



## **THRIVERcise: Healing from Toxic / Narcissistic Abuse – Validate Your Reality**

**Introduction:** There are many opinions when it comes to healing from abuse whether it be from toxic, narcissistic, and/or downright controlling people. The video(s) offering this **FREE THRIVERcise series** covers four actions you can take to facilitate healing – This THRIVERcise will be focusing on **Validating Your Experience**.

In a moment, we'll summarize the four techniques or concepts of focus for this series that will accelerate your current healing program and provide a solid basis for those just taking the first steps. In either case, you are **DOING THE WORK** to heal. Congratulations.

For now, at the end of this **THRIVERcise**, we've outlined the steps to schedule your initial **Free Meet the Matrix Virtual 1:1** and/or join **our eThrivers Email List**. You can skip this section by clicking **HERE**.

- **Get Some Distance**

**TtM Best Practice: FREE THRIVERcise Available at ThrivetheMatrix.com NOW.**  
**Before completing, if you haven't done so, view you the YouTube Video by clicking on the tile below:**



- **Validate Your Experience** – Healing from abuse is impossible in the fog of war, or in this case, the confusion that comes with gaslighting, projection, deflection, and the push and pull of idealization and devaluation, among other techniques outlined in this THRIVERcise. **Give yourself some grace: It's easy to believe you may be too sensitive, making it up, or the maladaptive person yourself. And it's no wonder:**

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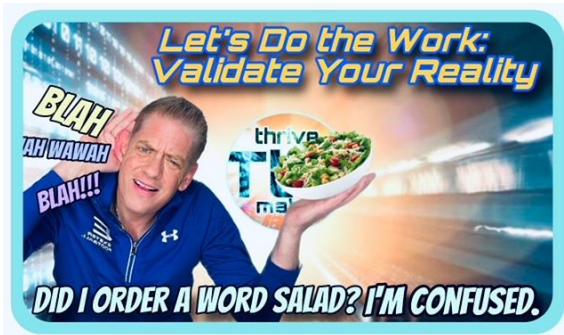
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*that's why these techniques are used. Be assured, there is plenty of evidence supporting your reality if you have techniques for doing so.*

- **Stop Personalizing** - Forthcoming
- **Radical Acceptance** – Forthcoming

***TtM Best Practice: Before completing this THRIVERcise (you're going to do quite a bit of work), if you haven't done so, watch this video available on YouTube first – No need to leave this document, simply click on the YouTube tile below.***



### **THRIVERcise: Validate Your Reality**

*In this **THRIVERcise**, you will practice the second of four techniques and work to '**Validate Your Experience.**'*

*My hope is that your journey continues, and this provides a good start or can supplement your current recovery efforts.*

***As mentioned, expect a FREE THRIVERcise you can use to practice after each video in which the four solid steps to healing (not all inclusive) have been posted.***



**Instructions:** In this **THRIVERcise**, you will practice the **second of four techniques, Validating Your Reality**, including **Developing a Trust Panel** and other common-sense ways to be confident that what you saw and heard was exactly as you experienced it:

- **Examine Action & Intent (Kind Should Feel Kind)**
- **Conduct a 'Devaluation' Evaluation**
- **Start a Cognitive Dissonance Diary**

### **Healing from Abuse – Four Steps to Healing:**

**Validate Your Reality** – To understand what you are up against, here are just a few of the tools that the Narcissist uses to coerce, control, deplete your supply, and move on to the next. There's one born every minute, they say – but they choose Empaths, so that is encouraging. One day, with enough HEALING, their maladaptive behaviors will be obvious to even those in a deep REM sleep in the Matrix.

- **Projection** of their own Toxic Shame
- **Scapegoating** to establish a Shame Repository in a family, work, friendship dynamic while engaging the Mob to assume the belief this ghastly role is deserved. No pun intended, but for shame!
- **Isolating** You via **Flying Monkeys, Pre-Emptive Character Assassination**, and the classic **Smear Campaign**.
- Using **DARVO – Deflect, Attack, and Reverse the Victim & Offender** to avoid accountability.
- **Gaslighting** to sow seeds of doubt on what was clearly seen, heard, and experienced.
- **Intermittent Love Bombing** to become who attracted you in the first place, which can only last until the Narcissists are disgusted with themselves for having to do it and worse yet, because it was with you. It's a quick process (I.E., days in most cases).
- **The Push & Pull** – Constant Idealization & Devaluation. Rinse and Repeat.
- **Splitting** – You are all good or all bad, and it depends on the day. Yet, nothing about you or your behavior has changed.
- **Breadcrumbing**, giving you just enough good days to forget the bad.

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- *This bullet acknowledges: we could go on and on.*
- *One thing is certain, **ANY PERSON WITHSTANDING ANY OF THESE TACTICS, USUALLY ALL OF THEM, EVERYWHERE, ALL AT ONCE**, would be in a constant state of **CONFUSION**.*

*All that said, we've got a lot to do. Let's dive in.*

### **Part 1 – Creating a Trust Panel**

*A **Trust Panel** made up of those in your Support network like friends and should include a therapist and/or your **TtM Life Coach** can be effective in validating your reality.*

**The concept:** *You'll be asking a select group of healthy adults (by sharing what happened to you as a hypothetical without specifics but including the essence of the interaction) how they would have perceived events or what actions they would have taken to validate that their instincts, responses, etc. were healthy ones.*

*Keep in mind, you may get varying advice and responses, but the goal isn't to gain a majority or absolute agreement. You're looking for a consensus that how you interpreted something was correct. Any validation you can get from those in your life who you consider healthy will help you stand in your truth.*

*They may have a different take, and you may stick with your initial thoughts and next steps on the matter, as is within the rights of both parties. The goal is to begin to validate your reality, not seek confirmation bias that you've been victimized.*

*While there may be one aspect in which your **Trust Panel** agrees and is not aligned with you, although 'like finds like' and you're healthier now. So, in most instances you should get a strong basis for your reality, the rest of which can be validated using other tactics.*

*Keep in mind, we are fallible humans too, so it's important to ask what if anything you did to contribute to the result. This may be heard by but doesn't have to be acknowledged with the panel, and there is no need to make amends – In this case, reflect and adjust your behavior as you think appropriate so that you remain a*



healthy adult who treats everyone with dignity and respect. When you fail, apologize (including the specific behavior, its negative impact on something or someone, and any actions you plan to take to improve).

