

BREAKING FREE FROM THE SILENT TREATMENT: --- STRATEGIES TO FIGHT BACK AND CONNECT



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“Breaking Free From the Silent Treatment”

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Breaking Free From the Silent Treatment

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A Definition of “The Silent Treatment”

In relationships, parties have many ways of dealing with each other: they can have conversations; make demands; have expectations, and express different feelings in different ways. We here bring up the issue of the silent treatment, which is a curious attempt both to control by restricting communication with the other side.

Some classical definitions:

The Merriam Webster Definition of SILENT TREATMENT:

“Is an act of completely ignoring a person by resort to silence, especially as a means of expressing contempt or disapproval of such person.”

Out of the Fog Definition:

“The Silent Treatment is a passive aggressive form of emotional abuse in which displeasure, disapproval and contempt is exhibited through nonverbal gestures while maintaining verbal silence.”

Out of the Fog Definition of PASSIVE AGGRESSIVE:

“Passive Aggressive behavior is the expression of negative feelings, resentment, and aggression towards the partner in a relationship done in an unassertive, passive way (such as through procrastination and stubbornness)”.

The silent treatment often lasts for a long period of time (months or years, for some people) and it is **directed specifically at a certain person**. Because of the specific intention that the silent treatment requires, it is often tied to passive aggression (above) and is a main tool of passive aggressive people to control others.

Three stories that will help you to see how it feels, please look carefully at the way they got resolved....

First story:

*"I've been divorced for three and a half years now. I was **married alone** for twenty years and raised our daughter alone too. The ex-wasn't willing to participate in being married, in fact, he told me it was enough to know we were in the house at the same time. No need to share anything! Keeping a ghost profile was unnerving for me... He didn't give me the silent treatment out of anger; he just preferred to be alone, even being married. And I didn't. After twenty years of it, I got out. We divorced when our daughter was eighteen."*

Second story:

"My boyfriend has recently given me the silent treatment for almost 2 months now. This is why I started reading about what this silent treatment really means as I have never experienced it before."

This rejection made me throw myself back at him; told him how I felt for him. I apologized for everything I may have done; begged him to talk...whatever it was, note that I have asked for it. He kept on ignoring and ignoring me. When I stopped, he sends me text messages saying that he knows I loved him and that we needed to work on the problem. When I start reaching out he ignores me again. That really drove me mad. I ended up in frustration. The whole process affected my work and concentration."

*This is when I started looking into what this silent treatment means. Why people do it? It's true – it's **a form of abuse**. Once I knew the meaning of this rejection and the experiences of others, I found a solution to the whole situation – I text him to google silent treatment, learn about its causes. Guess what – he did. Now he's the one calling/texting me 'say something'."*

Third and last story:

"Recently, I have become a victim of the 'silent treatment.' my boyfriend of two years chose to "manage" his anger this way, and it's been two weeks now. What did I do wrong? Apparently, I overstepped my boundaries by talking with his physician about a medical problem my boyfriend asked me for help with."

I'm a nurse, so I saw his doctor at work the day after my boyfriend experienced his frightening problem, and I mentioned it to the doctor (when the doctor initiated our

conversation by asking how my boyfriend is doing). The doctor confirmed my advice to my boyfriend, and I sent my boyfriend a text with that information.

When I reached his home that night, I was given a few clipped responses and hateful looks, followed by the silent treatment. When he decided to go to bed and left my presence by further shutting me out (going to his room and closing the door) I went right in there and asked why he was ignoring me. "I'm not ignoring you, I'm going to bed."

I collected my belongings and left. That was two weeks ago. Now, the truth is, I feel happy and I'm enjoying my new freedom. I will be returning his key via mail, and that's that. I will never put up with bullying/ manipulation/ emotional abuse anymore!"

It is clear in the three different stories that the way you react to the silent treatment determines if it will diminish your self-esteem and destroy your expectations of a normal relationship, or if you can preserve yourself from the damage and aspire to a more normal and supportive one.

Do you want another story?

"He gets very upset, storms out of rooms, IGNORES ME for weeks on end. His periods of distancing himself and being cold and dismissive are often followed up by "fun" times and togetherness. It's always been easier to accept these times when they arrive based on his decision to stop his bullshit, than to talk to him or work out why he behaved so negatively for weeks on end. Though, I've tried.

I've never met ANYONE so absolutely resistant to owning up to anything they do. It's as he doesn't have a conscience. He's a loud mouth and a bully. He came into my home just off of fights with other women.

