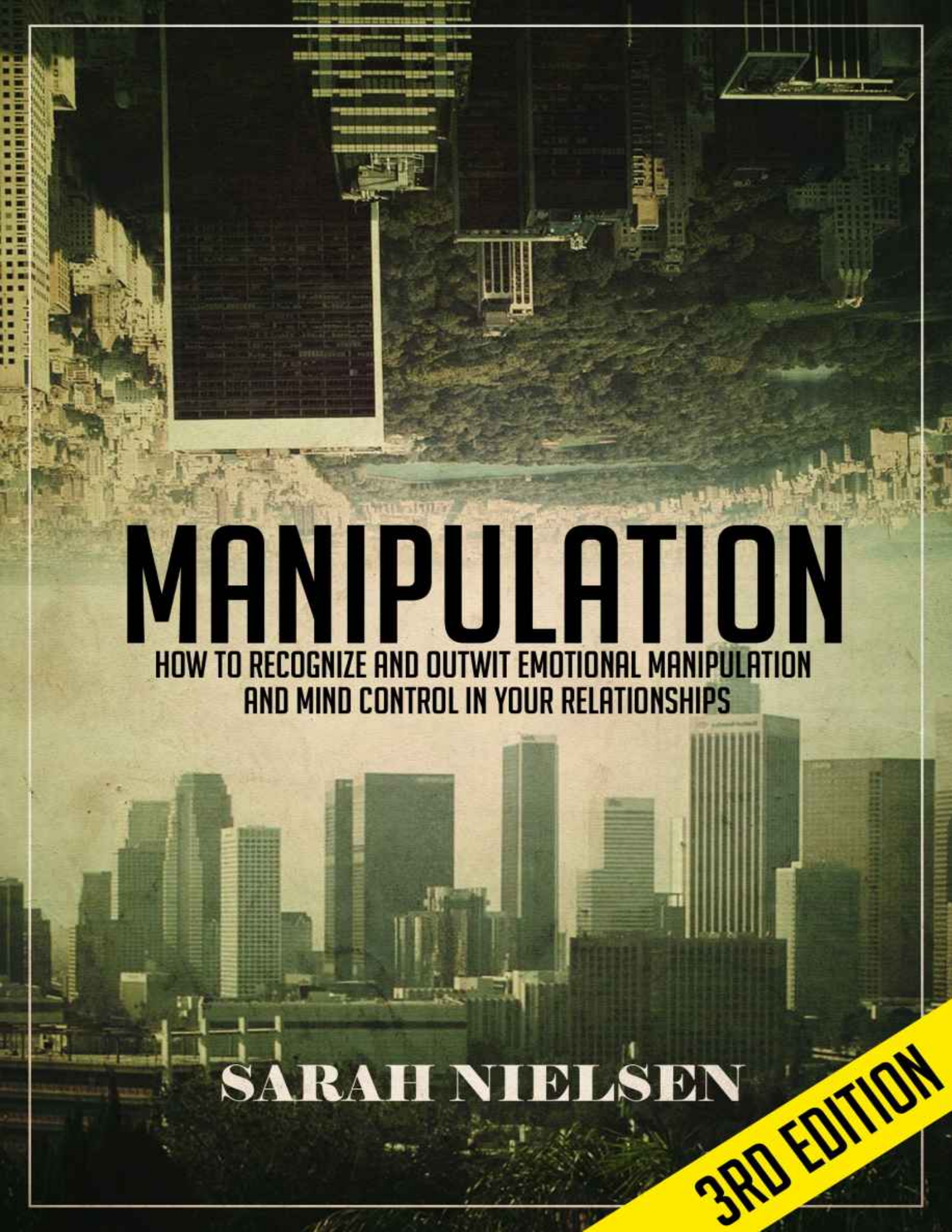


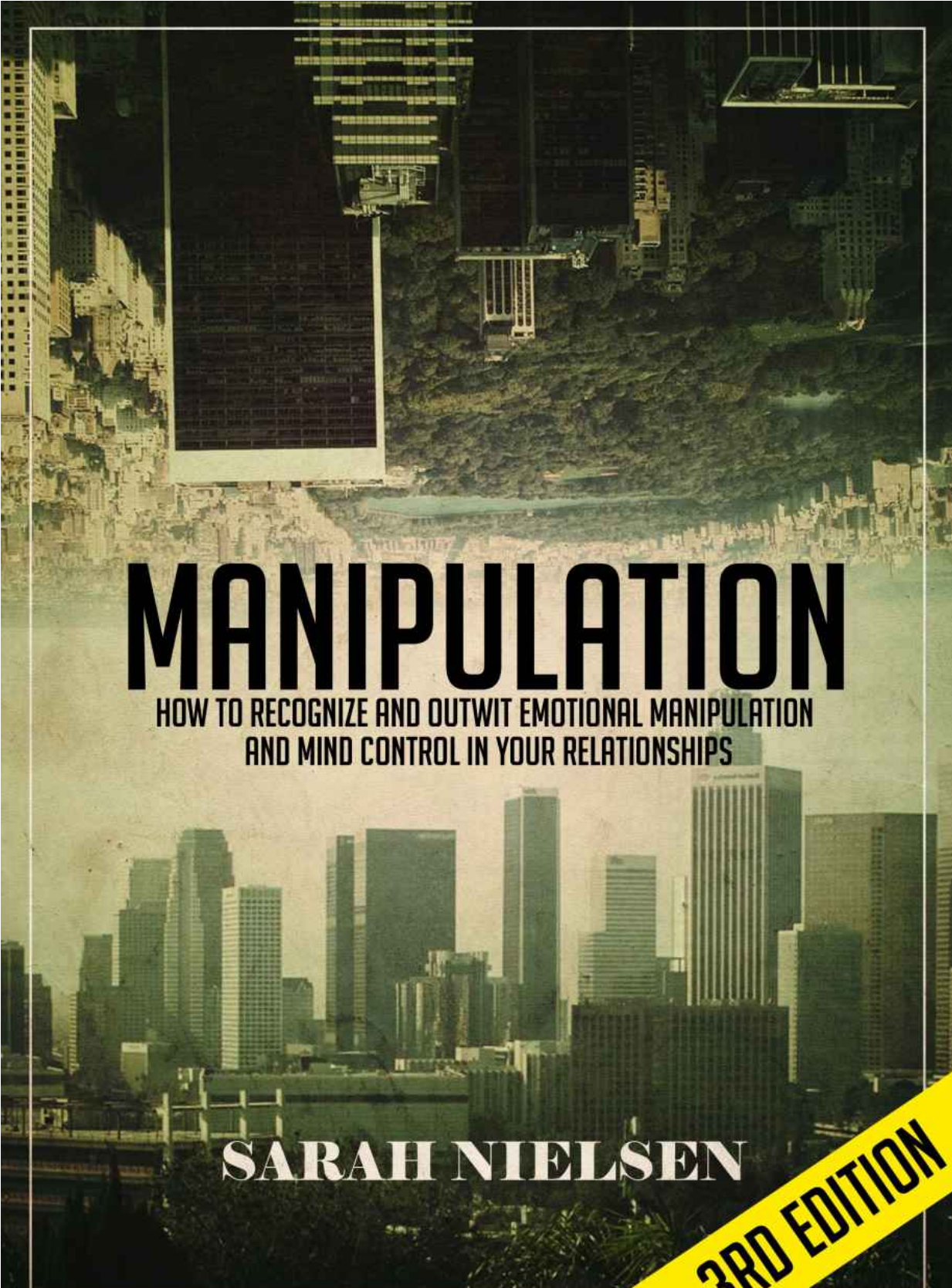
An aerial photograph of Central Park in New York City, with the surrounding skyscrapers of Manhattan visible. The image is used as a background for the book cover.

MANIPULATION

HOW TO RECOGNIZE AND OUTWIT EMOTIONAL MANIPULATION
AND MIND CONTROL IN YOUR RELATIONSHIPS

SARAH NIELSEN

3RD EDITION

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Introduction

It happens too often. People who are suffering from a low self-esteem end up getting stuck in a relationship where they're being controlled by their significant other or even a child. They're the unwitting targets of people who suffer from psychological disorders or emotional disorders that propel them to behave in a manipulative way.

The results of this manipulation can be painful for the victims, but especially for the manipulators themselves, as they struggle to maintain relationships with loved ones or workmates. Manipulators can end up isolating themselves in their attempts to control a situation and feed their need for power to build themselves up. These isolated individuals may find it hard to break the cycle, thus finding that it tends to feed itself.

Overtime, victims may become wise to the manipulation and end the relationships altogether. A manipulator can also find that they will manipulate themselves into believing their actions are necessary for the well-being of themselves or the person whom they are manipulating.

Manipulators have a few main motivations that may be shocking to those being victimized.

They:

- Must advance their purpose and personal gain at the cost of others.
- Are power hungry and need to feel superior in a relationship.
- Are control freaks and need to feel as if they are the dominant one in a relationship at all times.
- Have a low self-esteem and must have power over another in order to raise their perception of themselves.
- See manipulation as merely a game due to a psychopathic tendency.

If you find that you know someone like this, be aware of their actions and yours. Read further to figure out the warning signs of a manipulator and how to deal with one in your relationship.

Chapter One – Warning Signs

You've most likely picked up this book because you feel that you're already emotionally manipulated, or perhaps you're curious as to whether or not you're an emotional manipulator. Believe it or not, you can be a manipulator without being conscious of the act. You may believe that what you're doing is for the better of a relationship, but in all reality, it's not.

Here are the signs of an emotional manipulator, whether you are one or trying to figure out if you're *with* one. Note that many of these will be used together, but in the end, the goal of the manipulator is to achieve their ends, whatever it might cost their victims. Thus, they will take their victim's measure and then choose the best option or combination of options to achieve their ends with that specific victim. Below are some of the options that a manipulator has in their arsenal.

Positive Reinforcement

If you're with a manipulator, they will use positive reinforcement in order to get you to do what they want. For example, they will:

- give you superficial sympathy when something has happened
- use superficial charm
- apologize excessively
- use money, gifts, and approval to get what they want
- use a forced smile or laugh to elicit a positive reaction

All of these tactics are part of the strategy being used by the manipulator to achieve their ultimate goal of getting what they want at the expense of their victim's emotional, financial or physical well-being. After all, the rewards they are using during positive reinforcement are simply carrots. The next option may seem like a carrot, but often times it really ends with the stick.

Negative Reinforcement

Negative reinforcement is removing someone from a negative situation in order to get what they want. For example, your significant other may say: “You won’t have to do the laundry if you fix the sink.” Thus, the manipulator is providing a reward or removal from the negative situation to achieve their goal. Yet by giving the manipulator what they want, the one being manipulated may find themselves going from one negative situation into another one before they even realize it.

Intermittent Reinforcement

This is when you only sometimes get what you want. It's akin to gambling. You know that you sometimes get a really great response if you do the dishes, so you do the dishes all the time. However, you don't get praise for it all the time, so it's a lot like playing the lottery. One night you might get really great positive reinforcement for doing the dishes, and the next you get the cold shoulder. Yet that small taste of really great positive reinforcement keeps you wanting more, so you keep trying.

The manipulator uses the need for approval and your efforts to control the overall situation. They will keep you on your toes, while still getting what they want from you, either in terms of actions, emotional gratification or financial support. This type of reinforcement also tends to work on a carrot like approach. Yet the next one is using the stick to achieve the manipulator's goals.

Punishment

People who are trying to emotionally manipulate you into doing something for them will use punishment if you do not seem to respond well to the aforementioned ways. These punishments may include some of the following:

- yelling
- silent treatment
- nagging
- intimidation
- emotional blackmail
- threats
- swearing
- sulking
- crying
- playing the victim
- using guilt trips

The manipulator knows that this type of emotional blackmail will make you cave eventually. Thus, they are using a stick to achieve submission to their aims and demands. It all plays on the heart strings or psychological well-being of their victims, usually causing them to give in to the manipulator without realizing the damage they might be doing to themselves by acquiescing.

Traumatic One-Trial Learning

You have one chance to make this person feel better or you're in for a whopping punishment. These experiences are used to teach you that you're not the dominant person in the relationship, and you are expected to be trained to avoid all situations that might upset them in the future. This helps them use more subtle approaches that you're not aware of beyond this point.

Many manipulators use this tactic combined with punishment fairly early in the relationship to draw the boundaries of who is the boss. For the victim, the trauma can keep them from questioning other aspects of the relationship that are not to their benefit. The victim will also keep to their assigned role, thus diminishing their own sense of self-worth and value in the process. As a result, they help the manipulator by making themselves easier prey over time.

Lying

It's hard to catch someone in the act of lying, but if you do, don't sweep it under the rug. Lying in a relationship is very dangerous and is an indication that something is amiss. One of the ways you can minimize your risk of being lied to is to understand that there are people out there that are psychopaths. They lie all the time.

When you catch them in a lie, they are going to do whatever it takes to keep you on the hook. Thus, while you should not continue to trust them, a manipulator will do their best to maintain their hold. So they will attempt to make you believe that the lie was not a big deal or it was a simple misunderstanding. The manipulator may actually make it appear to be their victim's fault, thus using guilt to achieve their ends of remaining entrenched with their victim.

In addition, remembering that lying by omission is still a form of lying. It's very subtle, but don't underestimate the power of it. Lying by omission is using the withholding of necessary information to provoke various reactions. Thus, a manipulator can use the withholding of information to keep their victim in a place where they cannot make informed decisions.

Denial

You will never hear of a manipulator admitting they did something wrong. Whatever has happened will always be someone else's fault. They're very good at playing the blame game.

Thus, denial will usually be hand in hand with lying. A manipulator will often find the need to fill their denial with lies about the actions of others. Still, what the manipulator really wants is to keep their victim in line. They do not want their victims questioning their actions or motives. If a victim does, then they might see other cracks in the relationship, something a manipulator does not want to see happen.

Rationalization

This is an excuse that's made for inappropriate behavior. Don't underestimate how good manipulators are at rationalization. They can rationalize their way out of almost any situation. After all, Ted Bundy rationalized his way out of jail, not once, but twice.

When it comes to rationalization, the fault of the situation usually lies with the victim. Somehow, the actions of the manipulator become the fault of their victim or circumstances that the manipulator supposedly cannot control. Again, the combination of denial and rationalization can be used to work on the victim from a psychological aspect. Everything a manipulator does is about maintaining their hold over the victim, but at the same time, they are constantly asserting their control to achieve their ends.

Minimization

Manipulators will play everything down as a joke or make it seem like the situation was not as bad as it was. For instance, a manipulator may do something awful to a coworker and claim that it was all just supposed to be a joke. In reality, they were aiming to hurt that person.

This is a tactic that also makes the victim's feelings second class, thus making them feel less important. By working on their victim from a psychological standpoint, they increase the victim's vulnerability to other forms of manipulation.

Diversion and Evasion

Manipulators use diversion tactics such as, not giving a straight answer or steering the conversation to another topic. They will evade by being rambling, vague, or irrelevant during a conversation.

Yet, their end game is to confuse the victim, making them doubt the real version of events. The manipulator uses the victim's confusion to their advantage. Overtime, the victim may find it hard to discern what is real and what is not, because the manipulator will make them doubt everything they think and believe is true.

Guilt Trips

Guilt is their primary weapon. You can never do anything right with an emotional manipulator because they are always looking for a way to make you feel guilty. Your guilt gains them sympathy, which means they end up getting what they want eventually. The guilt also makes you doubt yourself, even when you catch them in a lie or note some of these other tactics.

For example, your significant other or friend tells you they got in a fight with their mother about how they don't want to go to a certain college, and now she won't pay for them to go to that college. In reality, there wasn't a fight about the college or even a fight at all. An emotional manipulator will make you feel like you have to be the hero, and you might end up giving them the money for tuition when it's money for something else altogether.

Beware of those who will not fight their own battles and take care of themselves. Instead, they will use their victims to do it for them. Thus, the victims take the brunt of any consequences, be those consequences of the financial, emotional or psychological.

Playing the Victim

Have you ever meant someone who seems to always having a problem worse than yours? Whenever you try to tell them something, they either have experienced it or what they're feeling is worse than what you're feeling. They have a way of derailing the conversation and putting the spotlight right back on them.

For example, you tell someone you have a headache. They tell you they have a migraine and feign being very sick. Worse yet, they'll tell you about a time where they had a headache so bad they thought they had a brain tumor. This is emotional manipulation to make you constantly feel for them rather than for yourself.

If you call them on this behavior, they will claim you're selfish and you always want to be in the spotlight. Thus, the manipulator again works the victim into thinking less about themselves and more about the manipulator and their needs. Overtime, as the victim falls under the spell of the manipulator, they will find themselves sacrificing time and sympathy to the manipulator who will be using it to their advantage.

Seduction

One of the easiest traps to fall into is the seduction trap. A manipulator will use praise, charm, flattery, and support of others in order to gain loyalty and trust. They will offer help just to get into someone's circle so that they can use more subtle tactics.

For a victim that might have issues with their self-esteem, body issues or personal view of themselves, the seduction tactic can be particularly effective. It gives the manipulator an opportunity to get close to their victim by becoming a source of their happiness, before employing other tactics to build on that self-doubt to increase their control.

Projecting Blame

Manipulators will make it look like the victim is the one to blame rather than them. They will tell a lie in order to be able to tell a more believing lie in the future. They will claim the victim is the one being abusive rather than the other way around and it's not beyond them to claim the victim is crazy.

Remember, the end goal is to achieve control over their victims. Therefore, whatever blame they place on their victims is meant to assist them achieving their control and whatever else they might want from their victims. Yet, for the victim, the damage done by the manipulator can make them question their sanity. The victim will begin to believe that it is their fault, regardless of the true facts of the situation. Thus, even when they catch the manipulator in a lie or other manipulation tactic, the victim will tend to doubt themselves first before they are willing to question the manipulator. This type of tactic guarantees the manipulator remains in the leadership position within their relationship with the victim.

Feigning Confusion

They will try to play dumb when they are accused of doing something. Plus, the manipulator will act confused when something of importance is brought to their attention, such as a lie they told. Then the manipulator will confuse the victim, so that the victim will doubt their own perception. Eventually, the victim finds themselves believing whatever the manipulator is telling them. This is another way to make the victim into the 'bad guy'.

As you can see with several of these tactics, the victim is being put into the position of feeling as if they are at fault or the reason for the problem. Thus, the manipulator is gaining the upper hand while reducing the victim's sense of self and creating self-doubt.

But that self-doubt is critical to the manipulator's long term success. No matter what, the ability to maintain control depends on the victim's unwillingness to doubt or question the manipulator.

Brandishing Anger

It's not that the manipulator is actually angry, but they use anger as a way to get what they want. They will throw irate fits and cry uncontrollably, only to use threats such as calling the police to report abuse. This is all used to put the victim in their place as the submissive.

A submissive victim is one that can be easily controlled. For a manipulator, all the tactics in the world are about achieving that goal for however long it takes to achieve all that they want to get from their victim. When using anger, their fits produce a sense of guilt and a feeling that the victim must have caused the problem. The victim feels that if they will work to be better or make other adjustments, the manipulator will not be upset.

The truth is that this type of behavior plays right into the manipulator's hands, making the victim even more manageable. Over time, this type of tactic, along with the punishment and other tactics, work to drive the victim into a place where they are so psychologically wounded that they will do whatever the manipulator wants.

They Hate Your Honesty

Someone who is trying to manipulate you will not appreciate your honesty, and it won't help in this situation. They're not in the relationship to be a couple. The relationship is all about them and their needs, not yours. So the more you try to point out the real facts of a situation or express your feelings, the more likely that the manipulator will go back to one of the tactics we previously discussed, to put you as their victim into a position of submission yet again.

For example, your significant other has forgotten about your birthday. You try to be honest with them and tell them this has hurt you, but instead of apologizing, an emotional manipulator will tell you a lie in order to make *you* feel bad. Your significant other might say something like: "I was going through a really tough time at work today because Kathy lost her husband. She was crying uncontrollably and I had to console her, and you want me to remember to drive to the store to get you a gift? But you're right; I should have remembered your birthday. I'm sorry."

At this point, you may or may not realize that they're not really sorry at all. They may even use real tears in their eyes to convince you that you are overreacting by not considering their feelings. However, the story just told was a lie and you end having to console this person rather than make them admitting they conveniently forgot your birthday. Thus, the manipulator achieves their ends, because they have shifted the blame away from themselves, but at the same time the manipulator has you apologizing to them for their own thoughtlessness.

If you see any of these traits with your significant other or a friend, you are dealing with a manipulator. A true manipulator will use all of these tactics, sometimes even in groups. The idea is make you feel as if your needs, wants and desires are second fiddle to their own, no matter what the circumstances or facts of the situation may be. In addition, these tactics can erode your strong sense of self, which only makes you easier to manipulate.

After a while, they will have asserted such control over the relationship that you will be apologizing for catching them in a lie or for having hurt feelings. Thus, they have turned you into a psychological basket case.

Be aware of their tactics and seek guidance from friends, family, and a psychologist if necessary. One of the important parts to remember about manipulation is that somehow you have made yourself a target. Thus, you will need to work on the different aspects of your personality or other factors to avoid being a victim. This includes building up your own sense of self-worth and forcing people to prove through their own actions how important the relationship is to them. So we will discuss these points in Chapter Two, where the focus is on what and how people become a target of a manipulator. In the meantime, it's important to understand the types of manipulators that might be out there.

Types of Manipulators

Many of us are aware that manipulation is a form of deceit. Manipulators are the people who use deceptive tactics to achieve what they want, but this is regardless of the consequences to those around them, particularly to the victims of their tactics.

Manipulators are not worried about how their manipulation will affect you personally or psychological damage that they inflict; all they care about is getting the results that they want. These results could be anything from getting to pick the restaurant to getting access to the funds or gifts needed to perpetuate a particular social standing.

Knowing the warning signs is a start, but knowing the type of emotional manipulator you are dealing with can also help you in defending yourself against them and their deceptive tactics. So let's talk about the various types of manipulators out in the world, thus gaining a more complete understanding of how they operate to achieve their ends.

Indifferent

First up is the indifferent manipulator, which is the one that acts like they don't care. These manipulators often seem indifferent towards anything you are doing or saying. This indifference is not just toward your actions, but any circumstances in your life, including difficulties or even celebrations.

In acting indifferent, these individuals have actually caught your attention. You spend time and energy attempting to achieve that breakthrough to capture their attention, thus hoping to achieve a deeper connection.

However, they have already singled you out for some specific reason, so they will provide just enough interest to keep you hooked without really breaking out of the indifferent cycle.

In fact, the more indifferent they act, the more questions you are going to ask because you genuinely care. However, when you start asking questions that is when the manipulation starts in an earnest fashion, because now a manipulator can use that they have information provided through those conversations to dig their hooks in ever deeper. Without them having to do or say anything directly, they have begun to play on your heart strings, thus achieving the goal of your personal emotional investment into their lives.

As the victim, you are now in a position that allows them to use your sympathy to “make them feel better”, but in reality, the manipulator is now just starting their sting to take from their victims whatever they want, from the emotional to the material. But when the victim has nothing left, then the manipulator moves on to their next victim, typically without any real remorse.

