



# THE BIG BOOK OF BOUNDARIES

*SwanWaters.com*



**WHEN YOU FIND YOURSELF IN AN EMOTIONALLY ABUSIVE SITUATION THAT YOU CANNOT, OR ARE NOT READY TO LEAVE, IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOU START PUTTING UP SOME BOUNDARIES.**

**SETTING UP BOUNDARIES IS NOT ALWAYS ABOUT REMOVING YOURSELF PHYSICALLY. IT CAN BE A WAY TO CREATE A PART OF YOUR MIND THAT IS ONLY YOURS. A PLACE WHERE YOU CAN THINK AND PROCESS WITHOUT THE INFLUENCE OF THE ABUSER.**

**THESE WILL PROTECT YOU FROM THE ABUSE, AND CAN HELP YOU GET STARTED ON YOUR HEALING JOURNEY.**

# CUT THE VIRTUAL CORD

**IF YOU USE SOCIAL MEDIA, BLOCK, HIDE AND UNFRIEND. YOU DON'T WANT TO COME ACROSS THEIR FACE AND STORIES EVEN WHEN YOU ARE NOT IN THE SAME ROOM AS THEM.**

**BESIDES, AN EMOTIONAL BULLY IS ALWAYS LOOKING FOR AMMUNITION, AND YOUR PHOTOS AND STORIES ABOUT YOUR PERSONAL LIFE ARE GREAT FODDER.**



# **YOU DO NOT NEED TO ALWAYS BE AVAILABLE**

**ONE FACTOR IN EMOTIONAL ABUSE IS NOT BEING ALLOWED TO HAVE YOUR OWN LIFE AND IDENTITY. SOMETIMES IT SEEMS THAT TOXIC PEOPLE THINK YOU ONLY POP INTO EXISTENCE IN THEIR PRESENCE. SO WHEN THEY CALL, YOU HAD BETTER ANSWER ON THE FIRST RING.**

**ONE WAY TO START CREATING SOME DISTANCE AND CLAIMING SPACE FOR YOURSELF IS NOT TO JUMP TO ATTENTION AT THE DROP OF A HAT. LET YOUR VOICE MAIL GET IT, OR WAIT A DAY OR TWO TO ANSWER THEIR EMAIL. YOU WILL GET SOME GRIEF FOR IT INITIALLY, SO STAND YOUR GROUND!**



# **DON'T GET PULLED INTO GOSSIP & COMPLAINING**

**TOXIC PEOPLE LIKE NOTHING MORE THAN COMPLAINING AND GOSSIPING – WELL MAYBE PULLING YOU INTO THAT NEGATIVITY WITH THEM IS EVEN MORE PLEASURABLE. WHEN YOU TALK TO A TOXIC PERSON THERE IS NOTHING GOOD ENOUGH AND NO-ONE FREE FROM JUDGMENT.**

**DO NOT GET PULLED INTO THAT VORTEX**

**NOT ONLY WILL THIS NEGATIVITY DRAG YOU DOWN AND MESS UP YOUR ENERGY. ALSO REMEMBER, WHATEVER YOU SAY CAN AND WILL BE USED AGAINST YOU.**



# BEING EMPOWERED MEANS DEVELOPING MENTAL TOUGHNESS

**I DON'T MEAN THIS TO SOUND AS HARD-EDGED AS IT LIKELY DOES, HOWEVER, THERE IS A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF MENTAL TRAINING YOU CAN DO IN ORDER TO COMBAT THE ONGOING ABUSE. I'M NOT SAYING YOU SHOULD BECOME AN ANGRY, IMPERVIOUS PERSON OF STEEL. RETAIN WHO YOU ARE, BUT LEARN MENTAL SELF-DEFENSE.**

**FOR INSTANCE, I WORKED HARD TO CREATE THIS CARICATURE OF HIM IN MY HEAD. WHEN HE WOULD RAGE, I WOULD PICTURE HIM AS AN OUT-OF-CONTROL 5-YEAR-OLD WHO HADN'T GOTTEN HIS WAY, INSTEAD OF TAKING ON HIS RAGE AS MY FAULT.**



# MAKE SURE YOU HAVE AN EXIT STRATEGY

**TROUBLE PEOPLE TRULY BELIEVE THAT THE WORLD REVOLVES AROUND THEM. THE IDEA THAT YOU WOULD NOT WANT TO SPEND ALL YOUR TIME WITH THEM IS ALIEN TO THEM. OR AT THE VERY LEAST:**