I'll be all happy and feeling great, and when he comes home and I see this look in his eye, I just know that no matter what, he'll make something out of anything he can come up with, get upset and spoil the moment with his anger and clamming up!

*I've been married to him for sixteen years, and I have yet to totally stem the tide of the bitter internal turmoil I go through ("What did I do?" "What could I have done better?" "How can I make him happy again?" etc., etc., etc.) It took me a long time to realize that **there is nothing I can do** or could have done. It's all about him.*

Maybe it was about his day or just some weird insecurity – I'm never privy to that, but when he's in this space, it seems to make him feel better to just dump on me.

At that point he attributes motives to me that are just ludicrous, he accuses me of stuff that just never happened – but no matter how much justification I give, it only serves to make him madder. Because you know what? I’m just feeding it when I do that. But it really has nothing to do with me.

Cooling Off vs. Ostracizing

The silent treatment is different from taking a “time out” or “cooling off” (leaving the conversation to save the conversation). Here is a good way to know what the differences are between the two.

	Silent Treatment	Time-Out
Effect	Destructive	Constructive
Duration	Indefinite	Time Bound
Non-Verbal Messages	Putting you down;	Neutral or Reassuring
Physical Posture	Engaged	Disengaged
Re-engagement	Unilateral	Mutually Agreed
Engagement of Third Parties	Seeks alliances in the argument.	To seek self-support
Disposition	Seeks to improve others	Seeks self-improvement
Problem Focus	To apportion blame	To find solutions

(From Out of the Fog. Click Here for more information on [Time-Outs](#))

One thing to keep in mind is that taking a time out to cool off is normal and usually a good option. If you’re too angry to talk to the person at the moment, both of you leaving the room to reflect for a while and get your act together can help you reach a solution that doesn’t end in insulting each other. As you can see, one aspect of cooling off is that you have **a hope of reconciliation and resolution at some later time, and that you give each other time and space to get more self-control.**

The silent treatment, on the other hand, leads to **completely denying the**

existence of the other person. In this way, it's commonly called **ostracizing the** silent treatment victim. Often, there will not be a clear reason given as to what event or action the silent treatment is "punishment" for. It is part of the tortuous game - you suffer more because you don't know what exactly you did wrong. It also puts all the control in the abuser's hands.

Wait - did we say abuse?

YES. The silent treatment is a form of abuse and should be recognized as such. This could be the biggest difference between cooling off and ostracizing: one is **emotionally abusive**.

Why people use the silent treatment:

Power and Control behaviors cover up

Hidden Fears and Insecurity

Normally, two grown up people can and need to air their differences by having a good conversation, where each other shares their interests and needs, after which both can make reasonable offers and negotiate some outcomes.

When one of them, or both, can't express what they deeply need from each other, frustration grows, and conflict develops. Blaming the other, feeling resentment and anger and in short, developing a perception of the other person as an "enemy" that prevents one's satisfaction is the common outcome.

Instead of having adult ways of managing the interaction with a spouse, we see people using strategies much older, those learned in childhood.

The use of withdrawal and refusal to open up and dialogue is a coping mechanism and learned behavior by someone who was not permitted to experience his or her feelings in safety, very early in childhood. It is also what emotionally crippled people employ as a defensive, "damage control" device. Instead of trusting themselves and negotiating what they need from the other, they feel slighted, and perceive themselves as "victims without resources," needing to withdraw.

The person who uses this control technique does so often out of a feeling of hopelessness; they feel they have no other recourse.

And many simply lack the emotional skills necessary to use two-way, emotionally open communication, because they never learned them. It is either explodes in anger or withdraws and seethes. They are terrified of

being open because that is when we all experience our vulnerability.

Chances are, as kids, the parental environment was one of emotional instability, covert retaliation, and continued manipulation and harsh critiques and put downs (which causes a hypersensitivity to it in the future).

The resulting adult will avoid these abuses, even if only perceived, using the only method of control they were able to develop and use as children: Silence and withdrawal (read internalizing), serve to prevent their emotional abuser to hurt them even more.

The trouble is, this behavior becomes a conditioned response that outlives its usefulness and is continued into the adult person's future relationships, where he or she then perpetrates the damage instead of being the victim of it. And in all honesty, they self-damage because they are closed for ever to loving, intimate connections where they could feel loved and secure, but will rarely become aware of it.

