

HUNG UP ON THE “IT”

By Christine Kniffen, LCSW

Have you ever found yourself hung up on the “it”? The “it” refers to that imagined sense of peace and happiness we would feel if we had the relationship of our dreams. It is the beautiful life that we imagine creating and sharing with another in a supportive, exciting and comforting relationship. Have you ever found yourself stuck on someone that can’t really give you what you need, but you seem to have quite a lot of difficulty letting go? If so, then you are probably hung up on the “it” more than the actual object of your affection. The only problem is that if you stay stuck in that place too long, then you are depriving yourself of the opportunity to finally experience many of those things that you long to share with someone. This is something that many people have experienced, at some point in their lives, to varying degrees and for varying lengths of time. There are three prominent reasons this may be happening. It is a *safe* place to be, it presents a great distracter from your life and it may be a pattern that you simply don’t know how to stop.

Have you ever met anyone who has been seemingly “hung up” on somebody else for an extended period of time, despite there being no real chance of having the type of relationship they ultimately desire? Have you ever wondered, “Why are they wasting their time?” Well, they are probably hiding out in a “*safe*” place. After all, if you remain in this place then you never really have to go out there and risk having a real relationship that requires doing all of the scary intimacy work associated with it. Staying stuck in this place is simply postponing your chances of experiencing your version of the “it” with someone who is truly capable of giving it to you.

Staying emotionally “hung up” on another also serves as a *great distracter* from facing and living your own life. If your mind is continuously consumed with fantasies and you are endlessly pining away for another, then you really don’t have the focus on yourself. Perhaps you are unhappy with what you have or have not achieved in your life to date and don’t know how to move forward. Or, perhaps you have just gone through a particularly rough period and simply need the escape. If you were really focusing on *your* life then you would have to face the reality that the person you have been “hung up” on simply will not be the one giving you what you want. Endlessly ruminating and trying to answer the “why” questions does not change the fact that it is not working for you.

A *final* reason for staying stuck may relate to simply not knowing how to break this cycle. It is often human nature for people to think they need answers to something before they can change it. Perhaps you identify with one of the above reasons for staying “hung up” on another or perhaps you don’t. However, do you really need this to be answered in order to change it? I say no. Face reality head on and make an honest assessment of the situation. Are you having the great head and heart battle? Do you know in your mind that things won’t work, but the pull of your heart seems to keep you stuck? If so then confront things head on. Shake things up a bit and snap yourself out of it. Perhaps you need to make some changes in the level of frequency or duration of time spent with this

person, or perhaps you need to have no contact at all. Work to immediately put the focus back on yourself. What short-term and long-term goals have you been putting off lately? Come up with something tangible that you can start today to better *your* life.

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