

# Narcissistic Abuse *in* Intimate Relationships

*Signs  
of  
Covert  
Domestic  
Violence*

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Narcissistic Abuse in Intimate Relationships

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# Acknowledgements

***Narcissistic Abuse in Intimate Relationships*** was produced with the support of our readers, our online survivor network and the families we have served worldwide in our efforts to help people end domestic abuse. A special acknowledgment to Partners in Prevention for their dedication and commitment to helping people find peace in their lives and in their relationships.

It is you, our readers, that have inspired me through your questions and feedback shared on social media. The precision in the way my internet articles have resonated with so many of you convinces me that we are accurately describing a syndrome that speaks to core human social issues. And I have been able to write about these dynamics...though which, many of our readers find other options supporting their well-being both in and out of their relationships. For this process, I am most deeply grateful.

My sincere appreciation to my life long colleague and friend John Paul for your wisdom so freely shared. Your insights on domestic violence offender intervention and traditional Buddhism have given a depth to my helping people recognize domestic abuse and heal matters of the heart.

In writing this eBook, I've been moved by the work of the "It's On Us" Initiative. Your commitment to victim advocacy helps people awaken to the realities of sexual assault, and contributes to healing for sexual abuse survivors.

As we all know, a picture is worth a thousand words and the imagery captured in the cover design of ***Narcissistic Abuse in Intimate Relationships*** is a salute to the artistic skills of Lou King. Your expertise in design and IT matters have been a blessing for us.

And for over three decades, I hold awe from patients who have shown me the potency of the human spirit. I thank you for your

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continuing to demonstrate, again and again, that change remains an option for all of us.

And lastly, from the deepest part of me, I acknowledge my beloved father for his kind, compassionate spirit. The foundation given to me through him is a large part of what equips me to recognize what's missing when relationships are toxic from narcissistic abuse.





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# Dedication

## ***Narcissistic Abuse in Intimate Relationships***

is dedicated to the people who have shown me  
the true meaning of narcissistic abuse,  
as through this knowledge,  
we help hundreds of people worldwide.

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# Introduction

***Narcissistic Abuse in Intimate Relationships*** evolved out of the swell of online interest in the concept of narcissistic abuse and antisocial, narcissistically abusive relationships. People worldwide are seeking to understand the signs and signals of this type of intimate partner abuse.

Would you recognize these domestic abuse dynamics in your own life...whether in a current or past significant relationship? Your ability to bring into perspective the fine detail of the subtle signs of this insidious syndrome is your ultimate cure.

And here's why... When you see it for what it is, over excusing it for what it is not, you act on your behalf. Otherwise, you can easily fall prey to a destructive narcissistic abuse pattern—beyond your imagination.

## Signs Signal Something

It's like if I say that balloon of smoke is something you want to run away from, not into, you know that we have identified a set of signals that can be tied to a lethal outcome. If you see these signals for what they are, you can deal with them more realistically—increasing the likelihood of your producing a positive effect for you and your family.

Far too often, people in narcissistically abusive relationships don't see it for what it is, until the chain is around them...until the "I do" is given...until the limitations of the relationship causalities entrap the narcissistic supply.

Living the dance of narcissistic abuse, by design, conditions you to lose yourself. Yet, an interesting thing about these relationships is that when you are in them, you can feel like you are on cloud nine united with your soulmate...until you repeatedly encounter and then confront the dynamics of narcissistic abuse. From here, it all changes abruptly and in a manner

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commensurate with your realizations.

If you are living in one of these relationships while reading this eBook, you may choose to deal with these signals therapeutically with an appropriate treatment intervention, or you may choose to terminate the relationship all together. If you are reflecting on a relationship in the past, you can use your new found perspective to insure that you see these signals clearly and objectively should they ever present again.

## Narcissistic Abuse in Adult Intimate Relationships

Let's begin by defining our terms. What is "narcissistic abuse" in adult intimate relationships?

The term "**narcissistic abuse**" originally emerged in the late twentieth century referring to a specific form of emotional abuse of children by narcissistic parents..."parents who require the child to give up their own wants and feelings in order to serve the parent's needs for esteem, (which constitutes narcissistic abuse)." Online Wikipedia

The concept has also been used to describe forms of abuse in adult intimate relationships by individuals with narcissistic traits or a narcissistic personality disorder. As we look closer at the dynamics in play, you can clearly see the same relationship dysfunction: one Partner A requires the other less empowered Partner B to give up/ignore/disregard their personal wants and feelings in order to serve their (Partner A) own needs for esteem.

Applying this definition and advancing it forward, we introduce the hybrid term narcissistic abuse, combining narcissistic and antisocial features.

"Abuse" in this context refers to **imposing one's will upon another against their will**, and that's the operative phrase: **against their will**. The "narcissistic" (and antisocial) part of this term refers to the **pattern of abuse, irrespective of the obvious risks and potential damages to their partner**. And, of course, the operative phrase in this part is: **irrespective of**

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***the obvious risks and potential damages to their partner.***

This persistent and pervasive behavioral pattern of disregard for the rights of one's partner, the experience of one's partner and the wishes of and commitments to one's partner can be observed across multiple contexts, including:

- Demanding that you partake in activity beyond your capacity due to your being injured and/or ill.
- Engaging in illegal activity implicating you against your knowledge and/or will.
- Insisting that you embrace something that makes you physically sick, aggravating an existing health condition.

Our focus in ***Narcissistic Abuse in Intimate Relationships*** is on domestic abuse evolving out of the psychopathology of Cluster B personality disorders. The primary emphasis is on the hybrid of narcissistic, antisocial and borderline personality features and characteristics.

Specific Cluster B diagnostic criteria brought to light in ***Narcissistic Abuse in Intimate Relationships*** include:

1. a pervasive pattern of grandiosity,
2. need for admiration,
3. lack of empathy,
4. fear of abandonment, and
5. disregard for, and violation of, the rights of others.

The relationship between these symptoms and the dynamics of intimate partner violence are illustrated throughout ***Narcissistic Abuse in Intimate Relationships***.

Be mindful that the batterer profile portrayed in this eBook represents a specific constellation of symptoms, distinguishing it from the affective and behavioral modulation disorders that other batterers have (such as impulse control and mood disorders).

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The identities of the people in the vignettes contained in ***Narcissistic Abuse in Intimate Relationships*** have been altered to protect the privacy of those involved. Some references describing specific psychological and/or domestic abuse concepts are drawn from decades of clinical experience as a psychologist with an expertise in the treatment of intimate partner violence.

It is suggested that you read each chapter and follow with personal reflection on the concepts introduced and/or illustrated in ***Narcissistic Abuse in Intimate Relationships***. Personal journalling may augment your self-discoveries and provide objectivity at the same time.

Our goal is to help you help yourself through these insights, whether you stay in your relationship or whether you chose to end the relationship. We provide this information to you for educational purposes only.

The content contained in ***Narcissistic Abuse in Intimate Relationships*** is not intended to diagnose or provide treatment for any specific disorder. If you need help with your own relationship, we urge you to secure appropriate professional resources.

*"Thank you so much for your information on narcissistic abuse. I read your postings as they come out. They are helping me deflect the poison of the narcissists in my life, and to recognize the abuse when it is camouflaged. Thank you."* Anonymous Reader

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## 1

# 7 Signs of Narcissistic Abuse

**N**arcissism is a term that has become mainstream in psychological and political circles today. It's a term that grows out of psychology to refer to an individual with narcissistic traits or a narcissistic personality disorder.

Some people will tell you narcissism in politics has nothing to do with narcissism in one's personal life. I beg to differ. In my experience, people are to those they love personally just as they are to the public whose support they seek. As Harv Eker says, *"The way you do anything, is the way you do everything."*

Would you know if you were entangled in narcissistic abuse? Here are the seven tell-tale signs of narcissistic abusers. Understand these signs, and you will know the politics of narcissistic abuse.

## No Empathy

These people truly don't have the capacity for empathy. They do not have the ability to authentically embrace the experiential world of another person unless for selfish gain. In other words, these people can put on a good "caring" show in their effort to manipulate others for their own personal benefit. But they won't and can't stand in the shoes of another, genuinely.

## No Remorse

These people don't feel bad about any wrongdoing of theirs. Why?

There is no conscience, no compassion, no concern about the impact of their behavior on others, even those they love. From the narcissistic abuser's point of view, the other person deserves what they got because the narcissistic abuser is...

## Entitled

These people hold rights—in their perverted thinking—that others would never assume. They live in a world in which they have privilege to that which is beyond your imagination. Whether they are objectifying you, raping you or ruling your life, they believe that they deserve what they seek, when and where they seek it because it is already theirs—before the ask.

## Deceptive

They will tell you whatever they believe you need to know in order to get what they are attempting to extract from you. To these people, a lie is not a lie; it's a mechanism to leverage outcome. A misrepresentation of information is the twisting of facts designed to convert another into compliance with respect to that which they pursue.