Finally, it's a veiled power-grab. Still, the behavior is effective: *"the more silent she is the more insecure and needy I feel. I've got to figure out how to break the cycle, and learn to cope, or cut my losses."*

Let's explore this behavior and its roots

Let's talk about why your husband/wife uses the silent treatment. Partners use the silent treatment as a means of controlling any situation they perceive as demanding or challenging for their present level of skills.

Their brain is telling them, "The only way to handle this is by shutting down and making the other person feel guilty." And so that's what they do!

In this way, you can see that using the silent treatment stems from fear and insecurity of not having any control over the other person left! A healthy and self-aware person would realize that disputes are not about control (who's right or who's wrong), but getting to a shared resolution of the issue while respecting each other.

Like other [passive aggressive](#) behaviors, the silent treatment is all about **control**. This is very dangerous in a relationship because any other future “couple connection” rests on one person continuing to be a **doormat** for the controlling partner. If that person wakes up and demands more from the user of silent treatment, the power structure topples and you’re left with one person still demanding something that the other doesn’t want to give any longer...

Why does the brain tell some people that the silent treatment is the **only** mode of communication? This goes back to passive aggressive behavior and how the two are linked. When the passive aggressive person was a child, they were taught that **showing emotion (like anger) was bad**.

So they grew up internalizing their anger and diffusing it in passive ways (like the silent treatment and sabotage). If your partner is not passive aggressive, it’s still safe to predict that somewhere in their childhood, they learned to use the silent treatment as a way of controlling people in a [passive aggressive](#) way (“if I don’t get my way, I can punish people by ignoring them”).

“I was on the receiving end of silent treatment for a while, I am a guy and the person doing this to me is my roommate and childhood friend. I was very hurt by this behavior and I suffered in silence for a long time.

It seemed like he would act nice to me until I felt okay, and then I would ask him a question and he would simply ignore me. He kept repeating this until I couldn’t take it anymore..

So I thought “what comes around goes around” and I started doing the same, but I do it 10x worse than him. I started ignoring all his friends (some common friends), and I feel like a very bad person.. but then I remember how he made me feel and then I don’t care anymore...I have been doing this for about 4 months now, and he does the same.

It’s a shame really.. We used to be such good friends, now I am graduating from college and I will probably never speak to him again.”

Often times, the silent treatment is a manifestation of a game. The game is control, but the reason the need for control is there in the first place is due

to fear of it being lost. Usually, bullies need to terrorize others to prove they're superior, but why do they need to prove it? Because they're insecure in knowing their own worth. This same line of thinking typically enters into the scenario when you're talking about a chronic emotionally withdrawing partner.

Many women in passive aggressive relationships (where the silent treatment is the **main tool of control**) feel that the use of the silent treatment leads to feeling “**married alone.**” They do all the emotional giving and supporting while getting nothing back.

However, the silent treatment happens to men, too! An example comes from one of our clients: “It makes me feel like I have done something terrible to her. Most of the time she does it to me when I say things she doesn't like.” Doesn't this sound similar to the first quote in the book?

Emotional Impact of this behavior

Getting the silent treatment from the person closest to you can be hurtful and frustrating. The silent treatment is a manipulative tool often used by the more passive partner in the relationship, usually as a form of punishment for something that the more assertive partner is supposed to puzzle out.

This way, the more passive one takes no risk while their partner squirms and tries to please them, figure out the mystery, pull them out of their shell, grovel, apologize, etc. It is a very hostile maneuver, and a classic in relationship dynamics having battles for power and control.

Let's see how it produces a definite pain in not only your soul, but your body:

"I found it very interesting that the -silent treatment- actually hurts you physically. And I can feel the pain in my belly, but I am slightly confused with my general feelings and the "cold shoulder" reactions.

As a girl, I do of course react the way that's typical, apologizing for everything. But I try my hardest to let the guy have his space, I sent him a message and told him I was sorry, I hope he has a good week, I love him, etc, etc and that he needs not reply.

I stayed up really late staring at the wall feeling hopeless, helpless, worthless, and very well pathetic and such as I should not have come into his life ever. Though I knew from the beginning I wasn't good enough for him. He tried to reassure me that he wanted me. I feel terrible because we'll never speak again; my belly hurts and I feel like some is tearing my heart out with pliers... I also feel paranoid and too pathetic for words, because I still love him. But maybe I should just face facts that it is pointless to love him? If I accept this truth, my depression will catch up with me..."

