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Review Paper

The Psychology of Conditional Bonds: A Systematic Review of Factors Shaping Human Connections

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ABSTRACT

Human connections are generally assumed to be rooted in unconditional love and acceptance but the psychological reality is different and reveals that many relationships are conditional that are formed and maintained based on the fulfillment of expectations or specific needs. This systematic review aims to explore the multifaceted nature of human conditional bonds by examining how they develop, persist, and impact psychological and emotional well-being. This review included peer-reviewed studies and theoretical papers (1980–2024) and excluded if they lacked a psychological focus, were non-English, or did not clearly define conditionality in relationships. This article covers some psychological frameworks like attachment theory, transactional analysis, social exchange theory, and behaviourism to investigate how early life experiences, emotional vulnerabilities, and social norms shape our understanding of trust, love, and acceptance. The paper highlights how conditionality manifests across various relationship contexts - parent-child dynamics, friendships, professional interactions, and romantic relationships which often results in anxiety, fear of abandonment and impaired emotional intimacy. The review also contrasts these with unconditional bonds which foster self-acceptance, psychological resilience, and emotional security. It critiques the bi-directional view of conditional vs unconditional bonds. Contemporary influences, such as digital culture and social media are also explored for their role in modern relationships and reinforcing conditionality. The paper concludes by discussing therapeutic and social implications by emphasizing the need for boundary-setting, emotional awareness, and compassionate communication that help in building secure and much healthier connections. Understanding the psychology of conditional bonds helps in improving individual well-being and fostering more authentic human relationships.

Keywords: *Conditional bonds, Attachment theory, Emotional conditionality, Interpersonal relationships, Mental health, Psychological well-being*

Human beings are inherently known as social animals and the interpersonal relations they engage in are essential for their psychological development, emotional regulation, and social survival (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Positive human bondings play an important role in their psychological well-being, positive identity formation, and

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optimum social functioning (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). The human bonds can be understood as a contrast between conditional and unconditional bonds where both lie at opposite ends.

Conditional bonds are bonds that are formed due to the satisfaction of a need and are sustained till the time these needs are resolved. These needs can be emotional such as consistent support, behavioral like loyalty, materialistic like financial benefit, or a social need. The sustenance of the bond is directly dependent on the fulfillment of these needs and fulfilment of these needs determine the quality, duration, and depth of the relationship from a psychological perspective, conditional bonds are fueled by external motivators like approval, social validation, protection, or any other personal gain, instead of internal motivators. According to attachment theory (Bowlby, 1988), individuals with insecure attachment styles are more likely to form conditional bonds, where love and support are not freely given, but it has to be earned through behavior. For example, a child raised by caregivers who offer affection only when the child scores good marks may develop the belief that love is only given upon achievement. This belief, if carried into adulthood, can manifest as people-pleasing behavior, fear of abandonment or difficulty in trusting others.

Furthermore, conditional relationships can be seen in various contexts, including:

- Romantic relationships where affection is shown only when the partner meets specific emotional or sexual expectations.
- Friendships that persist only as long as there is mutual benefit, such as academic help, social status, or shared interests.
- Parent-child dynamics where praise and warmth are contingent on obedience or performance.
- Workplace interactions where collegiality is offered only when tasks are completed or loyalty is shown.

Whereas conditionality in relationships is not always negative, aspects like boundaries and mutual expectations are essential for working on any healthy relationship, problems arise when the entire connection is based on conditional needs, leaving no room for feelings of vulnerability or emotional safety. This leads to emotional instability and the inability to form secure attachments later in life.

On the other hand, **unconditional bonds** are formed by an acceptance and commitment that is beyond specific expectations. They are often marked by positive behaviors like consistent emotional availability, forgiveness and support. Examples of such unconditional bonds are ideal parent-child relationship, lifelong friendships, secure romantic relationships based on mutual trust and deep emotional understanding (Rogers, 1959). In these bonds, love and support are not earned by any achievement but are given freely as a sense of respect and love, this also correlates with Carl Rogers concept of “unconditional positive regard,”. But here comes the interesting part: the boundary between these two types of bonds is not always fixed. Conditional bonds can also convert into unconditional ones by processes like shared vulnerability and gradual building of trust. For example, a romantic relationship that begins with mutual interests or attraction (conditional bond) may deepen over time into a bond with emotional safety, support during hardship, and commitment (unconditional bonds). Similarly, friendships formed on the bases of common goal attainment such as study groups or professional settings can develop into meaningful lifelong relationships when nurtured with empathy and time. This transition often requires behavior modifications and emotional maturity to develop positive aspects of bond attachment security, emotional intelligence and vulnerability (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). Despite the differences, both conditional and