Still at this moment, you are still a goose to be fleeced, so the indifferent manipulator may also take advantage of another type of manipulator, which is the one that is always in distress, or poor me.

Poor Me

This particular type of manipulator may be the easiest to spot, but in combination with other traits, makes them easy to fall for over and over again. So what do the poor me manipulators do so effectively when dealing with their victims?

The poor me manipulators use sympathy and guilt, appealing to their victims need to try to help another human being in trouble or assist someone out of a sense of charity or faith. Appealing to their victim's better nature is one consistent way that a manipulator will attempt to get into someone's head. Often it is this goodness that a manipulator can turn on their victim.

It is simply part of our human nature to feel for people who are struggling through something or who are facing various challenges different from the ones that we are facing. We react by doing what we can to help them out, so

we tend to cater to their demands without realizing we are being manipulated.

The demands can at first appear reasonable, but over time, will simply grow in complexity. These requests quickly turn into commands and ones that often prove to be real time suckers. Thus, your whole world suddenly becomes completely focused on the manipulator. So the isolation can begin, making it harder for you or loved ones to observe the manipulation and point it out to you.

Critic

As with other manipulators, this particular type is a bit more aggressive than the first two types. They will actively focus on their victim's habits and emotional cues. After finding areas of sensitivity or weakness, the manipulator will begin to focus on them, subtlety at first, then gradually growing bolder over time.

While it might be easy to spot what a manipulator is doing, many of us who fall victim to manipulators are helpless to stop it, unless we work on improving our mindset. Other ways to help avoid being a victim or getting out of a manipulative situation involve using anti-manipulation techniques.

The critic uses criticism as a way to get what they want because the victim is trying to please, although the critical manipulator will set a bar for their standards, which the victim will find impossible to meet. The constant criticism for their victim contributes to making them feel like they are not good enough nor will they ever be good enough. Through manipulation the critic makes you feel like you are worthless and they are better than you.

Thus, to achieve a better sense of your own self-worth, the victim will attempt to be more like the critic or to do things just the way the critic prefers them. Personality changes may also occur, because the victim just wants to gain the affection and praise of the critic. However, the victim does not know this goal is simply unachievable. With the tactics we discussed earlier, the critic is able to use a carrot versus stick approach to keep their victim within their grasp and easily influenced.

Still as bad as these types of manipulators can prove to be, there is one that can be far worse. Why? Because they are willing to go much further than

any of the others to achieve their goals, including using fear and violence.

Intimidators

When this particular manipulator comes into play, the victim can be in a very dangerous place. These manipulators are the worst of the worst, they are even more aggressive than the critic. In fact, the intimidator is not just critical, but they use fear and violence to make their victims cower.

These manipulators are more familiar with the stick, than using a more carrot like approach. Once their victim is afraid, these manipulators can easily have their demands met. In abusive relationships with intimidators, the tactic of using anger comes out frequently, along with the need to punish. Both of these tactics play into the fear aspect of the intimidator.

Let's face it, when we are afraid of someone, as individuals we tend to give in much quicker than if we felt in a position of power or a defensible position. These manipulators are all about stripping away any sense of being able to defend yourself, physically or psychologically.

Nobody dares stand up to a person who uses fear to manipulate them because they are literally afraid of what that person might physically do. This is where the manipulator uses violence or the threat of violence to complete their hold on the victim. Abusive spousal relationships often demonstrate this type of intimidation manipulation with a mix of violence all too well.

So now that we have a greater understanding of the manipulator, their types and tactics, it's time to get a better understanding of the victim. If you have recognized a loved one in the information just discussed, you might recognize some of the traits in the following chapter as well. However, you might be the one displaying those traits. Let's see how those traits play into a manipulator's hands and then later on, we will explore ways that you can defend against a manipulator or make the right moves to remove yourself from their grasp.

So what specifically about your personality or way of carrying yourself is sending up flags for a manipulator to zero in on?

Chapter Two – What Makes You a Target

Unfortunately, somehow you or someone you love may have become a target for those who are eyeing to emotionally manipulate another person. There may have been some warning signs or triggers, which they saw in you that made a manipulator realize they could be successful. After all, why would they go after someone they knew they couldn't emotionally exploit?

Don't worry, there are ways you can recognize these traits in yourself and fix them. But first, let's go over them so that you know what to keep an eye out for in your own behavior that might provide a natural draw to these psychological attackers.

What to Look out For in Yourself

These are some things that you should be aware of in yourself so that you can tell if you are a victim of manipulation. If you feel that you have any of these symptoms, you should refer to Chapter Four for tips on how to boost your self-esteem or overall sense of self-worth. One of the most consistent factors in being a victim or not is how you see yourself.

A manipulator looks for individuals that need to have their sense of self validated by others. Thus, they use this need for validation, which is typically rooted in other psychological issues, to achieve their ends with the victim. At the same time, these very traits that make the victim so vulnerable, are also the same traits that make it difficult for them to break away from a manipulator. So what are a few of these traits?

The Disease to Please

Do you find that you are always trying to make others happy? Perhaps you are always trying to please your friends, boss, family, or coworkers and nothing ever seems to be enough. You're afraid of conflict and try to avoid it at all costs.

A manipulator will thus try to create conflict with you, forcing you to react in a way that will minimize the conflict. The end result is that you give something to the manipulator, but often come away with nothing for yourself. The relationship becomes more and more one sided, but your disease to please does not allow you to stand up for yourself and negotiate better boundaries within the relationship.

Tactics that the manipulator can use with the disease to please include criticism, intimidation and anger. All of these encourage the victim to do what is necessary to avoid or reduce the chances of conflict. The manipulator is successful again, but at the expense of the people pleaser.

Addiction to Earning Approval

This is a lot like the disease to please, but a little different. Rather than just trying to make others happy, you actually need their approval in order for you to feel good about yourself.

Do you go out of the way to ask others how they feel about what you did? Are you always looking for signs that you've done something to displease

someone? These are signs that you're looking for approval from others, which is a sure sign that you have a low self-esteem.

It is this low sense of self-worth that a manipulator preys upon. Since they want to create a relationship where they have all the power and control, a victim that craves their approval fits easily into the type of submissive role a manipulator needs.

The manipulator can also withhold approval, creating more doubts in their victim. These doubts can be further crippling to an individual struggling with feeling of low self-worth and self-image, because they are now assisting the manipulator by repeating these doubts over and over in a mental dialogue with themselves.

The psychological damage can be extensive, but the manipulator does not care what happens to the victim in the long run, as long as they meet their needs and achieve their goals within the relationship.

Emetophobia

This is actually a fear of negative emotions. You are afraid of showing any anger, disapproval or frustration and are always trying to look like nothing upsets you. Public appearances mean a lot to these types of victims, thus providing a manipulator the ability to control the dynamic of the relationship.

Let's think about it this way. The manipulator wants something and their victim has declined. For the manipulator, this means that at the next social function or in some other public way, they will attempt to do something to upset their victim or disturb their very public persona.

Often to avoid the scene being continued, the victim gives in. The manipulator then changes their tactic and supports the public image again. Yet they have achieved their goal and the victim has lost additional ground, either emotionally, physically or financially.

Since a manipulator will know that you can be upset and that there must be areas of your public image you would like to remain undisturbed, they will probe and find these areas that do upset you. Or they will do things that put their victim in the position of smoothing things over so that the signs of anger and frustration on the part of the manipulator disappear. Because if

the manipulator does not show frustration and anger, than the victim feels better about doing that themselves.

Again, the relationship revolves around the manipulator and how they can push the right buttons to achieve their goals. Is this need for a perfect public persona one of your buttons? Then it might leave you open for an emotional manipulator.

Lack of Assertiveness

Do you have problems saying no to others? Even if it inconveniences you greatly or puts someone else you care about at risk of being disappointed? This is the personality of someone who is naturally submissive, and it's not good for your inner health.

Plus, anyone with this lack of assertiveness puts themselves right in the line of sight of a manipulator. It is almost like waving a red flag in front of a bull. The manipulator takes on a bullying aspect, and the victim has a difficult, if not impossible job of trying to stand up for themselves, while feeling as if they are in the wrong or feeling guilty because they do not always want to do things the manipulator's way.

Naiveté

This is very hard to recognize in yourself, but do you feel that no one is ever all that bad? There's always a little bit of good in someone? Perhaps you're being victimized at the moment but you believe that you're really not, despite the warning signs.

While it may be a positive trait to see the good in others, if you are being used by a manipulator, they will use that positive quality against you. In the long run, it is better to wish someone well and move on than to stick it out in the relationship and hope their good qualities will finally make an appearance.

Over-Conscientiousness

You may be willing to give someone the benefit of the doubt and see their side of things a little too often. It's okay to be able to put yourself in someone else's shoes, but if they're hurting you in some way, that is wrong.

Remember, a manipulator is in the relationship to achieve their goals and desires. So if you are always looking for ways to understand their point of

view, you just give them one more way to get into your head. Again, while under normal circumstances this is an admirable quality, when it comes to manipulator, this quality can cost you, potentially on a psychological level. Part of what a manipulator does involves taking your best qualities and turning them against you as the victim.

Low Self-Confidence

Do you find that you're always on the defensive? You may be suffering from low self-confidence because you care too much about what others think of you. For example, someone makes light of your shoes not matching at work one day and you overreact by crying and acting as if that person deliberately tried to emotionally hurt you.

However, the reality is that this quality is one that manipulators gravitate to. They use this quality of yours to keep you involved in the relationship. They might not have to use the punishment tactic as often, because withholding approval will work so much better.

Over-Intellectualization

Perhaps you want to believe the person has a reason for what they're doing. Maybe you, on some level, deserve to be treated the way you are because something bad happened to the other person in their past.

This type of rationalization only fuels the negative fires of the relationship. Thus, you do not really do yourself or the manipulator any good. In fact, the relationship is now becoming toxic for both of you, because you are effectively supporting the manipulator's behavior, especially if you recognize that the individual you are dealing with is a manipulator.

Emotional Dependency

If you rely on others' happiness for your own happiness, you are emotionally dependent. Do not fall into the trap of believing that if your spouse or significant other is not happy, then you can't be happy, too. This is a good way to attract emotional manipulators because your behavior is exactly what they want. They want you to be dependent on them for your happiness and joy.

Thus, they can use the carrot stick approach to keep you working for their happiness at the expense of your own. When it comes to some of these traits, they may feed off each other, thus a manipulator can use a variety of

tactics to achieve their ends, based on which of your traits is the most dominate at the time.

Therefore, it is important to keep your personal self-worth up to avoid attracting an emotional manipulator. After all, they feed on the traits that a lack of self-worth typically produces. Additionally, below are some more traits that are on the list of manipulators when scouting for their victims.

What Emotional Manipulators Are Looking For

This is a list of the additional traits that emotional manipulators are looking for in their victims. While individuals may struggle with changing these traits, it is still beneficial to take an honest inventory of yourself and work on any potential problem areas. By doing so, you will reduce your risk of attracting these emotional manipulators.

- **Dependency:** They want someone who will depend on them for emotional support, and eventually financial support. They want you to depend on them for your livelihood because this will ensure you will never want to leave. In this particular case, isolation will be a key tactic of the manipulator, because isolation breeds the dependency the manipulator craves.
- **Immaturity:** People who are immature are easily manipulated because they are either trying to please or they are trying to get back at a caregiver, and thus will do anything. Again, this falls into the manipulator's plans, because the immature would not question the tactics of the manipulator.
- **Naiveté:** People who are naïve believe there is no evil in the world and if there is, it won't touch them. A manipulator builds on this worldview, giving the impression that the world is that way, while they are taking from their victim. Thus the naiveté of the victim works against them, because the manipulator is able to shape the world view of their victim to match what the manipulator wants it to be.
- **Impressionable:** This goes along with immaturity. Those who are impressionable are easily swayed to believe something that is not true. Anyone can use this to alter how someone sees the world, thus turning a victim into someone who sees things the way the manipulator wants them to see it. The manipulator's opinions become the victim's and thus the manipulator gains a definite hold on their victim. This makes it even harder to break the hold, because the manipulator is seen as in the right and others who express concern are overreacting. A victim might even isolate themselves from family and loved ones because they believe that

those individuals are trying to ruin their relationship with the manipulator.

- **Trusting:** Someone can be too trusting when it comes to others. They believe that everyone has their best interest in mind and cannot believe that others would do something wrong. For a manipulator, nothing that they are doing is in the long term best interests of their victims. Instead, the victim's trusting nature leaves them vulnerable to the lies and blame game of the manipulator.
- **Lonely:** Loneliness is a dangerous emotion. It makes humans do anything in order to get rid of it, and that may include allowing a manipulator to come into their life. When someone is looking for companionship, a manipulator sees an individual with few friends that can step in between them and their victims. Loneliness can actually be a lack of a safety net for a potential victim.
- **Narcissistic:** Manipulators do not always use 'bad' tactics to get what they want. Sometimes they are able to play to people's narcissistic side and flatter them into behaving the way the manipulator wishes. This flattery can be about anything, from clothes to hair and other choices. When an individual falls for the flattery, they often leave the manipulator in the position where they can make the victim think that fulfilling the needs and wants of the manipulator is all their own idea. Yet the reality is that the victim is being controlled because they aren't willing to take an honest look at their own shortcomings, preferring flattery over self-improvement.
- **Impulsive:** Those who are impulsive are not in control of their emotions, which makes them a better target. Often they can quickly be turned toward being angry, thus giving the manipulator a chance to use this anger and the actions that accompanied it to build in guilt with their victim. The other way that an impulsive person can be worked on is by encouraging quick decisions without giving the victim time to ask questions or think a matter completely through. As with any tactic or trait, the manipulator is looking for a means to control the thought

processes and actions of their victim to achieve their short and long term goals.

- **Altruistic:** This is the opposite of a psychopath. It's someone who is too honest, too fair, or too empathetic. They always can see how someone else is feeling and they're more easily manipulated by false emotions displayed such as anger and hurt. Remember that almost all manipulators are good actors, feeding on drama whenever it can be used to their advantage. They aren't bound by being fair or honest. After all, one of the tactics in a manipulator's arsenal is lying and placing blame whenever possible.
- **Masochistic:** Masochism is believing that you deserve to be punished for something. This personality trait plays right into the punishment and guilt tactics of a manipulator. They may also continue place fault at the doorstep of their partner, even when their partner is sad or feeling hurt. As the manipulator feeds the feeling of being a bad person, their victim feel as if they serve what happens to them at the hand of the manipulator.

If you display any of these tendencies, you should seek a therapist in order to discuss how to get to the root of the situation better. Often times, there are deeply rooted psychological issues that need to be explored in victims of manipulators. If your examination of your own personality exposes some of these traits before you are a victim of a manipulator, then it is important to learn how to curb them, thus reducing your chances of being caught in a manipulator's web. A psychologist can help with many of these concerns, so don't assume that you can simply fix them for yourself.

Making Yourself a Hard Target

As you might have guessed based off what you have already read manipulators tend to look for the easy targets. They want to find somebody that they can control and bend to suit their every need. Manipulators almost have some kind of sixth sense that allows them to single out the people that make the best targets.

Now even though you might demonstrate some of the characteristics that make you an ideal target for manipulators that doesn't mean that you can't change. Simply by taking the steps to read this book you have more than

proven to yourself that if you are ready for a change, and if you want to break free of this vicious cycle of manipulation, it is possible. Breaking free is one thing, but you will also need to make some other lifestyle changes to make yourself a harder target for manipulators. After all, nothing would be worse than getting rid of one manipulator only to get hooked in by another.

Avoidance

Honestly, this is probably the simplest tactic you can use to make yourself a hard target for manipulators, by simply staying away from them. Now as easy as this might sound to some of you, for others it isn't so cut and dry. Knowing the signs of a manipulator is probably the best way to avoid them, so make sure you brush up the most obvious signs. This book covers some of them. Still, it is important to trust your gut. If a relationship seems off, then put some distance in the relationship. You should do so particularly if you notice any of the tactics or other signs we have already discussed in any of your relationships. For the most part, relationships with manipulators are unhealthy and the victim is usually left to pick up the pieces from the damage inflicted.

However, if you do find yourself around a manipulative person your best bet is to not be offended so easily by the things that they do. Really be aware and don't fall victim to their exploitations. While that may be easier to say than do, you can do so by being aware of how they operate and refusing to participate in their games and tactics.

Good Defense

One of the best ways to harden yourself against manipulators is to put up a good defense. In order to build a good defense though, you are going to have to have a very good understanding of yourself, including your personality and habits. Self-awareness goes a long way towards scaring off manipulators because they are looking for individuals that display traits they can exploit. These individuals typically are the ones who will never see a manipulator coming.

Learning about yourself, including your strengths and weaknesses, will help you become aware of what you need to do to protect yourself. Manipulators will play on your weaknesses, but if you know what they are the chance of the manipulator zeroing in on them undetected is lower. Not to mention that

the more you know about yourself the better you will be at making decisions about what will benefit you and not an emotional manipulator.

Heeding Desires and Fears

Much like a manipulator will pick up on weaknesses, they will also zero in on your inner most desires and fears. Many manipulators, well at least you are really experienced and affective ones, will promise you just about anything you could imagine will help you solve the variety of difficulties and struggles that life throws at you. Whether it is the promise to go on a lavish vacation you can't afford on your own or something even more complex, manipulators know how to dangle that carrot in order to reel you in.

The best manipulators will also play on fears the same way they do desires; they offer the promise of protection. Knowing and understanding your fears and desires, plus having a solid handle on the facts that can provide the solutions and help you realize a desire might be out of reach, makes you less of a target for manipulators. The best way to do this is to simply face them head on and honestly evaluate both what you fear and what you truly desire. By acknowledging the worst case scenario for each of your fears, you can make your peace with them and move on without giving these fears any power in your life. Desires need to be mentally catalogued. Those that can be reasonably attained (such as a dream vacation) can be worked for through goal setting. The others should be tucked away and reexamined within a set timeframe. By having a handle on both your fears and desires, you take away any kind of sway anyone could hold over you.

Most of what will help make you a harder target for manipulators is knowing and understanding your weaknesses. Once you have a handle on your weaknesses, you can start to take the necessary steps to effectively deal with them, which can include eliminating them from your life.

While this might sound easy to some of you, for others it might sound like the hardest thing in the world. After all, taking up the proverbial mirror and deeply examining yourself, and thus coming face to face with your weaknesses, is something that many of you have been avoiding for years.

For those of you who are not sure where to start when it comes to taking your personal inventory, there are numerous self-assessment resources

available online. These self-assessments can assist you in determining what areas your weaknesses are in. It is important to do this self-assessment right away, because the sooner you know what those weak points or other areas that need improvement are, the sooner you can get started on protecting or improving in those areas, thus reducing your appeal to emotional manipulators.

Chapter Three –

How to Resist Manipulators

Let's face it, all of us at some point in our lives have fallen victim to some type of manipulation whether we meant to or not. At the same time, it is also important to recognize that we all have been something of a manipulator ourselves to get our way. Yet, overall, most of set limits on what we are willing to do and what the boundaries are when we are in a romantic or other close personal relationship. The manipulators we have been discussing, however, are on a completely different level, lacking any empathy or respect for boundaries with their victims.

Let's also be clear: falling victim to anything isn't fun, but falling victim to these experienced and chronic manipulators can be very detrimental to your mental health. Manipulation, whether it is consciously done or not, has devastating effects on a person's emotional health over a longer period of time, as it makes you start to feel and act like a victim. The more manipulation you endure, the more you will behave in a manner that allows the manipulation to continue.

The problem with manipulation is the longer it goes on the worse you start to feel about yourself. And, the longer the behavior goes on the harder it is for you to escape it, in part because your sense of self-worth is going down the toilet.

So how do you go about resisting manipulation you ask? Here are seven simple steps that you can insert into your daily life to help protect you from falling victim to manipulators in a variety of settings. Combining these steps with a greater understanding of yourself can help you to fight off the manipulator in a variety of settings, as well as help you combat the various tactics and traits we have previously discussed in this book. So let's dive in and put on our suit of armor against manipulation.

Step one: Give Yourself Some Time

When dealing with manipulators, one of the best things that you can do is to give yourself a period of time before you respond. Manipulators will often make demands and expect you to respond right away or basically instantly, which is when you are more likely to make a response based on emotion rather than logic.

Manipulators will go so far as to pressure you into giving them a response immediately, so hold your ground and be determined not to make any snap decisions. No matter what you do, do NOT ask permission in any way, shape, or form from the manipulator. That is a way of giving power to the manipulator and they will use that power to your disadvantage.

By giving yourself sometime between their request and your response, you are able to examine the entire situation and review all the facts and the factors that have a bearing on your decision. You can take a moment and think through all of your options logically rather than emotionally. Not only that but you will feel a sense of control, which is vital to helping to boost up your self-confidence again.

When you are in control, the manipulator is not. Thus, taking power back from the manipulator is a positive first step to ending the negative aspects of your relationship with the emotional manipulator.

Step Two: Don't Explain Yourself

Another important aspect in resisting manipulators is avoiding their various traps. As we have discussed, there are many tactics they use to trap their victims and get them into a position where they will provide what the manipulator wants. One other way is by making you feel that you have to explain or rationalize your decision making to them.

No matter how tempting it might be for you, do NOT explain to the manipulator why you need to take some time to think about your response. It is none of their business or concern, even if they pretend like it is, why you want to think things through before making a decision.

Do not tell them what you are going to be thinking over or even when you will be responding to them. If you do give them this information, you are simply falling into the manipulator's clutches once again. You can

acknowledge the fact that you heard what they asked, but do not explain yourself. Instead, keep your response simple, direct and to the point.

Step Three: Desensitize Yourself

When dealing with a manipulator, using your emotions against you, including sympathy, guilt and your sense of self, is one of the building blocks of several of their tactics. Therefore, it is up to you to turn your emotions off when dealing with the manipulator, essentially desensitizing yourself to their emotional games.

This is probably one of the hardest steps for anyone to have to take when learning how to resist manipulation. Manipulators play on your emotions, they learn what buttons they can push to get you to do the things that they want. They know pushing those buttons will get them their way because you don't want to upset people or you will feel guilty if you based on your lack of action or unwillingness to provide funds. Thus, you will need to unplug those buttons that the manipulator is using to work on you as their victim.

Manipulators play on your guilt, fear, and your anxiety. What you need to do to resist them is to desensitize yourself. This means that you need to learn how to cope with uncomfortable feelings, such as the anxiety that you may feel when you tell somebody no. The better you make your coping skills to deal with those feelings, the easier it will be to resist manipulation in the long run.

Step Four: Call It What It Is

One of the reasons why manipulation is so powerful is because victims don't call it what it is. Instead, they silently endure the manipulation and go about living their life. Or they do not recognize it as a problem in the relationship. Often, victims think they are the cause of the problem, not the manipulator.

It is how the pattern of manipulation first begins. Like a seed planted in fertile soil, a victim not willing or able to call out manipulation becomes the fertile soil and the manipulation seed sets down roots in the relationship.

