

Beta copy of Infidelity and Abuse. Please read, do the exercise and answer two short questions on the link provided at the end.

Thanks... Bob

How a Client's Violent Death Changed my Life

It was in the late 80's.

A young woman entered my office for a late afternoon appointment. It was her first appointment, referred by a friend.

She presented herself as a reserved quiet person. A sadness pervaded her eyes and body language. She often breathed deeply and sighed.

She talked about her marriage, how she wanted to save the marriage. She was not specific about the status of the marriage other than she wanted her husband to love her.

We spent the 50 minutes with background information and building rapport.

The next afternoon, after getting home from the office, I opened the local newspaper and to my horror a picture of this young lady was on the front page.

She was brutally stabbed to death in the bathtub by her husband no more than 8 hours after I saw her in my office!

Although an idealist - trying to save relationships and bring people together in deeper intimacy - I was from that point forward, forever cognizant of the "at risk" potential in trouble relationships.

And, believe me, there are many women (and men) "at risk" in relationships that no longer hold potential for healing and growth but instead are a seed bed for violence and destruction.

In my therapy as an online infidelity coach I often encounter a spouse who out of his/her personal neediness or numbed by his/her sense of victimization will go to almost any length to "save the marriage" even though s/he and or the children are "at risk" by a spouse who uses and abuses.

Yes, it is laudable for us to write optimistic copy about the potential to bring the "spouse back." But, this sometimes flies in the face of reality.

So, what do we do?

I try to enable those who in their sense of victimization and helplessness - who believe their capacity to endure abuse will prevail - who live life focused exclusively on the degrading behavior of their spouse, to

discover their sense of internal power - to begin setting protective boundaries - to begin examining their standards for a healthy relationship and the values they want to live with.

What is the Degree of Your Abusive Relationship? Are You or Your Children at Risk?

You've probably heard the metaphor of the frog that is placed in water; the temperature of the water is raised and the frog's body accommodates the warmer temperature.

The water becomes warmer and warmer and still the frog does not seem to notice.

Eventually the temperature reaches boiling point and the frog, failing to realize his dilemma, is cooked.

Persistent and continual exposure to an abusive relationship is much the same.

You tend to build a tolerance for the abuse, rationalize many of the behaviors, continue to hope for the best and soon emotionally melt.

Functioning becomes difficult. You feel nothing or try to push away the pain and anger. You may withdraw into numbness with diminished self-respect.

The following exercise will enable you to evaluate your present situation and in that process reclaim, over time, your personal power.

This personal power will enable you to cope with yourself and the relationship with more effectiveness.

Step 1: What's Not Working or Cycling?

Follow these steps sequentially. Don't jump ahead.

Answer these questions:

This is the problem of abuse as I experience it now.

These images come to my mind when I think of this problem.

Having this problem means I have this negative thought about myself.

This feeling emerge when I think of this problem.

This feeling is located in this part of my body.

On a scale of 1-10 (10 being as bad as it can be) I rate myself a ____ when I now experience this problem.

Step 2: New Information – Abuse Evaluation Exercise

This exercise or questionnaire will enable you to make distinctions regarding the abuse and your response to it. Begin to put words and thoughts on what you experience. You will begin to discover the specifics of what the abuse means to you and the specific impact it has had on your life.

Be honest. Honesty will set you free.

Check yes or no to the questions:

Yes	No	Do you...
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1. feel afraid of your partner much of the time?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2. tell yourself that if you just try harder and love your partner enough that everything will be just fine?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	3. feel that you can't do anything right for your partner?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	4. believe that you deserve to be hurt or mistreated?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	5. find yourself worrying and obsessing about how to please your partner and keep them happy?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	6. wonder if you're the one who is crazy?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	7. feel emotionally numb or helpless?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	8. feel afraid to leave or divorce?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	9. feel tied down, feel like you have to check-in?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	10. feel afraid to make decisions or bring up certain subjects so that the other person won't get mad?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	11. find yourself crying a lot, being depressed or unhappy?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	12. find the physical or emotional abuse getting worse over time?
		Does Your Spouse...
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	13. humiliate or yell at you?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	14. criticize you and put you down?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	15. treat you so badly that you're embarrassed for your friends or family to see?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	16. ignore or put down your opinions or accomplishments?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	17. blame you for his own abusive behavior?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	18. act excessively jealous and possessive?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	19. see you as property or a sex object, rather than as a person?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	20. constantly check up on you?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	21. keep you from seeing your friends or family?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	22. limit your access to money, the phone, or the car?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	23. have a bad and unpredictable temper?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	24. hurt you, or threaten to hurt or kill you?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	25. threaten to take your children away or harm them?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	26. threaten to commit suicide if you leave or tell you s/he cannot live without you?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	27. destroy your belongings?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	28. abuse alcohol or other drugs?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	29. have a history of trouble with the law, gets into fights, or breaks and destroys property? Does not work?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	30. blame you for how s/he treats you, or for anything bad that happens?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	31. abuse siblings, other family members, children or pets?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	32. put down people, including your family and friends, or call them names?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	33. is always angry at someone or something?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	34. try to isolate you and control whom you see or where you go?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	35. Nag you or force you to be sexual when you don't want to be?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	36. cheat on you or have lots of partners?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	37. is physically rough with you (push, shove, pull, yank, squeeze, restrain)?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	38. take your money or take advantage of you in other ways?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	39. accuse you of flirting or "coming on" to others or accuse you of cheating on him/her?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	40. not listen to you or show interest in your opinions or feelings. . .things always have to be done his/her way?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	41. ignore you, give you the silent treatment, or hang up on you?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	42. Lie to you, doesn't show up, maybe even disappears for days?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	43. make vulgar comments about others in your presence?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	44. blame all arguments and problems on you?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	45. tell you how to dress or act?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	46. experience extreme mood swings. . .tell you you're the greatest one minute and rips you apart the next minute?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	47. tell you to shut up or tell you you're dumb, stupid, fat, or call you some other name (directly or indirectly)?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	48. compare you to former partners?

