Lutheran Counseling hope and healing Center

NOVEMBER 2026

WITH SECURE, VIRTUAL COUNSELING SESSIONS AVAILABLE
FOR ANY NEW YORK RESIDENT
Prepared especially for LCC Congregations & Schools

Lies We Tell Ourselves

By the Rev. Dr. Ronald W. Lehenbauer

Have you ever wondered about your own unique personality? Where does a person's personality come from? Why do we develop the identity we have – our inner life, attitudes, beliefs, thoughts, emotions, behaviors, the way we act and present ourselves?

There are a multitude of influences on the development of our self – and our self-image – our personality. One major influence was our childhood mirror. The intimate close family relationships we had growing up served as a mirror for us – to show us who we are. How our care-givers and family viewed us, and related to us, reflected back to us a view of ourselves that was very powerful and influential. And to some extent we bought and adopted that view of our self.

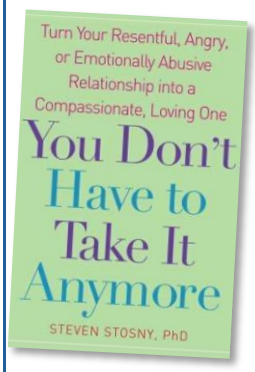
Core hurts are lies we tell ourselves – about ourselves.

We learned how lovable and valuable we were to those who cared for us. From that mirror we developed a sense of our self as being valuable and lovable and loving, competent, confident, creative, hopeful, courageous, etc. We tend to believe the accuracy of the reflection we see in that mirror of our childhood.

Young children seldom question the impressions of themselves they get from their parents. The problem is that sometimes that impression coming from that mirror is negative and distorted – like a fun-house mirror. It seldom occurs to a young child that their stressed-out mother or their raging father are having a bad time, or trying to recover from their own difficult childhoods. Children invariably blame themselves.

That's how core hurts develop. Core hurts are lies we tell ourselves – about ourselves. They are negative, untrue, internalized images of our self – believing falsely that "there is something wrong with me, that I am not-good-enough, or unlovable, or powerless, or unimportant, or devalued, or guilty, etc." – coming from our childhood mirror. We believe the lies. And they hurt at our core.

These core hurts tend to weaken as we grow older. But they do stay with us as adults – frequently in our sub-conscious mind. And every once in a while they can get triggered. How we think and feel about our self – how we view our self – that part of our personality – comes to a large extent from that childhood mirror we experienced.



This may also be a good reminder to be mindful of how we influence our children – any child with whom we interact. We can be their mirror – for good or ill.

For good mental health and relationships, it's helpful to understand this common human phenomena. It's helpful to be able to recognize and name your core hurts when they get triggered. And to remind yourself that they are not true – that they are lies you don't want to tell yourself.

It's also extremely helpful to remind ourselves of our personal core value – that we were created by God in God's own image. That God values us as his beloved children. We certainly are not perfect, but God loves and values us nevertheless with his immense and incredible love – displayed especially on that Cross where his Son died for us.

If you'd like to learn more about your core hurts and your core value, you can read the book by Steven Stosny, *You Don't Have to Take It Anymore* (NY: Free Press, 2006) from which I've derived much of the information I'm sharing here.

Dr. Ron Lehenbauer, D.Min., LMFT, is a certified Imago Relationship Therapist, also trained in Discernment Counseling, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), Motivational Interviewing, EMDR, and other therapy modes for anxiety and depression. He counsels adults and couples. *To learn more about LCC Counselor Dr. Ron Lehenbauer and all LCC's Counselors, go to https://www.lccny.org/meetourcounselors. Call the Lutheran Counseling Center at 516-741-0994 or 1-800-317-1173 or e-mail us at Center@lccny.org to set an appointment.*