unconditional bonds serve essential psychological functions. Conditionality can help establish boundaries, promote fairness, and protect emotional resources. However, when over-relied upon, it can lead to transactional relationships, increased social anxiety, and emotional burnout—especially when one's worth is perceived to be tied to performance or compliance (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Unconditional bonds, in contrast, help by providing a foundation for emotional vulnerability, secure identity development, and interpersonal trust.

From a psychological and clinical perspective, learning about conditional bonds provides valuable insights for mental health outcomes such as loneliness, and anxiety. Clients who internalize conditional love may develop low self-worth, people-pleasing tendencies, or fear of abandonment. It aims at helping the people looking at the practical aspect of human connections and cope with loss of such connections more efficiently. improve interpersonal well-being in the social setting helping with overall improvement in mental health. In therapy, recognizing these patterns can inform interventions aimed at promoting healthier, more autonomous relationships.

Finally, this review aims to synthesize psychological theories and empirical research to analyze how conditional bonds are formed, maintained, and psychologically internalized. By doing so, it seeks to answer fundamental questions: What shapes our tendency to connect with terms attached? When do expectations strengthen relationships, and when do they harm them? Addressing these questions holds value not only for psychological theory but also for improving interpersonal well-being in real-world contexts.

Theoretical Foundations: Understanding Conditional Connections

Conditional connections are emotional bonds that are based on the fulfillment of specific expectations, behaviors or needs. These connections are not solely behavioral but have a deep-rooted psychological aspect attached to it. Various psychological theories talk about the formation, maintenance and consequences of such conditional relationships.

Attachment Theory

Attachment theory given by Bowlby (1969) and further worked upon by Ainsworth (1978), states that early interactions with caregivers shapes the ideology for forming future relationships. Secure attachments are a result of consistent and emotionally available caregiving that fosters trust and self-worth. On the other hand, inconsistency or neglect in caregiving leads to insecure attachments where love and affection are often perceived as a reward for obedience or achievement. These form of inadequate early caregiving results in conditional bonds where individuals believe they have to earn the love to be accepted (Bretherton, 1992). This can lead to social anxiety, emotional dependency, and a constant fear of abandonment in relationships.

Transactional Analysis

Transactional Analysis (TA) given by Berne (1961), describes interpersonal communication through three ego states: Parent, Adult, and Child. Many people develop negative core beliefs during childhood called “life scripts” which are based on conditional rewards such as “If I am perfect, then I am lovable” (Stewart & Joines, 2012). These core beliefs often result in recurring patterns of conditional emotional transactions in adulthood.

TA explains conditional bonds as a consequence of unresolved Parent–Child dynamics. Emotional rewards (e.g., love, approval) are only provided based on behavior, reinforcing

manipulative and submissive interactions (Berne, 1964). Individuals thereafter look at relationships from a pre derived notion based on these early emotional transactions.

Social Exchange Theory

Social Exchange Theory views relationships as governed by cost–benefit analysis and reciprocity (Homans, 1958; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). Emotional investments are made and maintained only if perceived as rewarding or equitable.

Conditional bonding, from this perspective, arises when emotional resources such as time, affection, or loyalty are exchanged and expected in return. Emotional withdrawal or dissatisfaction often follows perceived imbalances, making relationships transactional in nature (Cook & Emerson, 1978).

Behaviorism and Reinforcement

Behaviorism specially the work of B. F. Skinner (1953), suggests that behavior is shaped through learned reinforcements. In relationships approval, affection, and attention act as positive reinforcers whereas criticism and emotional withdrawal acts as punishment.

When individuals receive affection only for specific behaviors, love becomes conditional. Over time, this trains people to suppress authentic emotional expression in favor of behavior that ensures emotional safety (Bandura, 1977). This is especially evident in parent–child dynamics and romantic partnerships where affection is strategically dispensed to shape compliance.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow (1943) gave a hierarchy of human needs, with love and belongingness being in the third tier. Unconditional acceptance and emotional safety are required for fulfilling higher-order needs such as self-esteem and self-actualization.

