

THE AUTHENTIC EDGE

Helping you to become who you are meant to be -- in your **personal life, relationships** and **career**.

July 22, 2025



Over the years, I've heard countless clients say things like, "I'm always told I'm too direct," or "People say I'm intimidating and need to tone it down." I know that experience intimately. It's jarring and disorienting—especially when you're simply being honest or asking a question. And so, we start explaining ourselves, trying to be seen and understood, hoping that clarity will ease the discomfort. But let me tell you—more often than not, it doesn't. Instead, we end up apologizing for who we are, even when we've done nothing wrong.

This week's edition of The Authentic Edge explores a pattern that quietly wreaks havoc in relationships—emotional blame. Whether it's a partner saying, "You made me feel this way," or a friend who claims your boundary "hurt their feelings," the message is the same: you are responsible for how I feel. But here's the truth—you're not. You're responsible to the relationship, not for the other person's emotional state.

In this issue, I've included insights, strategies, and brain-based tools for protecting your emotional boundaries without becoming defensive or disengaged. We also take a deeper look at how this dynamic plays out in therapy—and how even well-meaning therapists can keep clients stuck in cycles of blame, rather than helping them develop emotional agency.

If you've ever walked away from a conversation wondering how it all became your fault, this one's for you. I hope it gives you the clarity, validation, and tools to protect your energy and return to yourself.

With you on the path,

Anne Dranitsaris

Did You Know?

Blaming a partner for one's emotional state is a common but destructive pattern in relationships. According to the Gottman Institute, **65% of couples in conflict report that one or both partners regularly blame the other for how they feel.** This pattern of emotional blame—phrases like

"you made me feel this way" or *"if you hadn't done that, I wouldn't be upset"*—is especially prevalent in relationships where emotional regulation skills are underdeveloped. A 2023 Psychology Today survey found that **57% of respondents acknowledged holding their partner responsible for their mood or emotional state.** Similarly, a 2022 YouGov poll revealed that **42% of adults believe, "If I'm hurt, someone else must be responsible,"** suggesting a widespread externalization of emotional pain.

In This Week's Newsletter

Feature Article: Oh, the Drama

Brain-Based Tip for Dealing with Emotional Bypass

Did You Know? Emotional Bypassing Has Consequences

Is Your Therapy Keeping You Stuck?

Authentic Reflections: Why Are Your Feelings My Fault?

Upcoming Events: Fall 2025

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An ironic take on how everyone, everywhere, is always in a state of collapse.

Once upon a time, in the quaint land of Reasonable Emotional Responses, someone could have a bad day and just call it “a bad day.” Maybe they’d say, “I’m a little off,” or “Things didn’t go my way.” They’d shrug. Maybe eat a donut. Pet a dog. Call it Tuesday.

But that era is dead and buried.

Welcome to the golden age of emotional hyperbole, where no inconvenience goes unlabeled, no rejection is too small to escape the trauma-industrial complex, and no person simply feels—they suffer.

We used to say we were “busy.” That was real. Now? We are overwhelmed, depleted, burned out, and cognitively paralyzed. We don’t go to bed early anymore—we “crash from emotional overload.” We don’t lose our keys—we spiral into “executive dysfunction brought on by environmental chaos.” That’s right. A messy kitchen is a result of ADHD, or a legitimized self-diagnosed psychiatric disorder.

[Read the Full Article](#)



A Guide to Making Everyone Comfortable Except Yourself

Ah, to be a palatable woman. To shrink your sentences and cushion your curiosity. To lace your voice with just the right amount of self-doubt so that no one feels threatened by your presence—or worse—your clarity.

From the time I could speak in complete sentences, I was told I was “a bit much.” Too direct. Too inquisitive. Too intimidating. I wasn’t throwing chairs or setting fires—I was just asking why. And apparently, asking adults why was the conversational equivalent of launching a nuclear warhead into the dining room.

My mother, a lifelong apologist for female assertiveness, offered the usual training course in Social Softening 101: “Be nice.” “Smile.” “Don’t make people feel bad.” “You’re making them uncomfortable.”

Uncomfortable? Because I asked a question? Apparently yes. In the great emotional ecosystem of the 20th-century household, curiosity was violence, and honesty was arrogance in slacks.

[Read the Full Article](#)

The American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy reports that 74% of relationship therapists cite emotional blame as a leading cause of communication breakdown. Over time, repeated blame leads to resentment, emotional distancing, and a breakdown of trust and intimacy. Blame destroys the foundation of emotional safety. When partners feel attacked or held responsible for feelings they didn’t cause, they often become defensive, withdrawn, or reactive—making conflict resolution impossible. Rather than promoting connection, emotional blame shuts down dialogue, prevents growth, and keeps both partners stuck in a cycle of frustration. Relationships thrive when both individuals take ownership of their emotional responses and use conflict as a chance to understand, not accuse.

Is Your Therapy Keeping You Stuck

While therapy has become a vital tool for self-development and healing, there’s a growing concern that certain approaches—particularly those fixated on childhood trauma—may be keeping clients stuck instead of setting them free. Many well-meaning therapists, driven by empathy and validation, unintentionally foster a loop of dependence, blame, and perpetual victimhood. In these environments, therapy shifts from empowering clients to reinforcing their identity as wounded, broken, or powerless, blaming parents and childhood for relationship and career challenges—leaving them emotionally tethered to the past.