As we see in this narrative, if a person takes too long to "wake up" to the abusive use of the silent treatment, the emotional effects can be devastating. Depression and health issues set in as the person is made to feel **unwanted, useless, and unintelligent**, totally "not good enough."

Because some people use the silent treatment when they don't get their way, the relationship turns into one that's all about **that person and what they want**. The other person doesn't get their basic human needs fulfilled, and as a result, the relationship feels empty to them.

Another impact is that many partners feel they have no choice but to fight fire with fire and **ignore the other person back!** Now doesn't that seem counter-intuitive? It's not an "eye for an eye" or "giving them a taste of their own medicine," only - it's also showing you're just as insecure and hurt as they wanted you to be! A person who refuses to be backed into a corner would simply say, ***"I'm here to talk when you're ready."***

A common tale in relationships where the silent treatment is used is that it "breeds bitterness." This is a good phrase to keep in mind, because it clues you in to the effect that even a "once in a while" silent treatment can have.

A saddening effect is that one person can **stop abusing** and the other person will **start**. In effect, a partner comes to have low expectations because of past denial of harm or half-hearted apologies. The hurt partner might decide that the silent treatment is the only treatment a hurtful partner "deserves" (we see this happen a lot to women who are married to [passive aggressive men](#)). Of course, that just means the vicious cycle continues, doesn't it?

Some people claim that it is an "emotional intelligence" that shows them it is pointless to talk to someone who "refuses to see the light." Doesn't that sound like giving abuse back? Assuming that you're more intelligent and have the right to inflict emotional punishment doesn't make you a better person - **it sinks you to the level of the abuser**.

Besides, if this person is your spouse, you are forgetting the basic covenant of marriage where you would help each other grow up, develop more mature skills and become a better adult.

How ostracism can hurt your brain?

We talked before about how the silent treatment is indeed a form of rejection called **ostracism**.

Now, when someone is ostracized it affects the part of their brain called the “anterior cingulate cortex.” Don’t worry; knowing what the anterior cingulate cortex **does** is more important than knowing how to pronounce it.

The anterior cingulate cortex is the part of your brain that goes off when it **detects pain**. When someone gives you the silent treatment, your brain tells you to treat it as physical pain.

This means that simply by ignoring your existence, someone can inflict pain on you. This is why using the “time out” as a punishment for children is so effective. The child feels ostracized, and therefore feels pain. Their brain tells them to behave in such a way that they don’t have to feel that pain again.

Dr. Kip Williams says the cold shoulder or silent treatment is a form of rejection or social ostracism that can be extremely painful. According to an article published by the [American Psychological Association](http://www.apa.org), the emotional pain felt from the silent treatment is much like physical pain because of shared neural pathways in the brain.

In other words, when we pull a muscle or break a bone, the pain we experience is much the same as the pain felt when a loved one—whose validation and attention we need and seek—rejects us and gives us the silent treatment.

Watch here the impact of this behavior on the partner:

“The silent treatment did not allow our relationship be improved. When he used it on me, it made me feel like a nobody. It meant that by the time I could recover from it something

would happen and it would start again.

The silent treatment was making me sink to depths of despair I have never felt. My life last year was full of confusion, bewilderment, and physical weakness. It made a confident, well-educated and optimistic life-loving person suicidal and self-harming.

If I hadn't been such an independent person before I met him I would either be dead or a non-person by now. I still feel guilty but am getting better every day.

I will never be the "me" I was before, though. I will always be grateful that I was subjected to this treatment for a relatively short time of my life. I feel very anxious and upset when I think of people enduring this treatment for long periods of their lives."

How to know when it is happening to you?

OutoftheFog puts it well when they say that “The silent treatment is often designed to produce feelings of Fear, Obligation and Guilt (FOG) in people and is successful in doing so.”

So a quick way to tell if it's silent treatment what you are receiving, is to ask yourself: am I experiencing any fear, obligation, or guilt? Remember that these are the emotions you're *meant* to feel when someone uses the silent treatment to control you. These feelings will make you weaker and thus easier to control.

Other times, it's harder to tell whether your partner is just a little miffed and is stewing in their own thoughts (normal) or is actually using the silent treatment against you (being [passive aggressive](#)). It may be some combination of their actions and your emotions that is confusing you. Are you being too sensitive? (Some of us are.) Are they being passive aggressive? (Some people are.)