Conditional bonds interfere with this need by introducing fear, rejection, or conditional acceptance. Individuals may feel unsafe expressing their authentic selves and instead modify behavior to gain approval. As a result, their psychological growth remains stunted (Kenrick et al., 2010).

Each theory offers a unique lens to understand the development and maintenance of conditional bonds. Whether through early attachment patterns, reinforcement systems, life scripts, or relational economics, these frameworks emphasize that conditional emotional connections are deeply psychological. Recognizing these deep rooted causes allow individuals and therapists to identify maladaptive patterns and work toward helping clients build unconditional, secure, and authentic relationships.

Although human relationships are often dreamt of as being unconditional, they usually operate on unsaid conditions and expectations. These expectations can be formed due to sociocultural norms, psychological patterns or emotional vulnerabilities. Across various types of interpersonal relationships, the conditionality of connections often changes when acceptance, love and respect becomes more significant instead of specific behaviors, roles, or achievements.

TYPES OF CONDITIONAL BONDS

Parent-Child Relationships

Parental love is said to be the most unconditional form of attachment however sometimes this bond is shaped by conditional expectations. In many cultures, children's worth and acceptance are based on their academic performance or culturally accepted behavior. For example, children are praised and rewarded or shown affection when they excel in school or achieve specific milestones. This performance-based approval teaches children that their worth is tied to external achievements rather than intrinsic qualities. Moreover, obedience is commonly paired with goodness and deviation from parental expectations are dealt with emotional withdrawal or disciplinary punishments. In more rigid familial structures, love even becomes conditional by fulfilling gender roles, choosing specific career paths or not giving into religious values. When children do not align with these expectations or express divergent interests, and fail to achieve academically, they experience parental disapproval or rejection. This disapproval can have long-term psychological consequences including anxiety, perfectionism, low self-esteem and difficulty forming secure attachments later in life among many others.

Romantic Relationships

Romantic relationships that are often seen as a space for unconditional love and deep connection, but in reality can carry a lot of conditions sometimes hidden beneath the surface. One of the most common is the need for reciprocity: the hope or expectation that our emotional, physical, or even materialistic needs will be met by the person we love. Whether spoken or not, there’s often an underlying message “I’ll keep loving you if you make me feel happy,” or “I’ll stay, as long as you meet my expectations.

This kind of give-and-take turns love into something transactional, where affection starts to feel earned rather than freely given. Over time, it may lead to feelings of imbalance like one partner is always giving more than they're receiving fostering codependency, frustration, or even quiet resentment.

Factors like physical attraction, financial security, and shared life goals also play a big part in how secure or conditional a relationship feels. When these things shift someone loses a job, gains weight or begins to grow in a new direction it can shake the foundation of the bond, especially if the relationship was built on those traits. Sometimes, one partner idealizes the other, holding on to a version of them that does not even exist in reality.

When in reality that person fails to live up to those expectations, it gives a deep sense of disappointment. In such moments, love starts to feel like a test based on how much emotional validation one receives or how well the other person lives up to imagined standards. And when these emotional needs aren’t met, insecurity and fear of abandonment often creep in. Communication starts to break down, emotional closeness fades, and what was once a strong connection can begin to feel fragile.

Ultimately, these conditional patterns make relationships harder to sustain, unless both partners are aware of them and actively work to build something deeper grounded in acceptance, empathy, and open dialogue.

Friendships

Friendships, even though usually not bounded by formal obligations, are still not immune to conditional dynamics. Psychological reciprocations like support, loyalty and availability are

common needs and expectations on which most friendships are built. Friendships are frequently maintained based on mutual support and if one person is going through a rough time and becomes emotionally unavailable, the relationship may fall apart. Emotional presence becomes a condition for sustaining friendships. Similarly, loyalty is a significant expectation in friendships, actions perceived as disloyal such as befriending someone's enemy often results in the falling out in friendships.