**Please note:** A Therapist or your TtM Life Coach may (or in our case) will understand what you are attempting to do and may require less boundary setting, although it's ALWAYS a clever idea to set them.

- 1. Respect Boundaries** – Let the trusted person know that you are creating a group of valued supporters you may use to validate your reality. Don't assume everyone will be comfortable and willing to join, although most will. If they don't, don't personalize it. Their reasons may have nothing to do with you, and in the least, they may be wary of providing you with any opinions or advice that might make you even more confused. And, sometimes, they might be unsure of themselves about aspects of their own reality. Respect their self-awareness to know they would be a hindrance rather than a help. Offer to be on any Trust Panel they might need in the future.
- 2. Anticipate and acknowledge their boundaries** and ask if there are any you haven't covered that you should consider as a ground rule for participation.
- 3. Be Prepared for them to say: 'Yes' or 'No,' as is their right as mentioned above. You are asking healthy adults who do not engage in the tactics reviewed earlier, so don't internalize it. They are fantastic resources in many other ways. Appreciate what they are willing to give.**

**Activity Instructions:** Review the following example statement of setting boundaries and requesting participation on your Trust Panel. Can you think of alternate scripts that would help you to approach these valued members of your network?

**Key elements of the example script are highlighted to increase the odds of a 'Yes' response. Can you guess how they might benefit you and the 'panel member' after reviewing the three-step recommended process above?**



**Part I – Build a Trust Panel member request script example:**

*'Hi Sammy. I really appreciate your support while I'm making sense of a few things in my life. To know I have someone that may not necessarily understand everything I'm experiencing, you are always open to learning more and helping how you can. That means more than you know.'*

*'In fact, I trust your opinion so much that I'd like to include you a in a small group of people that I might approach to get their opinion regarding an experience I might have, including how you would have felt in the same situation and the next best action you might take.'*

*'I will always keep the focus on principles and not personalities, meaning I don't have to name those involved. Instead, I will share the basics and get your take. And, of course, you are not responsible for how I manage 3or interpret any situation. Consider it a council for obtaining friendly advice.'*

*'If you're willing, I would always ask you first if you had a moment to weigh in on something. Would you be willing to help?'*

**Part I – Script Brainstorm** – For each element in **GREEN** above, there are reflection questions below on why this was included in the request. The purpose is to respect boundaries and to ensure whomever you're asking understands what your goals are. Take a moment to answer each.

- **Why is it important to start with a show of appreciation for their support thus far?**
- **How might recognizing their relative unfamiliarity with all you've learned make them more willing to help?**
- **How might reiterating your trust in them increase the likelihood of joining your panel?**



- *How might this person feel better about knowing you won't name specific persons or exact scenarios?*
- *Why is it important to include the caveat that you won't hold them responsible for any action you might take because of their participation?*
- *Why was a boundary set to ask them first if they were able to hear and respond to a request as a member of your Trust Panel?*

#### **Part 1 – Build a Trust Panel – TtM Best Practices:**

- *Trusted members or your network should be thanked when appropriate. Showing your appreciation for the support they have already provided is common courtesy and will help you keep in mind a simple fact: they, too, have lives, may have struggles you aren't aware of, and are not trained clinicians (like a Therapist) or professionals (as in the case of your TtM Certified Life Coach). They deserve to be acknowledged for sticking by you while you work through something that despite your research, YOU still struggle to understand. Don't feel like a burden, they would want to make sure you never feel that way but recognize their own energy stores and be respectful of their time.*
- *Acknowledging their limited experience with a situation lets them know that their word isn't law (and will only be used in aggregate with other panel member inputs) and that they don't have to be an expert to weigh in.*
- *It's key that you gain permission from someone and remove any associated responsibility with your interpretations and actions. While you may validate your reality and agree with a next best action, **Practice Makes Progress**, and you may not always get the implementation right. In the end, their assistance is meant to lessen confusion, reassure you that you aren't being unreasonable, too sensitive, and provide confirmation that you're on the right track. They aren't cosigning any subsequent actions on your part.*
- *Leaving out People, Places, and Key Details protect you and protect them from becoming enmeshed in a situation that may involve people they know,*



work with, work for, or have friendships with. In this case, it may cloud their responses or make them feel at risk of betraying one or more of them or 'gossiping,' and a Trust Panel does anything but.

- Letting them know that you'll ask before surveying them sets a boundary that respects their time and anything they might be dealing with that requires their attention.
- Finally, as a rule, keep an open mind if your Trust Panel all concur but not with how you would have managed one aspect of a situation. This doesn't mean your feelings and reality are not valid, but it could indicate the need for reflection and adjustment. If your Trust Panel is willing to weigh in, acknowledge all feedback, not just anything that aligns with your thoughts on the matter.
- Remember, a Trust Panel is a tool and can be used with others to validate your reality. If you are unable to gain consensus, remember they are one of several tools, but a powerful one.

### **Part 1 – Build a Trust Panel - How to Keep People, Places and Things Out:**

**See the suggested scenario below for a detailed episode followed by an example of how to present this scenario to a member of your Trust Panel. There should be enough information to weigh in, without having to divulge details that might bias their response or put them in what they perceive as an awkward situation. For the sake of the example, Madison is an acquaintance of theirs.**

### **Part 1 – Scenario – Avoiding Specific People, Places, and Events with Trust Panel Members**

You made plans with your friend Madison months ago to attend a concert. She 'couldn't afford the ticket but also loved the artist, so you offered to front the ticket for now and in offering, you did not impose time limits – She could pay you back 'whenever she could.' In exchange, Madison offered to drive to the concert as 'her part of the war effort' as it was 'the least she could do.' 'you're





covering the ticket,' Madison said. You're glad she did as you were going to ask anyway. Your car was in for long-term repairs. Madison knew about this. She offered to because of that. In any case, you're grateful. As the days pass, you grow more excited for the show. A week prior to the concert, you called Madison to confirm the details, and everything was set.

