

DETROIT

NATIVE SUN

The Patching Crew

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While driving down the freeway, I noticed that traffic was slowing down ahead of me. As I got a bit further I saw flares on the road and a big yellow truck with a lighted arrow blinking on its back end. As I passed the truck I saw 4 workmen sticking shovels in the back of another truck and getting asphalt. They dumped shovels of asphalt into all the potholes that were in the pavement. The potholes were all different sizes from small and shallow to large and deep. The workers filled the holes and left them humped up with not much concern as to the efficiency of their tasks. Due to the extreme fluctuations in seasonal temperatures, potholes seem to be a dreaded yet expected phenomenon. The potholes will be filled in time and time again, year after year, and ultimately the road begins to look worse than Swiss cheese. Eventually the road will be stripped down to its foundation and repaved anew.

As I drove past the last truck, I began to think about how we all have emotional potholes. Emotional potholes are events, situations or experiences that happened in our lives that left us feeling angry, guilty, resentful, deceived, grief stricken, lonely, unappreciated, inadequate, hurt, disrespected, abandoned, fearful etc. Our potholes usually start at a very early age, and usually grow wider and deeper with time, which is the result when the cause of the pothole is not resolved. Some examples of emotional potholes are: the loss of a loved one, your achievements or efforts are not acknowledged; your mate has had an affair, being teased as a child, feeling unattractive, experiencing physical or sexual abuse, feeling like you never "fit in", feeling like you aren't smart or intelligent enough, etc.

The biggest problem with emotional potholes is that people don't know how to repair them. In an attempt to repair them, people typically resort to trying to fill them in. Filling a pothole in is ineffective and temporary at best. Some of the most obvious signs of filling in potholes are: increased or excessive eating, craving or eating sweets and other pleasure foods, increased to excessive sexual activities, gambling, pornography, increased to excessive alcohol and/or drugs, smoking, unnecessary or excessive shopping or spending money, multiple failed relationships, looking for another relationship before the current one has ended or immediately after a breakup.

Attempts to fill in an emotional pothole are attempts to feel good or better, and unfortunately it will never work, the only way is to permanently repair and repave it. Repaving your emotional road will be a process that will be achieved over varying periods of time specific to the issue. For instance, it might only take you moments or hours to make peace within yourself about losing a family heirloom, than you would at the death of your mate or child. There is no time table for emotional healing because we all process our emotions differently, what is most important is the willingness and ardent desire to change your life and to live in peace and happiness.

Before you repave your emotional road, you must:

• *Strip it down to its foundation by-*

- 1) First dissecting your feelings and identifying what you feel in any situation that evokes those strong emotions within you (such as "I feel lonely and abandoned"). Then ask yourself what or who makes you feel that way ("My husband")
- 3) Ask yourself why you feel that way ("Because he works all day and when he comes home he just watches sports")
- 4) Repeat #3, ask yourself why you feel that way ("Because he doesn't spend any time with me and he ignores me")

5) Repeat #3 again (Because he treats me like my father did, my father never paid me any attention")

The real issue has nothing to do with your husband, your emotional pothole developed with your relationship, or lack thereof, with your father. Now you have just stripped down to the foundation of your emotional road. This is where feelings of loneliness, abandonment, inadequacy, rejection, anger, resentment and fear began to first develop. These feelings will unconsciously arise and be the underlying cause of future challenges from adolescence into adulthood, creating larger and deeper potholes in the many experiences and relationships throughout life. These potholes could cause a person to not strive to reach their goals and dreams and live their passion for fear of inadequacy. Or, to unconsciously sabotage a relationship for fear of rejection and abandonment. Or to gain weight to satisfy the resentment, anger, fear and feelings of loneliness which have intensified over time.

Stripping down to the foundation of your emotional road is called Self-Analysis, or introspection. *Healing from without always starts with healing from within!* This is why in ancient Kemet (Egypt) the axiom "Know Thyself" was the primary focus in the schools of higher learning. To truly know anything, including yourself, you must do critical analysis, considering all possibilities. The journey of Knowing Thyself or self-discovery will be a lifelong one. Throughout your experiences and challenges in life, at the end of every day, reflect on what happened and how you acted or reacted. Were you pleased with each situation and outcome? Were they harmonious and peaceful, and if not, could you have handled things a little better? Was there chaos and disagreements? Instead of looking at the other person's role, look only at how you reacted or responded, focus on why you acted or responded that way. These are not the other person's potholes, they are yours. Go back to steps 1-5 until you strip down to the foundation of your emotional road.