Let's look at a break down. More than a descending “FOG,” the silent treatment can create feelings/sensations of:

- Real loss
- Not belonging
- Low self-esteem
- Strong unworthiness
- Not being good enough
- Not being loved/being led on
- Being “married alone”

To really determine your situation, you need to ask yourself these questions. Do you feel you are “married alone” or that your partner sees you as “worthless”? If so, you need to call this situation for what it is: the silent treatment done by a probable passive aggressive person.

“Does she ever really discuss the reason for her behavior when she talks to you again?”

When I was given the silent treatment and he began talking again, I would ask what the problem behavior was about and ask to discuss it. The response was there was nothing to talk about and everything was “fine.”

*My ex was a master at this behavior, but not a master at receiving it. A couple times I was so angry at his ignoring me, that I didn’t speak to him after he had been out of town for half a day; he blamed the children for my behavior. It took everything I could muster to give him this treatment because it is so averse to what I believe in, but it gave me an insight into why he behaved so. **He did it to control me.***

*When I asked him how it felt to be “ignored,” he said I must have been really mad at the children. He had not spoken to me for a week before he went out of town, so I thought that he might understand when he got back if he received some of his own treatment. **HE DID NOT!***

“From years of receiving this behavior and knowing others in my own family who practice this awful mental cruelty, I don’t think the practitioners of the silent treatment will ever change. They know what they are doing. When they are confronted, they blame someone else, or turn up the burner on their behavior. So sad.”

At the end, we have to decide if this kind of relationship can survive the challenges of long time engagements, with its ups and downs. What is very sad is to conclude that the preservation and growth of the relationship can be thwarted by one side having the people skills of a hurt, resentful child. If this person is not recognizing the opportunity to grow that marriage offers, and challenges this childhood attitude heads on, the results will be seen very early, and isolation will set in.

5 Ways to Fight the Silent Treatment

STRATEGY NUMBER 1:

If you are being given the silent treatment, you are being punished for something, but you are not actually being told what that something is and how you can make up for it, if it was ever a real and not an imaginary offense.

The first step is to notice how you are feeling in the moment- do you feel pulled out of yourself, trying to read your partner's mind? Are you angry? Apologetic? Scared? Guilty? Physically sick? Notice just how much you feel hooked into trying to work out this puzzle. It is not your job to read your partner's mind. It is not your job to fix something for someone who isn't using their words. Give yourself permission to stop trying. Take the focus off of your partner's puzzle, and bring attention to your own feelings.

Next, you can let your partner know that you care, and can see that something has upset them. Invite them to tell you what has upset them, and let them know that unless they tell you, there is nothing you can do for them- they may not be talking to you, but their ears are working just fine. Then, let it go as best you can.

Every time you notice yourself trying to read their mind and "fix" the situation, remind yourself that it is not your job to figure this out, and let yourself off the hook. This is call "detaching yourself." Detach from the situation, pursue your own interests and try to find occupations that provide support and recognition to you. When you refuse to play games, the games tend to fall apart pretty quickly.

STRATEGY NUMBER 2:

Say this statement:

“Dear Wife/Husband (insert name), from what I can tell, you’ve entered into the cycle where you’ve decided the best way for you to handle your thoughts and feelings is to shut me out of your inner world, to go silent, and to attempt to drive me away/drive a wedge between us until I figure out what has insulted or injured you, apologize for it, realize my errors, and validate your feelings.

I love you, I care about you, I don’t want to hurt you or for you to hurt or feel insulted. When you are able to talk without needing to hurt me or retaliate, please find a way to let me know. Until then, I will continue to openly communicate to you my responses to your behaviors and actions.

Additionally, I will allow our children to become aware of exactly what is going on here, making sure they know they are not at fault, and not to be pulled into the game, or to take sides without even realizing it.

It is important they understand that their parents are not perfect, and that we (the parents) are growing and learning as we go too. If being this open and exposed with all who live in this house is upsetting or threatening to you, I would encourage you to tell me about it, but in writing, as you have chosen to not speak with me currently.”

Then, wait and see...while you go on with your life. You can even print this letter and leave it near his/her desk.

STRATEGY NUMBER 3:

How to stop the silent treatment:

Stop paying attention to it. Talk to her, carry on the conversation, as if she were responding. Ignore her hostility completely. And call her out on her behaviors, matter of fact and tactfully. Don't point fingers, blame, or guilt. Simply state where responsibility is and where it isn't being properly tended to.

