THREE RED FLAGS & FOUR GREEN FLAGS (by Linda J. MacDonald)

THREE RED FLAGS of Dysfunction [F.O.G]

When your Primary Emotional Motivation is:

1. Fear

- If I don't (or do) … they will reject me (and that would be scary, terrible, disastrous or intolerable).
- If I say/do … they will get mad or angry (and that would be scary, awful, bad or intolerable).
- If I say/do … I will hurt their feelings or disappoint them (and that would be mean of me and/or will ruin my reputation as a nice person which would be awful).
- I am afraid I'd be imposing on them if I ...

2. Obligation

- I am the only one who can…[→ Messiah Trap, Burn-out, & Rescuer/Victim/Persecutor Δ]
- I have to...
- This is absolutely necessary, essential, etc...
- I must ...
- I should ...
- I ought to ...
- I need to...
- I owe it to them, after all they've done for me.
- It's my duty to ... [It is dysfunctional when duty is applied to an improper sense of responsibility].

False Responsibilities: turning optional uses of time and energy into imperatives; staying loyal to people who abuse me; remaining committed to people who are not committed to me; helping others when they do not ask for it (ie. unsolicited advice).
VS. True Responsibilities: to take care of my children, stay true to my spouse, maintain my own health and well-being, be ethical in my dealings, show up for work when I am well.

3. Guilt

- I would feel bad or be bad if I…or if I didn't…
- How dare I make my needs equal to others'…
- I would let this person/group down if I...
- I am responsible for this other person's happiness, feelings, behavior, or reactions.
- They need me to ...
- If I don't, no one else will ...
- God will be displeased with me if I don't…
- No one else seems to think there is something wrong with this picture. I must be off-base.

THREE GREEN FLAGS of Healthy Functioning [F.R.E.E.]

When your Primary Emotional Motivation is:

1. Freedom

- I can choose to… or choose not to…
- I have options that I can explore.
- I am not responsible for another person's responsibilities or happiness.
- I am responsible for my own: life / feelings / choices / self-care / direction / happiness / family / lifestyle / health / time.
- I am responsible to treat others respectfully without disrespecting myself in the process.
- It is good for me to honor, respect and be true to myself, even if it displeases others.
- I am not obligated to "help" when it is detrimental to my peace of mind & well-being, or that of my family.

2. Rest

- It's OK for me to notice my own needs and honor them by making them known or by taking care of myself.
- It's good for me to believe I count or matter in the equation. I can voice my preference.
- I am responsible to honor my own integrity and values, no matter how others respond.
- Just because this makes another upset, does not automatically mean I am wrong.
- They are responsible for their own feelings & reactions.
- The world will not end / fall apart if I don't...
- Humility: "It's no big deal if I do, and no big deal if I don't."

3. Energized

- I want to...
- I'd like to...
- I choose to...
- I prefer to...
- I would feel good or relieved if I...
- I am energized by…
- I feel called to…

Of course "desire" and choosing must be guided by a healthy code of ethics and not violate the rights of others.

4. Empowered

If I function from my own center, rather than the agendas of others or my own diseased conscience, I will be empowered to fulfill God's best for my life.