## Dr. Jekyll/Mr. Hyde

These people will project a persona that is 180 degrees from who and what they really are. Whether priest, doctor, attorney, accountant or philanthropist, they are not as they wish to have you believe. For example, they can be someone allegedly protecting an elderly woman from financial exploitation; all while emotionally manipulating/exploiting her, by using her as a flying monkey/agent in a mission to influence the behavior of her daughter.

## Emotionally Dependent

These people require the emotional support and admiration of their narcissistic supply as oxygen to sustain them. They truly cannot function naturally and normally without the object of their narcissistic abuse serving as the foundation for their existence.

## Uses Battering for Control

And when their narcissistic supply is in question, battering becomes the way to level the playing field. It is their means to shift the power and control within the relationship. It's their way to tip the scale, so they gain the advantage they need to feel on top again.

This battering may present as verbal abuse, emotional abuse, financial abuse, sexual abuse or physical abuse. It's the striking/maneuvering intended to diminish and disempower so as to nourish the deficiency in oneself.

If these signs are familiar to you, don't sweep them under the carpet because the elephant they become can trip you up...big time...when you ignore them.

## 2

# The Affective Sword in Abusive Relationships

**H**ave you ever noticed how some people will do whatever it takes—literally—to get you to do as they wish?

It doesn't even matter what is going on with you; their belief is that they are going to get from you what they seek no matter what. So your experience, your feelings, your preferences, and your circumstances matter not in this equation.

Take Lindsay and Jack, for example. As usual, Lindsay could be Jack and vice versa (Jack could be Lindsay). Alternatively, Jack could be Jackie. You understand that these dynamics cross all boundaries.

## When Needs Clash in Controlling Relationships

Jack arrives at Lindsay's home on a summer evening. Without checking in with Lindsay, he pulls out his phone to obtain tickets to a movie for that night. The two of them had planned for Lindsay to stay at his home that evening. Thus, her bag was ready and waiting at the front door.

However, Lindsay was not feeling well. Seems as though she was fighting a bug, and the bug was battling back. You know how it is when you are under the weather. This part is not a factor for Jack. He doesn't want to hear that Lindsay is not feeling well. This matters not, from his point of view. He places Lindsay's bag in his car (against her wishes) and they proceed in a bit of a hurry to the movie theater.

While walking into the dark theater, Lindsay trips and injures herself significantly. In the moment of impact and shortly after, the damage was hard to assess. At the end of the movie, it became more evident to Lindsay that another injury had been sustained.

So now, she is fighting a bug and weathering a blow to an already existing injury she had been nursing for months prior. Yet, none of this matters to Jack. He still demands that she accompany him to his home for the evening.

## Emotional Extortion, Neglect and Abuse in Play

Lindsay pleads with him to bring in her bag from his car so she may stay home and sleep in her own bed, as she is clearly not feeling well. Jack will have no part of this conversation...without camouflaging the discussion with coercive control and emotionally exploitive tactics. The two of them are in Lindsay's kitchen and the truth of this scenario reveals itself in the moments and hours that follow.

Lindsay pulls out from her herbal remedy cabinet several purification detox formulas that she knows to be effective when you catch an illness within the first 24 hours. Jack stands there watching her load all these supplements into her backpack. She is crying and begging that he "allow" her stay at home.

Jack cannot and will not hear this "foolishness," because from his perspective her gibberish is a lame excuse, a cock block, a detour from his agenda for the evening. This couple spends the next five plus hours with Lindsay in and out of tears and Jack pouring on the emotional extortion, blackmail and abuse, ad nauseam.

## Emotional Extortion/Blackmail Camouflages Actual Physical Needs

While the kitchen scene was glaring in and of itself, the ride over to Jack's home was a nightmare in the making. Lindsay can hardly see straight though her compromised health and the pain of her injury. All while Jack flings one rod of emotional abuse after another, until her weeping is so out of control that *she literally cannot see straight* much less think coherently.

He lets her know how she repeatedly wrongs him (deprives him, neglects him, withholds from him, falls short relative to him) by her not being accessible to him during the week. She is shamed to the core over the fact that she works and doesn't have the same flexible workload, as does he. He wants her to know that weekends simply aren't enough, and he is driven to fill in the space with weekday companionship and love.

She is in pain hurting, but he is demanding of her empathy. This single dynamic is a root theme in their conflict. Jack doesn't do empathy if and when it requires being taken off course of his agenda. **Instead of extending empathy to Lindsay with respect to her immediate and obvious physical health condition, he demands it and utilizes coercive control tactics to diminish her commitment to taking care of her own basic needs in order to get his way.**

By the time he has dispensed whatever it takes to engender fear, obligation and guilt, Lindsay merely holds onto the fact that Sunday is soon arriving and this Saturday evening, too, will end. Unfortunately, however, the dysfunctional toxic dynamics do not stop without proper intervention.

If you recognize this interaction pattern in your intimate relationship, take a hard and fast look at narcissistic emotional abuse in controlling relationships.



## 3

# Disregard ~ When Your Experience Matters Not

**H**ave you ever noticed how some people will throw a deaf ear at your plea for change and your cry for help...just because?

And then, the more you speak, the less you are heard. It's as though they want you to believe that no matter how you ask what you seek, it will not be forth coming...just because.

Take Andy and Rebecca, for example. Andy has a habit of engaging restaurant servers into conversations about matters unrelated to the meal at hand. On this one evening, he was chatting with Rebecca in a back and forth banter over a recent sexual assault/encounter of theirs.

Rebecca sees the waiter coming and politely asks Andy to refrain from talking further about their different perspectives on this experience. Andy clearly hears her request (repeated many times), but that doesn't stop this man's lips.

The waiter walks up and Andy blurts out the very thing that Rebecca begs Andy not to discuss at the table in front of this stranger. But even worse, Andy not only blurts it out in his uncensored style, he poses it as a question asked directly to the waiter: *It it rape if you...?*

So now Rebecca sits in the wake of her request for privacy in a public place, and she is met with having to digest her sense of embarrassment and awkwardness over Andy's flaunting their difficult, painful experience.

## When Disregard Rules the Moment

The exchange between the waiter and Andy looked a bit like buddies at a frat party spitting sexual innuendo, indiscriminately. Rebecca is pathetically withdrawn over her partner's refusal to respect her wishes coupled with the blatant crudeness of the discussion itself. Her partner and the waiter are laughing over such a sexual scenario and she is almost crying.

While driving home, Rebecca informs Andy of how she felt when he blurted out the very thing she begged him to refrain from sharing with the waiter. She had hoped he would hear her so as to avoid this kind of discomfort in the future. But instead, what he heard was an opening to *set her straight*.

Andy informs Rebecca, "If you are embarrassed, this is your problem." I should not have to change my behavior because of this problem of yours, Andy claims.

Now, take a step back and image being Rebecca. You certainly know that your embarrassment is yours. You also know that you do not seek to share highly personal matters of this nature with strangers in public places, much less local restaurants. And now you know that your partner refuses to factor your experience and requests into consideration. You are suddenly aware of your limited options.

If you recognize these roadblocks in your interaction with your intimate partner, seek to understand the control dynamics of intimate partner violence and the relevant psychopathology of narcissism.

## 4

# Identifying Coercive Control Domestic Abuse

**O**ften times people in abusive relationships know something is not right, but have a difficult time identifying the specific dynamics in play.

One feels violated, yet the actual violation remains blurred amidst the stress and strain of the conflict that they live with their abusive controlling partner.

In many cases, they may not even recognize their partner as being a perpetrator of domestic abuse. Moreover, the battering partner doesn't see it either. They don't envision themselves as a domestic violence offender. You may think this is because of denial; however, it may also be about ignorance.

Domestic violence is commonly thought of as the black and blue...the push, the shove, the hit, punch, scratch, slap...whatever marking remains to tell that something "physical" happened. Or, it might be thought of as the foul language and swear words that dart across the room in the heat of an argument. These verbal assaults, like physical abuse, are concrete.

They are the commonly thought of swords of domestic abuse. And believe it or not, these forms of abuse represent only a small portion of the tactics used to establish and maintain an unequal distribution of power and control in an intimate relationship.

## Power and Control Wheel

Take a walk with me around the Power and Control Wheel,\* and you will see the majority of abusive tactics refer to behaviors that can fall

under the radar of people outside of domestic violence circles.

1. Using Intimidation
2. Using Emotional Abuse
3. Using Isolation
4. Minimizing, Denying and Blaming
5. Using Children
6. Using Male Privilege
7. Using Economic Abuse
8. Using Coercion and Threats

For example, the use of “coercion and threats” can be seen as a specific personality style of “determination.” You know what I mean: saying or doing whatever it takes to extract something from you that is not willingly forthcoming. The way this tactic is realized in the relationship is excessive relentless pressure placed upon the victim to bend their will and forcefully yield the perpetrator’s desired outcome.

So whether your partner is telling you that he\*\* will find a prostitute to have sex with unless you succumb, or threatening to terminate the relationship unless you do whatever may be demanded (even putting you in harms way), a dynamic is set in play to disempower you. Over time with the use of ***repeated unrelenting pressure***, you come to see that you are not an equal partner in the relationship, and your sense of safety with this person vanishes.