On the day of the show later that evening, you happened to hear about a party that evening from a friend, and she mentioned that she heard Madison was coming and bringing a friend. An invite was extended for you to join, but...WE'RE GOING TO A CONCERT TONIGHT, you think to yourself. You didn't let on that you had questions; instead, you thanked the acquaintance but were left confused. How could Madison be in two places at the same time?

Unfortunately, Madison didn't answer your phone calls all day, you ended up missing the concert, had paid for two tickets that were now worthless, and you couldn't believe what had just happened.

A day later, Madison called with an apology – She did attend the party, but only because she heard at the last minute that someone she hadn't seen in a while would be there. To make matters worse, her phone died, and no one had a charger to lend. Madison asked if she still owed you for the ticket. Neither of you attended and without her car, you wouldn't have been able to go anyway.

There were quite a few things wrong here, you thought, and when you appeared frustrated, Madison apologized. **'I'm sorry you feel the way you do; there was nothing I could do about it. Plus, that tour is coming back in town in the Summer. Can't you get credit toward that show, and we can have a rain check?'**

### **Scenario - Your Reality:**

In truth we all might feel differently about the scenario above, but for this exercise, in approaching Carrie, a Trust Panel member, you felt that Madison's actions were inconsiderate in the least. A bit entitled and toxic, too.



*You ended the call without further escalation, but in this case, you felt that:*

**A)** *Madison did not follow through, resulting in a missed concert you were waiting months to see, which was inconsiderate.*

**B)** *that with her at a party with a group of people, it made no sense there couldn't be a good faith effort to get in touch.*

**C)** *her apology just seemed hollow. Sorry for how you feel? You feel the way you do because she didn't follow through. To you, she seemed sorry you were mad, not sorry she didn't hold up her end of the bargain.*

**D)** *To make matters worse she has no plans to pay you back for the ticket and for a reason you find illogical: just because she didn't drive and there is another future concert doesn't absolve her of the ticket cost. She didn't drive because she was a no-call no show, and she's lucky there is another concert in the future. In her explanation that wasn't even mentioned as the reason she decided not to go or that it was okay to cancel without notice. Anyway, that doesn't account for your disappointment in missing the concert after patiently waiting or the disregard for you in this scenario.*

**E)** *To you, there should be more accountability; you've heard that Madison has been known to flake on plans with others, and that was always a risk, but it's as if she thinks you're being unreasonable. Talk about confusing.*

*Madison has always been a good friend, and no one is perfect, but this was just too much. You thought about how you might ask your Trust Council if your judgement was clear on the matter.*

### **Part 1 – Sample Trust Panel Script – Validating Your Experience with Trust Panel Member Carrie:**



*'Carrie, would you have a moment to run something that happened to me past you? I can keep it brief. I have some thoughts on how I should feel and what I should do, but I'll just describe the situation and see what your thoughts are.'*

*'I asked someone to attend an event and we compromised on the cost and coordination. Long story short, I called this person about a week out, and the plan was set. The day of the show I heard from someone else that they had something else going on and I couldn't get a hold of them. When I finally did, it turned out, they attended a different event, their phone was dead, they were unable to let me know what was going on, and are now asking if they owe for their portion of the admission cost or if I could call to get credit toward the same event in the future.'*

*'To their credit, they were going to drive to the event, but at the same time, I could have arranged to get there had I known that was off the table. In speaking with this person, they apologized that I felt the way that I did.'*

*'So, if you were in my position, what would you have expected of this person? If you were this person, would you have managed it differently? And what do you think about our conversation after the fact?' 'Would you accept the apology?'*

*'Like I mentioned, I'm going to ask a few people, so there are no wrong answers.'*

### **Part 1 – Sample Trust Panel Script – Validating Your Experience with Some Dissent:**

***In summary, here is how Carrie responded:***

*'If this person knew they were going to break long held plans, they should've called before heading to any party. In the least, I'd expect them to borrow a phone, unless they didn't have my number memorized. Still, no charger anywhere at the other event she attended. Unlikely if you ask me.'*

*'To be honest, we're all adults, so to me, I don't think this situation even had to happen the way it did, and your friend wasn't specific about what they were sorry for. I don't think that's acceptable. If you make a mistake like that, you need to make good one way or another.'*



**Handling Dissent – Carrie also included the following:**

*'That said, if I offered to pay for the ticket, gave no deadlines to be repaid, and someone didn't set one, I'd be annoyed and while I don't agree with the way it was managed; that's a red flag to me. Plus, I try to make alternate arrangements just in case if attending is that important to me.'*

**TtM Best Practice:** *If you're willing to accept the good, you must consider the bad. Don't argue the point as Carrie was candid and thorough in her feedback. Consider that the others in your Trust Panel may not feel the same way. If they did, the reality could well be that these are valid lessons as a takeaway, so you don't find yourself in an analogous situation again. Madison did show some disregard in not offering a timeline to repay for the ticket. That doesn't mean you deserved the experience, but it was the first in a consistent series of dismissive and thoughtless behavior.*

**You Turn:** *Craft a Script for Thanking Carrie for her honesty and thoughts without invalidating the opinions that don't align with yours:*

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**TtM Example: Compare what you wrote to the following. How do they match up?**

*'Thanks so much, Carrie. I know you work two jobs today, so the time you took to help me understand the situation is appreciated, as is the fact that you helped me validate that how I felt was reasonable and what happened was inappropriate.'*

*'Your point about the ticket is also noted. It was a good one. If people show you who they are, it should lessen any surprise that they might behave in a similar way in other situations. And a back-up plan is never a bad thing to have. I might have made the show, although I'd have to find other transportation and would be out the cost of my friend's ticket. I'm not ashamed I trusted them, but maybe there were steps I could have taken just in case. Thanks, again.'*



