

IDENTIFYING THE PAYOFFS FOR KEEPING YOUR PROBLEM AROUND

You may feel as if your problem is only a blight and that you get nothing out of having this problem around.

Not true.

Check all the boxes that apply to you, even if they only resonate a little bit.

Put a star next to the ones that scream at you.

- My problem is my identity. I wouldn't even know who I was without this problem.
- Happy people annoy me. I don't want to be annoying.
- Without this problem I wouldn't feel as special. My suffering makes me feel special.
- I get a lot of attention from people in my life, because I have this problem. It may be negative attention but at least it's attention.
- I am the most _____(put your problem description here) person I know, and that makes me unique. I couldn't stand it if I was the same as other people.
- Working on my problem, makes me look like I'm hard at work. If I was all blissed out and didn't have this problem anymore, that may be interpreted as my not working hard enough or trying enough.
- I struggle therefore I am. Struggle makes me aware of my existence.
- I get financial assistance from a loved one because I'm too troubled or somehow 'disabled' to work harder or even work at all.
- I get empathy and love from a loved one. They show me how much they care about and consider me by putting up with me and my problem.
- I don't have to engage in the world (relationships? work? hobbies?) because I have this problem. My problem is my safety, protective resource.
- I don't like (or trust, or feel comfortable around) other people, and my problem makes it so I don't have to be around them.
- 'I can't get better' keeps me from having to do scary things / take any risks.
- 'I can't get better' keeps me from having to engage in the world at a higher level.

- I don't want to have to do any work to solve my problem, it sounds exhausting. I just want to live my life.
- I can blame my problem for holding me back, rather than having to blame myself.
- I can blame fear, my ex-wife, my colleagues, or even life itself for this problem, rather than blaming myself.
- Sadness is a companion.
- Anger makes me feel powerful and self-righteous.
- Poor self-esteem is my identity. It feels awful but at least it's familiar.
- 'I'm too broken to be fixed' is a loop in my head, which feels like home.
- If I didn't have this problem, then I may have to admit that my marriage, job, being a parent, etc. is not for me. I'd have to admit the truth, or make a serious change, or move on.
- I don't like change.
- The devil I know is better than the devil I don't know.
- My problem is my teddy bear.
- Keeping my problem around makes me feel like a child. I don't want to have to grow up.
- Keeping my problem around, I can justify my behavior.
- I want to WANT to solve this problem, and isn't that enough?
- By keeping this problem around, I don't have to take responsibility for my life.
- I have an excuse to not do things I don't want to do, without having to explain myself.
- If I get rid of my problem, I may alienate friends and family, who at this point expect me to behave a certain way.
- If I own my problem, I'll have to admit that I've been a jerk or loser all these years.
- If I own my problem, that means my friends and family may be smug about it. Like- "I told you so."
- I feel protected in my current state. Anything else seems threatening.
- Without the drama of my problem, life would be boring.
- Without the drama of my problem, I wouldn't know how to spend my days.
- My problem keeps me in my head- which I like, because then I don't have to feel.

- I get to feel self-righteous that I am not like other people who are so _____(fill in the blank)_____
- Feeling like a victim is my thing, I don't want to give that up because then I'd have to take responsibility for my life.
- When I look into my life in order to make changes, it brings up all the things in my life that I feel I have no control over or ability to help or change. And frankly, I just don't want that reminder.
- It keeps me in a relationship with something in my past, that was important to me.
- I need to keep it around, so I can intellectually figure it out.
- A family member has the same problem, and I don't want to give up the connection / bonding that comes from that.
- I'd be disrespecting my lineage or even alienating my family if I moved past this problem.
- If I deal with my own emotions, then I'll have to deal with others' emotions too ((family, friends and strangers), and that's not fair. Why should I do all the work?

Note are as many payoffs as there are people in the world, so be sure to come up with a few more on your own.

Once you become conscious of any payoffs you have, one of two things will happen.

Either:

1. You'll realize the payoffs you get for keeping your problem around are actually quite important to you, while the costs are not a big enough deal yet that you're willing to do anything about it. In short: at least for now, you'll decide to keep your problem around, so as to keep your payoffs around. Having viewed this list though, this is now a conscious choice, which is a huge win. No longer in the dark, you'll also know another choice is available, anytime you're ready.

Or:

2. You'll realize the payoffs for keeping your problem around aren't working for you anymore, because the costs of having it are far greater. This insight will motivate you to take action steps to change in your life. The action steps will result yes, in your having to give up your payoffs, but will allow you a much better future, involving new and much greater payoffs.

Support to do this, is right here. Exact action steps to take are what I outline in my content, courses and events.