We can progress through the wheel and see the same net result with each and every one of the power and control tactics listed. If you hurt and know you are being violated in your intimate relationship, seek to understand the wisdom in the Power and Control Wheel.

\* Power and Control Wheel, Duluth Model, Modified Online PDF

\*\* Domestic violence crosses gender, wherein men are victims of narcissistic abuse.



Power and Control Wheel, Duluth Model

## 5

# The Crazyiness of Coercive Control

**H**ave you ever noticed how some people will lose their mind in their pursuit to get you to do as they desire?

The things that they do and the things they say border on absolute insanity, from the outside looking in. But, from their perspective, they are merely twisting your arm to secure your compliance.

For example, take a look at Harold and Melinda. Harold has an important trip planned in which he will take the microphone to share his perspective in a panel discussion clear across the country. He wants his girlfriend Melinda to accompany him, and seeks to convince her that his performance (as well as his success) hinges on her presence.

However, Melinda struggles with a complicated leg injury that interferes with her ability to walk comfortably. She knows that she requires medical attention, yet all of her energy is tied up in fighting off Harold's demands.

## Coercive Control Tactics

Five days before Harold's planned trip, Melinda announces that should she feel by the end of the week as she feels now, she is concerned about traveling. She didn't even say she wasn't going, yet Harold is all over her with coercive control tactics designed to make her head spin.

Here are just a few of the lines used to manipulate her decision-making and reel her into his web of confusion and commitment.

- “You have been planning to let me down all along,” he declares.
- “If you truly loved me, you would accompany me on this trip,” says Harold.
- “You don’t really want a relationship; nor do you know how to have one.” (one of his regular lines)
- “Your injury is not the issue! You are using this excuse to get out of going with me,” Harold asserts.
- “You don’t believe in me and you think my cause is foolish.” (He doesn’t believe in himself and he thinks his cause is foolish.)
- “I’m going to put you in a wheelchair and WE are going on this trip no matter what!”
- “If you don’t go on this trip with me, we are done! You will never see me again. PERIOD”

As you might expect, this rant continues for several hours...actually several days. Nothing brings this to a halt other than Melinda’s submission.

But Melinda knows that traveling under the circumstances will compromise her health. She does all she can to assure Harold that her unwillingness to travel has nothing to do with her feelings for him, his professional cause or their relationship. Rather, her pulling back is about her injury.

Stay with me, because if you thought the first round of this coercive control was out of line, hold on. What’s to follow is beyond seriously silly. It’s out right insane.

## Call in ER to the Rescue

Two days before the scheduled trip, Harold tells Melinda that he is suffering a vascular episode of such severity that it may take his life. In this so-called medical emergency, he wants Melinda to know that her unwillingness to accompany him on this trip is directly responsible for his demise.



They struggle back and forth for hours on the phone until the midnight hour. Harold says that what she is “doing to him” by her withholding will kill him. What he wants is for her to realize that ***his medical needs trump hers because his health condition can result in death instantaneously; whereas, her medical issue will only net her wheelchair occupancy.***

This perverted “logic” is the basis for his demanding that both he and she “first” tend to his medical needs. Believe it or not, Harold embraces this belief ***and***—as he lures her in by engaging her assistance reaching out to neighbors for a welfare check—he secures Melinda’s buy into the same irrational thinking. ***She must compromise her health to prevent him from having a catastrophic health crisis...all in the spirit of getting his way through classic coercive control.***

If you recognize these dynamics in your intimate relationship, take a hard and fast look at emotional psychological abuse in controlling relationships. The sooner you see this for what it is, the quicker you can be on your road to healing.

## 6

# Using Your Emotions to Extract Your Compliance

**H**ave you ever experienced yourself giving into something you know that you do not want in order for you to turn off the ache of the emotional stirring triggered to get you there? If your partner is practiced in emotional exploitation abuse, I trust the answer is yes.

This partner (male or female) relies heavily on the use of your own inner suffering to yield his/her desired outcome. So let's say he/she wants you to go to an event that you do not want to attend. You know it is not practical for you to travel to this event, nor do you have the physical wherewithal to participate.

But as you probably know your experience and preference are immaterial to your partner, as their agenda is singularly focused to get you to do one thing: comply with their wishes.

## FOG Vehicle as Converter

The FOG is the vehicle that drives you there. It is an acronym representing the emotional composite of Fear, Obligation and/or Guilt (coined by Forward, S. and Frazier, F.).

Many things are typically said to trigger fear, obligation and guilt. It could be statements like this:

- "If you don't do this with me, I will get someone else to be my partner for the night." Sounds like: "If you don't do this sexual act 'for' me, I will find someone else who will..."

- “If you don’t accompany me, it suggests to me that you are not a good wife, because ‘good’ wives do X.”
- “If you don’t go with me, it proves to me that you really don’t love me, you don’t care about me...”
- “If you don’t come with me, I will not succeed and it will be all your fault.”

The ways in which the FOG gets stirred are as varied as the people stirring up the emotional ingredients. The stirring continues until it generates a compliant outcome.

Often times, you will see that the thing sought is minuscule relative to the weight of the FOG. You sit in the blanket of experience...sifting through your fear, your sense of obligation and, of course, your guilt.

The tipping point is when you reach that place in which the pain of the FOG is so severe that you will do most anything—including what your partner is seeking—just to turn the darn FOG off. You get the picture?

If you are entangled in an intimate relationship in which you spend time swimming in fear, obligation and/or guilt as you process your partner’s requests/demands...pause as you could be engaged in emotional exploitation.

You could be on the receiving end of someone using your own inner suffering to manipulate your choices. The long and the short of this life is this... You are chronically running from your own fear, obligation and guilt.

- You are doing things out of fear to prevent something else from happening.
- You are doing things because you “have to” because your involvement signs you up irrespective of your wishes.
- You are doing things out of a moral compass that have no relevance to the act itself.

Once you can get out from under the FOG, you enjoy the freedom and liberty of making choices expressing your authentic self.





# When a Delusional Process Bleeds Over into Domestic Abuse

**H**ow does someone vehemently demand that you risk your ability to walk in order to participate in their delusional process? Sounds extreme? No, this is classic in abusive relationships.

Typically, it happens when the delusional process is so severe that the person cannot see it themselves, NOR do they have the ability to see you except for how you may serve to support their delusional scheme.

## Abusive Delusional Stupor

Take Larry and Kim for example. Larry, a 40 year old entrepreneur, demanded that Kim support him in his effort to obtain an extraordinarily high-ranking position of which he was absolutely unqualified to fulfill (and he knew it). Moreover, he demanded that she offer such support for him even though she could not support herself standing comfortably on her own two feet, due to an accident two weeks prior.

From Larry's perspective, none of her concerns over her immediate bodily injury mattered. He had convinced himself of an unrelenting overvalued idea. And that is: *This beautiful woman traveling across the country with him to accompany him for this job event "would make him legitimate and more creditable,"* so he insisted. (As a side note, mind you, Kim was one of the only partners/significant other at this event.)

I hope you are listening closely, because I want you to notice how the second false belief identified here inherently counters the core delusion of grandiosity. But, he managed to hold them both...along with many others relative to his promise and success in their relationship and in his so-called professional endeavor.

## Delusions of Jealousy

It all cascaded so quickly that Kim could not tell if Larry was even aware of the absence of reality embedded in his thinking. What she did realize was that this same dysfunctional cognitive/affective process was the basis for his ongoing leaps into delusions of jealousy, chronically scattered throughout the relationship.

The simplest of all activities such as administrative accounting or researching insurance options sent Larry into his preoccupation of her abandonment/cheating even though that belief had absolutely no basis in reality. The uproars ignited by his harboring this belief netted the two of them days upon days of extreme conflict.

## Delusional Processes Bleeds On

Eventually Kim realized the only way she could tend to and maintain her health, her life and her well-being was to walk away from the relationship. And that is exactly what she did, as she retreated into healing her immediate injury. She detached from his delusional process, compartmentalized her connection with him and went on with healing the injuries and losses of the relationship.

In the weeks that followed, Larry's delusional process continued to spill over into his efforts and ploys to reassert his import and influence. At one point, he claimed that a famous person was quoting him and he wanted to impress Kim with this significant news.

She replied cautiously, "Was your name quoted?" As expected, Larry acknowledged, "No." But from his point of view, the fact that this

famous person mentioned the concept of peace in a specific situation, they (of course) must be referring to the ideas professed by Larry. This delusion of reference was quite typical for Larry.

## Delusions in Abusive Relationships

In the aftermath of this relationship, Kim sorted and sifted through incident after incident stemming from Larry's attachment to a set of irrational beliefs that he claimed as fact. In her reflections, she was reminded of the pervasiveness of the delusional process. There were delusions within delusions.

For example, at one point, Larry whole heartedly embraced the notion that an individual he met was going to facilitate his obtaining the exposure he sought leading to the job he longed. But this person, as the agent-of-facilitation of the core delusion of grandiosity, on face value, was glaringly unrealistic; but not to Larry.

It's one thing when someone holds and harbors their faulty perceptions. It's another when they flagrantly and brutally demand that you participate in their delusional scheme at the expense of your own physical health and well-being.