Take a couple minutes to go back over your check marks, paying particular attention to the yeses.

(Vitaly Important: If you checked mostly yes to numbers 1, 12, 17, 18, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 31, and 37 I strongly urge you to get away... NOW! If it seems impossible for you to do that now, promise that you will begin planning an exit strategy NOW. Begin contacting local community support groups, resource centers, etc. Please.)

Congratulate yourself for being honest and think: “This is one of my first steps in freeing me and claiming my power and respect as a person.” Does that feel a little better? Just a little?

Step 3: Distinctions and Shifts

Distinctions

Making distinctions means you peel away the layers to discover what being in an abusive marriage means to you. You explore and become aware of your different responses. You begin to see specific patterns in your actions and thoughts.

You no longer are a helpless, victimized emotional blob that reacts without forethought or purpose. You begin to identify specific areas in which you want to assume control and express your power.

Here are possible distinctions you may make:

- I pay more attention to my spouse (his/her behavior) than I do to my well being.
- I cope with the pain by shutting down.
- I increasingly lose touch with my true feelings.
- I am persistent (stubborn!) in hanging in there with this marriage.
- I often don’t realize how much I tolerate.
- I will suffer a great deal to “keep peace.”
- I lost who I “used to be.”
- The more I’m exposed to the abuse, the more confused I become.

Take a few minutes to note other distinctions (what you gleaned from the above exercise) important and more specific to you:







Shifts

Shifts are just that. You want to identify particular shifts in your thinking and acting that will shift the momentum away from the negativity and reactivity toward your health and well being.

Here are possible shifts to consider:

I feel numb and lifeless		I feel passion and excitement
I feel sad and depressed		I feel angry
I must isolate myself		I will gain from being with other and they will gain from me
I must tolerate his/her behavior		I can protect myself
I must stay in this marriage		I can and maybe must leave this abuse
I have nowhere to go		I can develop an exit plan
This mess is mostly my fault		I am not responsible for his/her abuse
I deserve to be treated badly		I am a person of worth whom demands respect
I am crazy		I can think clearly and act responsibly
I must help him/her with his/her pain		I cannot make him/her better
I am embarrassed around others		I can relate warmly and confidently to others
I am a wimp		I have courage
I am stubborn		I am persistent

List other shifts you would like to make:

Step 4: Engage self

Engage yourself means spending some time in the next day or two consciously and intentionally thinking about the above exercise; specifically the distinctions and shifts you desire.

Shift your focal point away from him/her to a degree. This, in itself, may be a significant shift. (Be aware that s/he will probably notice and may react. If able, plan your response if s/he reacts.)

Choose one shift and give that shift your full attention. What would that shift feel like? What would you be doing as you make that shift? What would that shift bring to you?

Reflect on and Answer these questions:

I will be most aware of these new distinctions and/or shifts at this time and place during the next day.

I will use this trigger (mantra: I will do this, word: power, feel good, etc., rubber band around wrist, etc.) to keep me on track.

Step 5: Evaluation: Enhanced Personal Power and/or Voice

Reflect on and Answer these Questions:

Evaluate what it was like to spend a day or two focusing on your desired shift and the distinctions you are beginning to make.

Notice any changes you experience in terms of your personal power, feelings and thoughts about yourself.

Remember, you are just beginning. Don't be upset or alarmed if you find it difficult to pinpoint change and shifts.

Employing the Ground Hog Process for most takes a number of attempts. It gradually will become part of you. And, when it becomes part of you, you will have it for life.

These questions will help you evaluate your experience:

On a scale of 1-10 (10 being as bad as it can get) I now rate my bad feelings as ____ .

I notice this new thought coming to mind after the engagement.

I notice this new image coming to mind after the engagement.

I notice this feeling _____ located in this part of my body
_____ emerging after the engagement.

I now think this of myself after the engagement.

I hope this exercise creates some new thinking, a new appreciation for who you are and helps you being planning actions that help you reclaim your power and dignity.

Please help me develop this exercise more fully by answering a couple short questions.

Please go to: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/5CCTKCC> to respond to the questions.

Thank you, I appreciate your help and input.

The best,

Bob