*TtM Best Practices: Healthy adults show gratitude and it's essential when someone is willing to provide their advice. Summarizing her points showed active listening, making it worthwhile for Carrie to participate. She no doubt felt heard, making it likely she'll 'remain on the panel.'*

*Acknowledging her dissent also showed that you're not looking for confirmation that you are completely justified. Seeking Validation for Your Experience just means there is a basis for how you feel, not that you are vindicated or that your feelings are fact, not least of which, that you are 100% correct.*

*In this example, Carrie acknowledged that Madison handled the experience poorly in enough ways that a sincere apology is warranted.*

### **Part 1 – Testing the Trust Panel Technique**

#### **Instructions:**

1. Document a real-life scenario where you felt there was evidence of entitled, rude, dismissive, or toxic behavior.
2. List your reality as a result as we did above with the lettered list. What feelings, actions, and considerations are you hoping to validate? What is any dissent might you expect from your Trust Panel?

#### **TtM Best Practice:**

*If you can anticipate the latter, own that when describing the scenario. The panel may end up validating that your feelings and actions were appropriate but also remind you to be kind to yourself. They may have done the same thing in your shoes or might agree that you played a part. In this case, they are validating what you thought you could have done better as well. In the least, it's a subtle way to reinforce that you're not seeking confirmation. You are open to candid and useful feedback.*

3. Map out your Trust Panel script for how you would present the scenario to seek advice without including specific people, places, or events.



4. *If after asking your panel, you gained agreement for all but one of the feelings / actions you wanted to validate, how would you handle that both with the panel members and in validating your reality?*

***There is no correct answer to the following question, but consider this: Did this exercise support any value in employing a Trust Panel to help validate your reality when in doubt? Why or why not?***

### **Part 2 – Examine Action & Intent**

*This technique is a simple but effective one and can vastly improve your ability to recognize toxicity or abuse. Essentially when someone does something with or for you as a show of kindness, it should feel kind. The motive is clear. If it doesn't feel kind, take it one step further and identify if there was abusive intent masked as good will.*

### **Part 2 – Scenario Based Activity: Examine Action & Intent**

#### **Instructions:**

*For the following, mark the scenario as 'Genuine Kindness' and if you can't, attempt to identify the abusive behavior and its purpose. What motive did the other person really have in that show of kindness? Keep in mind, we're validating our reality and aren't mind readers. If there was abuse, calling the person out on it would also be counterproductive. However, drilling down to motive when things just don't feel right help may validate why there was abuse, which certainly goes a long way to validate that abuse even happened. The goal is to confirm that very real possibility, not to diagnose an underlying disorder supporting any toxicity.*

1. **Background:** *Your brother lives out of town and usually gives you a call when he'd like to visit as he had a gift for you. Today, he called as you'd expect him to and let you know that he'd be there around 4pm. You asked if he had any flexibility. You are usually at the gym until 3:30pm and need some time to get*



settled for the evening once you get home. He didn't acknowledge the request but mentioned that he planned to stay the night.

*In truth, you aren't that close. He usually finds subtle ways to put you down and sometimes, it's what he doesn't do that demonstrates his disdain for you. While you've had positive interactions previously, they are rare. You are surprised by the request and that he is bringing a gift, especially because at a family dinner a few weeks prior, you asked him about his new job and if he felt up to the task.*

*He reacted strongly and you corrected yourself by adding: 'I just know that I've only been promoted once, and the first few months I felt like I didn't know what I was doing. If you felt that way, I wanted to reassure you. It didn't come across as intended. I'm sorry about that.'*

**The Visit:** *At 3:45pm you jumped in the shower as planned after a grueling workout. While doing so, you heard several quick and forceful knocks at the door and whoever was at the door hit the doorbell on repeat. A minute later, there was radio silence. You suspected your brother had arrived and quickly dressed to meet him and let him in.*

*When you got to the front door, there was no brother, only a package. 'Ah, the gift.' you assumed. 'I told him I had a time constraint, but maybe I could have waited until he arrived to wash up.' Then, a moment later you received a text from him.*

**TEXT:** *FYI, I left your present at the door. I practically had to break the door down and still, no one answered. I hope you enjoy the gift. As for me, I'm heading home. I was trying to do something nice and was looking forward to spending time with you. But, just like dinner the other week, it's all about you. First, acting better than as if I can't handle a promotion and now too entitled to greet me, especially when I had something for you. This is why no one can take you seriously. You're all over the place and frankly, rude. TTYL. Love you. ❤️*

**Validate Your Experience:** Take a moment to answer the following:



- *Did this kindness feel kind? Why or why not?*
- *Was there any toxic behavior in this interaction? If so, highlight those portions in **RED**.*
- *If this felt kind and no abuse was detected, disregard the following question:*
- *If there was toxicity involved in this act of kindness, why would your brother go through all the trouble and what was the point? Add your answer and if possible, list some of the tactics that were employed in the abuse. Use the reflection questions below as a guide for your analysis.*
  - ❖ *You believe this was abuse disguised as kindness. What made it feel unkind?*
  - ❖ *In the case of abusive behavior, what tactics mentioned at the start of the THRIVERcise were demonstrated?*
  - ❖ *What if anything (you can only theorize, not assume as fact) may have driven your brother to behave this way?*
  - ❖ **PROCEED TO THE TtM ANALYSIS ON THE NEXT PAGE. HOW DID YOUR ANSWERS COMPARE?**

### **TtM Analysis:**

**The Visit:** At 3:45pm you jumped in the shower as planned after a grueling workout. While doing so, you heard **several quick and forceful knocks at the door and whoever was at the door pressed the doorbell on repeat. A minute later, there was radio silence.** You suspected your brother had arrived and quickly dressed to meet him and let him in.

**When you got to the front door, there was no brother, only a package.** 'Ah, the gift.' you assumed. 'I told him I had a time constraint, but maybe I could have waited until he arrived to wash up.' Then, a moment later you received a text from him.