If you are in a relationship that blinds you with confusion, violates your most basic rights and hurts you to the core, keep your eyes open wide because you could be on a very dangerous, delusional ride.



## 8

## Where Empathy Does Not Exist

**E**mpathy is one of those golden words that says it all to many and says nothing to some. It's the capacity to experience that felt by another. It's the ability to authentically embrace—with open clarity—the feelings, needs and concerns of another person.

Some people have it, and some simply don't. It can be hard for those accustomed to giving and receiving empathy to stand raw and vulnerable with one's loved one, and face a demand for empathy while in one's greatest need.

### Extraordinary Moments, Everyday Needs

Lynette, a surgical nurse, knows this far too well. Christmas was in the air on the morning that her daughter reached back for mother-daughter holiday time. She had been waiting for this moment for years and finally the day was upon her.

It was all so perfect for a long over-due reunion of parent and child. They were both filled with excitement over the prospect of having this special time together. With enthusiasm, Lynette shares the news of her child's desire with her partner Doug. The last thing she expected was his interference because he, too, has issues being estranged from his own adult children.

## When Empathy Is Not Possible

Instead of supporting her having this time with her child, Doug demanded that he participate in their holiday reunion. Doug had not met Lynette's daughter and insisted that this was his opportunity to meet and bond with her adult child.

The back and forth that this couple endured, from the outside looking in, was painful beyond imagination. The struggle Lynette experienced over having a holiday dinner alone with her daughter was absolutely over the top.

Lynette was not ready to introduce her partner to her child. And Doug firmly insisted that he meet the daughter whether Lynette was ready or not. All Lynette wanted was to be with her child without the drama of her partner's demands for inclusion...intrusion. For weeks, they fought over whether he would or would not **"allow"** her to be with her own child without his being present.

## Blurry Boundaries of Narcissistic Abuse

What's wrong with this picture?

- A)** Why must she get his buy-in for her to fulfill her own needs?
- B)** Why can't he respect her request to lift his unreasonable demand?

Seems like simple questions, right?

As she described this encounter to me, I could feel the chains of her oppression. It was heavy. She was conflicted and entrapped. He was demanding, unrelenting and without empathy for the needs, the rights and the experience of his partner. It was sad and scary, all at the same time.

## When Control Dominates the Moment

As Christmas does every year, it came and it passed. And with only a few days left in the year, Lynette sought to find an opening in which she could be with her daughter for a holiday celebration.

She sent an email to Doug explaining how disappointed she was in herself for not holding her own relative to him with respect to this outing with her child in the days prior. In plain and simple language, Lynette told Doug that she is meeting her daughter **alone** for a holiday meal. And further, this meeting is non-negotiable. Her message was expressed with clarity, sensitivity and compassion.

Under normal circumstances, one might expect her comment to be received with understanding at best and without resistance at a minimum. However, we are not looking at normal here, instead what presents borders on creepy. You heard me. Creepy.

It's mid-week just before New Years and the perfect time for Lynette to meet her daughter. As she seeks to find her exit, she gets a text from Doug with an image of him eating at the restaurant that Lynette selected to meet her child on the only day she was not working. (Creepy and Controlling) Doug was determined to get his way, all while blind to how he was violating his partner's rights and blatantly disregarding her wishes.

## No Empathy, No Respect, No Relationship

Stopped cold in her tracks, she pulls in to coast through the balance of the holiday, all while privately planning her escape to rendezvous with her own child, without Doug's interference. The thoughts, feelings and experience of this two-week "holiday" period armed Lynette with the wisdom she needed to break the cycle of intimate partner abuse.

The concept of “no empathy” becomes ever so clear when you are living it. If you are in an intimate relationship in which you are coerced into delivering empathy in response to your plea for it, take a hard and fast look at the reality of narcissistic abuse in dysfunctional relationships.



## 9

# When Your Partner Is the Only One with Wishes Worthy of Respect

**T**he disregard in relationships of narcissistic abuse is so poignant that it stops me in my tracks. When you see it in action, you may ask yourself how can a person have such little regard for the wishes and needs of their partner?

Answer: It is part of the psychopathology. Period. And when you understand the underlying dynamics, you see it for what it is: narcissistic abuse.

## What Is Narcissistic Abuse?

As referenced in the introduction, the term “narcissistic abuse” originally emerged in the late twentieth century referring to a specific form of emotional abuse of children by narcissistic parents...“parents who require the child to give up their own wants and feelings in order to serve the parent's needs for esteem, (which constitutes narcissistic abuse).” Online Wikipedia

The concept has also been used to describe forms of abuse in adult intimate relationships by individuals with narcissistic traits or a narcissistic personality disorder. As we look closer at the dynamics in play, you can clearly see the same relationship dysfunction: one Partner A requires the other less empowered Partner B to give up/ignore/disregard their personal wants and feelings in order to serve their (Partner A) own needs for esteem.

For example, take a look at Don and Jackie. From the outside looking in, they appear to be a happy couple in a successful, thriving relationship. However, upon closer examination, one can see nothing could be further from the truth.

## The Muddiness and Clarity of Meeting Family

Jackie's nephew was getting married and it seemed like a wonderful opportunity to reconnect with many members of her family. However, hesitation lurks wherein she remains at an impasse for weeks over a "drug war" that isn't even her own.

Her partner has a significant daily cannabis smoking habit, and she is on the threshold of her beginning to see its compelling grip on him. Jackie engages Don in lengthy discussions about her not wanting him to invite members of her family into his habit. Specifically, she requested that he not fire it up with her brother, due to issues of his own.

Don and Jackie have numerous heartfelt conversations over her wishes regarding his exercising restraint in this matter with her family. All she wanted—as the condition for their going to this wedding together—was that he not bring his pot habit into this meeting with a specific family member. She didn't even care if he was stoned silly, as long as he did not engage her brother in getting high with him.

Jackie detailed at length all the many reasons for this request, and Don expressed complete understanding and full support...in the interest of her partner's brother. At all hours of the night and day they hashed this out, and he appeared willing to respect and honor her wishes. Again, nothing could be further from the truth. He had no intention to follow through on his promise to her, once the party weekend was on.

## The Reality of Narcissistic Disregard

The wedding was beautiful and the evening lovely when they were not fighting over whether or not Don would bring out a handful of joints to experience and share with the wedding party. The tension over this back and forth significantly compromised Jackie's enjoyment of the evening. And then, the whole mess of their different perspectives climaxed the morning after...

Jackie realizes that Don had no intention of honoring his commitment concerning the so-called "cannabis promise" for the weekend. During breakfast, Don invites Jackie's brother to take a stroll and join him in what he believed was an effort to bond with the ole boy. From Don's perspective, smoking a joint with her brother was his gesture toward intimacy with her family. From Jackie's perspective, it was a display of his disregard for her wishes and for the very commitment he made to her.

Adding insult to injury, Don seeks to make their conflict over this all about his loving efforts "to bond" with the brother amidst Jackie's ***intolerance for this kind consideration***. Don cannot see that he has violated a commitment he has made to his partner. Don cannot feel the betrayal because from his point of view there wasn't one. Don cannot experience the impact that his behavior has on his partner. There is no disregard for anyone whatsoever from his perspective, because he is the only one in the room. You heard me. He is the only one with wishes worthy of his respect.

If you recognize these dynamics in your intimate relationship, trust that you already know the workings of narcissistic abuse.

# When the Psychopathology Is the Structural Basis for Domestic Abuse

**P**eople ask if an abuser can really change. My belief is that in cases of well-established psychiatric disorders, it can be extremely problematic. The more severe the psychopathology, the less likely one can expect lasting behavioral change.

For example, Raymond (or it could be Ramona)\* is an expert emotional exploiter. That is another way of saying that he is a domestic abuser who most commonly reaches for the emotional abuse tactic to exert his control. And in addition to this well practiced strategy, there is a long-standing psychiatric condition that is characterologically rooted.

He has a narcissistic personality disorder, with anti-social and borderline features. The likelihood of Raymond changing his abusive behavior is truly a function of his addressing the core psychiatric condition, as well as the domestic abuse dynamics.

The unfortunate fact with respect to prognosis in these cases is that people with advanced psychopathology, as in this particular condition, may enter into a batterer's program without psychological treatment for the underlying psychiatric issue. You may then see the core dynamics transferred to another outlet of expression.

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\*Fictitious profile illustrating comorbidity of the psychopathology and domestic abuse.



## Separate Conditions Require Separate Treatments

Conversely, psychotherapy without domestic abuse treatment can lead to an incomplete resolution of the partner abuse dynamics. In Raymond's case, he had already undergone psychological treatment for years and still managed to retain and perfect his battering behavior.

The psychotherapy intervention may teach a patient how to manage their mental illness without changing the dysfunctional abusive control dynamics characteristic of their intimate relationships. In cases like this, the patients psychopathology continues to fuel their abusive behavior.

If the coexistence and crossover of the two comorbid conditions (domestic abuse and the specific Cluster B personality disorder/features) are not treated independently as two separate conditions, then successful behavior change probably won't be realized, much less sustained.