Rather than helping clients integrate their experiences and develop self-leadership, therapy becomes a haven for blame and regression. Some therapists even become stand-in parental figures, offering emotional safety but ultimately delaying growth. The result is a form of emotional infantilization, where clients rely on the therapeutic relationship instead of building their own inner resources.

This approach also contributes to the over-pathologizing of everyday struggles. Not every painful memory is trauma, but modern therapy often treats them as such, encouraging clients to view themselves through the lens of fragility and dysfunction. The cultural obsession with trauma risks undermining agency, making clients believe that unless every wound is unearthed, they cannot heal. But healing doesn’t come from staying in the past—it comes from learning how to respond differently in the present.

Effective therapy should do more than explain why we are the way we are—it should help us become who we want to be. It must shift from endless validation to active empowerment, helping clients take ownership of their choices and build resilience. The goal is not to keep clients in therapy indefinitely, but to equip them with the tools to face life with clarity and courage. Without this shift, therapy risks becoming just another form of avoidance—one that feels safe but ultimately keeps people stuck.

“When therapy reinforces survival-based coping—rather than challenging it—it can quietly sustain codependency, keeping clients ‘safe’ but small.” Anne Dranitsaris, Ph.D.

Brain Tip for Dealing with Being Blamed for Feelings



When someone blames you for how they feel—saying “You made me feel this way,” or “This is your fault”—it’s easy to feel cornered. Many of us are conditioned to respond by over-explaining, apologizing, or trying to fix their emotions. But here’s the truth: you are not responsible for someone else’s emotions, even if your actions triggered a reaction. You’re only responsible to the relationship—to be respectful, honest, and accountable for your own behavior.

Tip: Don’t Absorb the Blame — Set a Boundary Without Escalating

Instead of internalizing the blame or becoming defensive, gently name the dynamic and redirect it toward constructive dialogue. You might say:

Go to Tip:

Workshops for Women on the Path to Authentic Living

Fall 2025

These workshops and groups are designed to support breaking free from the limitations of roles, beliefs and fears to get on YOUR path to individuating and achieving your authentic potential.

- **60+ Women's Group: Continuing the Journey**

A soulful, supportive space for women 60 and older who are committed to deepening their journey of individuation. Share wisdom, reflect on purpose, and embrace the next chapter with intention.

- **Imposter Syndrome Workshop: Reclaim Your Inner Authority**

Quiet the inner critic and step fully into your worth. This experiential workshop unpacks the root causes of imposter syndrome and provides brain-based strategies to rewrite your internal narrative.

- **Breaking the Chains of Attachment: A Codependency Workshop**

Learn to identify unhealthy attachment patterns, understand emotional entanglements, and create boundaries that support freedom and authentic connection.

More information about the sessions is coming soon. If any of the groups or workshops sound interesting to you, contact me at anned@annedranitsaris.com. **Fall Sessions:** October. Limited group size – secure your place early

Interview on the Tegan Osmond Podcast

Enabling Dynamics & Covert Narcissism

We think we know what narcissism looks like—loud, self-important, attention-seeking. That's the overt kind. But what happens when narcissism hides in plain sight?

In this revealing conversation, I join Tegan Osmond to explore the quieter, more insidious form of narcissism: **covert narcissism**—and the subtle but damaging role of the enabler that often goes unnoticed.

Covert narcissists don't dominate—they manipulate. They make themselves indispensable, making others depend on them and then use guilt, withdrawal, and subtle emotional control to stay attached. And if you don't give these people enough recognition for being a victim or gratitude for all they do, watch out. You're in for an emotional firestorm.

Together, we unpack:

- The difference between overt and covert narcissists
- Why emotionally intelligent, empathetic people are most at risk
- How early attachment wounds prime us to use covert behavior
- The enabling patterns that feel like "helping" but actually hurt
- How to break free from the trap—without shame, blame, or self-doubt

If you've ever wondered why people seem to stay stuck in victim mode despite all your help, this episode will make sense of what's really happening.

Listen to the episode now on my YouTube Channel!

Check Out the Tegan Osmond's Podcast Channel.



Anne Dranitsaris, Ph.D.

If you've spent your life taking care of others, overthinking every word you say, or feeling like you're never quite enough—you're not broken. You're just stuck in survival mode. For over 40 years, I've helped people untangle the emotional patterns that keep them small—patterns rooted in childhood, reinforced by culture, and masked by roles like the "strong one," the "fixer," or the "people pleaser." Whether it's codependency, imposter syndrome, perfectionism, or trauma-driven relationships, I guide clients out of the past and into their Authentic Self—the version of themselves they were always meant to be.

I work with emotionally intelligent people who feel like they "should" be able to handle things but secretly feel overwhelmed, unseen, or lost. Therapy with me isn't about coping—it's about changing how your brain is wired so you can finally live from a place of clarity, courage, and connection.

If you're ready to stop managing symptoms and start transforming the root of the issue, I'm here to help. Reach out at www.annedranitsaris.com. Because you don't have to keep carrying what was never yours to hold.



Look for more information in future newsletters on upcoming workshops to help you achieve your potential.