it around to this because, so we can Yeah, You're gonna get good at identifying when people's in doing their stuff.

But part of why we're wanting to help you recognize it is so that you can call on your higher self, your prefrontal cortex, your hippocampus, if you're familiar at all with whole brain living your character for this connected psychic relational place that some people call it like a, like it's sacred or it's, like this feeling of connectedness. That's where I love ending with this. And when we can hold on and keep our mindfulness and our connectedness while we're seeing these things in other people, then that's gonna help regulate them. And we don't have to jump in, like you said earlier, about acting out.

We don't have to act on it because what we can know is like oxygen mask on us first. If we can stay in this connected place, everybody's gonna do better. And even if they don't, you're gonna do better. So it's

Ann Kelley: so true. And one of the ways to ask yourself on either end, if we can wrap on that. If you are the, maybe the individual that is, that has the per self-protection is about fearing the abandonment and the rejection and the relationships are so important.

So the reminder if you are activated is, Hey, wait, I am okay. If there is a space, if there's conflict or if there's distance, if. And to take yourself out of the panic about it, depending on how much, or just a reminder like I am, like to remind yourself. And if you tend to fall on the end where your goal is to keep people out, your tendency may be, you might really quickly to shut out.

And remember, we've talked a lot about how that feels really good to be able to cut people off to say, Wait, it's my job to warm my own system. It is not because we often get stuck with you've made me feel this way, so quit doing that so I can come to you. No, it's your job to go, Okay, I am in that real blocked place.

What do I need to do to warm my system up and like you said, find the four. How do I warm my system up so that I can come back in a relational way and it still may be in conflict. But instead of rehearsing all of what is happening and rehearsing it over and over about the unfairness or the injustice or whatever, to go, Okay, how do I move my body to a more secure way of relating and hold ourselves accountable on either end?

Sue Marriott: And that is the golden ticket right there. And I love how you just summarize that for both sides. So we challenge you around this. We really want you to use this. Highlight if this was in writing highlight, like really study it. We thank you so much for staying with us while we kind of work through and explore this with each other.

And if you're still with us and you're still listening, we hope you've gotten value and so we also ask you to help us out. There's a couple of things you can do that costs nothing. One of which is to just go to your podcast player and give us a rating and review. That's actually really helpful to the show.

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Ann Kelley: I wanted to also say you could rate in reviews and if you have something that you want us to hear personally, a suggestion or something like that, you can also just go on Speak Pipe and say, Hey, I have this suggestion.

And you speak pipe as well to give us suggestions. It doesn't like rate and review really helps us. Please do this and if you have some ideas that you want, To give more directly, don't think, speech pipe or just speech pipe.

Sue Marriott: Or Ann at Therapist Uncensored or Sue therapist, you have direct access to us.

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Ann Kelley: All right.

Thanks for joining us and we'll see you around the bin.

Therapist on Uncensored is Anne Kelly and Sue Marriott. This podcast is head to date by Jack Anderson.