## The Mind of the Emotional Manipulator

For example, Raymond may come to recognize that verbal abuse and psychological character assaults are unacceptable, and remain unaware of how his use of emotional exploitation violates his partner. From his point of view, his partner's experience is her experience and her responsibility to modulate.

His use of her sustained emotional stirring is his means for maintaining control when and where he believes he may be losing it. It is merely a leveraging technique that he views as benign, yet useful strategically in his getting his way and maintaining his power in the relationship.

He clearly fails to recognize the domestic abuse dynamics in play, all

while he remains unable to comprehend the impact of his actions on his partner. These limitations are a function of the psychopathology. **Expecting empathy from someone with an intact narcissistic personality disorder is like expecting an intimate kiss from someone without lips.** It can't happen because the basis for an empathic response does not exist.

When you attempt to seek empathy from someone incapable of embracing another's experience, it is much like expecting your cat to bark. Cats don't bark. Period.

The kindest thing one can do is to accept the narcissist for who they are, and not expect them to be any different, especially without proper intervention. They simply do not have the capacity for empathy and they cannot function without yours.

They are emotionally dependent, and emotionally absent with respect to compassion for their significant other...unless "for show" as part of a manipulation. As in the case of this example, it is paramount that the core psychiatric issues be addressed as central components in the domestic abuse dynamics.

## Treatment Prognosis and Expectations

One would need to effectively work through the core psychiatric issues of entitlement, privilege, universal disregard for the rights and needs of others, affect modulation and fear of abandonment (real or imagined), independent of the domestic abuse intervention, while at the same time being mindful of how these conditions overlap wherein the dynamics of one support the other.

A major problem that people run into in their effort to remedy the domestic abuse under these circumstances is that personality disorders are highly resistant to psychotherapeutic intervention. These disorders are fundamentally immutable to change. What one can realistically expect, however, is to acquire management strategies for coping with the disorder.

If you are in an abusive relationship with someone that has severe psychiatric issues, be realistic in your hopes for successfully interrupting the dynamics of intimate partner violence and breaking the cycle of domestic abuse. And, increase your likelihood for a positive outcome by addressing each condition independently and as they interconnect with the each other.



## 11

# It's Never Enough, When the Needs of Narcissism Lurk

**H**ave you ever noticed how some people have tanks that cannot be filled? No matter what you give them, it's never enough.

Even when you have nothing left to give—because you have already given it all to them—they remain insatiably hungry. I describe it like this because that is exactly what it is. ***One cannot satisfy he/she who is, and remains, empty.***

For example, take a look at Ronald and Mona. Ronald had a way of enlisting Mona's "full-time (unofficial) employment" furthering his delusional fantasies. Actually, he was using her to advance his professional social cause...so he made it seem.

## Your Time Is My Time

Ronald demanded Mona's participation in a forum gathering requiring that she miss her own income-producing work for over half of the week. Furthermore, he placed such demands upon her all while she was struggling with a serious health issue.

Upon their return from this intense and revealing excursion, Mona seeks to resume her own actual employment, which she neglected in the service of his narcissistic demands.

To this end, she gets ready for bed in order to meet the challenges of the day ahead. And in so doing, she yields to sleep and misses his call. Get ready for a major upset. ***The woman missed his call.***

## The Roars of “Neglect”

Mona awakens with the sun rising ready to do a day-and-a-half's work to make up for her being away. With a 12-hour shift, she plows through keeping her focus and giving her best.

Moments after she brings a close to this long day, she calls Ronald. And now he wants her to know how she has wronged him for not calling him during the work day. Mona claims that she didn't even have time for a bathroom break, much less lunch. And now after a 12-hour day, she is met with, *“Why didn't you call me during the day?”*

You know what her answer is: *“There was no time in the day...”* Plus, *we had been texting each other throughout the day*, she reminds him.

Now, if you know narcissistic abuse, you may even know what comes next. Ronald says, *“You didn't have five minutes in your day to call me.”*

Now, they are into a cascading fight regarding Mona's **“neglect.”** He wants her to know in no uncertain terms that she has let him down by not calling him during the day. And moreover, the so-called neglect must mean she is withholding or has something on the side.

He continues the sulking and abusive emotional battering for days. Whatever it means to him in that moment remains beyond her, as Mona awakens, once again, to the reality of her dysfunctional relationship. She realizes that ***it is never enough.***

There was something about the contrast of her having given “everything” to him in the context of his insatiable craving and accusation of “neglect.” What becomes ever so clear in situations like this is the futility in filling bottomless tanks. ...And for Mona, the inevitable error in assuming the assignment in the first place.

If you are in a relationship with someone who chronically lets you know, “it's never enough,” despite your efforts otherwise, see their empty tank for what it is. And most importantly, trust it is not about you.

## 12

# The Dance of Narcissism and Co-Dependency

**T**he concept of narcissistic abuse is so clear when you are standing in one of these relationships. It's kind of like this...

Pretend you and your partner are standing on the corner, and he/she (can go either way) is stepping on your foot. You tell him that he is standing on your foot...

## Can't Be

He says... that simply can't be. While his shoe is placed directly onto the toe box of your shoe, he is only being near you, so he says. Your partner vehemently denies placing his weight on your foot. And nothing changes...

Time passes and the discomfort of his standing on your foot doesn't go away. Actually, it gets worse. You begin to feel a throbbing pain. And again, you seek his cooperation in your addressing it.

You tell him that your foot hurts... It's throbbing because of the pressure and weight of his body placed directly on your foot. That's impossible he says, you are claiming that I'm hurting you when all I'm doing is being near you to protect you.

He says, if you don't want me to be near you, then I'll just leave. (In fact, I'm going to leave anyway *because you won't let me stand on your foot.*) Your unwillingness to allow me this privilege/entitlement is a huge blow to me, he claims.

You don't want him to feel as he reports, so you welcome him to stay all while pleading that he do so without standing on your foot. You feel like an unheard broken record lost in your efforts to deal with his secondary darts thrown in to avert accountability and keep you holding on.

## Must Be Something Else

He replies, if your foot hurts when I stand here, then there must be something wrong with you, because many women have allowed him this privilege in the past...and he knows there are many to follow that will welcome this gesture of standing on their foot.

After the two of you toss his rights around and diminish your concerns, still nothing happens to alleviate your pain and discomfort. Eventually, your foot starts to swell and turn purple. You point this out to him, and your experience remains to be heard.

"You are exaggerating," he declares. What I'm doing here could not be causing you this discomfort. You are making a big deal out of nothing. You are far too sensitive. Your pain must be coming from an older injury you sustained, he asserts. And further, I have every right to stand where I wish, how I wish and when I wish!

## Know Your Options

I assume that you see his lack of empathy and failure to assume personal accountability. Can you see how she is awaiting both his permission and compliance to deal with her own pain? And in so doing, nothing changes. Because at the end of the day, a narcissistic doesn't care about another person's experience if it is in conflict with his/her satisfying their own personal needs. This person's inability to empathize (stand in another person shoes) and unwillingness to assume personal accountability for their contribution to conflict leaves the two of you in a dead end. You cannot have a satisfying relationship under these conditions.

The only relationship you can have with this person is the one that fulfills the narcissist's needs—exclusively. If that is not your life purpose, then you are creating the wrong relationship. Trust that you have other options rather than enabling, contributing to and supporting the dynamics that result in continued damage to yourself. Seek to learn how you can break this cycle of narcissistic abuse, before your foot falls off...before this conflict costs you further demise...before the narcissistic abuse spirals out of control.



For information on effective therapy for abusive relationships,  
see the **Intimate Partner Abuse Treatment Program**  
<http://domesticabusetreatment.com/>



# No No No Means “No” Three Times; It Doesn't Mean “Maybe”

**T**here are people who believe that they are entitled to receive whatever they ask of you. Actually, they can't hear the “no” because in their head they already have you saying yes.

...And they are accustomed to getting what they believe they are entitled to even though it is not theirs to have, nor is it in your heart to give at this time.

We see these dynamics routinely in abusive relationships, particularly with respect sexual intimacy. Take Dustin and Isabel, for example.

## No, No, No

Dustin and Isabel met a little over a month ago, and Dustin is ready for whatever he can get...sexually. Isabel, on the other hand, is very clear that she does not want to have unprotected sex with this new intimate partner.

She tells him just that. But he won't take her “no” for an answer. Her “no, no, no” said clearly and consistently is a game to him... an obstacle to his party... an irritant to his demand.

Instead of it being an answer to a request; it is the joke of the relationship. Dustin grows to enjoy using the “no, no, no” as his go-to line to tease and shame his partner into submission. And that is exactly what happened.

Isabel became worn down hearing her plea of “no” turned back on her, thrown in her face as a relentless tease to taunt her into unprotected sexual compliance. She isn’t allowed the decency to have input into this basic couple’s decision. Her preference had already been pegged as foolish, unreasonable, and hurtful to Dustin, from his point of view.

So whether having breakfast, cleaning house, walking in the park or dining at a high end restaurant, Isabel is showered with Dustin’s teasing rant of “no, no, no” which he spews ad nauseam to shame and condition her into sexual compliance.