**NOT ONLY SHOULD YOU JUMP WHEN THEY SAY JUMP, YOU SHOULD CONTINUE JUMPING UNTIL THEY ARE BORED.**

**IT CAN BE DIFFICULT TO GET AWAY, AND SO HAVING AN EXIT STRATEGY CAN BE VERY HELPFUL. WHEN YOU MEET, MAKE IT AN ACTIVITY WITH A CLEARLY DEFINED END.**





# THE “GRAY ROCK” METHOD

**AS WE KNOW, THE TOXIC PERSON IS ATTRACTED TO YOU AS A CONQUEST AND NOTHING MORE. YOU ARE SOMETHING TO ACQUIRE AND DOMINATE, NOT A TREASURE TO BE VALUED. THE GRAY ROCK METHOD SUGGESTS THAT YOU BECOME AS BORING AS HUMANLY POSSIBLE IN ORDER TO BE LESS OF A SHINY BAUBLE.**

**PRETEND TO LOSE INTEREST IN EVERYTHING THAT MADE YOU A GLITTERING OBJECT THE TOXIC PERSON NEEDED TO ACQUIRE. DON'T QUIT YOUR JOB OR MOVE OUT OF YOUR HOUSE INTO A TENT, BUT KEEP A LOW AND UNAPPEALING PROFILE. EVENTUALLY, THE TOXIC PERSON LOSES INTEREST BECAUSE YOU ARE NO LONGER A VALUABLE COMMODITY.**



# STICK TO BREEZY TOPICS

**TALKING ABOUT TOPICS THAT ARE OF SIGNIFICANCE GIVES THE TOXIC PERSON MORE INFORMATION TO BE USED AGAINST YOU. WHEN YOU TALK ABOUT AN INCIDENT AT WORK, A ROW YOU HAD WITH YOUR SIGNIFICANT OTHER, OR EVEN A DAY WITH YOUR FAMILY THAT MADE YOU TRULY HAPPY, YOU GIVE THE BULLY MORE INSIGHT INTO YOUR EMOTIONAL STATE. MORE INSIGHT MEANS MORE INFORMATION TO PERFORM A CUSTOM ATTACK TO CAUSE THE MOST POSSIBLE DRAMA AND UPHEAVAL.**

**IF YOU CAN, STICK TO SHOOTING THE BREEZE. ANSWER QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR LIFE WITH EMPTY PHRASES LIKE 'GOOD' OR 'YES, EVERYTHING IS FINE' AND THEN TALK ABOUT THE WEATHER OR THE LATEST TOP 40 HIT THAT HAS BEEN PLAYING DAY AND NIGHT.**



# **WHEN LIFE GIVES YOU LEMONS, STAY AWAY FROM LEMON TREES**



**WHEN YOU HAVE SOMETHING DIFFICULT TO DEAL WITH, YOU DON'T NEED PEOPLE TO PILE ONTO YOUR TROUBLES. SO STAY AWAY FROM THE DRAMA.**

**FIND FRIENDS THAT WANT TO HELP YOU, SIGN IN ON SWANWATERS FOR A FRIENDLY WORD (YES, EVEN IF IT IS "OFF TOPIC"), ASK FOR HELP FROM AUTHORITIES OR CHARITIES... WHATEVER YOU NEED TO DO TO KEEP IT AWAY FROM THE TOXIC PERSON.**



# SAY NO TO ALONE TIME

**IN THIS CASE, BY ALONE TIME I MEAN: TIME ALONE WITH YOUR ABUSER. EMOTIONAL BULLIES PREFER TO UNLEASH THEIR TERROR BEHIND CLOSED DOORS, SO MAKING SURE THERE ARE OTHERS AROUND CAN HELP. TOXIC PEOPLE ARE OFTEN QUITE AWARE OF ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOR AND CAN MIMIC IT LIKE A MASTER.**

**HAVING PEOPLE AROUND MEANS THEY WILL WANT TO KEEP THEIR MASKS ON. HAVING WITNESSES MAKES IT HARDER FOR THEM TO THROW A TANTRUM, GASLIGHT YOU OR USE ANY OF THE OTHER TRICKS OF THE TRADE.**

