

Speaker 0:07

Welcome to another episode of the relationship school Podcast. I'm Jason Gaddis. And I'm Ellen Boeder. Married couple. What's up?

Speaker 0:19

Alright. We are. I am. Speak for myself. Glad to be here. Yeah. I'm glad to be here with you. Yeah, I want to quickly thank you all listeners for leaving us reviews. Got to get one short one from B_Dub13 that says this podcast has been incredibly helpful for me and my family. That's excellent. Thanks for leaving a review if you've gotten value here in slot. Thanks for the book reviews too, folks. Love it. All right. In this episode, we want to talk about dependency.

Speaker 0:56

It's kind of like a four letter word.

Speaker 0:58

It kind of is. Yeah. It's like this word. People want to look up. Yeah. Because immediately it conjures up what codependence is -

Speaker 1:06

that's that's definitely been kind of demonized. And can be kind of bad if you're in that.

Speaker 1:16

Yeah. Yeah, so dependency, I think Ellen it would be helpful if we talk about just dependency and families, parents/child first. And then we can walk our way into adult relationships and dependency because go to what we're asserting here, that what we'll get to is that we depend on each other, I depend on you.

Speaker 1:38

Yes, in our partnership, and I depend on you for a lot of shit.

Speaker 1:43

And that's really not a problem. But if you have issues with dependent people, depending on you, or you depending on others, because you're so damn independent, and self-reliant, and "that's how we should be all the time". Yeah, you're gonna probably have challenges in your adult relationships, particularly an intimate, intimate partnership. So let's talk about just parents and kids first, just how incredibly dependent kids are.

Speaker 2:08

Yeah. Yeah, I mean, I think that's pretty. If we walk back to like, the human development journey, to the beginning, a brand new baby, obviously can do virtually nothing for itself or their self. And they're completely reliant on their caregivers for everything, everything. And gradually, over time, over many, many years, they're able to start, become becoming capable and having the capacity to care for themselves, in a lot of ways.

Speaker 2:44

Totally. And there. That's the whole point is you're raising a child as a parent to become more and more independent, because they're so incredibly dependent. Yeah. So it takes 18 years to develop a independent human.

Speaker 3:02

You could Yeah, yeah, this day and age, I think it's longer, it's like 30 keeps getting longer. Adolescence keeps getting longer. But yeah, and I think that when we think of needs, a lot of us think of like, okay, for babies, like feeding them, keeping them warm, and dry and comfortable, and you know, those basic needs for just survival. And another survival need we have is to attach, to connect to be to bond to bond, it's a survival need, that biological survival need. And we, in this day and age, definitely struggle with that. I think as as a society, we struggle with that kind of dependency, that there's a person depending on our, our relationship, a baby, even on our care, our warmth, our attentiveness, our empathy. Our care and interests are depending on us to provide that for them so that they can grow and develop psychologically, as well.

Speaker 4:14

And it's kind of - any parent knows it's relentless meeting those needs. Yes. And having someone depend on you 24/7 for everything from there. And yeah, if you didn't want to be a parent, you became one or you weren't ready, or you're kind of unworked and haven't, you know, done a lot of self reflection, you might have had the experience of being incredibly triggered by how much a child needs from you and how demanding it is. I mean, any single mother knows how so intense it is to just be so needed, right? So I just want to validate, like there's still are some lots that yeah, it would make sense that there's reactivity. Someone like a child, depending so much on you day in and day out for years.

Speaker 5:08

Yeah, I mean, we get exhausted with that in moments. And we have a lot of support, and have done a lot of work and have a lot of training and all of that. And it's still, at my limit of today, I can't help please, someone help me. And so, it's, that's really normal, especially because most of us are now parenting in a lot of isolation, you know, in our nuclear family situation. That's like the best case scenario right now. And it's not great, it's not great to have all those needs on one or two adults all the time. We don't, we don't have our village. There's lots of things we could talk about here. But basically, children are very dependent for all of their psychological, physical, emotional, relational, spiritual needs, for a long time.

Speaker 6:01

for a long time. A lot to show up for we could I want to come back to child development in a minute, but just to say to like it, and then you become an adult, and you can find an intimate partner, and it can get kind of like, wait, you're supposed to be an independent person? Why do you need so much? Why do you, why are you leaning on me? Why are you?