**TEXT:** FYI, I left your present at the door. *I practically had to break the door down and still, no one answered. I hope you enjoy the gift. As for me, I'm heading home. I was trying to do something nice and was looking forward to spending time with you. But, just like dinner the other week, it's all about you. First, acting better than me as if I can't manage a promotion and now too entitled to greet me, especially when I had something for you. This is why no one can take you seriously. You're all over the place and frankly, rude. I just called Julie (his wife) and told her what happened and to expect me. TTYL. Love you. ❤️*

**Validate Your Experience:** Take a moment to answer the following:

- Did this kindness feel kind? Why or why not? **Our Take: Abuse disguised as kindness.**
- Was there any toxic behavior in this interaction? If so, highlight those portions in **RED**. **See TtM highlights. Do you agree? Why or why not?**
- If this felt kind and no abuse was detected, disregard the following.
- If there was toxicity involved in this act of kindness, why would your brother go through all the trouble and what was the point? Add your answer and if possible, list some of the tactics that were employed in the abuse.
  - ❖ You believe this was abuse disguised as kindness. What made it feel unkind? *Your brother was at the door for only a few minutes, and you mentioned it might be an inopportune time. He left knowing it's a 2-hour commute both ways. Later, your brother left a passive aggressive text message referencing your experience at dinner while labeling you as someone no one could take seriously, entitled, and rude. Despite this, he typed 'Love You' with a heart emoji.*
  - ❖ In the case of abusive behavior, what tactics mentioned at the start of the THRIVERcise were demonstrated?
    - **Lack of Boundaries** - In not respecting your availability.



- **General Manipulation** - Given the commute was 2 hours and he knocked / rang the bell during the exact time you mentioned being 'out of pocket' / unavailable, this seemed premeditated, indicating the desired effect was not to give a gift in good faith and stay for the evening.
- **Devaluation** – His lack of respect despite your boundaries shows a disregard for your schedule and for you. Positive intent on your part resulted in you being labeled someone that couldn't be taken seriously, self-absorbed, entitled, and rude. Nothing in your behavior supports those assertions.
- **Gaslighting** – The nature and content of the text is in stark contrast to the 'Love You' followed by the heart emoji. The text admonished your behavior, used several specific insults to devalue you, yet ended the text as if it was a loving exchange. This is why gaslighting can be one of the most confusing tactics.
- **Intent to Smear / Discredit** – In telling his wife and saying many of the same things, it's evident that one purpose of the exercise was to share his 'awful' experience with others.
- ❖ What if anything (you can only theorize, not assume as fact) may have driven your brother to behave this way?
  - In this scenario, it could be theorized that your brother was attempting to discredit your well meaning but poorly worded question during the previous dinner. After all who can take you seriously, anyway? If that is true, then your brother may feel he has avenged this perceived slight while discrediting you to ensure that the previous comment and any future ones should be disregarded.
  - It's possible your question inadvertently made your brother experience shame. This may have been an exercise in offloading that shame onto you. If his history bears out a



fragile ego. Those with this rarely forget a slight and will typically inflict hurt in retaliation.

- **IMPORTANT NOTE: NONE OF THE ABOVE INDICATES A DISORDER; AT TtM Life Coaching, we are qualified to theorize, but never diagnose. Toxic is not a diagnosis, however, and this felt toxic, purposeful, and unkind.**
- *If you disagree, the reflection questions to follow may be helpful.*

❖ **HOW DID YOUR ANSWERS COMPARE?**

- *If you answered there was abuse, this is well supported. If you did not, did the TtM Analysis change your thoughts on the matter? Also, if you did not, this is your reality. That said, did any of the reflection questions leave you confused or become difficult to answer?*
  - *How can Examining Action & Intent help you validate your feelings & reality in the future in recognition that feelings and reality are subjective and not fact?*
  - *In what way did examining motive and assigning possible maladaptive behaviors demonstrated increase your confidence in your ability to detect the toxicity?*
  - *If you still identify with Kindness rather than Abuse in disguise, what reasonable explanations can you offer for your brother's behavior?*
  - *Consider that Examining Action & Intent can happen two ways: sensing toxicity, and objectively reflecting on supporting evidence. Or, believing the best and considering any evidence to the contrary.*
    - **As a best practice, we should offer everyone a generous interpretation before we label behavior toxic or maladaptive.**



- *He misunderstood the boundaries you set on the phone, was frustrated by the drive, felt that if no one came after knocking that loudly and ringing the bell repeatedly, that no one would be answering, and genuinely believed what he said about you in frustration.*
- *Is there anything in the scenario that does not support this interpretation? If you asked your Trust Panel for advice, what might they say?*
- **Further Reflection Questions to Validate Your Experience if You Didn't Identify Abuse:**
  - *Given the commute, is it reasonable to assume that someone would make the effort to show up only to give up and turn back in such a brief period?*
  - *Put yourself in your brother's shoes. What would you have done? If you believed that no one was home to receive you and a follow up call wasn't made to confirm this, were the comments made in the text message focused on the scenario or inherent qualities about you that are unproved?*

### ***PT 3 – Conducting a 'Devaluation Evaluation' & Creating a 'Cognitive Dissonance' Diary***

- *These similar exercises were combined as both require creating an inventory for behavior in any 1:1 relationship or dynamic within a family, work, or other system.*



