

The Origin of Reactive Adaptive Behaviors in Relationships

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Trauma or deeply upsetting experience occurs in childhood or later.

Example: A young boy is molested by a babysitter.

giving rise to...

Erroneous belief that one is responsible for what happened,
or at least can prevent it from happening by eliminating
a behavior -- "x" -- thought to have caused the trauma -- "y."

Example: "Maybe I was being too weak, and she knew she could do what she
wanted."

giving rise to...

Formula: If I don't do "x" again then "y" won't happen again,
and I'll be safe from harm.

Example: "If I'm not weak with females, they can't hurt me."

or

If I do the opposite of "x", then "y" won't happen,
and I'll be safe from harm.

Example: "If I keep my guard up -- if I'm a tough guy -- they can't hurt me."

giving rise to...

A particular chronic reactive or defensive behavior that expresses itself in relationship
with others. This behavior may seem to have worked for the person,
but is excessive, and motivated out of fear.

Example: "Sure enough, no one has hurt me like she did! I have to keep it up!"

This repetitious behavior results in a person's unwillingness to take risks to become
vulnerable or more available in relationships.

Summary: A reactive adaptive behavior is designed to prevent something *that has already happened* from happening again.