## Teased Submission and Sexual Activity

The use of a condom in healthy relationships is a mutual decision. In relationships characterized by an unequal distribution of power and control within the relationship, condom use becomes the domineering partner’s decision. The teased, the shamed, the abused truly has no vote in this sexual preference matter at hand. Their focus is on how to deal with the discomfort from the shaming, teasing, taunting tactics in play.

If you say “no” to someone about your participation in any sexual activity, and they take your negative reply and turn it into a laughing joke of your relationship, walk away because that dynamic only progresses in one direction. It gets worse without effective intervention.



# Is It Lovemaking, Accommodation Sex or Is It Rape?

**I**s it rape, accommodation sex or is it lovemaking? It depends on how you define these terms, which may depend on who you ask.

Take Megan and Jim, for example (Please note the same dynamics can exist in same sex couples, as well).

Jim comes home from a business trip proud as a new father immediately after delivery. And Megan is there to receive him in all his excitement. She is open to his needs, all while he engages in an endearing near four hours of “show and tell.”

## To Rest or to Rape

The midnight hour approaches and they retreat into bed where Megan seeks to pass out and Jim wants to play. Megan’s fatigue is over the top as she, too, had a long week of her own, in addition to keeping up with the events of Jim’s travel. All she wants is sleep to restore balance from the weariness within.

Jim, on the other hand, remains charged with excitement from his journey. This energy is coupled with some pride that fuels his sense of entitlement, which works its way into the bedroom. He gestures for sex, in no uncertain terms, and she clearly lets him know of her excessive fatigue.

In a back and forth, Megan cries desperately begging to simply sleep without having sex. In a huff, Jim rolls over... but it is not over. Their problem encounter has only begun.

Megan pleads with him to rest, repeatedly bargaining for sleep. And in the quiet moment that lapses, as she is sinking into the depths of slumber, he becomes aroused and reaches over her...tossing her flat on her back as he lunges forth on top of her. Her resistance falls on deaf ears and away he goes as though he is the only one in the room having sex. Her presence is there to accommodate, from his point of view.

After Jim ejaculates, he acknowledges that he took care of himself without any regard for her or her wishes. They both fall asleep and sure enough the next morning, the consequences of the evening's actions rear its ugly head. Megan is overcome with emotion and messages Jim via text.

## Forced Sex Aftermath

She tells him that she feels "horrible, dirty, used and violated" after their encounter the evening before. Jim seethes as he tells her, go take a shower. (That is his compassionate statement.)

He is outraged by such a message. He claims that he is offended by her sharing these sentiments (in a "documented" form). He declares, "You are saying I raped you and that I'm a rapist."

Actually, he was saying he is a rapist and he raped her; she was telling him how she felt, but he is not willing or able to take that in... His preoccupation over how she may use this information in light of his "image," prevented him from ever hearing Megan. From here, their communications break down even further, and Jim wants her to know that he now is a "victim" of her sharing...of that which she asserts... *He is the victim of her feeling dirty, used and violated.* (Actually, he is victimized by his own projected fears.)

They spend months fighting over what actually took place. Jim calls it a "love-making" accommodation. For Megan, nothing could be farther from the truth. It was not lovemaking. It was intercourse secured by brow-beating, relentless pressure and an unwillingness to take "no" for an answer. From Megan's perspective, it was a surrender into a train coming with no breaks... much less sensitivity to her experience and their "interaction."

## Behavioral Reality of Consent

Was this a rape? Was it a power and control play? Was there mutual consent? At the end of the day, it all comes down to consent. You either have it or you don't.

It's not a function of what state you reside. It's not a function of whether or not you are married to your sexual partner. It's not even a function of whether you are in a monogamous relationship.

It's all about BOTH people wanting or not wanting sexual activity. If both people don't want it, there is no consent. Period.

Consent is not submission obtained through unrelenting pressure and coercive control. It is not something brow beaten out of someone. It is never something obtained from a person having said no, whether awake or asleep.

Obtaining sexual activity without consent—under all conditions—is sexual abuse. Whether it is a physically forced assault or a psychologically coerced surrender, consent is NOT obtained. And sex without consent is sexual assault no matter what your profession, no matter what political platform you profess and no matter how much money your pocket book holds.



# Narcissistic Behavior Symptoms

**N**arcissism...No rules, no responsibility, no remorse.  
Sound like someone you know or once knew?

The concept of narcissistic abuse has been popularized during the past year. And many people are waking up...over just the term's meaning. Many of these people are connecting the dots, clarifying the confusion that they live in their narcissistically abusive relationship.

When there are no rules, or shall we say when the rules that apply to others have no relevance to your partner, life is unpredictable and can be dangerous. For example, take a look at Norton and Jill.

Both Jill and Norton grew up in an upper middle class family socialized with similar norms, except for some reason they don't apply to Norton.

## His Toilet Is Wherever

There is a common understanding in society wherein people are trained/socialized to utilize toilets to eliminate personal human waste. Yet, there are some of us who believe they have the right to relieve themselves without the toilet. Norton is one of these people.

Here is how this plays out. Jill has an appointment for a manicure and Norton seeks to accompany her, by dropping her off and picking her up. Sounds pretty ordinary, right?

However, after this manicure she is met with Norton, who happens to need to relieve his bladder. While it is true that the salon has a high end coffee shop with a public men's room right next door, Norton (a

white collar professional) prefers the outdoor concrete over the indoor toilet.

So naturally, once Jill steps into the car, he drives across the street to a neighboring parking lot in which he parks...steps out of the car, pulls out his penis, stands facing the vehicle and relieves himself with no care in the world.

Now this is a blatant example of “no rules.” Sometimes the obvious shows more than the eye can see. It certainly does for Jill.

## Not Mine: No Accountability

Most people will tell you that you cannot own what is not yours. And this is true for the narcissist, as well. He/she is not responsible for that which does not apply to them. I trust you see where this is going.

You can't own what doesn't apply to you, because it is not yours. These people truly leave every morsel of responsibility on the table, because that is simply where it belongs—anywhere except with them.

These people can rape you (literally and/or figuratively)—knowing they have taken something not given—and claim no accountability for their actions or the impact of their behavior...whatsoever, thereafter. They are not accountable because the rules truly do not apply to them. Or, it might be that they have their own rules.

The net result: no accountability, no responsibility, no change.

## Remorse Is for the Guilty

For the narcissist, there truly is no remorse because they have done nothing wrong, so what's to feel bad for?

I have seen cases in which the lack of remorse is so chilling that you feel like you are in *The Silence of the Lambs*. The eeriness of the

remorse void in its living color is utterly stunning.

Take a look at it with Norton and Jill. Norton coerces Jill (in a relentless, gorilla-like fashion) to engage in an activity to benefit him all while she is seriously ill. And he does this without any concern for the consequences to her even though he is well aware of her condition.

His grossly abusive, manipulative and exploitive maneuvers to accomplish this are so blatantly apparent that his blindness in its context could make one with a conscience vomit. While, looking at her in a knee-high orthopedic brace weeks following their coerced journey, Norton expresses his "remorseful sentiments" saying: *"You didn't need to go after all."*

These people have the capacity to inflict obvious (and often intentional) injury and truly not care. Moreover, they take insult to your expectation for their accountability. They are the ones who smile inside when they recognize their destructive/disempowering impact on you. Why should one expect remorse, to the contrary. These folks are delighted by their success in your demise...as it replenishes them, empowers them and it asserts their assumed, unreasonable rights.

All this bringing you back to no rules, no responsibility and no remorse. If you recognize these characteristics in your partner and these dynamics in your relationship, seek to fully understand narcissistic behavior symptoms.



## When You Quash Your Own Inner Voice

**I think the saddest thing for most people in narcissistically abusive relationships is that they don't see it for what it is, until the chain is around them...until the "I do" is given...until the limitations of the relationship causalities entrap the narcissistic supply.**

It's clearly a dance between two people. And if one continues in its flow, by design it will diminish, degrade and destroy one, all while being insanely showered by love bombs.

The key to awakening is paying attention to the inner wisdom as it shouts out to you from within. Unfortunately, many people smother these signals so as not to rock the boat. And in so doing, they awaken to drowning in chaos and their own demise.

For example, take a look at Davis and his partner Liz.

### Inner Knowing

"This is wrong" "This is not good for me" were the voices whispering from within, Liz notes. And many times the words expressing this leaked out in a moment of insight, not in a fight. It became such a routine thing for this couple that Davis began to hear those words as a sword piercing through him.

In an emotionally climatic moment for him, he declares, "If I hear you say that again, I'm going to leave." And like a stun gun, she is stopped in her tracks. She sits with: "These words are hurting him and I should spare him this." And she continues his conditioning of herself from within. Clever!

## Inner Voice

Liz fails to examine her own words. She does no inquiry into the validity of this thought. She doesn't dare discuss this openly with him. They both put it away until it rears its ugly head in behavior.

The way this happens is characteristically part of the glue that binds narcissistically abusive relationships. Here's how...