Convenience and proximity too play a significant role in friendships. Many adult friendships formed during school or work deteriorate once the shared environment is lost, revealing that the connection was circumstantial rather than being deeply rooted. Additionally, in certain social circles, friendships are based on utility such as social status, popularity or access to useful networks. When these perceived benefits disappear, the friendship often dissolves. Furthermore, disagreements or differing values may not be tolerated if affirmation and validation are expected as a condition for closeness. The emotional impact of such friendships can include feelings of rejection, confusion about self-worth, and fear of expressing vulnerability.

Professional Relationships

Professional relationships are inherently designed to be based on practicality, but they also work on psychological conditions related to performance, hierarchy and transactional worth. In the majority of workplaces individuals are only valued for their productivity, efficiency, and ability to yield good results. When employees fail to perform or give out desired results, even due to external challenges, they face social exclusion, or job insecurity. This performance-based valuation fosters an environment where worth is conditional upon continued success, not intrinsic capability. Colleagues may exhibit friendliness or support during collaborative projects, but those relationships often disappear when the professional benefit ends. While strategic relationships can be effective professionally, they may also result in emotional exhaustion, imposter syndrome, and ethical conflict, especially when loyalty and authenticity are not reciprocated.

PSYCHOLOGICAL MOTIVATION BEHIND CONDITIONALITY

Why do people sometimes hesitate in relationships due to fear of being harmed? The primary reason for this is the fear of being left alone. Often, they limit their relationships to feeling safe and expressing affection just when it makes them feel good and not when it is required. Attachment theory (Bowlby, 1982) explains this tendency. Intimacy is often resented by those with insecure attachment styles, like anxious or avoidant.

People are often afraid of being honest due to the fear of being rejected. A spouse may not be able to express his or her strong emotions until their partner reassures them of stability, which is yet another example of conditionality in trust. The requirement for predictability or control is another justification for setting conditions. Relationships are no exception to the feeling that life is unpredictable. People occasionally set up circumstances in their relationships to feel safer and in control. Rewarding behaviors tend to be repeated, according to behaviorism (Skinner, 1953). If people learn that love is only provided when they please or accomplish, they might start performing for connection, which would lead to a reward-based dynamic.

People tend to change their behavior to keep a close relationship going with someone. For example, if a youngster receives praise only when they receive good grades or excel at academics, they may form a core belief that love is based on performance.

Many common phrases we hear all the time, such as "A good daughter always puts others first" or "Men shouldn't show their emotions" are cultural ideas that affect how people give and receive love, unconsciously. We learn by observing others—parents, films, and teachers—and start to replicate these conditional patterns in ourselves, according to Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977). Because you've always observed it, do you adhere to specific "rules" in your relationships? In certain cultures, for instance, adult children might feel that they must only express affection if their parents agree with their life decisions.

Experiences from the past may also be very important. People may establish more stringent boundaries as a self-defense mechanism if they have gone through trauma or unfulfilled emotional needs. To feel safer, it's like erecting walls. Like locks, these only open when they are sufficiently secure.

Have you ever cut off contact with someone until they "proved" they were deserving of your closeness? For example, someone who had a lot of disappointment as a youngster could only be affectionate when they feel totally in control of the situation.

Finally, power relations are important. Relationships are not always equal, and love can occasionally be negotiated. According to the Social Exchange Theory (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959), people think of relationships as a profit or loss statement. This unsaid statement includes a list of profits or benefits of the relationships which can feel like unwritten guidelines.

These examples help us understand that conditionality is not about manipulation and selfishness but in reality, it originates from a deep-seated need for stability, security and love. Understanding these psychological factors can help us promote compassion for others as well as for ourselves and help cultivating more unconditional forms of connection.

EFFECTS OF CONDITIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Imagine attempting to grow a plant in soil that only occasionally supplies nutrients. It only thrives when the soil "approves." You can water it and shield it from the sun. The plant might grow over time, but it will never be able to realise its full potential. Similar to this, people who are in conditional relationships may be able to emotionally survive, but they hardly ever flourish. Emotionally conditional relationships, in which affection, care, or acceptance are earned rather than freely given, can cause significant psychological and interpersonal harm, even though all relationships have expectations.

Impact on Mental Health

Anxiety, low self-esteem, persistent guilt, and emotional dependence are often associated with conditional relationships. People may start to internalise the idea that they are only lovable when they live up to external expectations if emotional rewards are irregular or contingent on compliance.