The longer you stay quiet about the manipulation the longer it will go on and the more damage that will be done to you and others around you. To

resist manipulation, do not be afraid to call out the manipulator by pointing out the manipulation. While it might not be easy, you simply let the manipulator know that you know what they are doing, tell them they are manipulating you and it won't work any longer. The sooner you call it what it is, the sooner you can shift the power into your hands and out of the manipulator's.

Step Five: Stopping the Manipulation

In order to resist manipulation you have to stop the manipulation in its tracks. The best way to do this is to tell the manipulator that you know what they are trying to do.

You need to further explain to them that the tactics they are trying to use to get you to do what they want is not going to work. Being upfront about it goes a long way towards stopping it. The manipulator will attempt to diffuse the situation and make you believe that the manipulation is not occurring. Stand strong and do not fall for their tactics.

Instead, if they are not giving up, be willing to make a clean break to stop the manipulation. Often, the only way to completely break free from the manipulation is to end the relationship with the manipulator. For most manipulators, they will not be willing to alter their behavior to continue a relationship with someone who is not willing to comply.

For others, they won't want to continue the relationship when they see that their tactics are no longer affective and they will not be able to continue getting cooperation, attention and even financial support from their victim.

Step Six: You Call The Shots

One of the most important courses of action that you can do to help resist manipulation is to start calling the shots. When it comes to relationships, you need to set your own terms and then stick with them. Manipulators do not want to respect boundaries and they will be actively trying to break through those boundaries.

Thus you will have to stand strong and be consistent to get your message across. To do this you are going to have to assert your intention, you tell the manipulator what it is you are going to be doing and then follow through.

You need to instill in the manipulator how you want to be treated, instead of putting up with how they are going to treat you.

A big part of calling the shots is setting boundaries with the manipulator. When setting boundaries you need to make the boundaries clear, plus you need to make it plain and obvious what will happen if those boundaries are crossed. Setting limits also goes along with creating boundaries. Be clear in setting your limits and be precise in laying out the consequences of what happens if the limits are reached.

Doing all of this will allow you to take back control of your life from the manipulator. You need to clearly state to the manipulator that you are a person and should be respected. While in most relationships, this would seem obvious, when dealing with a manipulator it needs to be stated. Remember, in their eyes, you are not a person to be respected but merely a means to an end.

Tell them, even if the manipulator chooses not understand, that even if the two of you have differing opinions or values that this does not have to be a bad thing or make one of you immediately wrong. Just remember you can tell them all of this, but you cannot make them listen. You also need to learn when to just walk away and be willing to do so. When we mention walking away, it may mean more than walking away from a conversation, but it could also mean walking away from the whole relationship.

Step Seven: Compromise

This particular step is very dependent on the victim, but it does not mean necessarily compromising with the manipulator. Why? Because manipulators do not know how, understand the spirit of compromise and often are unwilling to compromise with others.

Manipulators simply want what they want when they want it and will do everything in their power to get it, no matter the costs to their victims and those around or dependent on them. However, when it comes to meeting your own needs as an individual, you must be willing to compromise and negotiate with yourself. Do this by first determining what is most important and most necessary for you, as well as what you strongly desire.

So, knowing that manipulation is emotionally harmful is one thing, doing something about it is another. Most people who fall victim to manipulation have no idea that there are certain things that they can do and steps they can take to resist the manipulation. If you are tired of being manipulated by those emotional manipulators, you no longer have to sit back and allow it to continuously happen. You can stand up against the manipulators and begin to take your life back.

Knowing how to resist manipulation is one thing, but putting it to work is another matter entirely. What you need to keep in mind is that no matter how long you have been manipulated there is always the fact that you can take your life back; you can stand up and regain control.

However, standing up and taking back your life is not going to happen overnight, even if you use the steps above to resist further manipulation. What you need to do is work on it every day. There will be occasional setbacks, sometimes you are going to fall back a step or two, but don't let that discourage you. It is only going to be with time and effort that you are able to break the viscous cycle of manipulation that you have been living in.

Again, it has to be mentioned that these relationships cannot necessarily be changed. To avoid struggling against a manipulator indefinitely, especially when they are refusing to change the way they interact with you, the relationship may have to end. While there may be some pain and sadness (at least on your part) at the ending of the relationship, in the grand scheme of life, you will be opening yourself up to better relationships. Why?

Because you are no longer giving up your time, energy and resources to the manipulator, but instead are investing them in individuals who are also investing in you!

Tips for Resisting Manipulators

Knowing the steps you need to take to resist manipulators is helpful, but sometimes we can't always follow those steps. Or in some cases we follow all of these steps and still find ourselves having problems resisting them. Luckily, there are a few other things that you can try to help build your resistance to manipulators.

- If the person simply won't take no for an answer you need to be prepared to stand your ground or stand up and walk away. During

the course of the conversation they are going to do whatever they can to get you to change your mind. The manipulator will even say things that might make you feel guilty, but are really meant to work on your emotional triggers (pushing your buttons, as we discussed earlier in Chapter Two).

However, the worst thing you can do is give in to them because that means that they have won. Instead of giving in you need to learn to let the things they say slide off your back. No matter how inflammatory something might be just learn to let it go. If you don't react to it, they can't use it against you to get what they want. Recognize that what they are saying does not have a basis in the truth about who you are as a person and walk away. Remember also that if you would not react to a stranger trying to get your goat, then you may have to treat the manipulator like a stranger to achieve the same affect.

- Sometimes the best way to resist a manipulator is to simply walk away from them. In some cases though that isn't always possible. If you can't just walk away from them, the best you can do is to limit just how much time you are spending with them. In all honesty, the less you are around them, the fewer chances they are going to have to manipulate you. Be willing to find out if that individual will be at an event. If they are, it might be best simply to decline the invitation and thus give yourself some space to achieve the growth you are aiming for.
- Another great way to resist manipulation is to agree with everything that person is saying. No matter what reason they might give you to try and persuade you to change your mind you need to agree with them. Even if they are attacking you, by agreeing with them you are cutting off their arguments one at a time. You don't have to agree with everything they are saying, you can also agree with part of what they are saying. You can also just agree that they have the right to their opinion. No matter how you agree with them it will throw them off guard and help you in standing your ground. But keep in mind that you may not actually agree and privately, that is alright. However, for the sake of throwing the manipulator off their game, your instant agreement without them needing to work you will be off-putting

after a while. Let's face it, when someone instantly agrees with us, we enjoy it at first, but it quickly becomes annoying. That instant agreement can be much the same way with manipulators. Why? Because they enjoy the process of manipulating, as much as they enjoy the end result. Once a victim has reached the end of their usefulness, the manipulator typically moves on to the next one. By taking the game out of the relationship, the manipulator may simply move on to someone who is more susceptible to their unique skill set.

- Sometimes the only way you are going to be able to resist manipulators is to stand your ground. Do not budge from your original position, which we all know can be harder than it may first appear. Manipulators are known for not giving up until they get their way, so they are going to throw everything they can at you. Most of these emotional manipulators have also been doing this long enough that they have perfected their skills, while you are just one of possibly many victims in their lifetime. The tactics we have reviewed in the earlier chapters of this book are just some of the ways the manipulator will attempt to get you to back down. Standing your ground is often going to require you repeating yourself until the manipulator backs off. Again, another way to stand your ground is to walk away. While we have mentioned this several times, the truth is that most of a manipulator's bag of tricks are not effective if you are not present. For each argument they give you or tactic they may try, simply tell them you appreciate where they are coming from and their viewpoint, but you do not agree and you are not going to be motivated to action. At least you will not be motivated to follow through on their course of action. Instead, you can choose your own course and follow through.
- One thing that you need to realize with emotional manipulators is that their feelings for you are unlikely to motivate any real change in their behavior for the long haul, so there really is no point in trying to persuade them to make changes for your relationship to continue. Something else to dwell on when dealing with manipulators is that when you are focusing on them,

you must do your best to keep your emotional responses in check. Emotional arguments are only going to cause manipulation levels to rise and they will often play right into the hands of the manipulator to achieve their ends. Your best bet at putting up any kind of resistance is to stick strictly to the facts or refuse to be drawn into the argument at all.

- When it comes to dealing with a manipulator you need to know beforehand that no matter what happens the manipulator is not going to let you “win” the argument. A manipulator will never concede that you are right or that they are wrong. Knowing this can help end any kind of discussion before stuff gets out of hand. Not only that but if you try and defend yourself to a manipulator, you already know it is not going to work, so you are not disappointed at your lack of success. Everything that you say will simply be falling onto deaf ears. Thus, your win may be simply that you did not fall for the manipulator’s tactics, but were able to successfully end the confrontation without giving in to their demands or requests.
- Something that you really need to focus on when resisting manipulators is your own weaknesses. The more that you know and understand about your own weaknesses the better. Any soldier knows that they need to identify weak areas and shore them up before the battle. Do not hesitate to do the same with your own weaknesses before you are confronted by a manipulator.

Manipulators will always try to use your weaknesses against you in an attempt to get you to see things their way and thus follow the course of action that they are laying out. Knowing what your weaknesses are can help you protect yourself when confronted by a manipulator. Take the time to learn about what causes you to give into somebody even when you don’t want to can also help you resist manipulation. How? Because you will be able to confront the cause and shore it up before dealing with the manipulator, thus cutting off one of their areas of attack. As we mentioned previously, that shoring up may need to involve a professional counselor, but it is worth the time and effort to help you resist manipulation.

- When it comes to resisting manipulation the best thing you can possibly do is stop the manipulator in their tracks by reducing your face time with the manipulator. The longer you allow the manipulator to continue their attempts to persuade you or attack you emotionally, the higher your risk for giving in. By cutting it short you reduce the risk of potentially caving in to their demands. To keep it short, set your boundaries and stick to them. Keep all of your responses short and to the point, using only the facts of the matter in your answers. Do not bring up how you feel or other emotional components in your responses. While the manipulator will bring up the emotional issues in their responses, your factual and short answers will make it hard them to be effective on an emotional level. If that doesn't work you might just simply have to walk away from the conversation. Walking away may be a frequent occurrence when dealing with the manipulator, because close proximity is always a greater risk for you as the victim to fall into their traps.
- When dealing with a manipulator do not take their threats personally. They only reason they are using any kind of threat is to try and get you to give in to their demands. If you know what they are trying to do, it can aid you to resist them. Plus in some cases, you can even call the manipulator out on the carpet. As long as you know it won't make the situation worse, you can tell the person that you know exactly what they are doing and it won't work. With those manipulators who are more prone to violence, walking away may still be the best choice, as calling them out may lead to a greater problem as they are confronted. When someone feels cornered, they will attack and this is also true with manipulators. Thus, be aware of the situation and your surroundings before trying to confront a manipulator or call them out on the carpet for their behavior.

No matter how you decide to resist manipulation you need to realize it is not going to come easy at first. You have spent so long being manipulated by people that it is pretty much second nature for you to give in to others. It

is going to take time to learn how to use these methods correctly, so don't become discouraged if things don't always work out as you planned.

Still, the more time that you spend developing your resistance and building up your own self-confidence and feeling of self-worth, the better your success rate over time with manipulators. After all, there will always be these emotional manipulators. The question is, will you give in or instead, will you be motivated to give yourself the armor needed to withstand their tactics? Additionally, you need to be will to go on the offensive, versus always being drawn into a defensive posture.

Finally, no matter what tools you employ in your fight to resist manipulation, it is going to require strength on your end. You have to build up your mental and emotional mindset to be able to successfully resist manipulation for the long haul. Doing this requires you to become stronger than you were before; you need to firmly believe in who you are and what your values and core beliefs are.

Yet, successfully resisting manipulation can also have the positive effect of building up your sense of self-confidence. Anyone who sees success after their efforts is encouraged and it helps them grow as a person. Your successes in building your manipulation defenses can have the same effect overtime.

But for those already in a relationship with a manipulator, or those who have been a long term relationship with one of these individuals, there is more than just hardening yourself or using the strategies we suggested for manipulators you meet. As a victim, you need to work at actively defending yourself while dealing with the manipulator to achieve the best short term and long term results for you. In the next chapter, we are going to look at some steps for defending against manipulators that have already put down roots in your life.

Remember, these steps can be used in concert with the others that we mentioned in Chapter Three, but no matter your approach, it is critical that you have a better understanding of yourself as an individual. Thus, in the long run, you are making yourself a better person, both in your dealings with the manipulator and also for your future relationships.

Chapter Four –

Defending Yourself against Manipulators

After reading this far you have a pretty good understanding of what manipulation is and how it works. You should also have a better understanding of the warning signs of manipulators, as well as how they pick out their targets. Learning how to harden yourself against manipulation is a great way to prevent yourself from becoming a victim in the future, but it is not necessarily going to help you in your current situation.

If you are reading this book right now, chances are you are dealing with at least one manipulator in your life. Perhaps you are sick and tired of being walked all over and are reaching out to find a way to change the patterns of the current relationship.

You are ready to stand up for yourself and regain control of your life, but the problem is you don't know how to do it because you lack the road map for successfully evicting an entrenched manipulator from your life.

Learning how to resist manipulation is a good start, but you must also learn how to defend yourself against manipulators, especially when you are already in the relationship.

If you are ready to learn how to defend yourself against the manipulators in your life, which you must be if you made it this far, here are several steps that you can follow to ensure you are successful, not just in the short term, but the long term as well. Just remember that your safety should be paramount, so if you are dealing with a manipulator who is prone to violence, take steps to keep yourself and any minors safe throughout the period where you are altering or ending your relationship with the manipulator.

Step One: Be Aware

In order to take action of any kind, no matter what the situation might be, you have to first be aware of what you are looking at. In other words, if you

want to defend yourself against manipulators, you have to be able to recognize or identify the people that are manipulating you.

Look for any signs of the tactics that we have already mentioned. These can help you to determine who the manipulator in your life is and what relationship is the most toxic. One of the biggest problems with recognizing manipulators is how subtle they are. After all, they would not be successful if they advertised that they are using manipulation.

Earlier in this book we told you about the warning signs of manipulators, as well as what manipulators look for in a target. Use what you have learned to start recognizing the manipulators in your life. Once you know who they are, you can start working on defending yourself with the following actions. But you have to remember that in order to truly make a change with the manipulators in your life, you need to be willing to take action. No one else will be able to do it for you.

Step Two: Realize it's not Personal

Now this statement is not entirely true, but how true it is will actually depend on the manipulator. However, in general, most manipulators are not looking to personally harm you, they are simply more concerned with getting what they want and will do whatever it takes to get it.

In majority of cases you are simply in the manipulator's way, so they will do what they can, even if it means make you feel bad or cause you harm to get you to give them what they want. You need to remember that it's their choice as a person how they act; you cannot control their choices or actions.

Thus, you need to put the responsibility for their actions and overall behavior back on the manipulator. Stopping taking the blame for their choices or somehow making it your fault. After all, they are already trying to do this to achieve their end goal. You do not need to help them by creating an internal dialogue that compliments their ultimate goals.

Step Three: Give Yourself Some Space

One of the best things you can do with manipulators is to give yourself some space from them. In other words do everything that you can to stay away from them. When it comes to creating space, this can be as simple as not going to places where they hang out or refusing to answer phone calls

or return text messages. In a world governed by social media, you may find it necessary to unfriend or delete these individuals from your contacts.

Now, honestly, sometimes this is easier said than done, especially if the manipulator is somebody close to you, such as a family member or even a spouse. When the manipulator in your life is a significant other, there may be more individuals involved than just yourself, including children and extended family. Thus, depending on how your spouse operates as a manipulator, it might be easier to make changes or carve out space for yourself with the help of a counselor or other professional.

Other issues with a spouse may mean sticking to your guns to create change, while acknowledging that you might not be able to separate or divorce. For others, the mental and emotional trauma that is the result of the manipulation may be too great to overcome without a physical separation and divorce. Thus, working with a professional is a critical first step to determine where your path might lie when it comes to creating space and distance between yourself and the manipulator.

If you aren't willing or able to say good bye to the manipulator, you will simply have to learn how to effectively deal with them. The next few steps can help you keep your sanity while working and living with the manipulator in your life.

Step Four: Work on Improving Your Mind

Now no matter how much you might want to, no one can seriously spend all of their time and energy focused on running away from manipulative people. And, while it is best to avoid them, the problem is you attracted them at one point, so unless you change some things about yourself, you are going to continue being a magnet for them.

Getting rid of a manipulator will give you relief for a moment, but without changes to your own mindset and personality, another will come to take the original's place. We have discussed throughout this book the traits and other factors that play into how a manipulator chooses their victim. We have also looked at how to make improvements in those areas. If it seems overwhelming, do not hesitate to work with a professional, who can guide you in taking the steps necessary to remove the target off your back that guides manipulators right to you.

To truly defend yourself against manipulators you need to work on improving your mindset, but also change other habits, including your internal dialogue. Tell yourself positive things that reinforce a reasonable sense of self-worth and the manipulators of the world will be a little less likely to head your way. After all, their targets are ones that can be influenced because of their own self-worth struggles and the way they depend on others for validation. We have included some areas that you can focus on for improving your overall mindset at the end of the chapter.

Step Five: Learn Anti-Manipulation Techniques

Once you have a strong mindset you are not going to need this step, but until then you will want to learn and adopt several anti-manipulation techniques, which can be found further on in this chapter.

Anti-manipulation techniques are about learning a skill set to be used in your mental health defense. Remember that to the manipulator, you are a target and they see their needs before they will see any damage that they may have done to you. Thus, it is important to remember that the best defender you have in a relationship with a manipulator is yourself. It is not selfish to use techniques to protect yourself from their tactics, although they will try to make you believe that it is.

Before you start using the techniques though, you will want to practice them, which we recommend doing so with somebody you trust. Role-playing is one affective way to learn the techniques and ingrain them in your mind. Thus, when the situations appear, you will be responding naturally and it will not appear forced. When it does appear forced, the manipulator can see a potential weak spot and will go in for an attack. Do not give them the weak spot to attempt to exploit!

The more you practice these techniques, the better you will be able to respond when facing the problem in your daily life. But should you be subtle when using the techniques or when dealing with a manipulator?

Step Six: Be Direct

As we have discussed throughout this book, manipulators act the way they do to get the things that they want. Their first priority will always be

themselves, but they can be confused if they are dealing with others who do not put the manipulator first.

The games might be subtle, but you do not have to take part. Be direct, letting the manipulator know that you are not going to play the game by asking them right away what they want.

If somebody is trying to manipulate you into doing a particular action or giving up money or other possessions, don't play their game, simply come out and ask them what it is they want. If you are going to go this route make sure that you listen to what it is they have to say and do not judge them.

In some cases providing a listening ear can show a manipulator that there is an alternative method or a different way they can go about getting the things they want. While this may not alter their behavior, it will give you a freedom because you know that you are not falling under the manipulative spell.

Step Seven: Be Consistent

Now once you have started to defend yourself against manipulators you need to keep doing so. This requires that you must be consistent, even though there are times when you question your ability to do so.

If you are not being consistent, you are going to end up sending mixed signals. These mixed signals will give the green light to manipulators, which will encourage them to continue acting the way they do. Pick a method that you feel will work best and that you feel comfortable executing, whether it is an anti-manipulation technique or being direct.

Then keep practicing it, particularly using your preferred method during interactions with the manipulator. Eventually, they will see that their methods of manipulation are not working, so they will more than likely move on to another target. However, be prepared in the beginning for a strong attack from the manipulator, as they will try harder when you first start standing up to them. This is because they are hoping to break your resolve and return the relationship to their preferred status quo.

Thus, when the pressure is on, sometimes the best choice will be to create some distance between yourself and the manipulator. This leads into our next step, which is based on movement.

Step Eight: Leave

Sometimes no matter how hard you try or how consistent you are, people will still going to continue to try and manipulate you. If this is the case the best thing you can do is just walk away from that person and potentially the relationship.

As we have previously discussed, when it comes to a relationship with a spouse, leaving is going to require more than just walking away. You will need to take the time to work with a professional so that you can minimize the damage to yourself and the collateral damage to your children.

Making this move might be hard, but you need to put yourself first. Accepting manipulating behavior will do nothing but destroy your mental and emotional health. The damage can be calculated from an emotional, financial and psychological standpoint. There is no relationship worth the damage that can be caused from sticking it out with someone who is only willing to deal with you from the manipulator mindset.

At the same time, remember that the whole point is to put yourself into a better position. Since you have determined that this is a toxic relationship, treat it like one and do what is necessary to eliminate that toxicity from your life.

Tips for Adopting an Anti-Manipulation Mindset

One of the most important lessons you will ever learn when it comes to manipulation is that nobody can manipulate you, if you don't let them. If you allow somebody to manipulate you that means you have giving them control over you, whether you did it willingly or subconsciously. Since so much of what makes you easy to manipulate comes down to how you view yourself and others, it is important to take the time to get to know yourself.

Throughout our discussion of the traits that draw a manipulator, most of them were overboard ways of dealing with people that worked to your disadvantage. Think about it. Someone who always needs approval from outsiders, those that want to people please and those that narcissistic all tend to give their power to others. Thus, a manipulator is easily able to make themselves the most important individual in their lives. See how it can become unconscious submission to the manipulator? Your own personal traits can leave you wide open.

Using anti-manipulation techniques is a great way to defend yourself against those that are manipulating you, but the techniques are not going to be very effective if you don't have the right state of mind. Your current state of mind is obviously not very good, as it is what is allowing people to manipulate you. What you need to do is change the way you think, adopt different beliefs and a new attitude. As we have discussed several defensive measures, they are all based in a change of how you view your relationship with the manipulator.

So, how do you change the way you think? Here are some tips that you will find quite useful.

- Take Responsibility of Your Feelings – You are the only person who creates your feelings; what other people do or say doesn't create those feelings, however the actions of others can provide triggers for various emotions and thought patterns. If you notice certain triggers that bring consistent feelings to the surface, it might be important to look at the trigger and the feelings for the true source of the problem. If you can find it, you can resolve it and thus eliminate the trigger of those emotions.

Your feelings are determined by your state of mind, as well as your attitude and beliefs based on the situation you are facing. Taking responsibility of your feelings helps improve your mindset because you are taking control; you are not giving the control over to those that are manipulating you. The more you practice the better you will become at choosing how you are feeling and how you are going to respond to those feelings. After all, you cannot choose what happens to you, but you can choose how you will react.

- Ignore Guilt – You can only be responsible for your own feelings; you cannot be responsible for how other people feel. How you create your own feelings, the same holds true for them. Manipulators often use guilt as a way to get the things that they want from those who they have chosen as victims. You need to learn to ignore any guilt trips that are being placed on you. If they feel sad or mad or whatever they tell you they will feel, that is their problem and their responsibility to deal with, not yours. The same thing holds true for actions, you cannot take

responsibility for what others do; you can only be responsible for yourself. After all, you do not have the ability to make them act a certain way. When you reach adulthood, you can make the choices for how you will behave. No one else can do so.

