



Relationship crashers –

the 7 ghosts of our past and what to do about them

They're uninvited guests to our banquet of love.
They will get us where they want us if we don't deal with them.

by Johanna Kern

We all want the same things: good health, fulfillment, a loving relationship/family, and comfort in life. While the details of how we see our needs fulfilled might vary – it all comes to one thing: happiness. We all want happiness in life. There is no one on this planet who would truthfully tell you that he/she wants to be unhappy.

The quest for happiness in life is a two-sided coin. On one hand, it requires us to let go of our expectations and appreciate life for what it is – a wonderful journey to becoming who we truly are. On the other side, we need to put some effort into arriving at the place where we can fully be that person we are meant to be.

A happy relationship, based on true love, is built on the same principles. Happiness in relationship is present because of our ability to let go of what weighs us down – and at the

same time – because of what we are willing to do for our relationship to thrive. We want it to be a truly delightful feast, where the two of us can enjoy our time together, and celebrate what we have: love.

But what if that feast we longed and planned for is interrupted by uninvited guests that appear at our beautifully set table with their own hidden, destructive agenda?

The ghosts of our past are the relationship crashers.

Just as the wedding crashers can appear from either side – the bride's or the groom's – so do the relationship crashers. Often they can appear from both sides.

COMMON RELATIONSHIP CRASHERS

These uninvited guests can present in many forms. Here are some of the most common:

- **The fear of change:** It can stop us when we are about to move. It says it's for our own good.
- **The fear of getting emotionally hurt:** It wants to keep our love at bay. It won't trust it, no matter what we say.
- **The fear of rejection:** What it wants for us is to be seen. What it does with us is the opposite; it makes us want to hide.
- **The fear of loss of freedom:** It tries to scare us with its ball and chain. Beware; it fastens us to itself with them.
- **The fear of inadequacy:** Joined at the hip with the fear of rejection. This twin brother feeds on our self-perception.
- **The fear of loneliness:** It wants to always hold our hand. It won't let go of it to the bitter end.
- **The fear of failure:** Becoming our helper is its thing when it comes to forsaking our dreams. Where do they come from?

THE ROLE OF THE SHADOW

Every wound that we have developed becomes a weakness that we tend to hide in our subconscious – ‘brushing it under the rug’, so to speak. That wound, when not dealt with and not healed, becomes a base for developing a subconscious ‘shadow’. The shadow guards our weak spots with, one might say, its own body. Such a shadow becomes ruthless at the same time – a dark-natured bully which begins to control our behaviour and feelings. The more unresolved past trauma we have, the more shadows reside in our subconscious. The Swiss psychologist Carl Jung was the first one to talk about the dark energy as the building material for our shadows, that is everything that we reject in ourselves and others.

Our shadows take over in order to protect us from any possible harm. Whether there is a real danger, or just some imagined possible threat, our shadows come out and act on our behalf. As if someone pressed a button, we start behaving in a defensive way, like robots on automatic pilot. In short: we keep sabotaging our relationships, our happiness, our right to success, abundance, and our right to love and be loved.

SELF-RESPONSIBILITY

When we are beginning a relationship based on true love, we are agreeing to take equal responsibility for sharing our love. When any problems occur, we can't just point our finger and say, “It's all your fault,” or “You know that I'm screwed up. I can't help it.”

Actually, we can help it. We can always help it if we really want.

The ghosts of our past let us know of their presence, sooner or later. In reality, each of us knows our shadows well. We know how we may react; we know what we have done, and what we might do. So let us not pretend that we are surprised by our shadows' existence when they crash our relationship. And let's be equally aware that the person we love will have their own shadows as well.

Now, it doesn't mean that we need to run away from love, or a chance to have a loving relationship, when we are not yet fully healed. We also shouldn't dismiss the possibility of loving and being with someone whose wounds might go very deep. Yes, it is best to take care of our own mess, before it becomes a deal breaker. But the mere presence of the mess – the other person's or our own – is a problem that can be overcome.

WORKING WITH THE GHOSTS OF OUR PAST

When we decide to love each other and grow together, we naturally take the risk of facing and dealing with our human nature.

As humans, we are both beautiful and complex. Whether it's us, our partner, or both of us who need to do some healing, we need to be equally patient, supportive, and wise enough to know that the healing process takes some time. This is the most important thing to remember when the ghosts of our past appear to divide us, and 'put us in our place' – so that we won't dwell in the darkness of our misery, and that we don't lose sight of the light of our love.

Our emotional wounds can easily sabotage our relationship, or our attempts to have one. But if we look the ghosts of our past straight in the eye, we find out that they only grow so loud because they have no power over us, other than that which we grant them.

We need to make sure that both our partner and ourselves understand that we are equally responsible for the happiness of our relationship. Or rather, that the two of us have the privilege to make our relationship filled with love and happiness.

CHANGING OUR PROGRAMMING

Practising positive thinking will cause a gradual transformation of our internal beliefs.

When we decide to monitor our thinking and focus on positive thoughts,

we begin to replace our subconscious negative programming with that which is healthy and beneficial for us.

Of course, dealing with our inner negative programming isn't always easy. The thoughts that can do most damage in our life and relationship often are those we are not aware of, coming from our subconscious. And as our subconscious is responsible for 90% of our behaviour, responses, emotions, and beliefs, we tend to run our thinking on automatic pilot.

It takes approximately six weeks of daily routine to change our subconscious programming. And only six months of following it further to adopt the new way of perceiving and thinking as our lifestyle.

When we are in a deep relaxation state – for instance meditation – our subconscious can be reprogrammed more easily. There are various tools that can be very effective, and you can find what will suit your preferences and needs.

The most successful relationships are those in which both partners have found all the love they need within themselves. When we are filled with the joy of life, when we are able to accept ourselves as we are and enjoy our growth, we don't need to receive love from others to feel good. Instead we need to *share* the love that fills us up.

It's the best place to be when we want to have a true, loving, and caring relationship. ●

The above article is based on an excerpt from the book Secrets of Love for Everyone: Everything You Need to Know to Have an Amazing Relationship, published by HOPE Assn.

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Johanna Kern is a transformational teacher and multiple award-winning author. For many years she has

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