1. He cannot hear her experience.
2. He does not want her to hear her experience.
3. She is rewarded for not listening to that thought or bringing it into the conversation. (And conversely punished if she does.)
4. She learns to listen to his thoughts over her own.
5. The potency of her inner voice fades.
6. Ultimately, she has none.
7. ...Until the day comes when she can take no more, and something gives.

These are the inner signals that are your gifts. Trust your gut and attend to that which calls your attention. Simply sitting with the thought in bare attention can yield its further opening...bringing forth felt meaning that carries the full gestalt. You have a right to your truth. Listen to it, the first time it speaks.

If you are in a relationship in which you are discouraged (and discourage yourself) from exploring your inner voice as it relates to the relationship itself, stop and take a hard and fast look at the conditioning in narcissistically abusive relationships.

## 17

# When Their Discard Is Your Ticket to Safety

**H**ave you ever noticed how some people will throw their hands up, reach for their toys and go home when they are not getting their way...yet their exit is administered as a poison dart, rather than a reprieve.

It's not that they seek to insert an intermission, or a safety break, or even a time-out. What they are actually doing is a discard.

## The Discard

The "discard" is a term that refers to the way people with narcissistic features and/or narcissistic personality disorders act when their narcissistic supply is not forth-coming. If the object of the narcissistic supply is not producing as expected, it must be annihilated. It must be removed from the conversation.

We see these dynamics again and again...and all too often, they occur only to enhance the glue that binds the dysfunctional behavior.

## Violence through Discard

You can think of the discard phase of the narcissistic abuse cycle in the same way you understand the violence/assault phase of the cycle of violence. It's the blow that says, "You are not cooperating in giving me as I demand, therefore I'm reaching for a bigger bat... *You do not exist. You are dead to me.*" (It's the annihilation club.)

It's an escalation in the control dynamics...just as the domestic

assault (physical, emotional, verbal, sexual) is the batterer's effort toward re-gaining perceived lost power and control. The discard is the narcissist's way of saying, no-one ever says "no" to me. Therefore, when you don't support their faced and deliver as expected, you cannot exist—from their point of view.

When used in the courting of the relationship, they think it is a strategy to reel you back in... and it can often work with those unaware. When you look closer in, it is delivered to hurt... There is a malicious quality wherein you even sense and/or observe that their action is bringing satisfaction to them.

## Point of Wisdom and Power

This is also the point in which the other partner has the greatest and purest inner strength. It's the time in which you are driven solely by your natural wisdom. It's the moment when his/her dysfunctional grip loosens and one makes choices in the interest of their highest good, rather than as part of the narcissist's manipulation.

Just as in the cycle of violence, victims taste their greatest power right after the blow... because in that moment they say, "No more!" And they really mean it. This is the ONE point in which the victim is the strongest to break through the chains that bind the dysfunctional abusive relationship.

If you are in a narcissistically abusive relationship, see the discard for what it is and it will be felt differently. Doing so can be your ticket to well-being with respect to a toxic relationship. It can be the door that opens wherein you see this very important fact: it is not about you.

# The Most Tell-Tale Sign ~ When Saving Face Matters Most

**W**e often hear about the signs of domestic abuse as though these were specific behaviors and traits of individuals who get their way through overpowering their partner. These tell-tale signs are indicators that lead us to see a larger picture of the danger inherent in abusive relationships.

To me, the most glaring of these signs can be noted in confronting the actual abusive behavior itself. For example, take a look at Suzette and Robert.

## Confronting an Abusive Behavior Pattern

They are in a relatively new relationship of less than a year. And with each passing month, more and more narcissistic abuse signs rear their ugly head.

Suzette reaches a point in which she won't take Robert's abusive controlling domination anymore. Without and before even giving the dynamics a name, she points out Robert's behavior that she cannot and will not subject herself to in her relationship with him.

The **red flag sign** is in his reaction. Watch this. Suzette sends Robert an email essentially saying the following...

*I do not feel safe in this relationship with you as it is now. The reason is because you force your agenda on me until you bend my will, even when doing so puts me in harm's way.*

Essentially, she is saying that he doesn't allow her to say "no," because it does not stop there. He will go on and on until he gets his way, irrespective of the consequences to his partner. And this refers to both the consequences of the "ask," as well as the consequences of the "asking" process.

## The Flip, Saving Face and Lack of Accountability, All in One

In their next face-to-face encounter following this email, Robert declares that he—now—is the "victim" in their relationship. There is absolutely no sensitivity to the impact of his relentless pressure and coercive control so chronically employed to get his way. Instead, he wants her to know that he is the endangered party. He is the vulnerable person, because some of his transgressions during the course of the relationship are now "threatening to him."

He declares that she could bring these transgressions out into the open. Eventually, he wants her to know that if she attempts to charge him with criminal activity that she could be counter sued for attempting to hold him accountable for a specific named transgression.

Is Robert's reaction more about his unwillingness to be held accountable for his toxic behavior? Or, is he having a knee jerk response to potentially being exposed...to being seen as the opposite of what he must have others believe?

Saving face is the key element here. If assuming responsibility for specific behaviors and/or patterns of behavior places one at risk, then see their vulnerability for what it truly is. Their endangerment is more about losing their mask. Period. If you recognize this ever so glaring sign of narcissistic abuse, understand the larger dynamics before they spiral out of control.

# The Two Most Fundamental Steps in Breaking the Cycle

**P**eople ask me what is the way to break the cycle of domestic abuse? Or, they say how do I interrupt the abusive dynamics I'm in?

I think there are two things, which by their nature aid in breaking the fundamental ties that bind abusive relationships. And here they are...**The Most Fundamental Steps in Breaking the Cycle.**

## 1) Document Your Experience

Document, Document, Document! Susan Murphy-Milano's work influenced my life in the 90's when she so potently expressed the value in documenting the abuse. However, at that time, I heard her coaching as a means for me to display and/or evidence the abuse to others...in order to protect my children and myself.

Fast-forward a couple of decades. Today, I add another profound value in documenting the abuse. Doing this one thing solidifies your understanding of your experience. **Through the mere connecting personal events chronologically, you can step out of the river and experience the flow of water with detached awareness.** (please read this again)

Through this perspective, you can more objectively assess your circumstances and options. And moreover, from this place you are open to insights expressing your higher good...your best interest...what's most right for you.

You have a platform within you that shows you your truth...just

because (that's how healing works). The natural tendency is to return to homeostasis. The human psyche is charmed by health and well-being.

If you are in an emotionally abusive relationship, I invite you to step out of the FOG (fear/obligation/guilt) engendered through the emotional exploitation and bask in the light.

## 2) Break Your Silence

Never underestimate the power of your speaking your truth. You hear it for what it is when you speak of it outside of the relationship itself.

So for example, when you open up the abuse dialogue to your healthcare provider or when you go to the police, or you go to your clergy or you confide in a family member or friend, your understanding of the domestic abuse can transition from confusion to clarity.

In some respect, this action in and of itself also aids in your stepping out of the river. Your perspective is through a lens created that is untainted by the direct influence of the abusive relationship itself.

Another way of saying this is: the toxicity within it becomes clearer to you, because you are interfacing with it through non-intoxicated eyes that participate in it through "love," "habit," "blindness" or some conscious and/or unconscious "need."

It's my gift to you if this article inspires you to document the abuse and break your silence. As always however, when in an abusive relationship be mindful of safety first. Seek counsel through professionals knowledgeable about domestic abuse when implementing any strategies to interrupt the abuse dynamics.



## What's Love Got to Do With It?

**One of the hardest things for people in narcissistically abusive relationships is deciding whether to stay or go.**

Some people have almost as much heartache over this as they do over the chronic abuse in the relationship. And when you look closer in at their deliberation, it often is an expression of the very dysfunctional dynamics that they seek to end.

In their search, many people ask for the advice of others. But at the end of the day, there is only one person knowing what's best for oneself. I trust you know who that is.

The person standing in the shoes of the abused...the person on the receiving end of the narcissistically abusive control dynamics. The person who has willingly stepped into the gripping glue that binds the dysfunctional relationship in the first place.

## What's Love Got to Do with It

Initially, it may look like one's love for one's partner is a key factor in their decision. I believe it is what keeps you in the relationship well beyond what might be practically safe. If we were to take all the other social, financial and political factors affecting this decision off the table and just look at the "love" factor, we would better appreciate the life cycle of these relationships.

I don't think it has anything to do with love or the absence of love for one's partner. Rather, it is about love for oneself. You can love someone deeply and at the same time know this person to be a

danger to your health and well-being. As they evidence this again and again, one reaches a point in which you recognize, "What's love got to do with it?" Answer: Nothing. It's all about safety.

## Safety and Love

As Anaire Nin states so eloquently, "...And the day came when the desire to remain the same was more painful than the risk to grow."

This is the breaking point where one says, what is can be no more. You realize that the status quo is not safe...and from here, people make changes.

Some people will seek to end the relationship, all together. Others will separate and demand change. Those already living separately may take a stand on no further abusive control antics and remain unheard indefinitely. The core driving variable to the decision to interrupt the status quo is about **safety**. Period. Not love of other; rather love for oneself.