- **Devaluation** - The verb ‘to devalue’ means to reduce the official value of a currency in relation to a basket of currencies. The verb also means to underestimate or reduce the importance or worth of something. Either make sense as most toxicity is rooted in a transactional approach to treating another as property or based on the currency / supply they can provide.
- **Narcissists, Toxic, and/or Controllers use devaluation as a means of negative supply. Devaluation can be achieved with both verbal statements and what the toxic person does or doesn’t do.**
- **Cognitive Dissonance (CD)** – A psychological conflict that occurs when a person holds two or more contradictory beliefs, values, or attitudes.
- **Cognitive Dissonance is the difference between what someone says and does within the appropriate context. For example, declarations of love without actions that are indicative of a loving disposition toward someone causes confusion. A person is told they are loved with little evidence through action to support it.**
- **Devaluation & Cognitive Dissonance** are tactics employed by all those with Narcissistic tendencies. As narcissism is on a spectrum, the severity in use of either can vary, but are typically always present.
- **But why?**
  - **DEVALUATION: As a rule, Narcissists need supply, both positive and negative. There are debates on which is preferred, but as a rule, like anyone with compulsive behaviors that are used as a coping mechanism for survival, there are times that any supply will so, although Narcissists usually require a supply matrix that include someone to devalue to**



*offset the idealization of another, hidden supply source happening concurrently.*

- *Devaluation is a source of negative supply in that those on the spectrum of Narcissism often require making others feel inadequate (especially those they once deemed superior and as ‘Saviors’) to prop up their own fragile egos. It’s important to realize when this is happening as it is proof that should validate the experience of Control not Love.*
- ***COGNITIVE DISSONANCE: This is typically also inevitable for those on the spectrum of Narcissism and other toxic people with maladaptive behaviors for the simple fact that their lack of empathy and drive to maintain supply require them to say all the right things when the intent and skills for follow through are absent. In the case of a Covert Narcissist, they realize that while wearing a mask and perpetuating a character, there are societal standards in how someone should be treated. Then there is how they treat people, hence the disconnect.***
  - ***Example:*** *An ‘ideal’ boyfriend should want to spend time with their partner – girlfriend, boyfriend, etc. and thus will commit to a desire to do so but may not have the desire to do so. Therefore, the partner is left with the push / pull of ‘Let’s spend time together’ and disengagement and disinterest when doing so that confuses the other party.*



### **PT 3 – Conduct a 'Devaluation Evaluation'**

**Instructions:** Create a form with line items to note any devaluation you can remember from the relationship.

Review the list often. The more devaluation you have documented, the more it validates your reality and can help break the trauma bond. Seeing all the mistreatment on paper can be devastating, but you should feel absolutely justified for either moving on gracefully accepting their ending of any association. Also, compare it to the Cognitive Dissonance Diary in recognition of just how confusing the Narcissist you are healing from make things. In doing so, give yourself grace. Thinking the best of others, including those who were close to you, is never anything to be ashamed of.

**For your Devaluation Evaluation REMEMBER:** It's as much about what they didn't do or say as it is about what they did.

#### **Devaluation - Examples:**

- **Acting disinterested in engaging with you or giving you 'silent treatment' while treating 'the public' with kindness, consideration, and enthusiasm.**
  - **EXAMPLE:** A Narcissist of toxic person may ignore you while in the same room only for them to 'switch on' and act enthusiastically when receiving a phone call and interaction with the caller.
- **Giving backhanded compliments.**
  - **EXAMPLE:** 'I like that sweater, but I'm surprised you chose it given all of the other ones you have that are so nice.'
- **Withholding of Love, Affection, and Intimacy (two of which they are fundamentally incapable of doing, but can mimic the associated behaviors when needed)**
  - **EXAMPLES:**



- A Partner may ensure their sexual needs are met and simply walk away before doing the same for you.
- Inability to show affection or act annoyed or put out when you attempt to do so.
- Any calls to them are frequently sent to voicemail although in your presence, they will accept a call even from an unknown caller who they may believe is a telemarketer.
- Fulfill other's requests and needs while refusing to do the same for you.
  - **EXAMPLE:** The Toxic person may offer to run an errand for a friend of eagerly fulfill a request to run an errand for them while unable or unwilling to do the same for you.

#### **Cognitive Dissonance - Examples:**

- **Telling you how important you are to them but prioritizing routine chores or menial tasks over opportunities for quality time together.**
  - **EXAMPLE:** May forego an invitation for an evening out in favor or completing unnecessary chores that could easily be put off.
- **Profess to love you but appear put out or 'turned off' when you attempt physical contact.**
  - **EXAMPLE:** A Narcissist or toxic person may ignore you while in the same room only for them to 'switch on' and act enthusiastically when receiving a phone call from a friend, associate, etc.

#### **PT 3 – Conduct a 'Cognitive Dissonance Diary' to map Words & Actions and Lack Thereof**

**Instructions:** Structure a form like the example below note any difference between words and actions over the course of your





relationship. Add as many as you can think of for as far back as you can think of.

*You may initially be shocked at how apparent the disconnect was NOT at the time, but not you know. Again, seeing crazymaking committed to paper is a powerful (and devastating) thing.*

| <b>Cognitive Dissonance Diary (Start Date / End Date)</b> |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Words</b>  | <b>Actions (Add Checkmark for any Matches)</b> |
|   |  |
|   |  |
|   |  |
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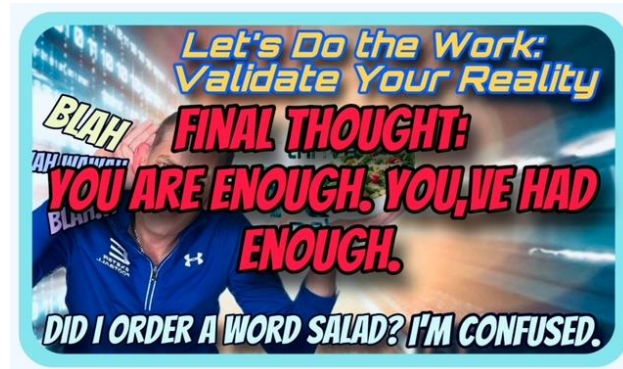
**What Should You Do with All This Validation?**

*In Validating Your Reality, you will be poised for the next skill needed to heal – The ability to not personalize what happened to you. You were targeted for your high value.*