- Don't Feel Fear – This one kind of follows the same line as guilt. Manipulators use it to gain control over you, they often try and exploit your fears for their own personal gain. What you need to do is learn how to face your fears and overcome. We have discussed several times throughout this book how important it is to seek help for facing your fears and worries. There are many professionals that can give you the needed tools to address them. After all if you aren't afraid of something, such as losing your job, then the manipulator can't threaten you with that fear to attempt to make you do what they want. Now we know that getting over your fear is nowhere near as easy as it sounds. You will have to do it one day at a time, but each time your fear pops up you need to acknowledge it and move forward; this will eventually help you come to terms with it. Again, do not hesitate to seek assistance in dealing with a fear, but also take the time to write out what you are really afraid of. Once it is black and white, it might not be as scary as you have imagined.
- Let go of pain – Old pain is a manipulator's pot of gold and sadly we all seem to have some old pain buried deep inside. If you have any old pain buried deep inside you, the one thing that you avoid thinking about at all costs, you need to let go of that pain. If you can't do it on your own you can always seek the help and guidance of a licensed therapist. Letting go of the pain may involve forgiveness, which is really about letting go of your resentment in order to find peace for yourself. After all, the resentment and hurt is not bothering the original cause of this hurt, but only you as the individual who is carrying it around. This type of burden is almost painful. Who wouldn't want to ease that burden for themselves?
- Love yourself – We all know that people with low-self-esteem make the best targets for any kind of predator, which includes manipulators. These individuals use what you least like about

yourself and exploit that to get what they want. For those without a good sense of self-worth, this is a trick that the manipulator can pull out time and time again for consistent results from their victims with low self-esteem and self-worth. What you need to do is learn to love yourself for who you are, accept the good with the bad and don't let things bother you so much. This is always easier said than done, but if you work on it consistently, it is possible. If you are happy with who you are, nobody can use anything against you. There are many self-improvement techniques that you can use to help improve your self-confidence, as well as your self-esteem. But all of these things are only effective if you are willing to put in the work and change your internal dialogue.

- Detach yourself – You cannot identify yourself as belonging to something. For example, you are not your job. If you feel like you are your job, you are going to naturally feel fear over losing it, which manipulators can use to their advantage. What you need to do is detach yourself from those things you identify with. You need to remember that you are simply you; you cannot be any more or any less. Things don't define who you are, you define who you are. So if you define yourself by what you have or what you do, then you might find yourself struggling in times of difficulty. At the same time, that sense of self tied to things can make you a target for a manipulator.

Anti-Manipulation Techniques You Can Use

Once you get yourself in the right frame of mind you are ready to start practicing some anti-manipulation techniques. The great thing about these techniques is they are perfect to use when you need to defend yourself against manipulation, no matter when or how it might be occurring. However, in order for them to work properly you have to be in the right frame of mind, so get your head together before you start working on these. Then practice until they are second nature to you. Thus, you are creating some nature defenses for not only dealing with manipulators, but others who want to find ways to take advantage of you.

Translator

This anti-manipulation technique is probably the easiest to learn and carry out, but it also happens to be the most effective. How this method works is fairly simple: you flip things around on your manipulator. When you are in the moment where you are being manipulated by somebody, sum up what they are asking for in one simple and compact sentence. Then simply ask them if this is what they want. This is a very direct method and puts all of the cards out on the table.

This is the best method available for you to use to truly find out what the other person is feeling or thinking. The problem with people today is that most people aren't very direct; they don't really say what it is they want or need; they feel compelled to do things in a roundabout way. By using this technique, you can learn more about the other person and what they are looking to get out of the relationship. This is a technique that can also work well in any relationship to demonstrate to the other person that you are truly listening and value them as an individual. The translator method is perfect in solving a variety of issues, because you will be able to clarify where each of you is coming from and get issues or concerns out in the open.

Literal

This method deals with the subtext of a conversation just like the translator method does, but in a rather different way. The translator method relies on putting things out in the open, but the literal method involves ignoring the subtext. If somebody is beating around the bush and you are picking up the cues, simply ignore it and move on. This method is perfect when you know that people are trying to manipulate you. It is also great when dealing with those individuals whom you have a relationship with, but these relationships might not carry the same weight with you as do others.

One of the greatest things about this method is that it is very logical. It is based on the fact people should ask for what it is they want. If they don't bother to ask, then they really should not expect to receive it by making individuals guess what they really need or want. This method is all about straight talk. If you don't say it, the issue, desire or request literally doesn't exist. Just keep in mind this method requires you to deal with a lot of pressure, so be prepared to handle it. After all, subtle pressure can become

more apparent and increasingly difficult to contend with as you continue to resist the pressure.

Subtext Exaggeration

This method is similar to the literal method, but instead of ignoring the subtext, you simply react to just that. You ignore everything that is being said and only respond to the subtext. However, you don't just simply respond to it, you need to really push things over the top. You need to exaggerate your actions when you respond to the subtext. If somebody is trying to manipulate you into going somewhere, respond with what you think they would say based on the subtle sub-text you believe is currently out there.

For example, if they have implied that you are a bad person for denying your request and breaking their heart, then say so. Just remember that no matter what you say no actions are needed. After all, you are not going to go where they want or do what they want, and you need to ignore that part as well. Merely acknowledging the sub-text does not commit you to anything, but it does let the other person know that you are on to their game.

The subtext exaggeration method is one of the best ones to use when you know 100% without a doubt that people are trying to manipulate you. This method allows you to make it perfectly clear to that person that you know what they are up to and that it isn't going to work, no matter what they might try in order to achieve their goal. In order for this method to be effective, you need to be able to quickly read the subtext because you have to respond to it in a quick manner. The message you will be sending to your manipulator is one that will throw them off and give them pause before they try again.

Time Delay

Time delay is best used when you know without a doubt that you are being manipulated, but you don't know exactly how they are manipulating you. This is often used when you can't read the subtle messages a person is giving off or when you just aren't sure what a person is asking. If you feel uncomfortable about anything or feel like you are being pressured into making a decision, you need to create a delay in making that decision. This

will give you time to mull over the situation and make sure you have a clear understanding of what they want and whether you are willing to give in to their request.

With time delay what is important is that you tell them that as soon as you make up your mind, you will let them know. Doing so puts you in charge, not them. Not to mention handling any request this way will make it difficult for them to be able to pester you about the original topic. While they might, the first time they push the issue, tell them that pushing the issue only makes you less inclined to comply with their request. After all, they want something from you, not the other way around. You need to remember that you are the one with the cards in your favorite and respond to them accordingly.

Being that they are manipulators they will most likely bring it up again, however, so what you need to do is stick to your guns and remind them that you will let them know what you decide once you have made up your mind. People who are dealing with a weak state of mind or who feel like they are going to give in to somebody's demands will find this to be a very useful method. It can also be used as an emergency method while you work on improving your overall state of mind.

Since you have been given a better understanding of the traits that a manipulator looks for in a potential target, you have some tools to use to combat a manipulative personality and you have areas where you can improve to avoid being a target, let's discuss how you can determine if your relationship is a manipulative one with harmful implications for you and your family members. Let's look at the steps to evaluate your relationships, giving you an action plan to help improve your relationships with those around you.

Chapter Five –

Recognizing a Manipulative Relationship

Now just because you know and understand what the warning signs are in terms of a manipulative person, it does not mean you aren't still involved in a manipulative relationship. Sadly, every day both men and women enter into what they think is going to be the best relationship of their life only to find out too late that the person they are with is more interested in manipulating them than loving them. Thus the result is that only one person is showing genuine appreciation for the relationship.

Entering into these unhealthy relationships causes the victim to lose themselves. The victim is more interested in pleasing the person they are with; all they care about is making their partner happy. Victims often end up losing family and friends over these manipulative relationships because they don't see the signs until the damage is already done.

If you have loved ones that are concerned about your relationship, you might want to pay them some mind. And chances are if you are reading this, you have already taken the first step to finding yourself again.

For those looking to find the parts of them that they feel have been given away as the price you pay for the relationship, the first thing you will need to do is give your relationship a deep examination. You need to determine if your relationship is actually taking away from who you are. Are you making changes that have a negative effect on you to maintain your relationship? If you are, you must take the steps necessary to put a stop to things as soon as possible; the longer you wait, the worse things will get.

Step One: Evaluate

When evaluating your relationship you are going to need to closely examine the relationship from every aspect. However, simply examining it is not going to get you very far if you hide behind omissions and half-truths, thus ignoring what you find during your examination. Honesty must then also play a part.

When evaluating our relationships, you have to be 100% honest with yourself about what is working (if anything) and what is not. Look at the relationship from the very beginning, while trying to maintain as objective stand point as possible. One way is to pretend you are on the outside looking in. That can provide assistance in building the best understanding of your relationship's true nature.

If you find that it is difficult to get that objective sense of your relationship, it might help you to get the assistance of a professional who can guide you through the process of evaluating your relationship and how you relate to your partner. This will help you understand both the positive and negative aspects of your relationship and allow you to access where you should go next.

However, some manipulative relationships go beyond a mental control game and cross into the physical realm. So there may be more that you need to do to exit the relationship in a safe manner for you and your loved ones.

Step Two: Is Your Relationship Abusive

Now not all manipulative relationships are going to be considered abusive, but majority of them are in some way or another. You need to ask yourself if you are in an abusive relationship by asking yourself a series of questions about your partner, as well as your own reactions to your partner.

- Does your partner make fun of you in front of your loved ones?
- Does your partner constantly or publically put you down or belittle you?
- Does your partner use fear or guilt trips to get you to comply with their wishes?
- Does your partner tell you what you can wear and how to do your hair and makeup?
- Does your partner tell you that you are nothing without them?
- Is your partner rough with you without your consent, such as hitting, shoving, grabbing, or getting physical with you in other ways that you do not consent to?
- Check up on you constantly when you are out with friends, including via text, phone calls or even randomly showing up at your location?

- Do they screen your friends, limiting access to certain friends or demanding that you stop associating with certain individuals altogether?
- Blame drugs or alcohol as to why they do or say hurtful things?
- Tell you it's your fault for how they are acting or feeling?
- Stop you from doing things that you want, including keeping you from friends and family?
- Are you worried about how your partner will react or act, more so than how you feel personally about a situation?
- Do you feel responsible for your partner's feelings?
- Or do you constantly make excuses or apologize for your partner's behavior or actions?
- Think you can make your relationship better if you only changed a few things about yourself?
- Do everything that you can to avoid upsetting your partner?
- Constantly feel that no matter how hard you try, your partner is not happy with you?
- Stay in the relationship because you are afraid of what will happen if you leave?

Let's be clear that caring about your partner's feelings is not a bad thing in and of itself. Yet, when it becomes the primary focus of your relationship, more so than anything else, this type of behavior could be bordering onto unhealthy.

Now when answering all of these questions it is VERY important to answer them honestly. You cannot justify your partner's actions or your own actions. As an individual within a relationship, you cannot say they only do it sometimes or it has only happened once, thus justifying your partner's behavior to yourself or others. Answer each of these questions with a straight yes or no. If you find yourself wanting to qualify your yes answers with various excuses, you might need to examine why you are so willing to put up with this behavior, despite its unhealthy nature. Finally, if you answer more than just a few questions with a yes, there is no doubt that you are in an abusive relationship, whether it is a physically abusive one or an emotional one. Therefore, you may need to consider outside help to address the abuse or find a way to leave the relationship in a safe manner.

Step Three: Evaluate Your Other Relationships

Part of determining if you are in a manipulative relationship is looking at the relationships you have with your friends and family. When evaluating these relationships, think about how well these relationships worked prior to your current relationship with your partner. Are they still functioning at the same level now or have they gotten worse as your current relationship progresses? What are some of the areas that you need to evaluate?

Some things to look for is how much time are you spending with your friends and family members, as well as how much time you are spending with your partners. Also look at whether or not you are avoiding previously close family and friends because of the way your partner treats them.

Is it easier to avoid them or make excuses as to why you cannot spend time with them, rather than to get your partner to hang out with them? Do you find yourself making excuses for your partner's actions? Are you apologizing often? Do you try to make your partner look better in the eyes of your family and friends by exaggerating their positive qualities in an attempt to minimize the negative ones?

What you need to bear in mind is that if your loved ones are concerned about you or if your partner is pushing your friends and family members away from you, those are not the signs of a healthy relationship. Healthy relationships allow you to bring about the best in each other, not the worst. Again when evaluating your other relationships you have to be honest with yourself, half-truths and lies about the relationship you have with your partner will get you nowhere.

Step Four: Are You Blind to Your Partner's Faults?

Now infatuation is not always a bad thing. In fact, most new relationships have begun with some sort of infatuation present; if you aren't totally infatuated with your new partner in the beginning you might consider that to be a little strange.

While it's great to always want to see our partners in the best light, it can also cause problems because it makes us blind to our partner's true nature. Sometimes we willingly brush aside comments from our loved ones that we

should actually be paying close attention to. Particularly because they often have our best interests at heart.

After all, if an otherwise positive family member or friend finds it difficult to deal with your partner or pull you aside out of concern, open yourself up to what they are saying and be willing to really hear them. Being blinded to your partner's faults can actually prevent you from seeing the early warning signs of a manipulative relationship.

To see if you are blinded to your partner's faults and to see if you should listen a bit more closely to your friends and family's concern, ask yourself these questions.

- Are you becoming defensive about your partner's actions?
- Are you constantly apologizing for your partner's behavior?
- Do you get upset when somebody questions your relationship?
- Are you constantly changing your plans to do what your partner wants, often going weeks or months without doing something you find enjoyable so your partner will not be upset?
- Do you always hang out with your partner's friends rather than your own friends?
- Have you replaced your favorite people and places with your partner's favorite friends and places? Or have you replaced them with places and friends you have met since your relationship started?
- Have your older relationships disappeared or your contact with them severely diminished to appease your partner?

If you answered yes to any or more than one of these questions, you may be involved in a very manipulative relationship that could have severe consequences for you in the long term. Realistically, if the relationship wasn't a manipulative one, you would have no need or desire to defend your partner's actions nor would you have any reason to hide what is really going on, particularly from those individuals that have been a part of your life in a positive way or who have demonstrated their love for you consistently over time.

By cutting you off from your past, all your partner is doing is making themselves the center of your world. By doing this what they have managed

to do is eliminate any competition for your attention. Friends and family generally see this sooner than you do, so if they are voicing concerns you need to start listening. If the relationship was a healthy one your loved ones would be supporting you rather than worried about you.

Step Five: Questioning Events

Have you ever talked to your partner's friends about a specific event? I am pretty sure you have, after all, when you are hanging out with people, one thing you tend to do is communicate. In a normal, healthy relationship talking to your partner's friends doesn't usually raise any red flags, but in a manipulative relationship it often can. Think back to the times where you have talked with your partner's friends about something that you and your partner had also talked about, such as a camping trip they all went on.

Do both of the stories match up? Or did talking to your partner's friends cause you to scratch your head in wonder and think to yourself that wasn't the story you were originally told. Does your partner tend to monitor what you talk to others about, jumping in when they think you will be revealing details that they do not want others to be aware of?

Now honestly, sometimes it is the friend that alters the story, maybe to get a laugh or it's slightly different due to their perspective. But if there are dramatic differences, which may be about your partner's role or other significant details, it could mean that your partner is trying to make themselves appear a certain way to you.

If you are thinking you are in a manipulative relationship, chances are it was your partner not their friends that changed those various details around, perhaps in such a way that they appear better or in a more positive light. What you need to do is make notes of all of the times things don't add up rather than just dismiss those thoughts as a minor hiccup.

Manipulators usually do so through half-truths and omissions rather than lies. Why is that the case? Simply put, lies are discovered easier and cause you to re-think things faster than a half-truth will. You might notice a lot of half-truths and omissions, and if this is the case, it might be worth it to confront your partner on them. But when you do, pay close attention to their reaction.

If they get defensive or try to make it about you instead of them, you shouldn't simply take their reaction and let the matter drop. If you are not happy with their answer, you need to rethink your relationship right away. Especially if this is the response you get to every question you put to your partner that makes them uncomfortable or puts them in a bad light. Putting it off and making excuses can lead to disastrous consequences.

Step Six: Keep Your Support System

Manipulators tend to cut you off from everybody that you love and care about. How they go about doing this will depend on the person, but the goal is to make it to where you have no support system so that you must rely 100% on them. This lack of a support system will also decrease the likelihood that you can end the relationship with no outside resources.

Some partners will treat your friends and family horribly in an attempt to drive them away, others will constantly cause drama. There is the possibility of punishment if you do see family and friends that are not approved in the form of silent treatment or arguments that you can never win. Ultimately, you would rather not see those banned individuals than deal with the results of the visit within your relationship.

Even better are the ones that will create problems and then whine to you about how they are all conspiring against your partner, so they have a "valid" reason for not wanting to be around your friends and family. Keeping you away from your support system is done in such a way that it will be your decision to cut them out of your life. Manipulators will work things to paint themselves in the best possible light, so you won't ever think to blame them for your actions.

Yet, later when you need help to get out the relationship, your partner will have made it hard, if not impossible, for you to turn back to those loved ones. Your partner is determined to keep you, and they will burn any bridges they can to make sure you stay put. Therefore, you have to be willing to rebuild bridges if necessary.

Step Seven: Recognizing Possessiveness and Jealousy

Everybody wants somebody to love and care about them, as well as protect them. To a certain degree it is actually considered to be something nice.

Where you need to start being concerned is if your partner is overly-protective of you. Some signs that they are too protective include constantly asking where you are, checking up on you to see if you are where you said you would be, or questioning you relentlessly if you are home later than you said you would be.

Other concerning actions would be your partner trying to make you feel guilty about spending time with friends instead of them, such as saying you obviously don't care about them if you want to hang out with a friend. Or if you make plans with someone you do not see often, your partner may pick a fight before you leave, thus making it hard for you to have a good time because you are stewing about the fight.

Eventually to avoid the fight, you might give in to their requests, but their jealousy and possessiveness do not diminish. They may even get worse, because your partner has now found an effective way to get what they want, which is your constant and unwavering attention.

Step Eight: Double Standards

One of the most concerning signs of a manipulative relationship is where your partner uses double standards when it comes to the relationship. If your partner says you can't do something, but then they go out and do what they said you could not, a double standard has been created.

This type of issue is a big cause for concern, because it can breed resentment within the relationship. Something else to watch out for is a no-win situation. These are when you get berated by your partner no matter what you do. When it comes down to it, nothing is ever right. These are moments that can really make you feel unworthy, which draws your attention away from what is wrong in the relationship. In these situations, no matter what you decide to do you are going to be at fault. Thus, it is important to look at why your partner is always deflecting back to your actions versus their own.

Step Nine: Asking Forgiveness

Now when you do something wrong it is only right to ask for forgiveness, so how does this serve as a warning sign to a manipulative relationship, you may ask. The answer is rather easy. When it comes to manipulative people,

they will constantly make their partners feel like they have to ask for forgiveness after making the same mistakes over and over again.

Or the other side of the coin, the manipulative partner uses apologies to keep their partners hooked into the relationship. The manipulative individual might know what they did is wrong, so they beg you to forgive them with the promises that they will change. And while they might sound like they mean it, honestly it is all a big part of control.

They use compassion to keep you in the relationship. And all too often what happens is they change for a little bit, just long enough to convince you that things have changed, and then all those changes disappear and the old patterns of behavior come back again. This vicious circle will eat away at your self-confidence over time, so the sooner you stop it the better it will be for your overall mental health.

Step Ten: Forgive Yourself

Now after reading all of this you are probably beating yourself up for falling for a person like that, but don't. The truth is manipulative people portray themselves as great people, and more people than you realize fall for their tricks. On the outside these people appear confident, almost to the point of arrogant, and they are often quite intelligent and talented, so it is easy to see why people would fall for them so quickly.

What you need to realize is that these people put up a great front, but for them it's all about the control. They honestly feel like they have to be in control of everything. For them, it can almost produce anxiety and they imagine that the worst will happen if they concede control to their partner, even if it is for a relatively short period of time. They may have also dealt with a period of time where the living situation was chaotic and they never want to be in that situation again.

However, you need to come to terms with the fact that they are using this control to keep you in the relationship. Whatever the cause of their need to control, it is not your issue to fix or make better. They need to recognize it and make the effort to make changes. You need to tell yourself that it is not your fault that you love them; it is their fault for using that love as a way to manipulate you and damage you in a mental and emotional, perhaps even a physical way.

Getting Out of a Manipulative Relationship

If you have determined that you are in a manipulative relationship, one of your best choices is to end the relationship. However, easy as ending the relationship might sound, it is not always the case. Sometimes ending the relationship is even harder than staying in it for a variety of reasons.

There may be children involved, which can make getting out of the relationship difficult. The children can be a source of continued manipulation from your ex-partner, even after the relationship is ended. Therefore, you will want to make sure that you plan your exit by factoring in these concerns and issues.

No matter what reasons you might tell yourself or what reasons your partner might tell you, the only way you are going to be able to move forward with your life is to make a clean break. Ending a manipulative relationship is going to take courage, but once you begin it is important to keep moving forward. After all, the only way to heal is to make the change and let the process begin.

Prepare to End It

The first part of this is the easiest, as the first thing you have to do is admit that you are being manipulated by your partner. Most relationships go on longer than they should because the victim doesn't want to admit that anything is wrong. You have been making excuses for so long about your partner that you have actually started to believe what you are saying. The first thing you must do in order to prepare yourself is to admit that you are being manipulated.

Once you have admitted that there is a problem you can work on why ending the relationship is the best choice for you. You can start to focus on how ending the relationship is actually going to improve your life in the long run. Knowing how it will benefit you and make you happier will also help motivate you to leave. Your best bet is to write down all of the reasons why leaving is the best choice. Reference this list when you are struggling, or your partner is doing all they can to make your exit as difficult as possible. You are moving toward something positive and it is important to keep that forefront in your mind as you move through this process.

Not sure where to get started? Here is a quick look at just a few of the reasons as to why you need to leave the relationship.

- You can be your own person again. You can do the stuff you loved doing before you lost yourself in the relationship.
- You can begin enjoying your friends and family again.
- You will see a huge jump in your self-esteem.
- No more fear and anxiety controlling everything you do.

Once you have made up your mind that leaving is the best thing for you, you need to figure out what you are going to say to your partner. You don't want to wing it because that leaves you open to their manipulation. When coming up with what you plan to say, remember to keep it short and to the point. You don't need to go into tons of details, the more you talk the more room they have to make empty promises.

More importantly don't be vindictive, stay calm as you tell them that it is over. If you start acting emotional in front of them, you are opening up the conversation for further manipulation. To help ensure everything goes smoothly find a trusted friend or family member and practice with them what you are going to say, so that you are 100% comfortable with it.

If possible, have a trusted family member or friend close at hand during the discussion with your partner. They can intervene if they see the discussion getting out of hand. This part is especially important if you and your partner have a history of physical altercations. And remember ending it in your mind before you do it in person can make saying what you have to say easier.

Planning what you say is important, but so is how and where you will say it. For example, if you are afraid of how they will react doing it in public rather than private is definitely the better choice. Even better, you can simply leave them a note, so you don't have to deal with them face to face. If you are opting for the note approach, plan to have all of your things removed while they are away from the home and then leave the note. This way you make a clear break, but the anger that will be generated by your departure will be avoided. This can be affective, especially if there are no children involved.