Cognitive Theory (Beck, 1967) holds that our thoughts influence our emotions and behaviour. Someone may start to believe that "love must be earned" or "I'm only valuable when I perform" if they are consistently rejected unless they act in a particular way. Feelings of inadequacy and chronic low self-esteem can result from this skewed self-concept.

For instance, a teenager who receives praise only for their academic achievements may become extremely anxious about failing, believing that subpar work will cause them to emotionally distance themselves from their parents

Effects on Attachment Patterns

Traditionality can either strengthen preexisting insecure patterns or interfere with secure attachment. Early interactions with carers influence how people relate to others as adults, claims Attachment Theory (Ainsworth et al., 1978). Children who receive love and care only in specific circumstances are more likely to develop an anxious attachment style, which is typified by clinginess, a fear of being abandoned, and a continual need for assurance. In order to avoid the hurt of rejection, some people may adopt an avoidant style, choosing emotional independence and detachment. Consider attachment to be your emotional thermostat. It is difficult to feel stable or secure in a conditional environment because the temperature is constantly changing—too hot one minute, too cold the next.For instance, a romantic partner who grew up in a conditional household might constantly look for approval and become alarmed if their partner shows signs of emotional withdrawal, even for a brief period of time.

Restricted Growth and Autonomy

Authenticity frequently turns into a liability in conditional relationships. To stay accepted, people start altering their actions, feelings, and decisions. This eventually impedes emotional freedom, personal development, and a distinct sense of self.

According to the Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985), psychological well-being depends on relatedness, competence, and autonomy. By suggesting that "you can be yourself—but only the version of yourself I approve of," conditionality undermines autonomy. It's like having a house with locked rooms that you can't enter unless you act in a certain way; those locked rooms are the parts of you that are never allowed to be who you are. For instance, if a partner only values traditional career choices, a person who loves the creative arts may give up on their passion, which can cause internal conflict, identity suppression, and resentment.

Reduced Long-Term Satisfaction

Conventionality may alter behaviour in the short term, but over time, it frequently erodes emotional closeness, trust, and relationship satisfaction. Mutual understanding and emotional safety are the foundation of healthy relationships; when affection is exploited as leverage, the bond may become less emotional and more transactional.

People evaluate relationships according to perceived benefits and costs, according to the Social Exchange Theory (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). Feelings of being underappreciated, in control, or unloved are caused by the conditional and inconsistent emotional rewards that characterise conditional relationships. A conditional relationship is similar to a contract that requires ongoing renegotiation because eventually, one or both parties grow weary of the terms.

As an example, a long-term marriage may seem functional on the outside but suffer from emotional isolation and unspoken resentment on the inside when one partner regularly withholds affection unless their standards are met (e.g., income level, appearance, chores).

Conditional relationships affect much more than fleeting feelings; they influence our self-perception, interpersonal relationships, and willingness to develop. People can start to

question the internalised notion that love must be earned and shift towards relationships based on unconditional acceptance, emotional safety, and genuine connection by being aware of these repercussions.

CONDITIONAL VS UNCONDITIONAL: A FALSE DICHOTOMY

We often see relationships as one of the two either conditional or unconditional. This is a very black and white perspective because human connections are truly very complex in nature. Even though the idea of unconditional love sounds perfect especially in relationships like those of parent-child bond or romantic partners. In real-life all relationships bear the weight of expectations, whether said or unsaid.

For example, Parents often say to their children, they love them no matter what. But if the same child does something that does not align with family values or might not live up to their expectations, that love becomes distant and the relationship becomes strained. This shows that there were expectations underneath for the love and approval of the parent, even if no one said them out loud.

Similarly in romantic relationships when there is an unsaid expectation to always be emotionally present or physically affectionate. The relationship might disintegrate or can turn into a heavy emotional baggage for both the partners.

The essential difference lies between healthy boundaries and harmful conditions. Healthy boundaries make a person feel respected and safe in a relationship which in turn helps cultivate a more positive and healthy relationship. But when love or support is only offered if a person behaves a certain way, meets certain standards or expectations which results in suppression of the true identity of a person, that becomes a problem. That becomes control under the false pretext of love.