Speaker 6:20

Why do you care? If I'm not in a good mood? Yeah, does that matter?

Speaker 6:24

I'm not available. I work. I don't, I don't want to be here for your 24/7 dramas and challenges. And, and, and obviously, we're not kids, kids, and we're not as we're not also caregivers of a partner necessarily to meet every need of a partner. But you can see how this gets complicated when you you know, it's so demanding as for parents to meet kids

needs, and then you get into adult partnership, and you want people to be more like self reliant. A lot of people, a

Speaker 6:57

lot of people want that. And I think I want to back up there, because I kind of jumped ahead a little there. But so we have we, as humans, we depend on each other. And as we grow and develop, yeah, we hopefully over time are developing true independence versus like a forced kind of false independence. And the difference between those is like a true independence is like, wow, I was, I know that I can go do things that are hard or challenging, or, you know, take risks in the world. Because I have this support back here, of another person. It's like a strength, it's like, I have that springboard that's really strong and stable, because we've cultivated that over time. So you know, as you grow and develop as a kid, you can take more and more risks and go away further and further and do new things that maybe your family never even did all this stuff. Because you have this really strong support behind you. That's true independence and false independence, is there's no really no support here, psychologically, and so I have to rely on myself way earlier or way more often, then really is developmentally, that I'm really developmentally ready to. And I think our society is really bent in that way. We're more, we push kids to independence, independence sooner. And definitely, like, generations before us, were maybe more intense about that. But you know, we want babies to like, hey, put yourself to sleep, or hey, just figure out that argument with your sibling or whatever. There's all kinds of things, but it took

Speaker 8:45

your kid, you know, two years to walk? Well, there must be something wrong with your kid, you know, they're not moving toward independence fast enough.

Speaker 8:51

Yeah. So yeah, we get really worried about that as a society because we're very independent, self reliant, driven. And we really prioritize that. So. So let's say you come into adulthood, and now you're an adult, and you're in a partnership, so why would a partnership trigger stuff that we're, like this, this stuff about? Why do you need me so much or oh, my god, I need you so much, this feels really scary or intense, or we don't know how to work this out. That's because we depend on each other. Like that's, I think that's what I'm trying to say is like the partnerships trigger attachment, fears, because we depend on

partners like we depended on parents. Yeah. That's, that's the connection between. That's why attachment theory can be translated from parent child into adult partnerships, because they're dependently. They're dependent relationships. Does that make sense?

Speaker 9:58

Yeah, it does. And this is why in which you've said to me before, like, why friendships don't trigger the same level of dependency irritation and like overwhelm. Because, you know, we don't live with friends 24/7 Usually we might in college or something, but long term, the dependency attachment, you know, the attachment system starts to fire when we're locked in with one other person. Yeah, over many years.

Speaker 10:25

Yeah, we're start we're sharing a home or finance lowers, we're friends. You know, you're the person that helps me with all kinds of things in life and, or children, child rearing, like

Speaker 10:40

and in some ways you partner because you don't want to do it alone. You want to depend on other people. Yeah, you want to share the journey called life. When you want help with like, your mental health or getting up in the morning, or you want help cleaning or you want to help raising a kid. We're so we're wired to

Speaker 10:58

be social and to be with each other. Like we, yeah, we're not like isolated. We're not like mammals that just like live in isolation. And that's how we are we're not solitary. We were very social. And we we need each other very much

Speaker 11:14

for survival. Yeah. And we, a lot of people kind of suck at this partnership thing, because one layer is this dependency stuff gets so activating for people. Yeah. For example, if Ellen and I first got married, let's say, and I'm just making this up. And I, I really deep down wanted to feel seen by you. But I, at the same time, didn't want to depend on you to like for that. And I really like, I feel like I'm in this time. Yeah, you're in a bind. I want you to know

me. And you should understand me. Yeah. But I'm not gonna like share my inner life with you. Because I don't want to be dependent. Yeah, and I shouldn't need you.

Speaker 12:03

And I didn't really get practice at that. And no one really, that wasn't like what I grew up doing with people. And so I kind of don't know how, but but I'm sort of expecting this high level of care or understanding. Expecting a lot of really complex relational things, even though we're not actually doing the kind of vulnerability and intimacy, sharing, listening, that that would enable us to, to be really good at each other.