Bear in mind the timing needs to be right as well. Don't end the relationship after the two of you have been out drinking all night, do it when things are a bit more stable to lessen the chance of an emotional response. The timing can also help keep the discussion from getting out of hand or getting very physical between you both.

Part of planning the end of the relationship involves figuring out how you are going to get your stuff back, whether you were living with your partner or just had stuff at their house. If you are living with the person, make sure you have a place to move to before you break it off with your partner. How you get your stuff back will depend on how safe you feel. Some find it easier to sneak the stuff out in small batches, while others find it easier to go back after the break up. No matter how you decide to handle it, you can always use friends as back up. Some even choose to get all their things out in one swoop, just prior to letting your partner know the relationship is over.

Carry Out Your Plan

Now that you know what you need to do; you need to carry out your plan. One thing to keep in mind as you start to carry out your plan is that you need to be firm, you can be nice, but you still have to be firm. No matter what kind of reaction your partner has, you need to say what you have to say and leave. Chances are your partner will try and manipulate you anyway by crying about how you never gave them a chance to explain. Don't fall for it though because in reality you have given them far too many chances.

Once you have told your partner what you have to say you need to leave. Do NOT stick around. You don't need to hear what your partner has to say nor do you need to witness the fake tears, no matter how real they might look. You are not here to negotiate with your partner. One way to make things easier is to keep your distance from your partner. When telling them what is on your mind stand or sit as far from them as possible, do NOT let them touch you. If they do touch you, you are at risk for being manipulated back into the relationship. Additionally, if they do try to hold your hand or lay their hand on your arm, shift away and continue saying what you came to say.

Now remember you are leaving a person, who has spent the entire relationship manipulating you, chances are they aren't going to stop that behavior anytime soon. You need to be on the lookout for that type of behavior. Do not let their emotional outbursts change your mind. No matter what they might say or do or how they might act, you must remind yourself that you are leaving the relationship because of that behavior. You can't let it work on you any longer.

As a result of your departure, you may find that your partner tries to get you to change your mind by continuing to attempt to contact you. If possible, do not give your partner any new contact information. Make sure that the break is as clean as possible. After all, this is a new start for you and you want to make the best of it.

Once you have said everything that you came to say you need to turn around and walk away. Do NOT look back, simply hold your head up and walk to your car or your friend's car. And more importantly do not tell your now ex-partner where you plan on going. Even if you think they have an idea of where you will be staying, do not mention or acknowledge it. Frankly, it's none of their concern where you go or what you do from here on out.

Continue To Follow Through With Your Plan

Now that you have broken up with the person, you might think that you are done. Sadly, that is not the case. Now comes something even more important than the actual break up, you must now follow through with your plan. You need to ensure that the break up remains permanent.

Now that you have broken up you need to avoid all contact with that person. Giving them any sort of attention after you have left them, gives them the idea that there is a small chance that you can work things out and get back together. Not to mention when you avoid them you can no longer fall victim to their manipulations. Avoiding all contact means ALL contact, no talking, no Facebooking, nothing. Some exes are going to be more persistent than others, so you might need to invest in a restraining order.

Something that you are going to need to be prepared for is the feeling of loneliness and sadness that will come after the break up. This is when you are going to be the most vulnerable and you will start to question your

decision. This is normal, but for those of you who just left a manipulator it is often worse because you also have to work on finding yourself again. Here is another good opportunity to seek the assistance of a professional counselor, who can help you set goals for yourself and get you focused on a positive future.

Suddenly every aspect of your life is yours to control, it is up to you to make all of the decisions. No matter how low you might get you need to stand by your decision, do not change your mind. Tell yourself every day that things will get easier; you just need to ride it out. Remember you were fine before the relationship, so you can be fine again.

Tips for Making the Break up Work

Once you have decided that the break up is for the best and that no matter what you are not going back, your life is going to start to change for the better. Now even though it might start changing for the better that doesn't mean things are going to always be easy. You are going to wake up some mornings really missing your ex. You might even start thinking that you were too hard on them and that they deserve a second chance. Now these feelings are normal and they will eventually go away, but that doesn't make dealing with them any easier.

If you are having a hard time dealing with the break up there are things that can help you get through even the roughest of days. Here are some useful tips that you can immediately put to use.

- Hanging out with your loved ones – Most of us think that after a break up we need to spend all of our time alone, but that is not even close to the truth. In fact, total isolation is the worst thing to do after breaking up with a manipulator. Sure some alone time is good, but leaning on loved ones will help you stay strong and get through even the roughest of days. Remember loved ones are your support system, talk to them about how bad the relationship was and how bad you are feeling. They will be there to help you get through it and the more they know and understand the more they can help.
- Keep busy – One of the worst things you can do is lie around the house feeling sorry for yourself. The more you sit around and do

nothing the more likely you are to start thinking that you made a mistake. Plus the more you feel sorry for yourself the harder it will be to get over the relationship. Your best bet is to stay as busy as possible. How you stay busy is entirely up to you, but you can always hang out with friends, work some extra shifts, pick up a hobby, or even head back to school. The important part to staying busy is to get out of the house as much as possible, as isolating yourself inside your home will cause you to really feel alone. Planning your week can also help, especially if you create something that you have to look forward to each day.

- Remind yourself of how much happier you are – Now obviously some days this is going to be more true than others, but over time it will be very easy to see. Every day when you first wake up or even before you go to bed think about one thing that you can now do since you left your ex. Create a list of all of the things that you can do and how much better your life is can also help. It's nice to have the list to look over when you are having those down days.

Chapter Six – Dealing with Manipulation in a Relationship

Sometimes it's not always possible to get out of a relationship with a manipulator, such as a parent/child relationship. In some cases, you may truly care about the person you're with and you want to help them, but don't allow this to become another way for the manipulator to take control. There are ways that you can deal with a manipulator, but it will take some time and some hard work on you.

Focus on You

All too often, victims of manipulators focus on their tormentor rather than themselves. This is exactly what the manipulator wants, which will only make their behavior worse. The reality of the situation is that you can only help yourself and not the person who is manipulating you, so focus on you rather than on them. Sometimes this will actually resolve the situation all on its own because the manipulator will realize they are not in control anymore and leave.

Do not fall into the trap of sharing your emotions and feelings with a manipulator. They will only turn this against you in the end and having them thrown back at you from a different perspective may be very difficult to handle. Remember that manipulators are not susceptible to empathy and will not be able to take your side in the matter.

Assess the Value

Is this relationship really worth all of this effort to you? Sometimes the damage is already so severe and your sense of happiness and integrity has been damaged so badly that you just need to leave the relationship. This is difficult to do if you have a low self-esteem, so be sure to check out Chapter Four on ways to raise your self-esteem levels to be able to face your tormentor and have the courage to stand on your own.

Of course, sometimes it is impossible to get out of a relationship with a manipulator because they may be your child, so you have to assess how the relationship is hurting you as the parent and figure out how to alleviate some of the manipulation. If you are the parent dealing with a manipulative child, sometimes it's best to have that child see a psychologist to get to the root of the issue.

Use Assertiveness

The first step to using assertiveness in a relationship is to take back the control you have. You are most likely very used to complying with your manipulator just to avoid an altercation, but there are other ways to avoid altercations. When one starts to arise and the manipulator starts to do something that upsets you, simply remove yourself from the situation. You can do this by stating, “I need time to think about this.”

Do not allow the manipulator to ask you *why* you need time because this is another tactic they use to regain control! Simply restate the previous statement over and over again until you are out of the situation, in another room, outside, or in another location completely.

Once you’re removed from the situation, you must confront your fears and anxieties that are building up. Why do you feel guilty when the manipulator uses this tactic? This is very hard to do, but there must be a reason as to why you are responding the way you are, being submissive and being the victim. This may be a great challenge for you, but it could save your relationship or set you up for healthier ones in the future.

Finally, in a calmed state, confront the manipulator and tell them exactly what you just learned about yourself. For example, they may threaten to leave you during an argument and that makes you feel afraid. Simply state that to the manipulator and tell them that if they state what they want with respect, you might be more willing to listen. Then tell them firmly, but not without control, that you will not allow them to play on your fears any longer.

This will lead to one of two results. Either the manipulator will realize that what they did is wrong and hurtful to you, and they will stop their manipulative ways or they will leave because they no longer have control. Do not be afraid of either outcome as this will strengthen your relationship with yourself, and that is the most important one you have.

Performing these steps can be very difficult and you may need the help of a therapist or a psychologist. Do not be afraid to ask for help! Sometimes manipulators know what they’re doing but they don’t realize it’s hurting their relationship with you. If they’re confronted with a calm and friendly environment in a therapist’s office, things might go better.

Can You Successfully Deal With A Manipulative Partner?

As we just mentioned not every relationship needs to end because of a manipulator, although in several cases it is the best choice. One thing that you really need to remember is that even in a normal, healthy relationship it is natural to be influenced by your partner. Relationships are known to change both parties, as you grow and discover who you are together as a team. What you need to watch out for though is where you start to feel like you are losing yourself in the relationship. Your partner should be bringing the best out in you, not overpowering every aspect of your life.

We mentioned some specific ways that you can deal with manipulation in a relationship earlier in this chapter, so now we are going to look at manipulation in general. Here we are going to talk about what signs to look for to know if it is manipulation you are dealing with in your current relationship.

Understanding Manipulation

Manipulation can present itself in a variety of forms, as we discussed earlier in this book there are four main types of manipulators. In relationships though manipulation can present itself a little differently as it can be in the form of teasing and sarcasm. With how many different ways manipulation can be presented it is often very difficult to determine whether or not your partner is manipulating you.

Signs of Manipulation

Many times in relationships you will start to feel like you are being manipulated, but sometimes you can't pinpoint why you feel that way. In most cases you feel that way because you aren't listening to your gut, you are going against those feelings so you start to feel a bit uncomfortable. Other times you will make decisions because of things your partner suggests, they work on getting you around to their way of thinking very subtly.

However, in order to say without a doubt that you are being manipulated you have to look at your partner's behaviors logically. You cannot go on gut instinct alone. One way to do this is to be 100% honest with yourself. Look at your partner's behavior towards you and think about what you would tell

a friend if it was happening to them. If you would tell your friend to leave the relationship because the behavior is too controlling, you need to follow your own advice. If you would honestly tell them they are overreacting, chances are you are too.

What to Do If you are Being Manipulated

Now if after an honest evaluation you have determined you are being manipulated by your partner you have a few different options. One is to leave them, which we covered how to do that in the previous chapter of this book. Your next option is to simply deal with the manipulation as we discussed in this chapter. However, you can also approach your partner to see if you can get the manipulation to stop. Sometimes partners don't even realize they are doing it.

If you decide to approach your partner you are going to want to make sure that you have a plan in place. Having a plan in place is important because sometimes confronting the manipulative person causes further manipulation, making it hard for you to stay on track regarding what you want to discuss. So to prevent this from happening carefully think about how you want to handle the situation, you can even use some of the approaches already mentioned in this chapter to help you deal with it.

When you do approach your partner do not do so in an accusatory manner. Accusing them only sets them on edge and can cause the entire conversation to go awry. Instead focus on the way that you are feeling rather than putting the focus on how your partner is acting. To keep the focus on you and your feelings use plenty of "I" statements. These kinds of statements will also help provide examples to your partner of what has been going on. Going this route will help open up the conversations and will hopefully prevent your partner from becoming defensive.

Now once you start the conversation with your partner you have to be willing to carry it out. You cannot go into the conversation and state your case and then just walk away. You need to listen to what your partner has to say as well. In fact, how your partner responds to your conversation is going to be what determines if the problem can be solved. If your partner accepts responsibility for what they have done chances are the problem can

be solved, but both parties will need to continue to work on improving communication.

If your partner belittles your feelings or brushes you off, you need to rethink the entire relationship. Only you can make the decision of whether or not the relationship is worth saving.

No matter what you decide you still need to continue to be aware of how others are treating you. It's all too easy to get back into the same routine of manipulation. If you do stay with your partner to work things out sharing how you are really feeling on a regular basis is very important. Effectively communicating with your partner can help prevent both of you from falling into old patterns.

Chapter Seven – Raising your Self-Esteem Levels

All of the aforementioned reasons a manipulator chooses a victim are related to self-esteem levels of the victim. It's very easy to fall into a pattern of nitpicking at everything we do wrong. I'll give you a personal example.

A few months ago I missed a deadline with a client at work and I felt terrible about it. Meanwhile, I had been doing awesome with other projects and excelling in areas that I never thought I would excel in, but that one missed deadline seemed to drag me down. The rest of my projects suffered and I ended up missing more due to my lack of motivation and ultimately, the low self-esteem I was beginning to suffer from due to stress. It doesn't take much to drag a person down in today's rough and tumble economy where we're constantly competing for jobs, love, and respect.

That's why it's extremely important to follow some of these steps to keep your self-esteem boosted that you are in a better position to defend yourself against the ruthless manipulators out there who want to drag you down.

Thirteen Ways to Boost Your Self-Esteem

These thirteen ways will help you boost your self-esteem levels so that you can handle the people who are attempting to manipulate you. If these do not help, I strongly suggest you see a therapist to get some more tips and discuss why you're feeling so low about yourself.

Start with Something Small

You're not going to change your outlook in just one day, so start with something small and easily obtained in order to give yourself a gentle boost in the right direction. It's like trying to clean an entire house that is stacked full of junk. You have to start somewhere, so start in the hall closet and celebrate your success. Then move on to the kitchen and keep going to each different room. Before you know it, the entire house is clean and your self-esteem has elevated.

Use Visualization and Make it Compelling

Your imagination is a very powerful tool and you should utilize it as often as possible when it comes to your self-esteem. When you imagine an outcome, make it positive and reinforcing, not doom and gloom. Take ten minutes every morning and find a quiet place in your home. Visualize how you want to be as a confident person and then write down all of those attributes you saw in yourself. By doing this, you are training your subconscious to behave the way you want to be.

Don't Underestimate the Power of Socializing

Find people who will support you no matter what and hang out with them more often. They will give you an opportunity to practice your interpersonal skills and help you see that there are other people out there who care about you. You don't need to rely on one person for your happiness.

Do Something that Frightens You

If you're afraid of going out to parties, go out to one alone and experience it to its fullest. Don't rely on someone else to hold your hand through the situation, and if you need to, practice some breathing exercises to get through it.

Do Something You're Good At

It doesn't matter what it is. It could be painting model airplanes or even crunching numbers for a budget. Do something that you know you're good at and that you will excel at so that you feel accomplished. This will boost your confidence sky high.

Have Goals

Without goals, you have no idea where you're going in life and whether or not you've accomplished something. You should always have something you're working toward and always reward yourself when you're finished with a goal. It doesn't matter if your first goal is to clean the bathroom, do it and reward yourself for taking the actionable steps to clean the bathroom. By accomplishing things and feeling good about them, we're boosting our self-esteem levels.

Helps Others Feel Good

Give others compliments when they're feeling low or teach them something they've always wanted to learn. By helping others, you're helping yourself feel wanted and productive. Just be sure that the people you're helping are not manipulators. Do not allow them to have control over the situation and always be aware of those who are trying to take advantage of you.

Get Clarity

You need to have a clear idea of where you are at your lowest on a self-esteem scale and which category you need to work on first. There are three main categories: health, relationships, and finances. Rate yourself on a scale of one to ten through those categories, and work on the one that is at its lowest point. By doing this, you will boost your self-esteem in all the other areas, too.

Have a Plan

Treat your life as if you're baking a cake. You need actionable steps in order to accomplish your goals, so make a list of small goals beneath your large one and then make a list of tasks underneath those goals. Take everything a step at a time so you don't become overwhelmed and quit prematurely. This will only hurt your self-esteem, so you have to be ready with a plan when you have a goal.

Become Motivated

It can be as simple as setting rewards for each milestone you complete underneath a goal, or it could be reading an inspirational book. We find inspiration and strengthen in others' ability to overcome hardships, so find something that really makes you want to get started.

Get External Compliments

It may seem awkward and a little odd, but go to a family member or a friend and ask them to be honest with you about your strengths and what they love about you. Sometimes we need to hear someone else tell us what we're good at, but don't rely on this too much. Take those strengths and expand on them with the knowledge you have about yourself.

Use Affirmations

Affirmations have to be used in the correct way in order to be productive and helpful. You cannot be sitting on your couch and tell yourself that you are highly motivated and productive. Instead, ask yourself why you're sitting on the couch and is this your best self? Is this what you want to be doing right now in order to be ideal? Your affirmations must be the *truth*, and not something that you want to be true. You have to be honest with yourself and take the first step toward doing something of value.

It would be empty words with no meaning if you sat down in front of a mirror and told yourself you were beautiful every morning without believing those words. You have to dig deep and find the belief that you are beautiful inside and mentally repeat it in order to make it stick.

Stop Comparing Yourself to Others

All too often we're stuck in this vicious cycle of comparing ourselves to others. We need to know what the latest fashion models are wearing so that we can emulate them. If our coworker has something that's better than what we have, well then, we must not be worthy of love or companionship. Stop looking to others for how you should feel about yourself. Just accept that you have to move at your own pace and travel your own path to becoming the person you want to be.

Chapter Eight – Following Through with Getting Rid of a Manipulator

Sometimes you fall back into your old pattern because it's familiar and humans crave familiarity. The best way to counteract this is to use self-esteem boosting techniques continuously rather than using them once and getting rid of them. In addition, you should remember some of the following steps if you're tempted to get back together with someone who has manipulated you in the past.

Avoid Contact

If you have been with someone who manipulated you in the past, the best thing to do is avoid contact with that person. Do not allow them to call, text, Facebook, or show up in places where you once frequented. In fact, change your number, Facebook, and start frequenting *other* places in order to avoid that person. This is your best bet when it comes to staying out of a manipulative relationship because it's too easy to fall back to what is familiar.

If you have to talk with this person for any reason or you end up seeing them in a public setting, take a friend with you or call one for support.

Don't Change Your Mind

You may feel sad, lonely, and just downright terrible about the relationship and how it ended, but don't be tempted to change your mind. Remember the reasons you did this. In fact, write them down so that you see them in front of you. This makes it more solid for you and helps you recall the emotional turmoil you went through before. It'll be nothing to feel a little sad every now and then compared to feeling controlled constantly.

Spend Time with Friends and Family

You should be with the ones who love you during this tough time. If you feel comfortable enough, open up to them and tell them what happened in your relationship. A confidant will be able to listen to you without judgment, and you're really going to need that during the rough road of recovery ahead.

At this point, it would be a good time to reach out to old friends or even find a support system within a therapist's office or a group. Surround yourself with people who are understanding and empathetic of your situation.

Stay Busy

If you're spending all your time alone and thinking about the relationship, you will never get past it. This doesn't mean you have to go out and party, but spend some time doing something you love like skiing or jogging. Immerse yourself in work or school for a little while.

Write down Why You're Happy

When you write down why you're out of the relationship, write down why you're happy, too. Be sure to note that you're not being controlled anymore, and this is an excellent reason to celebrate! Whenever you have a weak moment, refer back to your list and remember why you left in the first place.

Warnings about Getting Rid of a Manipulator

Getting rid of a manipulator is supposed to be a good thing, but sometimes things can go horribly wrong. While in some cases getting rid of the manipulator is as simple as walking out and not looking back, there are several manipulators out there who simply won't take no for an answer. With these kinds of people you need to be a bit more persistent, you have to stand up to them and not back down. However, standing up to them can go horribly wrong, if you don't take certain precautions.

If you have broken it off with a manipulator the last thing you want to do is continue to see that person, but what happens if they simply show up at your house, which happens more than you might think. If they do show up you need to be smart about things, don't let your emotions over run you, think things through before doing anything. If you are home alone do NOT answer the door, do NOT talk to them at all. The best thing to do is cut off all contact, even if other people are around. And most of all be consistent, don't talk to them one day, but not the next, as that can send mixed messages.

Always pay attention to your surroundings, some manipulators will revert to stalking type of behaviors. These people might threaten to harm you or they may even threaten to harm themselves. You cannot determine if the threats are serious, so what you need to do is turn it over to the authorities. If they continue to bother you, you might need to obtain a restraining order. If you do obtain one you need to call the authorities each and every time they violate it, if you give them an inch they will end up taking a mile.

In addition to contacting the authorities, if they begin stalking you or threatening you, you need to come up with a safety plan and put it into action. The worst thing that you can do is underestimate them. You might be surprised at just how far they will go to keep you. Part of having a safety

plan involves never going anywhere alone, but it also involves having a safe place to stay. Don't be afraid to ask for help, your safety is far more important than your pride.

Now what you really need to keep in mind when it comes to ending a relationship with a manipulative person is that all we can offer you is advice. The advice we are giving you can backfire, so always be prepared for the worst. If you don't want to consult on expert on manipulation your best choice, as well as the safest choice, is to disengage yourself from the manipulator.

Conclusion

It's important to remember that you cannot change the manipulator, but you can change you. Learning that you have a low self-esteem can be a real eye opener and it will be hard. Dealing with that low self-esteem and boosting it up will be harder, but it's not impossible. You can change your personal relationships and change how you respond to manipulation with a little will-power, and perhaps some help from a professional.

Now is the time to take action and start building your self-esteem so that you can take on manipulators! Create a small goal for yourself, confront your manipulator, and realize that you no longer have to be a victim in this situation!

If you enjoyed reading this book and it helped you, please leave a review at your eBook provider's website.

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BOUNDARIES

TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR LIFE
AND LEARN TO SET BOUNDARIES
IN YOUR RELATIONSHIPS

2ND EDITION

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Introduction

What are the everyday boundaries?

Boundaries are the various lines of personal property that help in defining the responsibilities we have, who we really are, and the areas we are limited. A balanced, healthy lifestyle is a product of clearly set out boundaries.

In the modern day life, the need for boundaries has become pertinent to a good living. From home to workplace, the most prominent show of boundary invasion is through the sexual, physical and emotional abuse that runs through the society.

As a parent, it is always necessary setting out the various life boundaries for your family. These are the values you would wish to subscribe to as a family. The boundaries help to indicate the responsibilities of every member of the family and the need to dialog and discuss issues at home. Boundaries at home ensure limits are well set for the right thing: when to begin dating, the mode of dressing, the type of friends to have, bedtime, and physical affection among others.

Setting your everyday life boundaries works to maintain a healthy working relationship at work. As a boss, you will effectively relate with your juniors and vice versa. Everyone understands the role at work. Friends will also learn to appreciate and back each other so long as they have their boundaries.

You must understand the various cases when to do different things. Parents should know their limits and children as well. Everyone in the office should understand their roles. This way, the holistic relationship in the society grows for better.

Worth noting: boundaries start with you. Your limits- your choices!

Chapter 1

General Principles

There is a dying need to understand the foundations of every boundary you set or need to set in your life. It is important that you understand the boundaries, misconceptions and how to solve the conflicts.

What are the right boundaries?

In life, many people may construe the term ‘boundary’ to be a selfish and demeaning aspect of a human social life. It is, therefore, important to understand the right boundaries, when and where to have them and for what purposes. Everyone needs to outline the right boundaries in life.

