

Spirit-Filled Psychologist Offers Powerful Advice for Your Post-Holiday Blues

Have you experienced deep emotional pain during the holidays? Clinical psychologist Dr. Barbara Lowe says many people do. In her clinical practice in Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina, she says, "Our phone rings off the hook as the new year starts because people are coming out of the holidays.

"And often they've experienced pain being around their family of origin ... and things that have been bothering them underneath the surface have kind of bubbled up," Lowe says on *Dr. Barbara's Whole Life Podcast* on the Charisma Podcast Network. Part of the reason for this, she says, is "the roles we've played in our families of origin and maybe roles that we're continuing to play. ... We all play roles in our family, whether we come from a healthier family or a less healthy family. No family is perfect. None of us comes through unscathed because of sin and brokenness in the world."

But what happens when, as healthy adults, we step out of those roles? Lowe says that sometimes, we face persecution or criticism from other family members "because we're stepping out of what has been holding the family together. It's like every dysfunctional system is held together with this imaginary glue that tries to keep everyone in place. And there's this feeling like .. 'If you rattle it, we're all going to break because of the chaos we grew up in. We don't want that to happen again, so don't break out of that role.'"

What God wants, Lowe explains, is just the opposite: that we become children of freedom, as Romans 8 describes. To do that, she says, we must step off the triangle of pain in our relationships and walk in freedom. "The triangle of pain has

three points, and each point is a pain point. It's a role that when we play it in relationships, we are getting into a painful cycle. There is the role of the persecutor. That's the role of the blamer: 'You're doing everything wrong.' ... Now when someone else comes against us with this kind of persecution, this blame, this criticism, our tendency is normally going to be to go to one of the two other points on the triangle: the caretaker/fixer or the victim/child."

To have healthy relationships, Lowe says, we must stay off this triangle of pain and its sinful cycles. To learn more about how to do this, listen to this podcast.