Speaker 12:37

Yeah. Can you, would you be willing to share maybe a historical couple you've worked with? Or? Gosh, yeah, there's so many, just just an example. So we can kind of bring this down to street level, around what you've seen?

Speaker 12:54

Around dependency?

Speaker 12:55

Around why, yeah, this, this is kind of what's going on with a couple doesn't think this is what's going on? Yeah. And they're just fighting. I'm not getting along.

Speaker 13:01

I mean, there's a lot of ways that can show up. But a lot of times in a partnership, you have one person who grew up in a family where we they didn't depend emotionally on each other. I mean, we they did, right? Because we do, yeah, but it's all underground. And it's all kind of like, buried. And so we're a family who sort of is like, We're fine. We're okay, we don't, if we get upset, we just sort of go in to our corners. And then a few days later, come back and yeah, but underneath that is like, God, I need someone I need someone to care I need I need to know I'm okay. But but there's some families that are just really removed, removed from that, those feelings and those needs. So that's one partner and then the other partner is someone who there was a lot of maybe kind of emotional overlap and like

intrusiveness, let's have to paint the paint the partners first. So that for so this other foreigners coming from a family where it's like, no, we fought, we argued, we you know, it was kind of like almost messy and anxious, let's say and preoccupied around feelings and upset and there wasn't a lot of ability to contain or really be differentiated. I might be going fast here, but no, that's good. So these are two partners, they come together, they tried to create a relationship. And they have both really different ideas of how you manage internal states. And how one that you know the partner from that more distant kind of family just dismissing relational needs kind of family doesn't even know what to say in a lot of these intense situations like doesn't even have a sense of what's going on inside. But they really want to be known and understood, but they have no idea how cuz they don't know how to talk about it or convey it. And they kind of want to get away from these conversations at the same time. So they're like, I have no idea what to do here. And then the other partner is constantly feeling like there's not enough here, what are we doing here? And he's like, angry and agitated, and, and being kind of intrusive, and, and but isn't owning, or it doesn't know how to work out this sense of wow, I depend on you, you depend on me, we have to be, we have to be making sure we're not sending threat signals to each other. Yeah. Silence can be a threat signal. Anger can be a threat signal. So like, these couples, I'm just thinking of so many that come in, and they're doing all these things that are conveying threat to their partner. And basically conveying like, you can't depend on me, because look how unsafe I'm being, basically look how angry I am, or look how silent and withdrawn I am. And both people feel like I can't depend on you. But I'm kind of fighting for a certain way of being that is familiar to me, but is never going to work here. It's never going to feel good to both of us, unless we create something totally new and different. That's, that's really different than what we know. Actually, that's collaborative. That's fair. Like we get we get into secure functioning, you know, from Stan Tatkin, and that whole idea, right?

Speaker 16:32

So I'm hearing if both partners could acknowledge wow, I really, I mean, this is where I'm wondering where dependency comes in? If they have that awareness? If they don't, I know. But if they could, yeah, like, would it be helpful to educate them about? Oh, yeah, you depend on this person. Completely. Totally. It does not you depend on this person completely. Yeah. For so many things. And can you see why this is so hard for you?

Speaker 17:03

Right? Yes, no, it totally does help to start bring it into the room. Because I think why we wanted to do this podcast is like this, we're talking about something normal and natural about human beings in primary relationships. Whether that's parent child, whether that's

partners, partners, it's mutual, dependency, peer, parent-child, that's one way (the child's depending on the parent). But if, if people can recognize like, Oh, of course, I depend on you, I depend on you to be to listen, to be kind, to be to be like, to psychologically sound, depend on you to be able to regulate yourself, I depend on you to be able to do these things. For yourself, for me, for us. If we can normalize that and just put it in the room. People can start to work with it more consciously, like okay, then how can since we depend on each other, since we're vulnerable, really, because of depending is vulnerability? How can we make this safe to depend on each other? Yeah. So that so we can go and do really cool things in our own lives. Really cool things in the world, when we have that sense of that we have someone we can depend on that depends on us, like when we have that really, when we're comfortable there. And we're good there. We can go and be really, we can do amazing things in this relationship up until what would

Speaker 18:35

be an interesting thing, you have an interesting exercise right now, for a couple are you listening is you can make a list. It just be an interesting experiment. "I depend on you, And then for..., and actually write down all the things you depend on the other person for. And the first partner you described, I wonder if their list would be really small? Because they're so self. Yeah, they might. avoidant attachment style, and they might be like,

Speaker 19:01

I'm fine. I don't depend on other people.