Now that you have stripped down your road, it is time to repave it. When a road is repaved, special care and attention is taken to make sure the foundation is solid and free from all cracks and debris. If you lay fresh pavement over a cracked and rocky foundation, the new pavement will be uneven and eventually create new potholes.

• Repaving your road begins with:

- 1) Being completely truthful and honest with yourself while doing steps 1-5, without blaming anyone for anything (including yourself)
- 2) Acknowledge that there is a part of you that needs to be healed
- 3) Make the decision to want to change and heal that part of you
- 4) Acknowledge your actions or inaction's regarding the situation that needs resolution
- 5) Analyze your role, actions or inactions (not the other person's) and then assume responsibility for your role and actions or inaction's
- 6) Find Forgiveness towards yourself and/or to the other person regarding the situation
- 7) Discover what your life's lesson within the experience was (i.e. to begin to love and value yourself, to stand in your power, that you are not a victim, that you can achieve anything that you set out to do, that you do not need validation, etc.)
- 8) Release the experience with no blame, judgments, negative feelings or emotions attached to the situation

The process of stripping and repaving is not necessarily easy because of the level and intensity of the emotions that will arise. Praying before you begin is extremely important and helpful. Some people might need the assistance of a spiritual advisor, or a trained counselor to assist them through this process. Regardless to which method you choose, the ultimate goal is to eventually drive down a smooth even, newly paved road with no potholes in it!

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Inflation is causing consumers to identify their priorities



(StatePoint) If you've been watching your wallet, you're not alone. As Americans continue to navigate inflation, 76% report cutting back on spending, up from 67% in 2024, according to the second annual Wells Fargo Money Study.

The majority of Americans also say they are making tough financial choices to navigate their lives, including delaying plans with hefty price tags, such as travel, homeownership, education, marriage and retirement.

"There is a clear social narrative surrounding the question: 'do I, and will I, have enough?'" The fact that these questions are being asked is positive because we know the earlier people focus on their money behaviors, the more time they have to course correct to achieve their goals," said Michael Liersch, head of Advice and Planning at Wells Fargo.

Consumers continue to navigate higher than expected prices

An overwhelming 90% of those surveyed responded they feel "sticker shock" in one or more areas of common spending, including eating out, attending a concert, buying a bottle of water, or downloading a video game, and say actual costs are between 55% and 200% higher than what they expect.

"Spending is one of the most important factors to staying on track," said Liersch. "I would encourage people to align their spending with what matters most to them."

Nearly all Americans (94%) acknowledge that they want to do just that: align money choices with their values, and 86% want to be more intentional and thoughtful about spending.

According to Liersch, "These insights highlight that Americans are not just winging it. They are being extraordinarily introspective as they navigate their financial priorities."

Americans judge themselves, not others Money can be an emotional topic, at times inciting envy, anxiety and secretiveness. While 87% of Americans say it makes no difference to them how much money another person has, 56% keep how much they have secret, and 32% of them say it's because they are trying to avoid people judging them.

Americans also spend time thinking about how much money other people have - and wishing they could have more themselves. Forty-seven percent responded

they often feel envious of how much money other people have, 37% admit to obsessing about getting rich, 34% admire social media millionaires, and 23% admit to sometimes overspending just to keep up with people around them.

"Americans appear comfortable with other people being authentic about their financial situation, which is encouraging," Liersch says. "So now it's time to overcome self-judgment and reset the frame of reference from others to one's own personal benchmark."

Americans want help meeting goals

Eighty-six percent of respondents say they have a clear picture of what they want their money to do for them. And the vast majority are optimistic about how to do it: 87% say now is a good time to save and 65% say now is a good time to invest. Yet 61% say they need a mental reset, and are being held back by such factors as difficulty changing habits, lack of financial knowledge and other financial responsibilities.

To overcome these challenges, Americans are seeking more financial advice year over year. Last year, 24% said they were seeking more advice from others; this year it's 36%. Looking across generations, the desire for more advice is higher among teens (54%), gen Z adults (61%) and millennials (46%).

At a time when many are feeling cash-strapped, learning new ways to think about and manage money can help you take control of your financial future.

For the full report, visit sites.wf.com/wfmoneystudy-2025.

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