Misconceptions around boundaries

Life boundaries have been founded on misunderstandings over the years. Many people mistake these life practices to be

- ☐ an excuse for not helping other people or having an excuse to do what one wants
- ☐ limits meant for other people
- ☐ punishments for misbehavior
- ☐ boundaries are seen as walls to avoid relating with others
- ☐ as a means to control or change your children, friends, spouse or workmates
- ☐ using irrational means to control other people

More often than not, people who have a misunderstanding on the use of boundaries in life are known to subscribe to the expression ‘*setting boundaries*’ is a show of selfishness and lack of submission. This is not true about boundaries. Most people have been fed with mischievous information regarding boundaries to the point of developing fear. Get all you need to know to begin setting the right boundaries in life.

Keen aspects

Never mind- there is more to setting boundaries than mere creation of limitation to others. The whole idea is about learning and practicing self-control in life. A boundary is more of a property line- it clearly earmarks the beginning and end of anything. Like in the physical world where the term could mean indicating ownership and the extent of one’s responsibility, boundaries in the emotional, social and mental setting remain as important though intangible. These are property lines that define a person- who one is or is not.

Central to the setting life boundaries is the need to maintain healthy boundaries that are core to your personality. To begin, the following 3 steps could come in handy:

1. *Check your personal engine light* – the human life is a product of the decisions taken upon certain indications. Every situation in life comes with a warning. You need to come up with a personal ‘boundary’ system to allow rational actions. These are indications that will help your system in controlling the entire body.

In this case, you can now tell when your boundaries are breached. Well-guarded boundaries will allow you to deal with all sorts of unwanted stuff. The initial step in establishing life boundaries is to understand the personal engine lights.

2. *Be ready to maintain and defend your boundaries* – always get the right tools to deal with the stormy moments of your life. The boundaries you have set must be held central to one's connection. With a firm root system, you can always defend from being blown. It allows for focus and connection with one's intuition and heart. Some of the known ways of grounding unto the set boundaries include:
 - Meditation
 - Affirmation
 - Chanting your affirmations
 - Use some phrases and relevant symbols for easy remembrance
3. *Be open to expression of feelings* – this allows clear understanding of your feelings between you and your children, your wife, friends or workmates. It is important that you take note of any situations that may aggravate them. However, it is not advisable to use any form of gifts to convince your friends or family, especially when you are guilty.

Boundaries and Responsibility

Worth noting is the fact that all the boundaries and limits you set out will come with some fair share of responsibilities. All that is within your boundaries is under your control. Make sure you can handle the situation to avert taking in unwanted stuff.

Everyone needs some form of help from either family, spouses, friends or workmates. To manage the tough times that may arise, it is advisable that you seek help and agree to such help when needed. Responsibility and boundaries implies that one can control what comes in and what goes out. As the person setting out the life boundaries, you need to be aware of the various people being affected by the boundaries. Your kids or spouse, workmates or friends will always look up to you for some advice on the limits.

At home, as the head of the family you need to clearly set the time for everything. Make sure you take responsibility of any ideals you need the family to subscribe. Your children will always seek further clarification on these ideals and you need to make them understood. At the workplace, leadership skills are exemplary when setting boundaries. This helps one to show some importance for the boundaries set out. Friends must relate positively based on the ideals they have spelt to follow as a group. This is what defines you as a person- your boundaries.

Chapter 2

Fundamentals of Life Boundaries

The need to come with boundaries is always central to our human nature. ‘If you don’t stand for something, you can fall for anything’. This is a phrase that often helps to know why we do things the way we do them. Boundaries are very important in guiding our social life. The benefits may vary from one social setting to another as highlighted below:

Having Marriage Boundaries

Marriage relationships are known to demand clear and strict boundaries. This is the closest of all human relationships. A stable and developing marriage is banked on freedom, love, protection and responsibility.

Put together, the above cornerstones of marriage create a stable relationship. It has been established that over time, with growth in love, spouses tend to become freer with each other. They turn away from vices like sinful patterns, self-centeredness, self-limitations and past wounds. This results into some sense of responsibility and self-control. The pillars of the relationship are known to develop each other over and over again.

Lack of freedom creates some sort of slavery causing rebellion. On the other hand, a responsibility vacuum ends in bondage and selfishness. This can only get better if there are boundaries. Blaming the other person is a common phenomenon in a relationship that has no boundaries. There is always need to own up to our mistakes instead of blaming on anyone else. Temporarily, our minds may get convinced that this has solved the problem but in the actual sense it has not.

Limits in a marriage helps to outline what every spouse is responsible for in the relationship. This helps to eliminate unnecessary blames and dangling of one’s tasks. Relationships are ever faced by tides. The best way is to come up with a way that allows for equal participation in solving the situation. There is always a misconception that spouses setting out some limitations could endanger the relationship. This is a fear we need to deal with to ensure our marriage relationships grow deeper. The boundaries can only cause temporary flux; one that is very normal in relationships, but the benefits out rightly supersedes the lack of setting some.

Marriage is a social relationship that requires a deep sense of protection. Spouses must feel their relationship is protected by the other spouse. In a healthy marriage relationship, boundaries are set to help in safeguarding the good while protecting it from the evil. Unfortunately, some marriages have the ‘silent sufferer’. This is where an abusive situation is known to trigger some unwarranted boundaries that eventually kill off the intensity of the relationship. To save the marriage, it is important that you stand by your boundaries and never let your spouse to abuse you. These are the firm limitations that will protect your relationship for the unthinkable. While this might be construed to be a sign for a divorce, this is not even an option. Come out and defend your marriage ideals to ensure continued happiness.

Within the boundaries

Every marriage intends to craft boundaries that are best for the development of their relationships. However, this could be a moving target unless spouses understand their responsibilities and take

ownership of their tasks. This can only be possible if one identifies what is within the boundaries. These are the aspects of this relationship that spouses must protect and control. These include:

- **Attitudes and beliefs-** on one hand, beliefs are the issues one accepts to be the truth while on the other hand, attitude is one's perception of life, relations and other people among other aspects. These are aspects everyone develops at a tender age and hardly questions them at his or her old age. This could make us misunderstand what one should take responsibility for in life. The various convictions and attitudes are usually within our boundaries and we need to control them.
- **Feelings-** this is an inevitable phenomenon in the human nature. Feelings could cause us to do the unexpected in life. However, they should never be considered negative since they could motivate us into doing some great things. Anger, hurt or depressions are some of the negative feelings that must be addressed to avoid messing up. We must develop a culture of taking responsibility of our feelings. This way, we can control and protect them.
- **Behaviors-** in a marriage relationship, it is expected of every partner to give and receive love. Irresponsibility comes with a huge cost such as poverty, failure and other problems. We need to exercise self-control and stick to some ideals- the limits. The best way to control our behavior is taking full responsibility of it. This helps to avoid the notion that we act in a certain way due to bad luck or hate from nemesis.
- **Values-** anyone has what he or she loves and how important it is. This is controlled by our values. This often sets out our priorities such as the need to seek approval from others; valuing wealth, power or posh lifestyles. Lack of responsibility and discipline for our values may cause us to fight for so many things only to admire more once we get them. Married couples must understand the due value of their values, control them and take responsibility of their desires and values.
- **Choices-** the choices we make as human beings are always within our control. It is our responsibility to make them and bear any consequences. Distancing yourself from an awful choice will never solve any mess. We always shirk it off by blaming it on someone else or coming up with circumstances.
- **Limits-** in marriages and life in general, limits are mistaken to be meant for others. This is not true- you cannot make someone else acting 'rightly'. The best thing we can do is to come up with limits on the exposure to others. One could easily fall for his or her desires, feelings, or impulsive reactions. This underscores the need to have strict and rational limits to curb the above problems. It is upon every relationship partner to set up ways of observing self-control that is void of repression.

- Other aspects that are under our relationship boundaries include talents, thoughts, consequences, emotional and physical distance, and other people among others. We can always contain these for a better relationship with spouses.

A marriage is a union between two complete individuals. There is need for high level of maturity to avoid imbalance in the relationship. Maturity is not a matter of being a perfect person. Rather, as an adult, you can relate well with others and take action as deemed by the current situation. This is the ability to:

- overcome selfishness
- provide
- have self-confidence
- be responsible
- handle failures and problems in life
- be self-sufficient and independent
- understand and listen to others
- build and sustain a friendship

Having Boundaries at Work

There is need to positively relate at work: juniors and their seniors or juniors versus their fellow juniors as well as seniors amongst other seniors. It takes respect beyond fear or pressure to have a lively office. There are operational practices and guidelines to help in smooth running of the office. These could be ineffective if there are boundaries at work. The extent of personal interventions at the workplace should be guided by these limits.

Boundaries at work should begin with personal limits. As an individual, it is important that you come up with boundaries that you identify with at work. This grows into an office setting where everyone agrees on the boundaries. There are common problems that could be taken care of once you have stable working boundaries. They include:

- Ego- many people fail to understand their extent of intervention. Your ego could be a deterrent while working with others in an office. Boundaries at work will help to control this vice.
- Laxity at work- without boundaries, some people may tend to grow very lazy. It is important that you subscribe to some ideals as an office. These are necessary in controlling what one does in the office. This way, everyone is responsible and self-sufficient.
- Self-centeredness at work- once you have established your boundaries on how to relate with your workmates, it is easy embracing each other. This way, you can avoid making every situation all about you. You will always take time to listen and understand others.

Creating limits at work promotes better working relations and productivity. Boundaries at work will spur the following:

- Pro-activity- no one waits for a directive. With boundaries, everyone knows their responsibilities. This helps every workmate to act on their discretion to ensure a proactive mode of operation in the office.

- Induces self-confidence in the office- once you understand the relationship at work, it is easy working with each other. This is a sense of independence and confidence boost. With confidence, productivity is guaranteed in the office.
- Stronger ties at work- boundaries create a sense of ownership and responsibility at work. Everyone knows when to begin or stop a task. This way, you can correctly deal with each other in the office. Limits will not cause furor in the office but create stronger working ties amongst workmates.

Creating Boundaries with Friends

This is the second most influential social circle in life- friends. Everyone needs to have one. These are the people you share so much in life. The extent of their influence could be harmful or quite helpful depending on how you approach the relationship.

This guide highlights on the need to have clear boundaries with your friends to ensure a healthy relationship. It is true that most of our decisions are either misguided or advised by the people we share so much in common. Our friends could be right or wrong depending on what advices we share. The limits of our relationship should always remain clear to avert wasting each other's ideas and time.

There are many benefits associated with having boundaries with friends. These may include:

- Better understanding- when you learn each other's likes and dislikes, it is easy to live in harmony. Friends with boundaries always take time to listen and understand one another.
- Sense of protection- everyone has that friend he or she can trust with their secrets and life issues. This person often offers you an alternative when it seems impossible. When you have boundaries, your friends will always be there for you- protect you.
- Development in responsibility- friends with boundaries help to induce some sense of responsibility. Each of your friends has a role to play. A friend will make you realize your tasks and how to own up to your problems.
- Self-confidence and freedom- with boundaries, every friend feels free to address an issue without infringing on others. The boundaries you have set out will always help in controlling the relationship. This creates a high level of confidence in oneself thus better understanding and freedom amongst friends.

Lack of boundaries with friends may attract huge costs such as:

- Blinded friendship- a blind friendship is one without any positive vision. This is a group that will never come out to defend the talents or values of others. These are friends who spend more time without understanding each other's situations. Lack of boundaries may mean allowing anything from any of your friends thus hindering your personal progress.
- Lack of responsibility- having friends without limits means no one takes up any situation and own it up. This is a serious situation and friends can end up in a single stage of their lives. Friends must develop each other's sense of responsibility.
- Break ups- friends stand a huge risk of parting prematurely if there are no boundaries. With limits, everyone understands the vision of individuals and the group at large. This could be impossible in absence of boundaries. Life with friends is short-lived without limits.

Boundaries with Children and Family

A good family is banked on some values. These are ideals you subscribe to as a family. Children do not yelling and punishments to do the right thing- they need love and attention from their parents. In

most cases, parents spend more energy to quarrel their kids while they take little time to listen to their situations.

To have a happy family, you need to set the right boundaries for your family. Take time to listen to them and say no to the unnecessary. This way, you will learn to accept their essential requests. This is the first step towards implementing your set out boundaries- knowing your children.

Children will not respect you just because you are their parents. It takes virtue and good parenting for children to understand why they should respect you. Once you have the right limits for your children, it is time to make sure they understand and adhere. This is the tricky part and most important of all. You need to listen and share with every kid at their personal level. Sometime during the night out or a snuggle-time before bed could be a good time to share with your kids. This allows you to evaluate their view on the family boundaries and their personal needs.

Work on the physical boundaries

The emotional boundaries with your children are highly impacted by the way kids internalize the physical boundaries. You need to make sure you have created stable physical boundaries. Such limits include movie time, time to bed, bathroom time and time to play and table time among others. Your children must have a stable ground of such practices before they can develop their understanding on the intangible values. For instance, if you just walk into your kids' bedroom without knocking, this could develop negatively and often they will bump on to your room in a similar manner. Punishments should be guided to avoid negative impacts as well.

Children too need respect. For example, playing and wrestling with your kids is physical bonding tool. However, they need to come out with an understanding that their physical requests are worthwhile. If a kid says stop, you need to do so immediately. This way, they are likely to respect other people's physical boundaries as they grow older.

Healthy life boundaries with our children help to teach children that they are a product of their own personality. This way, they will respect you as a parent and understand that no one else can define them. This creates a sense of freedom and independence.

Why boundaries

Children can only grow to understand and practice family boundaries. These are values they will always try to uphold and protect throughout their generations. Setting limits on the type of dresses they wear, friends they have, when to do anything at home or elsewhere will be a key guide to their lifestyle. Boundaries help to create understanding at home, harmony and freedom. Other benefits include:

- ☐ Better development- with limits, parents can develop their kids. This shapes them as they grow old. Boundaries will tune their lifestyle in a desired manner.
- ☐ Instills discipline and a sense of responsibility- a family that subscribes to some ideals will always own up to their issues in life. Children with boundaries grow to understand what they should do at certain times. This is a great sense of self-discipline and responsibility.
- ☐ Protection- it is the best feeling in a family when children feel protected by their parents. In return, parents who share some life boundaries with their children develop a feeling of protection as well. This way, the family values and ideals are safeguarded even for generations.
- ☐ It is easy solving conflicts in the family- arbitrating conflicts at home becomes easier if you have set out boundaries. Everyone understands their position in the family thus easier to deal with misunderstandings.

Chapter 3

Boundary Conflict Resolution

Boundaries in life are not always welcomed. Due to either lack of clarity or misconstrued sense of internalization of the boundaries, you might have to deal with resistance and irresponsibility among other conflicts. Your spouse, children, friends or workmates could have one problem or another with your boundaries.

To resolve on the conflicts that have arisen from the set boundaries, it is important that you do the following:

- Develop patience and self-control. This helps to control your feelings towards a rebellious spouse or friend. Take your time to understand the cause of their resistance before acting on it.
- Appreciate your family, friends and workmates for who they are. Do not jump into conclusions but always make sure you listen and reason out together.
- Be open to criticism and correction. While you might have the boundaries set, allow for dialogue and correction in case a friend, spouse or child feels to have a different opinion.
- Be sympathetic and accommodating. The boundaries could come at a time when your friends or family are facing tricky situations. Always find space to share their problems that could be hindering them from observing your boundaries. Show empathy to their needs, desires and hurts.

There are various aspects life boundaries that we need to change so as to have a smooth relationship with our children, spouses, workmates or friends. These are:

- Allowing others to say no to what they feel is not worthy
- Having a heart to forgive others' faults
- Find respect for others' freedom
- Be honest to others without feeling afraid
- Be compassionate with your friends, family or workmates on their negative feelings and weaknesses
- Do not become so controlling over anyone or anything
- Be ready to apologize and accept confrontation when you fault others

Key elements that you need to consider when resolving boundary conflicts are:

- *Observation*- always be on the lookout for any rebellion. Always take time to check for any weaknesses in your spouse, friends, workmates and children.

- *Confrontation*- upon realization of a fault, you should confront the person without fear. This way, you will resolve the issue easily. Additionally, you could be on the wrong. Admit to your mistakes and allow other to conflict you on the same.
- *Ownership*- develop a sense of ownership. Your children, friends or workmates should learn to own up to their mistakes and take full responsibility. Avoid blaming others for your mistakes or creating circumstantial reasons.
- *Repentance*- ask for forgiveness when on the wrong and accept apologies from others when they fault you.
- *Communication*- for better understanding, always discuss on issues at hand. Communication allows for effective resolutions in case of any boundary conflicts.
- *Re-evaluation*- once there is a boundary in place, make sure you sit back and examine its effectiveness. Allow others to understand the limits and check on the importance once more.

Causes of Boundary Resistance

Once the boundaries have been set, maintaining and protecting them could be tricky. It is even difficult dealing with resistance and resolving the conflicts that arise. This demands some self-discipline and understanding. Common causes of such resistances are:

- Empathic failure
- Irresponsibility
- Feeling pressed when subjected to limits
- Living in the imperfection denial
- Unnecessary desire to be in control and power
- Quest for a retaliation
- Transference

Empathic failure

Empathic failure has become a normal characteristic feature in most relationships; they are often regarded as small failures to fulfill certain obligations. It can be referred to as involuntarily recognizing boundaries set by others, hence Empathic failure are pardonable to certain extent, however, when such failures become rampant, the other partner whose boundary is being invaded may take serious actions against the culprit. Through empathic failures one can learn to identify boundaries set by others, hence Empathic failures should not be seen as negative but a constructive problem that will help an individual become more aware of such boundaries after facing the consequences of his actions.

Irresponsibility

Irresponsibility is a deliberate act, and unlike Empathic failure, Irresponsibility are viewed as more grievous and the consequences set against irresponsible behaviors are tougher than those set against Empathic failure. When a partner is not committed to recognizing the boundaries set by the other, there will always be a friction of interest. Irresponsibility is the most prominent cause of boundary resistance and it is often the most difficult factor to handle in any relationship.

Feeling pressed when subjected to limits

Most people who break boundary limits do so because they feel they have been subjected to boundary limits. Many people think that setting boundaries in relationships shows that their spouses are secretive. A successful marriage should be based on open-mindedness, and the setting of boundaries to some spouses means their spouses cannot be trusted. A spouse has a reason for setting

boundaries, and the other person does not have to see him or her as being secretive. When a spouse feels he is being subjected to restrictions, he is bound to react and such reactions may either make or mar the relationship at the long run.

Living in the imperfection denial

One of the main reasons why boundaries are resisted is that some spouses are denying the fact that they are imperfect. When a spouse is denying her imperfection, she will try to shield her shame by creating boundaries, so that the other partner does not get to remind her of that imperfection. When you are perfect, you don't have to worry about anything, and your boundaries are usually easier to protect, however, when you have something to hide, your boundaries may become unrealistic and that could hurt the other partner the more.

Unnecessary desire to be in control and power

Many men are guilty of this issue- they want to stay in control and power and ensure that their partners don't know what they do in secret. When an individual wants to remain in power always, he tries as much as possible to impose numerous boundaries that make it difficult for anyone to track him down, however such habits will often lead to confrontational arguments with spouses who believe they are being subjected to unreasonable boundaries. The partner who often desire to be in control and power is often seen as an aggressor, and it is difficult for the other partner not to violate his boundaries.

Quest for a retaliation- Most women who set unnecessary boundaries often do so as a quest for retaliation against previous actions taken by their spouses. Quest for retaliation is an act that can bring discourse between couples and may even end a relationship if not properly handled. A woman may seek retaliation against a cheating husband for instance and banish him from sharing a bed with her for several weeks or months. Many boundaries set as a result of quest for retaliation often end up as destructive correctional methods.

Transference

When a partner had been cheated upon in the past, he or she may transfer the anger generated from such experience to a new partner, and he or she does this by setting out some boundaries. In most cases, a woman may set transference boundaries in order to avoid coming in contact with situations that remind her of the past. Transference could be response to trauma, and until the wounds of such trauma heels, an individual will continue to set boundaries.

Resolving boundary conflicts in marriage

In several cases a resistant spouse may not see the hidden benefits of relational boundaries within the marriage. Most men are the ones who always end up bursting all the boundaries in their marriages, and their wives don't take such offences lightly always. Spouses who try to control their partners know that change is always painful and they hear that they are inflicting hurtful feelings on the people they love but they keep doing such things because they have little or no control over their own feelings. Making changes in marriage boundaries may involve several things including the following;

- Accepting and allowing your spouse to say No to you when you cross the boundaries,
- Admitting to the fact that you have been trying to exercise excessive control over your spouse
- Submitting yourself to the process of learning self-control especially on how to stay within the boundaries,

- Respecting your partner's freedom,
- Learning the ability of restraining yourself from attacking or withdrawing from your spouse or even make her feel guilty during conflicts,
- Having the awareness of your helpless state to control anyone, and
- Learning to ask your partner for her comments or feedbacks especially when you cross her boundaries.

The tasks mentioned above are not normally pleasant when resolving boundary conflicts in marriage, it is understandable, just like it hurts sometimes to accept that there are boundaries in marriages. It is also important to understand that conflict resolution in marriage is painful but it is a pain that will end up on a positive note.

One of the problems couples face with the issue of boundaries in marriage is that the boundary-loving spouse cannot tolerate the boundary-resistant partner, the boundary-loving spouse does not grasp the idea that the boundary resistant partner does not feel the same as she does, however, understanding the other partner's viewpoints will help you handle issues the right way and more serious complications can be avoided. Here are some of the conclusions experts have made about individuals boundaries issues in marriages;

- Partners who do not respect the boundaries set by others do possess a basic attitude towards life in general; "I should be able to do whatever I want, whenever I want to". Some partner often wants ultimate freedom as their privilege or right. While parents notice this trait in their kids, they believe such kids will outgrow such issues and learn to respect people's boundaries in the future.
- Some spouses may break boundary rules, but they remain wonderful and loving in character. He may be breaking your boundaries occasionally but he genuinely and deeply cares about your progress, health and every other thing, and couples that find themselves in this situation may live comfortably until issues of boundaries arise and then the good feelings suddenly disappear, giving way to feelings of guilt, anger or even acting out of place.
- The boundary resistant spouse react in his own way because he feels that any limit in a relationship is unfair an unreasonable. A boundary-resistant partner will become so mean at his partner for pushing him out of some particular restricted areas of her life. Her simple requests to respect her privacy may suddenly mean hate or unrighteousness to him. For the men, it is unreasonable to start feeling immature and angry simply because your partner has set limits or boundaries.

Accepting and allowing your spouse to say No to you when you cross the boundaries

Accepting and allowing your spouse to say No when you cross the boundaries, is the simplest way of handling boundary issues in marriages. When you accept a simple No for an answer, you will learn to cope and handle pressures from breaking her rules. Accepting your spouse' No can be painful, it may force you to feel restricted or rejected in certain ways, whereas the reverse is a case. Women generally set boundaries and they appreciate when their men accept and honor such boundaries. When you learn to adjust to her boundaries, you will naturally find it easier to stay out of trouble.