Speaker 19:04

And I kind of don't depend on you. And if you got hit by a bus tomorrow, I'd be fine. Like, I wonder if that could be an interesting experiment for the couple to do. And and then to cross reference and share notes. Yeah, because some of my having a huge list. Yeah, like holy shit. And if we're honest, if you're in sort of a traditional marriage, sort of like, one person's the earner, one person's raising the kids so one person is a provider, it'd be pretty clear. Like, what you, you know, there'd be some obvious ones, like I depend on you to like, take care of the kids and pick them up and drop them off at school and like, get their appointments and blah, blah, blah, , blah, blah. And you depend on me for finances and our lifestyle and that there might be some obvious ones. But I get curious also about the more subtle ones like the more anxious, yeah, the more relational sort of needs which is like I depend on you to, to hold my sadness and my anger when I go going through

something and for emotional support, and the other person might be like, I don't depend on you for that. And I don't need that. Right, but they do need that. Because they're going to ultimately complain to the other person that you don't see me, you know, get me. You know, blah blah blah blah blah. Yeah. It's tricky.

Speaker 20:18

It's tricky. It's tricky. There's layers, there are layers. But I think we do like to focus on the relational layers, which are, you know, as partners, what is the what are the relational aspects, that relational needs that we're offering and providing here, you know, and I think you said, like to be with me, when I'm struggling, you know, in some way, or to just be kind and caring, when I'm under stress, or to help relieve my stress by just being comforting, or like all the things that like human mammals are meant to do. Like, that's why we have each other, that's why we convey feelings through our face, so that you can see someone is experiencing a lot of joy, and you want to join them in that or is experiencing a lot of sadness, and you want to join them in that, like, that's where you just be there for or to share in these experiences of life. And that's, that's what we're for.

Speaker 21:22

I remember myself in my 20s, traveling a lot, being so feeling so good that I didn't depend on anyone. Oh, yeah, I totally was like that being maybe a good stage. Yeah, not only for it can be a good stage, like, I don't need anybody, I'm on my own account, independent and powerful. Yeah. And then I get a job and I can start, like, it's very, like orienting, you can build a lot of self confidence for adolescent into age 30, to start to feel really independent and self sufficient, totally. So I want to acknowledge, I just wanna acknowledge, like, how awesome that is. But I, at the same time, if I'm honest, I had this kind of secret longing, to not be alone. Totally. And I didn't know how to get it. And I didn't know how to, you know, I was like, anti-dependent on anyone. Because that was drilled into my head by my dad and my culture. So you know, any sort of, "I need" partnership, or "I need to not feel alone", or "I need a friend" with me right now. Or "I need other people", that was very unconscious. And I didn't want to admit that, you know, but I had, I had a deep longing for I don't want to actually do this alone. And I want to be needed and I want to need someone.

Speaker 22:37

Yeah, just I love you speaking to that, because it's so human. And something has happened our society where we really, those those feelings of needing each other wanting someone

there can really be dismissed as weak or wrong, wrong, or, you know, quote unquote, needy, which is kind of like the worst kind of human to be according to like, if you look on our society, like a "needy" adult is like, so it's really bad. And and so therefore, like, a lot of our really normal relational human needs, go underground or go into like a shame pile. And it can be really hard to figure out like, how do I maintain this sense of independence? That feels so good? Yeah. And be connected to someone else? Like, can I still can feel so also can feel so fucking good. And we're really advocates for both, like, we're like, yeah, as a mature adult in the world. We get to have both and we want our kids ultimately that both too.

Speaker 23:41

Yeah, these are secure relationships. Yeah. Secure strong attachment is your you have yourself and your you have what you want. relationally Yeah, right. And then we get into the standing for three principle around. I got me and I got my cool independent life. You got you, your cool, independent life. And we got we yeah, we got us and our cool independent life or the the We. And it's, the We is much harder. It is it's I think it's much easier to just do your own thing.

Speaker 24:12

1,000% Yeah, in some ways, and then it's also and that takes its toll takes its toll at the time. Yeah. Yeah.