# THE “BROKEN RECORD” TECHNIQUE

**UTILIZES THE REPETITION OF A FEW KEY RESPONSES AND ABSOLUTELY NOTHING ELSE. YOU WRITE DOWN A COLLECTION OF SINGLE SENTENCE RESPONSES FOR COMMON SCENARIOS. DOES THE NARCISSIST REPEATEDLY TRY TO DODGE OR CHANGE THE VISITATION PICK-UP AND DROP OFF TIMES? “AS SET FORTH IN SECTION X, SENTENCE X OF THE PARENTING PLAN, YOUR PICK-UP TIME IS 6:00PM. THERE IS A X MINUTE GRACE PERIOD. SHOULD YOU NOT ARRIVE, IT IS ASSUMED YOU HAVE VOLUNTARILY SURRENDERED THIS TIME.” DIRECT, FACTUAL, NEVER WAVERING, AND REPETITIVE. NO MATTER HOW MANY TIMES YOU GET THAT TEXT TRYING TO PICK A FIGHT ABOUT “I WANT MY TIME WITH MY CHILDREN,” THIS IS YOUR RESPONSE.**



# KEEP YOUR CONVERSATION POSITIVE

**THIS IS GOOD ADVICE FOR ANY DAY OF THE WEEK AS COMPLAINING IS DRAINING. BUT ESPECIALLY AROUND TOXIC PEOPLE, MAKE A CONSCIOUS EFFORT TO ONLY TALK ABOUT GOOD AND LIGHT HEARTED THINGS. THIS CAN BE COMPLICATED BECAUSE THEY WILL BE ON THE HUNT FOR DRAMA, SO THEY WILL TRY TO GET YOU TO TALK ABOUT PROBLEMS. A SIMPLE REMARK LIKE 'SUZY IS DOING SO MUCH BETTER IN SCHOOL' WILL EASILY TRANSLATE TO: 'SUZY WAS DOING BADLY IN SCHOOL' IN THE EAR OF A DRAMA HUNTER. SO REMARKING THAT 'SUZY IS DOING SO WELL IN SCHOOL' IS A MUCH SAFER EXPRESSION TO USE.**



# **THE “LOVE” ISN’T REAL, SO BEGIN LETTING GO TO GAIN STRENGTH**

**AT SOME POINT, I CONCEDED THE FACT THAT THE “LOVE” I HAD FOR HIM WAS NOT REAL. IT WAS WHAT I WANTED, IT WAS WHAT I NEEDED, BUT I WAS GIVEN A SENSE OF CLARITY TO ACCEPT THAT I LOVED WHO HE PRETENDED TO BE WHEN HE NEEDED TO.**

**THE TIMES HE GOT THE CLOSEST TO BEING WHAT I WANTED A HUSBAND TO BE WERE WHEN I SAID I WAS FINISHED AND THE MARRIAGE WAS OVER, OR WHEN I WOULD JUST LEAVE FOR SOME PEACE FOR A FEW DAYS.**



# BECOME SUPER BORING

**THE TOXIC PERSON FEEDS OFF YOUR EMOTIONAL RESPONSES. SO STOP GIVING ANY. BECOME THE MOST BORING PERSON YOU CAN IMAGINE.**

**“ONLY GIVE BORING, MONOTONOUS RESPONSES SO THAT THE PARASITE MUST GO ELSEWHERE FOR HIS SUPPLY OF DRAMA. WHEN CONTACT WITH YOU IS CONSISTENTLY UNSATISFYING FOR THE PSYCHOPATH, HIS MIND IS RE-TRAINED TO EXPECT BOREDOM RATHER THAN DRAMA.”**

**(FROM THE GRAY ROCK METHOD OF DEALING WITH PSYCHOPATHS ON LOVEFRAUD.COM)**



# TALK TO THE HAND

**YOU NEED TO RECLAIM YOUR LIFE, YOUR GOALS, YOUR JOY, AND YOUR ABILITIES. PART OF THAT IS SETTING OUT ON A JOURNEY TO CHASE EVERY POSSIBLE DREAM YOU HAD, WHETHER IT IS REALISTIC OR NOT.**

**I HAD SPENT ALMOST MY ENTIRE LIFE LISTENING TO HIM GIVE REASONS WHY I COULD NEVER DO THESE THINGS AND INSTEAD OF LETTING THAT CONTINUE TO DOMINATE MY THOUGHTS, I DEVELOPED AN ATTITUDE THAT SAID, “DON’T THINK SO? WATCH ME.” EACH TIME HIS VOICE INVADED MY THOUGHTS, I RESPONDED WITH A VARIATION OF “TALK TO THE HAND BECAUSE I’M NOT LISTENING.” EVERY TIME I HEARD HIS VOICE, I REDOUBLED MY EFFORTS, FREQUENTLY YELLING AND SWEARING AT HIM OUT LOUD. SEEMS NUTS, BUT VERY THERAPEUTIC. TALK TO THE HAND IS ALSO BIGGER THAN IN YOUR HEAD. IT TEACHES YOU “DNR” – DO NOT RESPOND – UNLESS ABSOLUTELY, POSITIVELY NECESSARY AND IN THE MOST INDIRECT WAY POSSIBLE.**