So, thinking about relationships as either totally conditional or totally unconditional is a hypothetical assumption, because in reality relationships are fluid, always changing with time and context. This view can enable us to build better, more genuine connections based on mutual understanding and not unrealistic and unsaid expectations or conditions.

CONTEMPORARY TRENDS

Modern technology, especially social media and dating apps has completely transformed the view and experience of relationships. Social platforms like Instagram and Tinder have made relationships primarily centered around performance and public approval. Majority of the interactions now depend on things like likes, replies, or whether someone matches with us. As a result, people often feel pressured to present only the best and the most “likable” version of themselves online in order to get noticed or fit in. (Chou & Edge, 2012).

Dating apps especially have made finding a partner feel more like an online shopping experience. With just a swipe, people are accepted or rejected usually based on a quick judgment of their looks and lifestyle. While it feels empowering at first making us think we are in control, this approach often leads to shallow connections where people are treated as options rather than individuals. Due to this newfound approach things like ghosting, emotional burnout and fear of commitment have become more common targeting the younger generation most. (Ansari & Klinenberg, 2015).

This has also affected communication a lot. Instead of deep meaningful conversations, relationships are now driven by quick replies, emojis and algorithm-based content. Which in turn has made understanding and connecting with others a lot harder than it actually is. Relationships now rely on whether someone is available online and not whether they are emotionally present in real life.

The culture of today puts a heavy focus on independence and personal goals. Even though it is extremely important to value our own needs, this has now become a new way to avoid emotional responsibility or efforts in relationships. Vulnerability and emotional support are being neglected in a relationship which in turn makes many connections feel conditional and only being maintained when it's easy or convenient (Turkle, 2011).

THERAPEUTIC AND SOCIAL IMPLICATION

The belief that many relationships are conditional has deep meaning in therapy. In clinical settings, people often come in with the struggle of emotional pain that can be traced back to early experiences of love that were interpreted as "earned" rather than given freely. These early experiences with either parents, caregivers or romantic partners form the foundation of how they further relate to others later in life. This is the primary learning of attachment theory as well that our early bonds affect whether we grow up feeling secure in relationships or being constantly anxious, distant or unsure (Bowlby, 1988).

Therapy helps people by understanding their past experiences that have unconsciously affected their relationships in their adulthood. For example, a boy who is only praised for doing well in school and following rules may grow up believing that he only deserves love when he succeeds in life or follows the set cultural values. As an adult he might face problems of perfectionism and develop a constant fear of disappointing others and constantly keep associating his worth to his achievements. In therapy, they separate who they are from what they do. This helps them understand that they are worthy of love and care simply because they exist and not because of their achievements or performance (Brown, 2012).

Therapy also offers something which is even more powerful that is, a space where empathy, honesty and emotional support are offered without conditions. For a person who has always felt love came with strings attached, this kind of space can be life changing. It allows them to experience what a healthy and an emotionally safe relationship actually looks and feels like.

Understanding how common conditional love functions can benefit our society as a whole. In social institutions like families, schools, workplaces and media, more conversations about emotional intelligence and healthy communication are needed. People should be taught how to identify red flags of covert conditionality, set boundaries and show how mutual emotional care can lead to stronger, more lasting relationships. This in turn can help create a culture where people support each other not just because it is convenient to do so but because of the fact that everyone deserves safe and meaningful relationships.

CONCLUSION

Human relationships are far more complex to be simply classified as "conditional" or "unconditional". This paper has explored how conditional bonds are shaped by early experiences, cultural norms, and emotional needs and how they are manifest across families, romantic relationships, friendships and work. Psychological frameworks like attachment theory, behaviorism, and social exchange theory reveal how people learn to equate love or value with approval, performance and conformity.

Conditionality is not always harmful. But when conditionality becomes an unconscious or rigid pattern, it leads to anxiety, low self-worth and emotional burnout. In today's digital age of social media and dating Apps these dynamics have become even more visible and even more damaging.

Finding more about unconscious conditionality can help a person break away from destructive patterns and make better, safer interactions with other people. Setting boundaries, being aware of your own emotions, and being emotionally intelligent are all important parts of this process. The objective is to identify and consider the expectations and conditions we set for ourselves and other people, rather than to let go of all of them. We can build relationships based on empathy, respect, and emotional safety if we are more conscious.

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