Speaker 24:20

Yeah. So I think it's, I think maybe just summing up here. Like, can it be okay, and we teach this in all the courses and particularly Relationship Mastery around? Can my needs be okay? Is it okay to have needs relational needs - they're valid - as an adult? And can I get can I learn how to get those needs met and choose people who will meet those needs, but can I also offer those to others? Again, that's a secure partnership.

Speaker 24:49

You're after. Yeah, it's advocating for myself advocating for you, and who you are, what you want your life and then advocating for our shared vision.

Speaker 25:02

Yeah, and if we want to go after the We and kind of win at that, and just have a really cool ride in this life, we're going to need to acknowledge and be honest about how much we depend on the person to totally depend on us. And then, oh, that's just true. How do we work with that? How do we work on triggering, but I want you and I want us but man, I'm getting really feeling really invaded or engulfed here. I don't want you to depend on me so much. But can I just relax and learn how to start working with it? Yeah,

Speaker 25:32

there's so much to work with in there. And I? Yeah, it is really vulnerable. It's to depend on you at times where I'm like, fuck I, I want you with me, I don't want to go do this thing by myself. Or like, we go through phases where we really need to kind of lean on each other more. Yeah, I do. I go through phases where I'm like, I don't I need you here for this. And, and then other phases, where it's like, oh, I got I got me right now. And I'm, I can come and tell you about things. And I don't know it. It's it's a it's a flow. Yeah, there's a flow to it. You're coming in and out and being there. When we need each other to like, kind of get resourced and then back out into the world we go,

Speaker 26:20

yeah, yeah, I'm just remembering a quick story that some people, some listeners might have heard in one of our courses. After our second child, you kind of needed you are during the pregnancy of our second show, or daughter, you needed me to show up more. And like, you were so dependent on me, and I was kind of going through my own shit. And you really like challenged me in a good way. So that you could depend on me. Yeah, that's how I'm seeing that right now. Is you're like, dude, I'm leaning on you. I don't want to like lean in the air here. I need actually something to lean on. And I was because I was not just weren't that present. I wasn't being an oak tree. No. I was being like a little brand new fledgling willow tree here, aspen in this moment. Yeah. Anyway, that's an example of like, you know, sometimes we go through these massive transitions in our life. And we really need the person to be more of a rock. And look, I'm depending on you. And sometimes we can't be a rock for the other person. And it's like, hey, what's in the way? What do I need to do to like, like, get stronger? So I can hold my person through this challenging moment? They're, they're going through? Yeah, it's another way to like, Wow, there's so many times where I've depended on you. You've depended on me.

Speaker 27:37

Right? And sometimes we have to be like, Hey, I'm depending on you. Can you? Can you like, get together a little bit on? Can you set that crap down here for me be here? And yeah, I mean, there's so many.

Speaker 27:50

And then we could go into this is so good, why we need friends, like really, really great, strong friendships. Because our you're not always going to be there for me, totally. So I'm going to depend on my friends. Yeah, circle out, you know?

Speaker 28:01

Right. We're not 100% reliable. And, and that's part of why it's vulnerable, because we know that sometimes someone might not be fully present or might not have that capacity. But we want to have that as a something we're aspiring to do for each other. And I think we I think we mostly, I mean, you know, we we work it out and figure it out and look for each other. And yeah, sometimes we're going through our stuff, but it's like, and I'm coming back. I'm coming back to us. Yeah. Because it's good for both of us. Like I think for you in that situation when you were like oh, yeah, you got reoriented to us, and I think it helped you through the shit. You were kind of floundering in Yeah. Put things back in perspective for you. So for us that worked. Yeah. Exactly. In that moment.

Speaker 28:07

Sometimes a swift kick to the nuts helpful.

Speaker 28:57

Is very helpful. It's good to know how to do that.

Speaker 29:00

All right, people. Thanks for listening as always. Thanks Ellen. Yeah, thank you. Yeah. And be honest, you depend on people. It's okay. It's okay. Learn how to work with that.

Speaker 29:14

Oh, we weren't recording

Speaker 29:16

No, I was action step at the buzzer here is reflect on this, share it with a friend. Or, you could do that exercise. You can actually even if you haven't, you're single, how much? What are the ways in which I've depended on my last partner or my current partner? How much do I depend on them and make the list and like it's pretty gonna be a pretty long list potentially. We're pretty short. Notice that Alright, peace out.