



Emotional Adulthood

Understanding your relationships and leaving old stories behind

Objectives

- ▲ Explore the origins of your beliefs and ideas about authority figures
- ▲ Explain the purpose of your unintentional thoughts (likely to keep you safe around authority figures)
- ▲ Acknowledge any pitfalls of internal discord, martyrdom, or victimhood
- ▲ Move towards a new relationship with authority figures (emotional adulthood) and take responsibility for your part in your narrative

The Way Out: Moving from Pleasing to Choosing

Authority figures may have power in the system, but they do not control your worth, safety, or identity.

You do.

The path to emotional adulthood is about reclaiming agency and authenticity.

Let's start by understanding your automatic narratives a little better:

How did you respond to immediate authority figures, such as parents or teachers or public authority figures?



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Were you taught or modeled that there was a moral obligation to follow authority figures without push back? If so, how?

When you were young, did you feel safe around your core authority figures?

Has your family, cultural group, or tribe been punished by authority? How has this shaped the narrative with authority?

Is there a real risk something like what happened to you or your family could happen again? **It is important not to gaslight yourself and the risks you may face- get specific**



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Now let's look at your current thoughts:

Are there authority figures you want to like you? Why? What does it mean about you if they like you?

Are there authority figures who you think do not like you? How do you act around them?

Let's try this in one of your models.

Remember, emotional adulthood doesn't mean *rebellion* or *disrespect*.

Think of an authority figure in your life that you have a tricky relationship with or even just have had an uncomfortable feeling about at some point. Red flags for this example are anyone you find you are "not yourself" around (ex: you might tell "little lies" or respond instantly with urgency or are never able to say no, or brain "goes offline", or your chest gets tight).

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Reflecting on that model, how are your behaviors keeping you safe? In other words, why does it make sense that you act the way you do around them?

Do you like your results?

Before you get mad or ashamed about your current situation, remember, *we all want to be liked and accepted*. We are social creatures who seek safety in our relationships. It makes sense why you have acted the way that you have until now. You just didn't realize that you gave up yourself to please them.

If you are not ready to change right now, **that is perfectly ok**. You are starting with honesty and awareness about *why* you are behaving how you behave. Potentially changing this relationship may stir up fears and reminders of past experiences and concerns about their perceived authority in your life.

If you *are* ready, try this:

Step 1: Pause & Check Alignment.

Before responding to a request, ask yourself:

Am I physically and emotionally safe here?

Does this align with who I want to be?

Am I choosing this out of fear, or from my values?



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Step 2: Shift from Pleasing → Choosing.

Notice when you act to keep someone happy vs. when you act from authenticity.

What do I fear might happen if I stop trying to please?

Step 3: Redefine Safety:

True safety comes from self-trust, not controlling others' opinions.

How do I know I can keep myself safe, even if an authority figure is disappointed?

Step 4: Own Your Narrative.

Your story about authority matters *more* than their story about you.

What story do I want to tell myself about this relationship?