Once you fully embrace this, you more easily ride the waves of the turmoil inherent in change. If you are in a narcissistically abusive relationship, know that safety and love can be two words used in the same sentence, once you realize ***what's love got to do with it.***

# Choosing Your Level of Domestic Abuse Risk

**M**any people question their fears relative to dangerous intimate partners—past and present. It's human nature.

Often their partners want them (and those that will listen) to believe that they are delusional...that they exaggerate...that they are distorted in some way. This can be both their belief and/or their defense.

The questioning party can wonder whether their perceptions and experiences of toxic and/or potentially lethal events are "real." It's part of how they keep themselves in the narcissistic abuse dance.

They may say things like this...

- Are the gasoline kerosene soaked socks really gasoline kerosene soaked socks?
- Is the bleached soaked pillow actually my pillow soaked in bleach?
- What was that vomiting violently...literally retching all night when I'm not sick?
- Is the threat to my safety left as a post on Facebook really "real"?
- Is the sharp metal object in the cottage cheese an accident?

And each of these questions is set in circumstances that make their happening ever so eerie and malicious. Each one of these events occurs in the context of ongoing documented domestic abuse and specific disturbing factors **before**, during and/or **after** the incident in question.

These mysterious "happenings" occur all too often in cases of

intimate partner homicide. That is not to say that they are going to become homicide cases. It's only to say that when you look at the time leading up to intimate partner homicide, it can have "stepping stone" incidents that look a lot like this.

The delusion is in not believing what you experience the first time you experience it. It's much like not believing a person the first time they show you who they are... Hanging onto a belief that something is other than it is... Hanging onto the belief that they are something other than what they are with you ***is your delusion***. That's the illusion.

For example, listen to Robin. She and her partner parted, and months later she finds herself questioning the night of her violent vomiting.

Or look at Samantha, nearly a year later recalling—with question—the evening she foamed from the mouth.

Or Ben biting into a tack in his oatmeal...a memory that lingers with him for years on end.

These people all have this one important thing in common: they are questioning what they already know to be true, so as to make entertaining other options possible.

You don't have to remind these people of the foam coming out of their mouth. Or, the way in which they felt while losing their guts overtaken by vomiting throughout the night. Or, the taste of the metallic cold sharp object folded into the oatmeal.

You can question how these things happened, but you cannot question that they happened. Because they did and that simply is. Now what you do with this reality is your business.

## Bazaar Events, Fears and Decisions

When you see someone cross the line, you know they are capable of walking the line (at a minimum). And then the question that you

have to ask yourself is: Is it worth it? Is it worth it to walk the line with this person...knowing what you know?

There may be times in which the answer to this is “yes,” simply because this person provides for you something you cannot—or do not want to—live without. Or, this person offers something vital that you believe you cannot produce/generate on your own. Or, it might be that you have decades of life into this relationship and you seek to do all you can to salvage it. In either case, you get the proper professional help so as to create a healthy relationship.

Then, there are times in which the answer is “no” because you see it like heroin. Why take a lethal chance, if you can avoid one. You get to determine: Is the magic you feel/felt worth losing your life for? That’s the most important question. It’s using foresight based on the information already given.

If you have been threatened with harm toward yourself all while in the context of a controlling abusive relationship with someone that ***lacks empathy and is without moral conscience***, do your own math and draw conclusions that support your highest good.

There will always be people who tell you that you are exaggerating before a life altering blow. And after a lethal incident, you’ll be told you are a dummy for not seeing it coming. What side of this conversation do you want to be on?

There are no right or wrong answers. There are only choices. And fortunately, you can make educated ones. Thank you for giving us an opportunity to be a part of your domestic abuse education and healing. Education is prevention AND prevention is the cure!

For information on effective therapy for abusive relationships,  
see the **Intimate Partner Abuse Treatment Program**  
[www.PreventAbusiveRelationships.com](http://www.PreventAbusiveRelationships.com)

## About the Author



**D**r. Jeanne King helps people recognize, end and heal from domestic abuse. She is a 30-year seasoned psychologist, published author and leading expert in identifying the subtle communication patterns of battering relationships.

Dr. King works with individuals and couples in abusive relationships throughout the United States and Canada. Additionally, she serves as a consulting expert in criminal and civil cases of family violence, and offers keynotes and training for government and healthcare organizations.

She has been featured in dozens of newspapers and appeared on numerous radio and TV talk shows across the country. Her work is known as the bridge between psychology, healthcare and domestic abuse advocacy.

Dr. King received the **Heart of Gold Award 2006** for outstanding humanitarian contribution by Harv Eker Peak Potentials Training in recognition for her work in domestic abuse education with healthcare professionals.

Her groundbreaking book *[All But My Soul: Abuse Beyond Control](#)* has been used as a college textbook in criminal justice and has helped thousands of people break the cycle of abuse and reclaim a life of peace, dignity and respect.

Dr. King developed the *[Intimate Partner Abuse Screen®](#)*, which is an assessment tool that makes detection of intimate partner violence more expedient and accurate in both professional and personal use. It is the first tool to clearly bring to light the subtle communication patterns of intimate partner violence.

Dr. King earned her doctorate degree in Psychology from Northwestern University. She was founding director of the Chicago Center for the Treatment of Pain and Stress, and past president of the Illinois Biofeedback Society. Before shifting her focus to helping abuse survivors and their advocates, she pioneered the **Biofeedback and Stress Reduction Program®**, conducted in hospitals with thousands of patients for the treatment of pain, stress and illness.

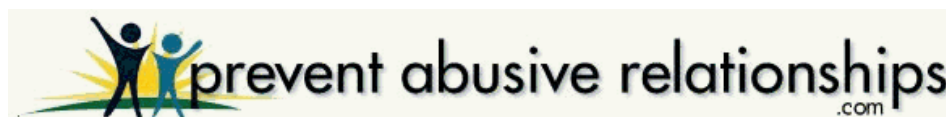
In her work today with *[Partners in Prevention](#)*, she incorporates the principles of bio-behavioral medicine into domestic abuse therapy and family violence victim advocacy. Dr. King has published 12 eBooks and over 530 articles (at the time of this writing) on identifying, ending and healing physical, emotional, verbal and narcissistic abuse.

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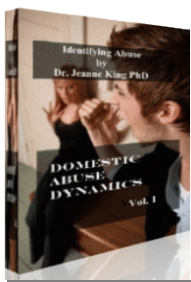
If you want help with domestic abuse at home or in court, feel free to contact us for personal assistance by visiting:

<http://www.enddomesticabuse.org/consulting.html#apt>

To contact Dr. Jeanne King, email [drking@enddomesticabuse.org](mailto:drking@enddomesticabuse.org)



## eBooks by Dr. Jeanne King, Ph.D.



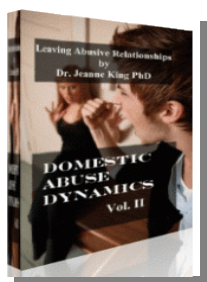
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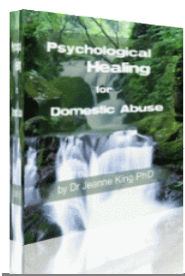
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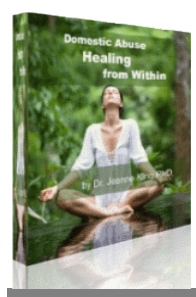


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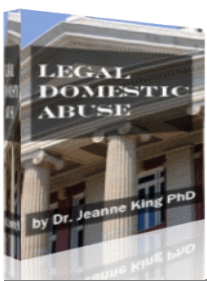


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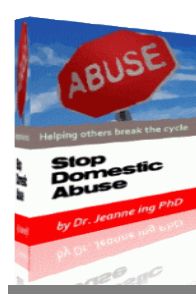
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### Domestic Abuse

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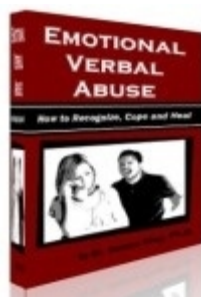
**How do I help** her/him see the light? How do I help someone I care about

**awaken to the danger** they live and deal with their circumstances in a way that serves their highest interest? These are the questions of parents and friends of individuals in abusive relationships.

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## eBooks by Dr. Jeanne King, Ph.D.



### Emotional Verbal Abuse

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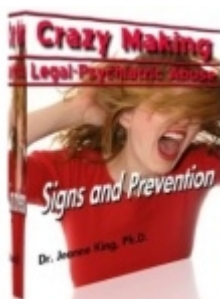
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**Controlling Intimate Relationships** helps you recognize and change the control dynamics...including **psychological, financial and sexual control**.

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### Crazy Making Legal-Psychiatric Abuse

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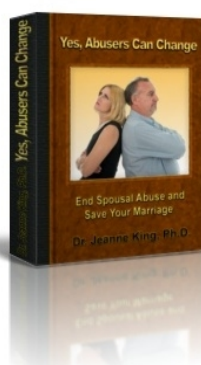
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Thank you for helping us end domestic abuse.

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