Submitting yourself to the process of learning self-control especially on how to stay within the boundaries

If you find yourself always breaking the boundaries set by your spouse, then its time you submit yourself to the process of self-control. Exercising self-control can help you adjust your own lifestyles

to ensure that you don't get caught up in situations that will make you cross the boundaries. There are several ways of submitting yourself to the process of learning self-control, first of all you need to understand the periods of time when you normally break into her boundaries, secondly, you need to identify alternative paths or actions you can take that will ensure that you do not break the boundaries again. For instance, if your spouse doesn't want the bedroom light on while she is sleeping but you still need to work late into the night, then you have to find an alternative place within your home to complete your tasks.

Respecting your partner's freedom

Respecting your partner's freedom is one of the easiest ways to avoid boundary disputes in marriage. Just because you are suspecting your partner of infidelity, does not mean you must invade her privacies always. Each and every woman deserves some privacies. As long as your partner is respecting your freedom, you must also respect her freedom, otherwise, there will always be conflicts. When you respect your partner's freedom, she will extend the same gesture towards you.

Learning the ability of restraining yourself from attacking or withdrawing from your spouse or even make her feel guilty during conflicts,

There are high possibilities that you will occasionally break the boundary rules, even if you apply extra cautions not to. In this case, you need to learn the act of restraining yourself from getting into confrontational arguments with your spouse. When you break the boundaries, you should learn to apologize immediately instead of being confrontational even after you have been caught. You don't have to enforce your right to know everything your spouse is doing, she would have communicated the boundaries to you before you got married to her, hence you must take responsibilities for breaking the rules. When you make her feel guilty during conflicts, she will become upset and even create new boundaries and that is what you should avoid at all cost.

Having the awareness of your helpless state to control anyone

One of the main reasons why boundary disputes arise in marriages is that the man always wants to be the main dominating force. He wants to control every aspect of the relationship, including financial decisions, and the woman may feel she is being cheated. Men who always seek the opinions of their partners in marriage before making any decision normally have little or no issues with boundaries. Being aware of your helpless state to control anyone should be seen as a psychological or emotional problem and the earlier you seek help, the earlier you can avoid confrontational situations as regards marital boundaries.

Learning to ask your partner for her comments or feedbacks especially when you cross her boundaries

Sometimes, you may not understand when you have crossed the boundaries in your relationship, and your partner will expect that you ask her or apologize even if you are not aware. Your partner's feedback should help when you find yourself in this situation. Most women exhibit irrational behavior – for instance, they keep quiet when they are hurt, and will refuse to tell you when they are unhappy with you. If your partner is not willing to communicate with you when you cross the boundaries, then you must be ready to figure it out by yourself and this could be painstaking.

Most of the tasks highlighted above can be extremely difficult for men but they will eventually pay off and help you stay safe from crossing the boundaries. It is now understandable that any spouse will definitely experience boundary exploitation or intrusion, and accepting boundaries will be hurtful especially for the men, it is quite important that some of the pains associated with learning to live with boundaries are growth-producing.

Establishing consequences for your spouse' transgression against your boundaries

As a woman, you may have to establish some consequences for your spouse especially if he continues to dis-respect the boundaries and doesn't want to change. These actions will make him feel discomfort for his deliberate actions. The consequences you set up must possess the following characteristics;

- Must be realistic, and not designed to control or change your spouse – Creating boundaries and consequences for breaking through boundaries should not be about fixing a spouse and trying to make them be better off, rather they must be done to allow appropriate cause to take place and ensure that your spouse feel the pain of an irresponsible behavior.
- Must not be deliberate or impulsively conceived out of anger- When setting the penalties for your partner who is pushing beyond the boundaries, you must not do so out of anger, otherwise the situation may become even more complex. Make sure you think through, and decide on the most appropriate punishment that will be corrective in nature, rather than being destructive in nature. You need to consider the fact that such penalties must not be aimed at getting even, it should be done to protect yourself against the negative affects you may face when your boundaries were violated.
- Must be reality-based as possible- You definitely want your spouse to come back to reality, and people are always wary of staying around people who play tantrums, hence the consequences you set must be realistic enough not to make him turn worse.
- Must be appropriately severe in effect- Consequences against boundary violation in marriage must be proportionately severe (must not be too harsh nor too lenient). In order to set the best consequences, you need to evaluate how destructive or severe the boundary violation is. For instance, if your spouse refuses to clean dishes when he needs to, then you should allow him to cook his meals to get the idea of the consequences of his actions. A spouse who is having extra marital affair will require more serious punishment, but it must not be too severe to cause destructive actions.
- Must be enforceable under any circumstances – You need to ensure that the consequences you set can be done and be controlled. You need to be sure of your resources and the ability to set limit at which your boundaries may be broken. Do not set punishments that are beyond your own control, otherwise, the situation may get out of control.
- Must preserve the freedom of your spouse- You don't just set consequences by words of mouth, and remember that consequences are not set up to control your spouse, rather they are correctional measures or reactions to the negative choices he is making. You need to allow your spouse make his choices while you set your own reactions.
- Must be immediate as possible- The consequences you set against a spouse who violate the boundaries must be quick. Just as the kids require constant and quick response to their decisions, older adults like spouses also require instant correctional reactions when they cross the boundaries. Your spouse needs to establish a connection between his actions and the reactions he will get, this will help him refrain from crossing the boundaries and consider the consequences of his actions before acting.
- Must recognize and respect his roles as a partner or spouse- You must not set consequences for boundary rules by saying “ You must” or “ I will make sure you do...”, rather, such consequences must recognize his roles, hence it must not be aimed at humiliating him. You must not create punitive consequences or make fun of him through some sarcastic remarks.

- Must be designed for modification- The consequences set must be able to undergo periodic modification, as your spouse returns to reality and abide by the rules of boundaries set by you. As your spouse repents from his actions, you must reduce the severity of the consequences of his actions. You need to be however sure that his changes are genuine, and do not rely on words such as “I’m sorry”, but his actions must clearly shows that he has changed. You may also have to increase the severity of some consequences if you believe your spouse is not changing for the better.

There will always be some difficult realities when setting boundaries in marriage, especially when dealing with an un-corporative spouse. When your spouse does not support limits being set, then you need to make it a gradual process starting with a thorough explanation of the reasons why you are setting the boundaries but remember that , it is not advisable to threaten your spouse because you want to set boundaries.

Resolving boundary disputes with professional colleagues

Resolving boundary disputes at work can be as difficult as marriage boundary resolution, and the reason being that conflicts are inevitable at an organization where different people have different expectations. Boundary conflicts at work can be avoided in so many ways, whether through avoidance of arguments, or through a tougher option of litigation, it all depends on how an individual is able to manage such disputes. Some companies normally provide full time mediators in organizations, and these people investigate and ensure that all disputes are carefully examined before passing judgments or resolving the disputes. Here are some options you must consider for settling boundary disputes before they become full-blown conflicts;

- Stay calm and don’t be unruffled,
- Listen and understand the other party
- Emphasize more on the positive,
- Tactfully state your case,
- Attack the issue and not the person,
- Stay away from the blame game,
- Focus more on the future and not the past,
- Throw the right kind of questions,
- Tactically, pick your battles, and
- Be creative about the conflict resolution.

Stay calm and don’t be unruffled- Nothing else can give you more advantage over the other person while resolving boundary disputes than staying calm and unruffled under all circumstances. Escalation is often the main factor that can trigger conflicts, and anger is the main issue that triggers the escalation of conflicts in boundary disputes. As you get angry, it becomes difficult for you to listen, before you argue back. When you stay calm you will be able to point out the flaws in the other person’s arguments, and if you picture it right now, you will notice that all boundary disputes will eventually become resolved after all points of arguments have been considered.

The work environment is becoming increasingly difficult to manage even with the increasing number of PDAs, emails and cellphones- many clients still can’t get enough support and such working conditions will create even more stress. When conflicts arise at work, the first thing you should be thinking of is; what can I contribute to end this boundary conflicts? It is very important to check your faults and remain calm in order to avoid embarrassing yourself when you finally discover that you are at fault.

Listen and understand the other party- Paying careful attention is the most important step towards boundary resolution at work place. You can learn the act of listening and understanding the other person by picturing a recent dispute you were involved. Take for instance, yesterday morning, while leaving the house, you were involved with a boundary confrontation with a family member, client or colleague at work. Try as much as possible to replay your experience, and as you do this, you must ask yourself; how much listening actually took place during the argument? The probability that any listening took place during the argument will be extremely low, because each person wants to prove his point. The best possible way of resolving a boundary dispute is to stop and listen for a while, and when you listen to what other person has got to say, you can point out the errors or omissions he is committing and such errors could win the argument in your favor at the end.

Other people will always surprise you with reasons and when you listen more, you will easily discover that people's underlying interests are the reason why they create boundary disputes, they will keep arguing until they drop a point where you can prove them wrong- but how will you discover this when you are busy arguing with them while they were talking. People will usually start out by downgrading the other person's points of view, they will also personalize issue and want their own intentions override others and they end up speaking with anger.

Psychologists have made it clear that anger is usually the secondary emotion that used as a defense mechanism that can be used in covering up fear and hurt. When someone is angry, it often occurs that there is something he is afraid of, and in order to diffuse the other person's anger, you need to learn to listen to them. You will notice that most people who start their arguments on an angry note tend to slow down when they see that you are not arguing with them. Actively listening during a boundary resolution at work will signal some verbal signs to people that you understand what they are saying. Simple gestures such as nodding, or saying "okay" will reassure the other person that you are on their sides and ready to welcome their points.

When you are attending to clients on phone, at work, giving a dead silence to a client means you are not listening to their complaints, and they may fear the worst and possibly shut down the conversation, but when you occasionally give your consents by saying "Okay" intermittently, they know you are following them and will eventually pause and let you speak- this is when you are re-establish your boundaries and let them know when they are crossing the boundaries.

You cannot achieve a conflict resolution until the experiences of each participant has been fully heard, especially as regards their perspectives on the subject of matter. When you set boundaries, and there seems to be a clash of interest, the other person may think that you don't care about them. You should act as a good customer representative of your company, even if you don't work in that professional capacity, but the ability to let people finish their complaints before voicing your opinion will help you resolve boundary disputes faster and easier. Get all the "broken pieces" on a table and then glue them together- this is how you resolve conflicts.

In most confrontational arguments about boundary disputes, the commonest questions you will hear others ask are; can I ask you a question? What is so important to you? Or why are you so selfish? When you hear these questions then you should consider keeping quiet for a while and let the person talking express his or her frustration or anger before explaining your point. If you are at fault, the first thing you should do when it is your time to talk is to first apologize, and take full responsibility for your actions, however, let them realize that you have boundaries and they must respect such.

Emphasize more on the positive- When you emphasize or accentuate on the positive, you can easily discover some common points of agreements between you and the other person involved in the conflict resolution. Even if you do not end up on an agreeable terms, then you can simply tell the

other person that he or she must give you some time to work things out and this will normalize things eventually. Normalizing the situation by focusing on the positive side of things can calm people immediately.

Tactfully state your case

Learning to state your case tactfully is one of the best possible ways of resolving boundary conflicts successfully. The key to resolving issues is to let people understand things from your own perspective without making them become more defensive. You can eventually disarm people from their frustration and anger by tending a tactfully prepared case, and you can be tactful with your case by stating what is yours, but you must apologize for your wrongdoing first. Try as much as possible to avoid stating issues of differences, however you must leave some little benefits of doubt. You don't have to insist on certain issues and try to acknowledge some room of doubt- this will make the other person feel at ease and ready to shift his position in your favor.

Try as much as possible to state your position along with your interest or boundaries, and what this means is that; instead of not acknowledging that nothing is wrong, it is better you offer a position that will be helpful such as providing a perspective that they will also benefit by respecting your boundaries. You need to remember that your position is the bottom line of your argument, while your interests or boundaries are the main reasons behind such arguments. If your boundary or interest will take something away from others, you should offer something back in compensation or simply try and respect their own interests or boundaries too. Tactfully stating your case is the best possible way of dis-arming the other person, and it will simply take the fight away from the argument.

Attack the issue and not the person- Most people lose out in boundary disputes because they attack the other person instead of attacking the main issue. When you de-personalize your points, your views can be easily heard and accepted. You should focus on saying things like "we will have to deal with this issue together" rather than saying "You have to deal with the issue". You don't have to drive home your point by personalizing and even cursing people just because they break through your boundaries. Maintaining an ideal concentration while arguing with people will help you avoid personalizing the issue and that will help avoid conflicts.

Stay away from the blame game

Try as much as possible to avoid assigning blames when trying to resolve boundary disputes at work. If you have to assign any blame then you have to assign it to yourself. When you accuse people of violating your boundaries, you may end up messing things up, and if the goal is to fix a problem, it doesn't worth it spending too much time on the blame game. The blame game is a diversion and will end up costing more on conflict resolution because you have to sort out and investigate the person at fault. The real trick on solving issues is to focus more attention on resolving issues instead of pointing accusing fingers. You need to focus on your individual strengths and see where both parties can compromise to bring an amicable resolution to the boundary issues.

Focus more on the future and not the past- The solutions to boundary issues start and end with present and future tenses and not the past. You don't have to spend much time on what went wrong and who did what wrongly but the real solution is to treat the situation with a problem-solving approach. Though the past can be analyzed in order to ensure that the problem does not repeat itself. The solution is what you should be interested in.

Learn to throw the right kind of questions- The best possible way of detecting that someone is violating your boundaries is through the asking of the right type of questions. When you ask the other person questions such as; what or why is that? Or what in your opinion do you think it should be?

Then you will end up making him more defensive. Make sure you ask him the future and present tense questions because that is the only way you can resolve boundary conflicts and that is how you can find solutions to a problem.

Sometimes, some people ask short and direct questions and the other person will perceive they are interrogating them instead of trying to resolve issues. Some questions will help you get what you want to get from someone while other questions will permit you to tell them what they ought to know- you should aim at the latter, because you cannot communicate your boundaries to people without first telling them, and when you tell them where your boundaries, lie, they can't claim ignorance of not knowing.

Try as much as possible to give people a little information first by telling them why you are asking them such questions, then you will be able to make your intention clear at first and they wouldn't have to guess it. Asking the right question will help deliver your facts and will help you reach an amicable negotiation. Asking the right questions will also make the other person less defensive.

Another type of question that can help you get more information from a boundary conflict is the Open-ended type of question, they are also referred to as Opposite or directive questions and such questions will help invite the other person about what he thinks about the boundary dispute or what is important in the present situation- these include questions such as "Can you tell me what actually went wrong at the beginning?" or "It sounds as if this situation seemed too frustrating to you?" The answers or information you obtain from Open-ended questions like these can help you get more information that can help you resolve boundary disputes at work.

Tactically, pick your battles- When asking questions during boundary disputes, it is important to choose your points tactically. The natural instinct in man will want us to be right at all time, even to the extent of defending a point that may not really matter at the end. Tactically picking your battles during boundary conflict resolution will help you throw tactical questions such as "On a scale of 1 to 5, how important do you think this issue is to you?" If an issue is rated 2 by the other person and 4 to you, on a scale of 5, then there is no point arguing on the issue, however, if the issue is of equal importance to the two of you then you can continue resolving the issue.

Many people think the issue of boundary setting should be 50-50, however, there is no argument on boundary disputes that will put each party at equal rights- when issues are adjusted based on individual's perspectives, and an argument is bound to favor someone than the other. In boundary resolution, you should either choose whether you are right or whether you want to be happy.

Be creative about the conflict resolution- Just because you set boundaries does not mean they are undisputable or non-negotiable. You can actually resolve boundary conflicts more easily by being creative and open-minded. You need to think outside the box occasionally with your boundaries and see where your interests are clashing with the interest of others and see where you can make compromises to ensure that an amicable resolution is brought in. Make sure your ideas are not fat-fetched. It is true that being creative with boundary resolutions may make such resolutions last longer, and at the end you can achieve a win-win solution.

You can be creative with boundary resolutions by carefully listening when asking open-ended questions, and then gathering information you can use later to bring success formula into your resolutions. You can propose creative solutions where the other person or persons may find it easier not to invade your privacy or cause boundary disputes in the future. Being creative with your resolution tactics may mean, you may have to shift your position as regards your boundaries- for instance, you can suggest alternative ways they can handle business issues without involving you, hence your interests will still be protected and they wouldn't step beyond the boundaries.

Be confident but don't be confrontational- Not getting confrontational when resolving boundary conflicts does not make you less confident, it simply shows you are matured enough to state your case without causing "bad blood" or friction between others and yourself. Don't be like many people who always shy away from confrontations, the reason being that you may never resolve boundary disputes that way and people will always violate your spaces or boundaries. Having confidence in yourself gives you the ability to convince others about how they can avoid violating your boundaries and avoid causing troubles.

Celebrate any boundary resolution victories you make- There is nothing wrong celebrating the victories achieved when you successfully resolve boundary disputes. Celebrating with the other person after boundary resolution can build trust and friendship. You and the other person involved in the resolution deserve some pat in the back especially when you finally come into agreement. Nothing is more important than the survival of a relationship or friendship, hence you need to cultivate the habits of ensuring peace between yourself and others.

Chapter 4

Evaluating Boundary Success

After coming up with practical boundaries in life, there is need for fundamental adjustment to the way one thinks so as to uphold these boundaries. One is likely to get discouraged as the effects may take longer than expected. The process can be evaluated based on the following stages to check on the level of development and the next step to take in the process. The evaluation stages are:

- Anger- when your boundaries are infringed, the initial warning is being aggrieved. This, however, should be controllable and within your limits.
- Changes in personal preferences. As you begin the process, you begin getting attracted to the limitations. This creates a sense of control over the boundaries.
- Close connections to those with clear boundaries. You always find it easy identifying with those who have precise limits in their lives.
- Change in the value system. What you value begin changing as you establish a close connection with those who have clear boundaries.
- Safe environment to practice your boundaries
- Guilty feelings are a sign of growth. These are feelings associated to development in the sense of ownership.
- Trying your boundaries with difficult people.
- Disappearance of guilt feelings. As you develop, you get better ways of establishing the right boundaries and ways of safely solving any conflicts.
- Desire to involve others in boundaries
- Being sure of your decisions. When you have grown up the process of boundaries, it becomes easy to say NO instead of an uncertain acceptance.
- Setting goals that are visionary and value-driven.

Chapter 5

How to set up boundaries and achieve success

It is easier to identify stressed people in every spheres of life- they simply don't set boundaries, while some of them have boundaries but rarely monitor if someone is breaking through such boundaries. You need to learn how to set up personal boundaries in life, because such boundaries will help move towards success in every spheres of your life- whether marriage, financial, or business.

There are few steps you should take when setting up your personal boundaries, these are;

- Identifying what exactly personal boundaries are,
- Identify exactly what you want,
- Know where you are presently are,
- Create more value for your time,
- Identify good boundaries and realize that they can help you create better relationships,

Identify what exactly personal boundaries are- Simply put, a personal boundary is defined as a line that sets the limit. For instance, the lines marked on parking lots clearly indicate the boundaries where cars must park and any cars that violate such boundaries may be fined. You should consider the fact that without line boundaries in car park lots, fewer cars would probably fit into parking spaces because everyone will park haphazardly. In the same way boundaries are set at parking lots, so also personal boundaries can help you prevent frustrations, stress, resentment and failure in your everyday living.

Having personal boundaries will help improve your personal relationships, and helps you head toward the right direction while increasing your productivity at all fronts. Take for instance, when you are stranded on an Island, the first thing you do is to gather materials that can help you set a boundary and build a shelter for protection.

Know what you want – Knowing what you want is the most important building block in the setting up of boundaries. Once you know what personal boundaries are, you need to ponder and spend some time to identify what exactly you want in life. You can't set boundaries when you still don't understand what exactly you want. If you want to pursue a certain career then you need to identify key elements of that career that needs to have boundaries so that you can pursue the career successfully. Setting boundaries involve setting disciplinary steps that you must follow in order to accomplish your aims.

Know where you are presently are- knowing where you are presently can help you set the record straight on where you want to be. You need to identify the things bugging you now, likewise you need to identify key elements frustrating you, especially those obstacles causing frustration on your productivity- Productivity reduces when challenges become insurmountable and you become even more frustrated. You need to identify your strength and weaknesses, and then identify how you can use your strength to cover up your weaknesses so that you can improve on your productivity.

Create value for your time- You value your time when you stop doing what others bid on your, and doing what will enhance your own value. Time is as valuable as any other thing, and when you don't

manage your time, it becomes more difficult to set boundaries and monitor them. When you value your time, you wouldn't allow constant interruptions to and this can reduce your self-worth and make you become less productive. You need to know what you are doing at a particular time and what you are achieving at that particular time, this will help ensure that your boundaries are effective.

Identify good boundaries and realize that they can help you create better relationships- You can only set your boundaries effectively by training others how to treat you, and when you communicate your limits to others, they will value and respect you, especially when they understand the consequences of violating your boundaries. People's interests don't have to clash with yours before boundary disputes are created.

Create boundary dispute resolutions- Now that you know how to start the process of creating boundaries, you should also create a way to resolve any boundary dispute that may arise when your interest clash with others. You don't have to become confrontational with people when they cross the boundaries because some people may be unaware of cross the boundaries. Boundary dispute resolutions will help put people back in their places and they can easily recognize when they are about to commit the same offence again.

Where to set your personal boundaries

There are several key areas of your life you must set boundaries around, however, there are specific areas you must consider first ahead of others, and these are;

- Time,
- Your responsibilities or tasks,
- The expectations from others,
- Your self-care, and
- Your space.

Your time – First and foremost, you need to set boundaries around your time if you want to become more productive and more successful. People, who don't set boundaries around their time, often end up doing the right things at the wrong time or the wrong things at the right time. When you set boundaries around your time, you will know when to work and when to engage in pleasure and your friends and family wouldn't violate such boundaries because they know where you are and what you are doing at a specific time.

If you think it's easy to get simple things such as a blog post done then you should wait till later in the day when unexpected things come up and get you distracted. You need to schedule appointments at realistic time and set boundaries or time limit for which you can break the rules of meeting appointments. You need to set up some self-constraints in order to ensure that you don't violate your own boundaries. You are not a super-human, but setting realistic boundaries around your time can help you become disciplined.

Your responsibilities or tasks – You need to set your boundaries around your tasks and remember that to a certain extent, your responsibilities will depend on others. Just as you expect others to fulfill their responsibilities, they likewise expect you to fulfill your obligations. When you don't have boundaries, you will naturally say Yes to every work or duties thrown your way and that will only force you to pile up jobs you wouldn't be able to complete. Unexpected tasks may come up and you must incorporate them into your boundaries, if you don't want to suffer from exhaustion and stress later on.

Setting boundaries around your own tasks will help you complete them on time without having to seek the help of others. When you don't set boundaries around your responsibilities, you may end up becoming a burden to others.