**THE MOST IMPORTANT THING YOU CAN DO AFTER VALIDATING YOUR EXPERIENCE IS TO REFLECT ON IT OFTEN.**

**IT'S REAL NOW. YOU HAVE THE EVIDENCE. DON'T WASTE IT ON REVENGE OR SETTLING THE SCORE. IT'S A VALUABLE DETERRENT AND MOTIVATOR TO HOLD ONTO YOUR TRUTH...AND TO NEVER RETURN TO TOXIC PEOPLE AND PLACES.**

**CLICK BELOW FOR A FINAL THOUGHT.**



GREAT WORK

## Let's Talk About It

*Validating your experience can help you lift the fog and give an accurate appraisal of your experience, and that appraisal can be devastating. Schedule your FREE Meet the Matrix Virtual 1:1 today. There will be grief, and there are ways to HEAL from that, too.*

*Get an early start on that process with supportive sessions full of sound strategy and THRIVERcises to help you DO THE WORK.*

*[How to Schedule Your FREE Virtual 1:1 with your TtM Coach, Andy Lynch.](#)*

1. Click [HERE](#) to bypass the TtM website and Scheduler to the Meet the Matrix scheduling option (powered by Calendly).

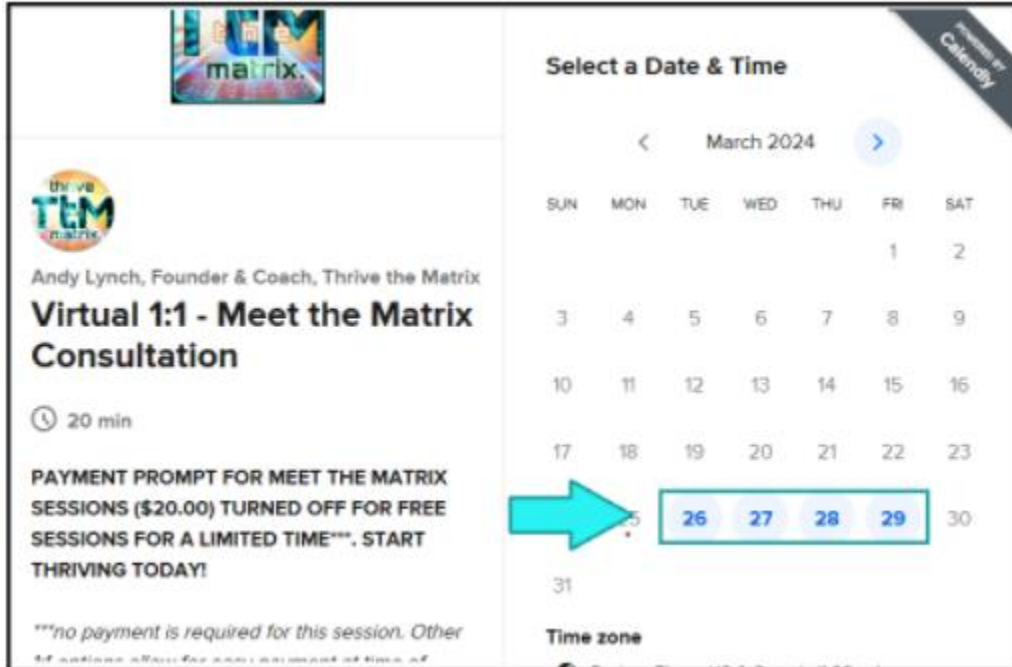
Or...

2. Visit [Thrive the Matrix -Coaching: TtM Scheduler](#) and select the [Meet the Matrix Consult](#) option on the website. You can also click the [Promotional Banner](#) at the top of the web page as shown below:



A screenshot of the 'Thrive the Matrix Scheduler' website. The page has a dark background with a light blue header. The main heading is 'Thrive the Matrix Scheduler' in a light blue, monospace-style font. Below the heading is the text 'Schedule &amp; Pay in a Few Clicks. See FEE Details Below.' A list of service options is displayed as rounded rectangular buttons. The first button, 'FREE VIRTUAL 1:1 - MEET THE MATRIX', is highlighted with a red border. Other buttons include 'VIRTUAL 1:1 - INITIAL (60MIN)', 'VIRTUAL 1:1 - WEEKLY (60MIN)', 'VIRTUAL 1:1 - THRIVERCISE DEBRIEF (30 MIN)', 'VIRTUAL 1:1 - THRIVE &amp; SAVE: YOUTUBE SUBSCRIBER APPRECIATION', 'VIRTUAL 1:1 - THRIVE &amp; SAVE (30MIN)', and 'VIRTUAL 1:1 - 'SAY YES TO YOU' FOR AGENCIES'. A light blue navigation bar at the top contains the text 'Click: Schedule FREE Meet the Matrix Virtual 1:1.' and a menu icon.

3. When prompted with the calendar, select a Date to view available times.



4. Select your preferred time. If a time is not available, it will not appear for selection.

The screenshot shows a 'Select a Date & Time' interface. At the top, it says 'Select a Date & Time'. Below that, there are navigation arrows and the text 'March 2024'. To the right, it says 'Tuesday, March 26'. The calendar grid shows days of the week (SUN, MON, TUE, WED, THU, FRI, SAT) and dates. The date '26' is highlighted with a blue circle. To the right of the calendar, there are five time slots: '9:00am', '9:20am', '9:40am', '10:00am', and '10:20am'. The '9:20am' slot is highlighted with a blue border. In the top right corner, there is a small logo that says 'powered by Calendly'.

5. You'll be asked to enter your **Name, Email Address**, and select either the **Zoom or Phone option**. There is a field for entering anything specific you'd like to focus on.