# CONVINCE YOURSELF YOU CAN DO THIS!

**TOXIC PEOPLE WILL HAVE YOU BELIEVE YOU ARE THE MOST INCOMPETENT PERSON IN THE WORLD. THEY WANT YOU TO FEEL YOU CANNOT ACHIEVE ANYTHING WITHOUT THEIR HELP.**

**THEY LIE! SERIOUSLY, DO NOT BELIEVE THEM!**

**YOU CAN DEAL WITH YOUR PROBLEMS. SOMETIMES IT IS HARD NOT TO WALK BACK TO THE BULLIES, IT IS A STRONG PART OF THE PROGRAMMING. SO STAY CONVINCED THAT YOU CAN DO THIS.**



# **TAKE A STEP BACK, AND LOOK AT THE WHOLE PICTURE**

**OFTEN TOXIC PEOPLE WILL STIR UP SOME EXTRA DRAMA WHEN THEY SENSE YOU MIGHT BE KEEPING YOUR DISTANCE. DRAMA WORKS LIKE A VORTEX AND WILL PULL YOU RIGHT BACK IN TO CARE FOR THEM. HOW CAN YOU LEAVE THEM DEAL WITH PHYSICAL INJURY, PENDING DIVORCE OR MENTAL BREAKDOWN ALONE? HOW CAN YOU BE SO HEARTLESS?! SO WHEN A TOXIC PERSON PLAYS THE DRAMA CARD, TAKE A MOMENT TO CONSIDER THE ANGLES. CREATED DRAMA IS SIMPLY SPIN. IT IS SOMETHING TRIVIAL THAT IS PRESENTED LIKE SOMETHING HUGE. IT IS THE FENDER BENDER THAT IS PORTRAYED AS THE NEAR DEATH EXPERIENCE. MORE OFTEN THAN NOT YOU WILL BE ABLE TO IDENTIFY WHETHER THIS IS A TRUE INCIDENT OR CREATED DRAMA.**



# STRATEGY IS EVERYTHING

ONE TOOL THAT HELPED ME IMMENSELY WAS HAVING A PRE-PRACTICED PLAN FOR HOW I WOULD REACT, BOTH EXTERNALLY AND INTERNALLY, WHEN HE WOULD BECOME ABUSIVE. I SAT FOR A LONG TIME WITH A PIECE OF PAPER DIVIDED INTO TWO COLUMNS: ONE SIDE SAID, “HIS BULLSHIT” AND THE OTHER SAID, “HOW I’LL DEAL WITH IT.” (I HAD TO EMPLOY A WICKED SENSE OF HUMOR TO KEEP FROM FALLING APART) I ACTUALLY SAT AND WROTE OUT A PLAN FOR WHAT I WOULD DO EACH TIME HE EXHIBITED ONE OF HIS ABUSIVE TACTICS. THE FUNNY THING WAS, THE MORE I STUCK TO MY PLAN AND EMPOWERED MYSELF, THE LESS I PAID ATTENTION TO WHAT HE WAS DOING. MY REACTIONS, OR LACK THEREOF, MEANT THAT HE WAS NO LONGER GETTING THE SAME HIGH FROM BEING ABUSIVE.



# **DISTANCE IS THE ONLY CURE**

**I APPRECIATE THAT THE ABOVE STRATEGIES ARE NOT ALWAYS EASY TO IMPLEMENT. SO MUCH DEPENDS ON YOUR SITUATION, AND ALSO ON THE LEVEL OF TOXICITY OF THE BULLY. ALL THESE STRATEGIES ARE ABOUT CREATING DISTANCE, AND EMPOWERING YOURSELF. IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO HAVE A MEANINGFUL AND DEEP RELATIONSHIP WITH SOMEONE WHO IS TRYING TO CONTROL AND RESTRICT YOU, AND IN MANY CASES TERMINATING A RELATIONSHIP ALTOGETHER IS THE ONLY TRUE CURE.**

**ALSO REMEMBER THAT AN EMOTIONAL BULLY NEEDS A VICTIM AS MUCH AS OXYGEN. WHEN THEY FEEL THEY ARE LOSING CONTROL OVER YOU, THEY USUALLY KICK UP A STORM OR LAUNCH A CHARM OFFENSIVE TO GET YOU BACK IN YOUR PLACE. SO WHEN YOU ARE IMPLEMENTING STRATEGIES IT IS IMPORTANT YOU STICK TO THEM.**

**IT IS MUCH LIKE TRAINING A DOG, CONSISTENCY IS CRUCIAL.**



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