The expectations from others – You need to set boundaries around what people expect from you. Just because you are the best in what you do does not mean you must turn yourself to a slave and trying to satisfy everyone. It is important that you communicate with your family, friends and colleagues about what you will do and what you will not do, and make plans with them especially on how you can help them at your spare time and how they can help you complete certain chores. If you have set new boundaries, you need to notify other, otherwise, you shouldn't blame them if they violate such boundaries.

Your self-care – If you do not set limit around yourself, you will gradually fall sick, overweight and malnourish. Having a sound health is the number one key to high productivity; hence you need to set limit to what you should accomplish on a daily basis and at a given time. You need to set boundaries in such a way that you can have sufficient time to rest, play, eat well and exercise when necessary. Setting boundaries around yourself will help you become disciplined and become more active or productive at the long run. Taking care of yourself may also means, taking care of several other things such as laundry, and other home chores- all these will require a substantial part of your time and failure to do them may interfere with your general quality of living and productivity. You need to have a resolute mind and pay attention to your body when you work- when your body asks you to stop, you must not hesitate to stop working and take rest.

Your space- If you work in an organization, you may find it easier to set boundaries around your space, but when you work from home, it becomes more difficult to set boundaries around your space. You need to let everyone around you understand the limits or rules around your office supplies, and you need to let them know that constant interruptions and distractions can create some frustration and make you become less productive. You need to let your family, friends, and colleagues understand that violating your space may result in chaos, loss of office items or even breakages of some sensitive items, hence they need to respect your space.

Steps and Actions to take in creating personal boundaries

If you believe that you may need to set some boundaries in order to survive and become prosperous, you should do so by engaging in the following practical steps;

- **Start small** – You need to evaluate each area of your life causing frustrations, and work at one particular area at a time. You will discover that setting boundaries in one key area of your life will motivate you to set up boundaries in every other areas. If not having enough time to attend to your extra office works is the issue, or if many co-workers like using your office supplies, you can start setting boundaries around such situations and ensure that not everyone has access to your office supplies- this will force co-workers respect your space and find their own supplies elsewhere. When you start small, you can gradually attend to other areas of your life that need boundaries.
- **Take notes and write down what you expect from each areas of your life**- You may have to spend a couple of intense and highly focused period of time to write down what you expect in each area of your life. For instance, if you want to stop other workers from using your office supplies excessively, you can simply write “My office supplies will be for my personal use from now”. The more you obey this rule, the easier you find it easier to maintain your boundaries.
- **Cut out the emotion and consider where you are right now!** Sometimes, you may have to cut own your emotions when creating personal boundaries. If social media networking for instance are

interrupting your abilities to stick with your rules, then you need to work on your emotions in such a way that you don't spend too much time on such distractions- If you have been spending 2 hours a day on social media, you should aim at spending less than an hour a day, in order to have time for more serious activities. Your emotions could be your number one challenge in sticking with your boundaries.

- Have a list of the practical boundaries you can set and whoever will be involved with such boundaries- for instance , you can set a social media boundary such as “ I will not check my Twitter account between 1pm and 3pm”, or OFFICE- My office supplies will be used only by me. These two boundaries are physical boundaries that involve you only, hence you have to stick with them.
- Try as much as possible to communicate your boundaries to those who will be involved. This procedure will be important when you explain the problems to them, because they can help you set the boundaries. You should expect feedbacks from such people, especially on boundaries that may create some conflicts against their own interests- in this case, you must be prepared to make some adjustments or compromise before finalizing the boundaries.
- Make use of all tools necessary to set and enforce your boundaries – There are so many tools you can use in setting out and enforcing your boundaries, while some are automated, others are manual. Automated tools you can use in enforcing your boundaries include; computer updates, signals, reminders, and apps, while manual tools include; written manuals, and diaries. Boundary crating apps can help you block certain websites such as Twitter and Facebook at certain hours of the day, some apps can also help you set limits where certain activities will automatically shut out when the limits are reached.
- Perform a periodic evaluation on your boundaries and make adjustments when necessary- Performing a periodic evaluation on your boundaries can help you identify the boundaries that are unrealistic and need modification very fast. Some boundaries may set you against the management rules at work; hence you need to modify such rules so that you wouldn't get into trouble with the law.

The Importance of re-setting your boundaries

Setting up some clear personal boundaries is the surest way of ensuring that personal relationships turn to mutually respectful and supportive one. The personal boundaries you set will definitely measure your self-esteem, and they help you set the limit and the type of acceptable behaviors you want around you. Setting personal limits will ensure that people do not take advantage of you. If you are not comfortable with the way people treat you, it is the time you start setting personal boundaries, or if the boundaries existed before, now is the time to reset them and such will show others that you deserved to be respected also.

If you find it difficult to reset your boundaries, you can simply start by writing own how much each person in your life hurt you or make you feel uncomfortable. Once you have identify your boundary issues, then consider the motivation behind each person's actions. The next step is to determine what actions you will take – you must be careful with the way you present your case, if someone's smoking habit is violating your boundary for instance you can simply tell him “I will really appreciate your help not to smoke while you are with me” do not use straightforward command requests such as “Do not smoke whenever you are with me”. You need to remember the importance of saying a polite “No” to any request from time to time, especially when the other person is aware of your new boundaries. Try as much as possible to stop using humors in putting other people down.

The “Five things” technique of resetting personal boundaries

- List the most important five things you want people to stop doing around you every day.

- List the most serious things you want people to stop doing to you, for instance list some nicknames you want people to stop calling you or lists negative thoughts people normally have about you – for instance “ You always give up easily” , “ You have a bad breadth”.

The second stage is; think about your current boundaries, and then ask the following questions;

- How much attention do people around you expect from you at a moment (your family, Friends and co-workers, etc.)?
- Do you always make yourself available always? For instance; do you always answer phone calls even when you are always busy?
- How much praise do you receive when you do something extra-ordinarily?
- Why are you so popular with your friends?
- How do you feel when you spend time with each member of your family or each of your friends?

Re-defining or re-adjusting your boundaries means you have to get yourself out of the mentality of pleasing other, to doing what is just.

Chapter 6

Common boundary myths

By now, you should be able to understand the importance of setting boundaries for both personal and relationship growth. Many individuals will struggle to set and maintain boundaries because of some myths and because they are afraid of the consequences such boundaries can have on their values and their lifestyle- for instance, some people are afraid of losing all their friends when their boundaries seem to be too high and unrealistic. It is important to deal with certain common boundary myths and embrace reality, in order to set boundaries successfully.

Myth #1: I may appear selfish if I set boundaries

This myth or objection is often raised by individuals who think or feared being considered as selfish or self-centered when they set boundaries. Many people are afraid of being accused of lacking concerns for others when they set boundaries, hence they give up setting such boundaries. In reality, setting boundaries does not make you selfish, setting boundaries as a matter of fact will help you take care of others, while you protect yourself from being at the receiving end of every misgivings. People who set the most limits are usually the most caring ones in the world and the reason for this is that they have discovered that through boundaries, their own needs have been taken care of, hence they have plenty of time and energy to take care of the needs of others.

We all have needs, desires, and selfishness only consider our own desires, whereas boundaries consider our needs. When we focus on our desires, we may lose focus and balance, and instead of pursuing our healthy goals through setting boundaries, selfishness may force us to work to satisfy others. Trying to meet our needs does not make such needs bad.

Myth #2: Boundaries are symptoms of disobedience and un-submissiveness

Many people are afraid that setting boundaries or limits will signal to their partners, colleagues, friends or bosses that they are rebellious and disobedient in nature. Some people believe that saying “No” to something good simply means they are unresponsive, hence they participate in every social gathering, or take whatever that is thrown at them. Doing everything that comes your way has no emotional or spiritual value. When you do things out of sense of duty, but your heart is not in it, then you are wasting your time and trying to please others. Focus on setting boundaries in whatever you do so that you don’t do too much.

Outwardly obliging to something when we actually mean No simply makes you a liar, and if we say no to good things just because of our selfish desires, then such a boundary makes you disobedient.

Myth #3: Setting boundaries means I am always angry

For most beginners who are just setting boundaries, they may realize that they suddenly begin to tell the truth and take responsibilities for all their actions. These people may feel that they are being surrounded by some form of “anger cloud”, most especially when they become sensitive to where their boundaries are being violated. When you start setting boundaries, you may fear that you can become easily offended, and this may get you confused. This is just one of the things you may experience at the onset of boundary setting but you will definitely get over it, when people start to understand what you stand for. Boundaries does not cause anger in us, however, if you see boundary

setting as the source of your anger, then you are misunderstanding your emotions. Your emotions should be the signals that should notify you about something – for instance, your fear should tell you to move away from a dangerous situation, while anger should tell you to challenge an imminent threat.

You should take note that an angry situation is a warning that you are in an imminent danger of being attacked or injured. For this reason, anger should be seen as a positive sign that you are about to be manipulated, or your boundary is about to be violated. While your fear may tell you to withdraw from a situation, anger will definitely help you step forward and protect your boundary. There is no reason to be frightened when your boundaries are being violated, rather, the anger should help you engage in a reasonable but not violent way to tell the violator to stop violating your boundaries.

Don't just let your anger out, rather you should learn to protect whatever is yours in a more proper manner without showing negative emotions.

Myth #4: When I start creating boundaries, I may be hurt by others

It is often complicated when you set boundaries with people who do not respect limitations. It is true that many people don't like it when we present our opinions and arguments, and may get angry at us or simply withdraw from associating with us but this does not mean you should treat people softly always because they don't respect your boundary. You must not refrain from the truth, because those who love the truth will find it easier to associate with you. It is more important to be loved by few who understand the truth, than to be hated by many who want to oppress and take advantage of you.

Ask yourself the question; what if the person who hates you for your boundaries is your spouse? Will you then comply with no boundary rules just to protect the peace in your relationship? Or will you just endure his bad sides and let him violate your boundaries and still walk out on you. If you are afraid of the survival of your relationship and keep allowing your spouse to treat you badly, then you may not have the courage to set the boundaries. It is ideal to discover the hidden true character of your spouse and resolve all necessary issues instead of avoiding the problem.

It is very likely that you will get hurt from setting boundaries, but it is even much more likely that your relationship will become deeper.

Myth #5: When I set boundaries I may hurt others

You may end up disappointing other people occasionally when you set boundaries, especially when you value the happiness of such people. Some of the cases where you may hurt people when you set boundaries include;

- When a friend wants to borrow your car when you need it,
- People may call you for a social gathering preparation , and that is when you are physically down, or
- When a relative gets into a difficult financial situation but you can't loan him the exact amount because you have some financial obligations to take care of too.

Depending on how you see boundaries, you may hurt or may not hurt others, but nothing can be better than knowing the truth and the truth is that setting boundaries around your treasures are the only way you can protect them from being taken, destroyed or trampled upon. When you set boundaries for the wrong purpose or motive, then you may hurt the right people, but you need to keep in mind that saying No for the right reason will not cause injury to other people, even though it may cause discomfort and they have to look elsewhere for the same favor.

It is not your responsibility to meet the needs of everyone, though you should do everything possible to help others achieve their goals (but not at the detriment of your own happiness). You should help others freely when you have the resources to do so, and even when someone dare to you have a problem, you may have other more serious issues to contend with, hence you must attempt to solve the most important issues in your own life before considering meeting the needs of others.

Sometimes you may be the one who gets turned down, hence you need to develop some supportive relationships where you do not become enslaved because of others.

Myth #6: Boundaries may become difficult to accept

Some people are afraid of setting up boundaries because of bad experiences they had in the past regarding past boundaries that were set on them. Getting yourself to accept the boundaries set by others can become unpleasant. Since nobody likes to be turned down, you need to prepare your mind for negative answers you get when you cross the boundaries set by others. You may ask yourself; why is it difficult for people to accept boundaries?

- During your childhood, you might have been injured by certain inappropriate boundaries set by people. When parents set boundaries around their children for instance, the children may feel some sense of not being wanted and this may follow them through their adulthood, and often feel unaccepted when the word “No” is said to them. The good news is that old bad news don’t have to stick in your memory especially when you learn to accept other people’s boundaries.
- Individuals who were deeply hurt by boundaries in their childhood often try to escape from the hurt by meeting the same boundaries against others. Setting limits on other people cannot allow you impost hatred on them because they will simply walk away from you for the right reason. Never project your old feelings from the boundaries set on you, on your children, friends, colleagues and other people around you.
- Inability to accept boundaries set by others, especially in your marital life, may tend to do with your intentions of cheating on your spouse. If your emotional satisfaction will always depend on your spouse’s being on your side at all time, then something is not right about the relationship because you are the only one who set boundaries.
- Failure to accept boundaries may mean someone has problems in taking responsibilities. Sometimes, many people are accustomed to relying on people to rescue them from problems they deliberately brought on themselves, these people think the responsibilities of their own wellbeing are in the hands of others, hence they feel dejected when such obligations are not met by their beneficiaries. When you learn to take responsibilities for your own life, you will be confident of setting boundaries.

Myth #7: Boundaries may result in feelings of guilt

This is another myth many people can’t comprehend, the reason being that the feeling of obligation may become an obstacle for them in setting boundaries that can be beneficial. It is difficult to say No to someone who has helped us in the past, especially with money, efforts and time. All you need to do is give gratitude for what has been done to you, instead of feeling guilty for setting boundaries. Many of us are not comfortable with taking free gifts because we always believe sometime we have to pay something back in return, and some people don’t want to accept gifts any longer because they don’t want to worry about paying back in the future.

Some people do not give selflessly, however they give for the purpose of needing us in the future, and you can tell the difference between these people by the way they react even after you thank them for their gesture- Kind givers don’t even wait for you to thank them because they expect nothing

from you. If the giver is angered by doing you a favor, then the person sees the gift as an investment, and if the gratitude you offer is enough, then he or she probably wants nothing in return.

The issue of gratitude and boundaries must be kept separate, because boundaries must not be nullified because of gratitude, hence this myth holds no weight.

Myth #8: Boundaries will separate me from others

Many people are afraid of setting up personal boundaries because they are afraid of becoming social outcasts or appearing different from others- these people tend to avoid anything that may make them seem different from everyone else. You need to understand that going with the crowd always will rob you of your individuality, even if it will make things different from you. You need to understand that you have a free-will and responsibility for yourself and those entrusted in your care, hence you must set boundaries in order to protect whatever is treasurable to you. It is your responsibility to decide the choices you want for your life, and you don't have to become a puppet for someone to trample on you. Your relationship with the crowd must have limits, hence your boundaries must be completely under your control. When you discover that your property line will be respected, then you can re-adjust your boundaries (for instance, make it less tough). Boundaries will make you different and people will eventually learn to separate and respect you when they see how differently you do things.

Myth #9: Boundaries will become permanent and may create a permanent gap between me and others

Do not be deceived; there is nothing like a permanent boundary and the reason being that situations change, hence you have to change likewise. Many people believe that once boundaries are set, they can never be removed, they believe that boundaries will create a permanent gap between them and their friends, family and colleagues. You should learn to adjust your boundaries to current realities and situation; hence you wouldn't appear to be a difficult person.

Boundaries are not created to eliminate closeness; rather they create stronger bonds and more responsibilities. Boundaries will definitely lead to personality maturity and also help create the kind of closeness we deserve as humans. Naturally, immature people will want to stay away from us when we create boundaries, but they return to their senses when they see the true meaning of why you set such boundaries.

All the boundary misconceptions highlighted above should be regarded as mere misconceptions, true boundaries should be able to help you stand for yourself and say No to irresponsible activities.

Personal Boundary- Common difficulties you may face

Boundaries, especially when they are personal, can provide the freedom and growth that you desire. Setting up boundaries are not easy, likewise complying with such boundaries are even more difficult. You need to keep in mind that the purpose of setting boundaries is to protect yourself from bad influences. There are quite a number of ways of explaining the problems of setting and complying with boundaries, these are;

- Compliance to boundaries may simply mean saying “Yes” to the bad things. This also means that the boundary setter may fail to set the limits and may continue to feel guilty of being controlled by others.
- Avoidance of boundaries may simply mean, one is saying No to the Good. The avoidance of a boundary may decide to close the gate of their love and affection of others.

- Failing to stay under control simply means one is failing to recognize the “No” of others. The controller in this case will try as much as possible to violate the boundaries set by others through manipulative and aggressive means.

- Unresponsiveness to boundaries simply means the failure of the unresponsive individual to love others. Unresponsive people will naturally fail to hear about the needs and desires of others; hence they fail to give responsibility to care and help.

You don't have to comply with everything thrown at you, if you do, you will end up carrying the burdens of others, however controllers on the other hand want others to carry their burdens. Avoidants will generally want to shoulder their own burdens because they don't feel like seeking help from people. The non-responsive people will naturally refuse to help others even when the burdens of others' are becoming unbearable.

There are four major problems associated with personal boundaries and some people may develop problems in many of these areas at the same time. Boundary problems are;

- Compliance,
- Avoidance
- Other-control, and
- Unresponsiveness.

Compliance a major problem in boundary setting

Compliance is the number one and most prominent problems faced by people outside of a boundary set for them. Compliance is often the most difficult problem of boundary that can be tackled. Simply put, compliance in boundary is the difficulty to say No to others. We live in a conflicting world and if we don't learn to say words like “I disagree”, “It hurts”, and “That is wrong”, we may find it difficult to survive the evils of this world. Many women are trained to be submissive and obedient and by doing such, they think they are inferior to men. Those who comply to boundaries often give-in to the demands of others in order to avoid to accept conflicts and that can force them to be subjected to manipulative and controlling people. It is not ideal to accept any abusive situation. When you are not submissive then you may influence the other person to change from his or her ways and embrace the truth.

Compliance as a problem in boundary setting may happen for a number of reasons, these include;

- The fear of hurting the feelings of other people,
- Fear of losing friendship or being abandoned,
- Fear of receiving the punishment for other people's anger,
- Fear of being labeled as “Selfish”, and
- Feeling of guilt.

Being over-critical about one's evaluation can force one to engage in self-condemning acts, and many people's consciences are so weak that they become easily manipulated. Compliant are simply unstable, hence you can't rely on them to take a stand for a long time.

Avoidance – a problem of boundary setting

Boundary setting will help keep the evil out of reach and also allow us to embrace the good. Some people seem to have problems with this believe because they have set their boundaries as walls because they allow the boundaries to become a protection where nothing is allowed through- this means no one can reach out to them for good , and this could be a disaster.

Avoidant people who set boundaries deliberately scare of people who want to reach out to them and care for them. Individuals who suffer from avoidance problems in boundary setting will always want to avoid people so that they wouldn't discover their needs. Avoidants deeply want someone to come to their rescue but the wall they created around themselves are too strong. Some individuals may also say that their issues cannot be compared to what others are dealing with, hence they want to resolve their problems by themselves.

Many men often try hard to ignore their emotional needs because they want to maintain a self-dependent strong image to people, they claim they possess everything they need and desire, whereas they are empty inside. Men don't want to be seen as weak. Some people who try to avoid conflicts are always drained in their own guilt of allowing others to use them for their selfish purpose, hence they constantly lose energy with nothing to replace it.

Control –a problem in boundary setting

Setting boundaries can be confusing and difficult; however, this can become a lot easier when people respect such boundaries. Some people always want to remain in control of others, and when we say No, they simply see as a challenge to change our minds- for instance, sales and market men and women, will always want to convince others to buy their products. Controllers will always have problems respecting the boundaries set by others. Controllers will try to use various means to get others shoulder their loads, and they usually come in two forms;

- Aggressive controllers, and

- Manipulative controllers.

Aggressive controllers are the most problematic people around because they do not care about other people's boundaries. Once they make up their mind, they simply want the whole world to be on their sides. They always want the final say, and they simply neglect their own responsibility and rely on others to handle them. Religious fanatics are good examples of aggressive controllers who do not care about boundaries set by others, but they want to impose their own beliefs and ideas on others.

Sometimes, we can only admire the traits of some aggressive controllers, especially when they put such qualities into good use.

Manipulative controllers are reasonable to certain extent in recognizing the boundaries set by others. Manipulative controllers will try to do everything possible to convince others to give up their boundaries, and they may often deny their desire to control others even though it is inherent that their final resort is to gain the attention and control of others for their selfish desires.

Most controllers often end up isolated but that doesn't mean they don't get to have people around them but they are unsure whether the people around them stay because of fear or dependency. If you are a controller who wants to manipulate others, then you need to confront your fear by giving up your control over others, otherwise you may end up losing respect and your boundary may be violated when you violate other people's boundaries.

Compliants and avoidants may also be controllers at the same time but they clearly state what their boundaries are.

Unresponsiveness- a problem in boundary setting

Unresponsiveness describe an attitude where some people live their own lives without bordering about the welfare of the people around them. Unresponsive people believe that life is tough and everyone needs to handle his or her own business. Unresponsive people often appear as if they are not distracted by things happening around them, as long as they accomplish whatever they have in

mind. While unresponsiveness may thrive when setting boundaries in the business world, lack of sensitivity in marriage is a different case because it makes other partners appear cold, and such may lead to the disintegration of the relationship.

Unresponsive individuals will naturally shrug off the needs of others when they express such needs, and for unresponsive people, needs are simply distractions and nothing more. Unresponsive people believe they are not responsible for how others live their lives, and they don't feel the need to stay connected to the people around them or even help them shoulder part of their responsibilities.

Unresponsiveness in boundary setting may become even more complicated when individuals involved are also indulging in aggressive or manipulative control behavior. Individuals who are unresponsive and controlling at the same time never see beyond themselves, however, these people often find it extremely hard to get out of their problems because there might be no one to come around to help them due to their isolated lifestyles. In-completeness is usually the most striking features of individuals who suffer from unresponsive behavior especially when setting their own boundaries, they may appear to be satisfied with what they have when actually they are empty and lack happiness within.

It is important to start dealing with problems associated with boundary setting whenever they start to show up, this will help in identifying areas where you will need help and you wouldn't end up isolating yourself just because you have created a wall around you. The more boundary you set, the more problems you may actually face, hence it is advisable to keep boundaries to a manageable number at a time so that you can easily identify violators and also re-adjust realistically. In this case you may require some periodic evaluation of the performance or effect of the boundaries you set.

Conclusion

Life is about making decisions. This is a situation that should be guided by our values and ideals. Boundaries are always necessary for a better family, marriage, working relationship or friendship. While many fear having limits, the importance of having life boundaries supersedes their absence. As a person, a couple or family, you need to identify with some values in life. Ensure that people around you understand the need to have boundaries to avoid unnecessary conflicts.

Boundaries should be positive. You do not have to come up with limitations in life as a sense of punishment. This is a common misconception that has been addressed in this resource. These are values you always want to grow identifying with even in the future. The ideals must be geared towards developing you as a person and society at large. Negative boundaries are created without value addition in mind. Once you have the information, you can now make up your mind.

Social circles in life should always tune to one's personal goals and not the other way round. This underscores the need to come up with clear boundaries that will help you grow toward your goals in life. Your circles must identify with your boundaries and ideals. Family, friends, workmates and spouses will always support your boundaries so long as they are clear and positive. Always find time to re-evaluate your position as the boundary setter. Listen to advices and own up to your mistakes. Boundaries are about development, responsibility and understanding!