You can say: *"I understand that you might feel frustrated and angry with something I did. Nothing can happen if you don't explain what your grievance is so I can answer it. If you open up and tell me what hurts you, I promise not to excuse myself but do the most to understand your point of view and search for a solution to your point."*

If possible, turn a silent treatment into a time-out and use the time to go work on yourself. If you find yourself angry at another person and tempted to use the silent treatment on them, it is better to take the approach of having a healthy, constructive 'Time-Out'.

You can: *Express your feelings using 'I' statements - but only do this once. 'I feel uncomfortable right now' or 'I am feeling upset and don't want to talk right now. I'll discuss this with you tomorrow.'*

Exit the room or the environment so you can think more clearly without all the pressure. But, very important, you need to continue the conversation; don't transform the time out into a cold shoulder, and find a humane way of expressing what is hurting you.

STRATEGY NUMBER 4:

You can read as much info on “coping” skills and how to deal with someone who dishes out the silent treatment to you but the fact remains: if you are in an intimate/close relationship with someone who continually uses this as a pattern, it is NOT a healthy relationship for you; it is not helping you grow up and develop and unless the other person is willing to listen to you and empathizes with you on how badly the treatment is affecting you and is open and willing to change, NOTHING will change.

Nothing you do can or will make someone else change their behavior. That’s it; they need to assume that they are doing some hurtful behavior and make a plan to change exactly that, alone or using a therapist or a coach.

So you have two options, while you wait for your spouse to change by himself or going to therapy: keep tolerating it or move on. The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and expecting the same result.

Leaving:

“It is the most difficult thing to make the decision to leave. You have invested so much of yourself in the relationship. You grieve over the person you thought you knew, the person you wish he was, the relationship you wanted. The time you have spent just trying to cope with his madness. The silent treatments and the other behaviors will not stop, unless he decides he needs help. It is deep inside him to resort to finally stop doing these behaviors and begin communicating.

You need to look at what you can gain by leaving- yourself, your freedom and the right to a peaceful life, the right to be yourself. Plan it very carefully. Find your friends, family and a psychologist. Plan it so that you will have plenty of people around you to do lots of things with for a while. You will feel panicky and terrified of being alone.

You will have an irresistible urge to make contact with him to check to see if he is ok, just to hear his voice, to drive by and check up on him to try again etc. Try to curb this or at least if you must then try to make it longer each time before the next contact. So do a few days, then a week then ten days or something like that.

Every time you feel yourself weakening your resolve spend some time reading literature about the silent treatment and people’s life experiences so that you don’t feel it is you being selfish or that you haven’t tried hard enough. You will feel that perhaps you could try again, try harder, change things. Remember he has to change himself.

You have already tried to change yourself to make life normal with him and it hasn't worked. Read about it to confirm again and again and again that you are not alone with this experience and that you are doing the right thing.

You will feel like you are going crazy and losing your mind. You will feel like you cannot even get through a normal day and it is very hard to keep your concentration. You will feel like you don't have the energy and it's easier to go back to him. Try to give yourself lots of little tasks to do. Tell yourself you have reached the bottom and the only way is up. Be very clinical about getting through the days. Plan them like a campaign. You are in a self-recovery one!"

But ..

You will get a bit better every week.

You will rediscover the things you were interested in before but haven't had time to look at because you have been so busy trying to cope with all this anxiety, cruelty and manipulation and bad behavior.

Gradually you will start to find yourself and again be comfortable spending time with yourself AND more importantly actually liking yourself again. Remember when you could happily spend a day with everyone out of the house just being with yourself? That will come back. You will still miss the person you wished he was. It is hard to come to accept that he is not that person.

You will start to sleep better and feel calmer.

You can't do this well on your own. So plan ahead find your friends and family. Tell them what you are planning to do and how you need their help. Tell your doctor. Talk to a psychologist. Join anything you might be interested in, but get the help you need to get better and go back to yourself.

STRATEGY NUMBER 5:

Get support from others who understand about personality disorders and can relate to what you are going through, so you can evaluate your situation and ponder if it is time to leave. Get a therapist, a conflict coach, an adviser, someone who can understand your situation, and give you the necessary support as to detach and set limits and be ready to walk out.

If you can't afford paying for individual sessions, find any kind of support in your church or any organization that can give you psychological services.