The screenshot shows a Calendly booking page for a 'Virtual 1:1 - Meet the Matrix Consultation'. The page is divided into two main sections. The left section contains event details: a back arrow, the Thrive TtM Matrix logo, the host's name 'Andy Lynch, Founder & Coach, Thrive the Matrix', the event title 'Virtual 1:1 - Meet the Matrix Consultation', a duration of '20 min', the time '9:20am - 9:40am, Tuesday, March 26, 2024', and the time zone 'Eastern Time - US & Canada'. It also includes a payment prompt: 'PAYMENT PROMPT FOR MEET THE MATRIX SESSIONS (\$20.00) TURNED OFF FOR FREE SESSIONS FOR A LIMITED TIME\*\*\*. START THRIVING TODAY!'. Below this, it states '\*\*\*no payment is required for this session. Other 1:1 options allow for easy payment at time of scheduling.' and 'The Meet the Matrix Consultation Virtual 1:1 Option is a chance to meet and determine how Thrive the Matrix can help.' At the bottom left of this section are links for 'Cookie settings' and 'Report abuse'. The right section is titled 'Enter Details' and contains a form with fields for 'First Name \*', 'Last Name \*', and 'Email \*'. Below these are radio buttons for 'Location \*' with options for 'Zoom' (selected) and 'Phone call'. There are two text input areas: one for 'Are there specific focus areas you would like to learn more about?' and another for 'Are you interested in an either of the targeted programs listed on the site?'. A blue 'Schedule Event' button is at the bottom of the form. A small 'Community of Thrivers' badge is in the top right corner of the form area. At the bottom of the page, there is a note: 'By proceeding, you confirm that you have read and agree to Calendly's Terms of Use and Privacy Notice.' and a small note: 'You will be redirected to an external site.'

6. That's it! After clicking **Schedule Event**, you'll be redirected to the website with a **QR code** to join the **Community of Thrivers** that I'd like to build with your help on Instagram. Scanning is optional.



**Please Note:** You will receive a Calendar Invite at the email address entered and a reminder for the session before our designated meeting time.

Scan the QR Code on the [Build of Community of Thrivers](#) landing page to follow up on Instagram:

A graphic with a black background and green text. At the top, it says 'Help Build a Community of THRIVERS!'. Below this, on the left, is a square graphic with a blue and white QR code. Above the QR code, it says 'We call our Followers THRIVERS.' Below the QR code, it says 'Come along for in app Exclusives on... Instagram'. To the right of the QR code graphic, the text reads: 'Thank You. And...You're Invited! Thank you for your interest in Thrive the Matrix. In addition to our Virtual 1:1s &amp; Programs, we look forward to offering new ways to THRIVE Reality as IT IS. As a reminder, you are ALWAYS invited Scan the QR Code and join a budding community of THRIVERS on Instagram! And, before you go, if you haven't reviewed them already, click the link below for the FOCUS AREAS that we can work on to THRIVE Together.' At the bottom right, there is a button labeled 'TTM FOCUS AREAS'.

**Best Practice:** If you found the THRIVERcise(s) and/or our session insightful, then be sure to join the eTHRIVER Email List.

**Please Note:** Your Email Address will only be used for the purpose of scheduling and doing so **will not automatically add you to the eTHRIVER email list.** Consider using [the Promotional Banner on our Contact PAGE](#) to join - follow the instructions below for joining via the banner or the Contact the Matrix form radio button.



### **Joining the eThriver Email List:**

**Clicking the Website Banner – Contact the Matrix:** Once clicked, an automated email will populate, only requiring you to hit send. Please review the email for more on how we use your information (we do not share your email address with third parties) and more on our Privacy Policy. Simply click Send. In two clicks, you'll have access to **additional FREE CONTENT** and **THRIVE & SAVE OFFERS** as they become available.

A screenshot of a website's contact form. At the top left is the TtM logo. A blue arrow points down to a red banner that says 'Click HERE to Join the eThrive Email List for EXCLUSIVE FREE Content'. Below the banner is a black box with the title 'Contact Us' in white. Underneath is the text 'Contact Form: Your Resource for Timely Responses for... Inquiries, Ideas, Orders, Requests, Upcoming 1:1 Preparation, & More!'. The form has four input fields: 'Name\*', 'Email\*', 'Phone Number (Optional)', and 'Organization (Individuals please enter N/A)'. At the bottom, there is a 'Request Summary: Add your inquiry, suggestion, or Request Here\*' field.



A screenshot of an email composition window. The 'To' field contains 'Contact@thrivethematrix.com <Contact@thrivethematrix.com>'. The subject line is 'I'd Like to Join the TtM eThriver Email List!'. The body of the email contains the following text:

Hello TtM - Please add me to your eThrive Email List using my Sender email address.

I would like to enjoy EXCLUSIVE FREE Content and Thrive & Save Offers. I am aware that I can reply or submit via the website Contact Form for removal at any time.

I understand that my email will be used only for this purpose and not shared with 3rd parties without notification per the Privacy Policy located on the website.

Any change to the policy will require notification from TtM including but not limited to an Email Notification and Notice displayed prominently on the TtM website Home Page.

If you would like to join as an **eThriver** using the **Contact the Matrix Form** for your Intended purpose, simply click the radio button before submission.

**TtM Best Practice:** Did you the **TtM Contact the Matrix Form** allows you to upload attachments? Before using the **TtM Scheduler** to secure an appointment submit your work for this or **THRIVERcises** using the form and TtM will review it prior to your session.

**Please note:** Each **THRIVERcise** is posted in PDF format\*\*\* (see footer for more information), however you collated your answers in a document is acceptable. However, the easier it is to correspond your answers to the action prompts in the activities, the easier it will be to review and be prepared to discuss.

Both the radio button for the **eThriver List** and **'add attachment' feature** are shown in in the **Contact the Matrix form** shown below. In the Example, the form is filled out as you would if submitting your work on a **THRIVERcise** for review prior to the session.



Contact Form: Your Resource for Timely Responses for... Inquiries, Ideas, Orders, Requests, Upcoming 1:1 Preparation, & More!

Name\*  
Anna Molyneux

Email\*  
[Redacted]

Phone Number (Optional)  
[Redacted]

Organization (Individuals please enter N/A)  
N/A

I am submitting my THRIVEPoint for Validating Your Experience for review and feedback and am scheduling a What 1:1 in the T.M. Schedule to discuss it.

Attach File Attachments (0)

Join our eTHRIVE List for Program Previews, Free THRIVEcises, and Thrive & Save Offers.

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