Even when this situation is not your fault, and you are not provoking the hurtful behavior, you need to protect yourself and change the power dynamics in the relationship, or walk out.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Silent treatment can really hurt you and destroy those aspects that really make a difference in the way you live. Your self-esteem, level of personal satisfaction, happiness, financial outcomes and personal health are compromised by staying in this non-nurturing environment.

You need to recover the very definition of what marriage is for you. And be clear on what you can give and what do you expect to receive. An unequal relationship where one controls and the other submits, can't help any of the sides develop and become a mature adult. If someone withdraws and covers up an important part of him/her, then there are no ways you can say that there is good communication. Mutual love is not flowing freely, but constrained by power tactics.

The person giving the silent treatment may just be having problems they feel they need to hash out by themselves, which diminishes the marriage bond. If you love someone, you just want to be part of them no matter what. If someone you love is having a hard time with hard issues, it's good to know they want to lean on you. This is what marriage is for!

Finally, this is an opportunity to re-define what is what you expect from a good relationship; make clear in your mind how much can you take if your partner is still engaged in childhood mindsets, and decide by yourself if you are better off continuing stuck in this lonely dynamics, or better of cutting your losses and moving on.

Whatever your decision, we wish it is for your happiness!

Nora Femenia

This report has included parts of some other forums, reports and conversations, such as:

www.passiveaggressivehusband.com

<http://www.kensavage.com/archives/silent-treatment>

Our Online Resources

	<p>Free Coaching by Coach Nora</p> <p>You know what it is to suffer and be bitterly disappointed. You know how much it costs you to recover from each frustrating episode in your relationship. Now is the time for you to make changes that will allow you to manage your marriage better. Do this for yourself, put yourself on the path to a better life, by claiming your Free 30 Minute Coaching Session, right now!</p> <p>http://conflictcoach.me/services/getstartednow/</p>
	<p>Creative Conflict Resolutions</p> <p>At Creative Conflict Resolutions, we believe that people get into relationships to fulfill the need for self-expression and developmental learning we all share. It is part of our life mission to learn how to interact, help and love each other better.</p> <p>How can we learn from you and you from us?</p> <p>http://creativeconflicts.com</p>
	<p>Fair Fighting for Couples</p> <p>Sometimes in life we do things without paying attention to their consequences. The way we relate to others seems to us "natural" and "the way we are." We do this without thinking of the choices that brought us to this exact point, and now you and your partner are paying the price. Learn how to fight fairly and respectfully with this book!</p> <p>http://www.positiveconflicts.com/FairFightingForCouples/</p>



Turning Conflicts into True Love

When frustration builds up, we escalate it by being angry, oppositional and violent. We demand that the other person should change first. What we do to defend ourselves, the other side experiences as emotional abuse! This book teaches you to stop doing those knee-jerk reactions and to change your communication style with your partner. Through simple exercises, you will learn to see conflicts as chances to love each other even more!

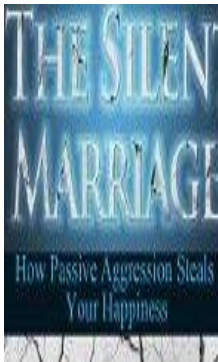
<http://www.myrelationshipsaver.com>



Healing Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse has the power to weaken even the strongest people, diminishing self esteem and self worth. The abuse may have been in the past, and you don't know how to move on and become stronger - or it may be going on right now, and you don't know how to stop it safely. Either way, this book is here for your use and for your emotional health. Heal the pain emotional abuse is causing in your life!

<http://healingemotionalabuse.com>



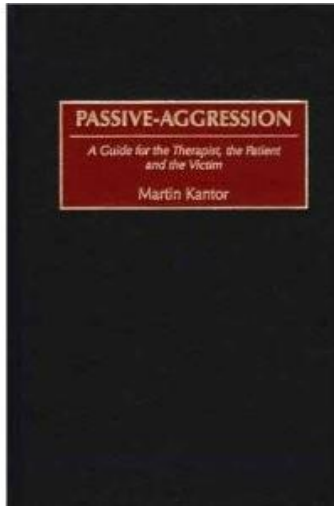
The Silent Marriage: How Passive Aggression Steals Your Happiness

Few people know the true impact of passive aggression in a marriage, because it has only recently been acknowledged as a real behavior style. Now, we understand that passive aggression is more than "being difficult." In this book, we explore the price you will pay for passive aggression if it continues to go unchallenged in your home. This book is suitable for wives who are new to the topic of passive aggression, who aren't sure whether it's worth it to fight back, or who don't know why their current defense strategies aren't working.

[The Silent Marriage: How Passive Aggression Steals Your Happiness](#)

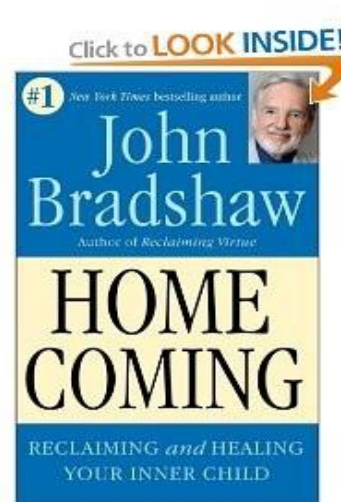
Suggested Reading

[Passive-Aggression: A Guide for the Therapist, the Patient and the Victim](#)



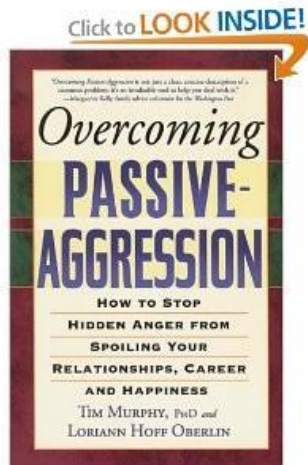
“With absorbing detail and deftness, Kantor gives clinical descriptions of the dynamics in this overlooked syndrome: Passive-Aggressive Personality Disorder. It is a syndrome rooted in poorly suppressed, thinly disguised, and indirectly unleashed anger. This volume presents a scientifically based approach to the patient that will help him or her deal with anger in a healthier, and sometimes life-saving, way.”-- Amazon.com

[Homecoming: Reclaiming and Championing Your Inner Child](#)



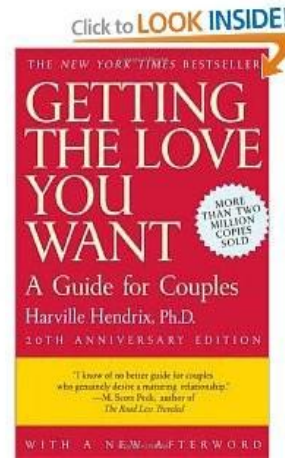
“‘Homecoming’ includes a wealth of unique case histories and interactive techniques, including questionnaires, letter-writing to the inner child, guided meditations, and affirmations. Pioneering when introduced, these classic therapies are now being validated by new discoveries in attachment research and neuroscience. No one has ever brought them to a popular audience more effectively and inspiringly than John Bradshaw.” -- Amazon.com

[Overcoming Passive-Aggression: How to Stop Hidden Anger from Spoiling Your Relationships, Career and Happiness](#)



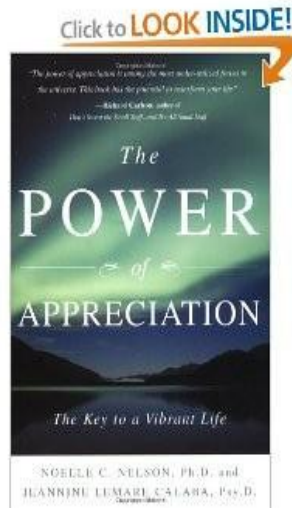
“A frank and interesting chapter on the roots of anger in childhood is followed by constructive advice for those who experience hidden anger on how to handle that anger at work, at school and in a myriad of relationships. While acknowledging the complexity of the problem, the work provides ample opportunity (and exercises) for personal growth regardless of whether you are on the giving or receiving end of passive aggression.” --
 Reed Business Information

[Getting the Love You Want: A Guide for Couples, 20th Anniversary Edition](#)



“When Harville Hendrix writes about relationships, he discusses them not just as an educator and a therapist, but as a man who has himself been through a failed marriage. Hendrix felt the sting of his divorce intensely because he believed it signaled not only his failure as a husband but also his failure as a couples counselor. Investigating why his marriage dissolved led him to start looking into the psychology of love. Marriage, he ultimately discovered, is the ‘practice of becoming passionate friends.’” --Amazon.com

ThePowerofAppreciation:TheKeytoa
VibrantLife



"The power of appreciation is among the most under-utilized forces in the universe. I appreciate this book so much and know you will too. Appreciation is absolutely magical and has the power to transform your life." -- Richard Carlson, author of *Don't Sweat the Small Stuff*. . . and *It's All Small Stuff*



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