

Malissa Page
Licensed Clinical Social Worker, Inc.

Live an Empowered life!

Tactics of Emotional Manipulation

Guilt trips:

- The “Love” Guilt Trip- “If you love me, you will...”
- The “Moral” Guilt Trip- “If you were a good person, you would...”
- The “Victim” Guilt Trip- “You know what I have been through." "The least you can do is...”
- The “Friend” Guilt Trip- “If you were a real friend, you would...”
- The “Ego” Guilt Trip- “If you knew what you were doing, you would...”

The qualities of a good Guilt Trip:

- Motivates the target to do what the emotional manipulator wants (these are often little things to get the victim back on target).
- Not recognized by the target as a guilt trip
- Laced with distorted thoughts that make sense to the target
- Comes from a half truth
- Touches at the heart of the target's self-doubts & insecurities
- Guilt trip is attached to a deep need, such as love or affiliation
- Brings the target back into alignment with what the emotional manipulator wants

Victimization:

Pretending to be victimized by the victim or others. When exploiting victims emotional manipulators falsely claim victimization to get what they want. They promote the idea that others or their victims are taking advantage of them, but it is not true. To promote victimization, they fabricate and exaggerate previous and current abuse stories.

The Red Flags! of victimization:

- They always have a plan or a goal but they don't get started on it, or has excuses about it.
- Severe projection of blame—their failure is always someone else's fault.
- “Life isn't fair” sob stories
- Always requesting money, or an expensive item, such as a car, under the guise of needing to improve their life, but they still never quite get there. “If I had a car I could get a job.”
- Shoving responsibility on to others or systems.
- Using word manipulation: Changing the meaning of the words.
- Changing the meaning of sentences.
- Changing the meaning of a thought or concept. Politics provides examples of this during elections.

Dependencies:

Having an attitude of being in charge, but actually they are totally dependent on others for their needs.

Dependency thought processes:

- You are never good enough, so you need to over-compensate by doing everything for me.
- You should jump when I talk. You should not expect me to do things that are beneath me.

Entitlement:

This is at the core of every type of Emotional Manipulator. This the fuel of emotional manipulation. Many emotional manipulators do not know how to love because of the way they were raised, genetics, or a combination of both. As a child, due to abuse, neglect, or over-indulgence, they grow up thinking their parents owe them and takes that view into their other relationships. Many emotional manipulators have narcissism while some have a blend of narcissism and dependency. At the basis of entitlement is conditional love, *"If you give me what I want I will love you. If you don't, I won't."*

Types of entitlement:

- *"I should have what I want without earning it."*
- *"I should be able to do whatever I want without receiving consequences."*
- *"You should give me a stress-free life."*

Covert bagering:

To bother incessantly, either behind your back or by convincing you that something is wrong with you, so it is okay to badger you. Cover badgering can also happen with an emotional manipulator secretly turns others against you, while being kind and cordial to your face. Commonly known as "Fire starters". Covert badgering also happens within the victim's brain. An emotional manipulator will plant ideas within the victim's mind that something is wrong with themselves. Therefore, the victim should overcompensate the emotional manipulator.

How do they plan ideas:

- Some make a direct request.
- They look at you like they are a little child excited about something with you.
- The offer a tiny trace of disappointment when you say no, which sways the victim to cooperate.
- More sophisticated emotional manipulators very subtly mention what other people do for them or previous people did for them.
- They often subtly follow-up with how nice those people are/were.
- They follow up with how much they enjoyed what others have done for them and the nice connection they have with those people.

Hiding behind a mask:

- Emotional manipulators use the tool of creating well-developed facades.
- Pressurized facades to get you to do things.
- Pressure release facades to get you off their backs.
- False friendship, false mentor, false advocate, and false partner.

Irritability:

Using irritability as tool so you'll do what they want because when you do their irritability immediately goes away.

- Irritability is a multi-purpose tool. It says: “Hey something needs to change!”
- “Hey, you are not changing fast enough. I said something needs to change!”
- “If you don’t want the wrath of my irritability, make sure I get what I want!”

Experts at Triangulation- Getting a third person involved who is on their side:

Triangulation makes the dysfunctional world go around. One of the cornerstones of triangulation is the art of monster-building. Triangulation is usually a set-up for their triangulation buddy. Their triangulation buddy will eventually become a new victim once their alliance falls apart.

Pretending to be ill:

Some emotional manipulators are pretend hypochondriacs. They use fake illness to keep people tied to their manipulative games. They tap into kind-hearted people’s good nature. However, they never go to the doctor. They have a lot of symptoms but no diagnosis, and do not seek medical attention.

Constantly Misunderstood:

“You misunderstood my motives. I was doing all of this for you.”

“People constantly misunderstand me, but you are the one special person that truly understands.”

Attacking self-esteem

- Emotional manipulators destroy the self-esteem of others to get what they want.
- Isolate, destroy, and enjoy- Emotional manipulators isolate their victims away from family and friends, destroying their relationships with others.
- Manipulative Disappointment- *“I am so disappointed in you!”* One very common feature of emotional manipulators, is that they talk in code language, “I am so disappointed in you” really means “Get back into alignment with what I want you do to/think!”

Emotional manipulators thinks in magical thoughts. If this then that:

- If I am pompous, I avoid shame
- If I am seen a victim, I have power
- If I triangulate, I get revenge or the upper-hand
- If I promise love, I get sex
- If I blame you, you will feel bad and give me what I want
- If I break your spirit, I own you
- If I indulge my child, I am the preferred parent
- If I threaten or pressure, I end up getting my way
- If I promise a wonderful future, my partner gives me what I want

“You are the special one” :

- I can only love you, or I can only befriend you- no others. “God meant for us to be together.” “I can’t do it without you.”

“I’m your Number 1 Fan:”

- You are the most special person in the world, so I am going to torment you with my horrific and special needs.

The smoke screen

- Often a cover for various forms of abuse. “You’re weird!” So its not me! “You see a therapist, not me.” “You have unresolved issues, not me.” “You are too ____ it’s not me.”

Enticements:

- Emotional manipulators use narcissistic enticements to get victims to stick with bad relationships. A common enticement is the use of fear. “You won’t be able to make it without me.” “You will never find anyone as good as me.” “I am the best you could ever get.”

Tips to handle emotional manipulators:

- Its wise to keep your knowledge about emotional manipulation to yourself because calling out the manipulative behavior will only escalate the situation. Telling the manipulative person that you know about their tactics will not stop them from attempts at manipulation. Also, psychologically savvy manipulator/master manipulators will just increase their manipulation tactics.
- Use your knowledge of these tactics to help you identify when the manipulative behavior occurs. When you can see the manipulative behavior in action you take away its power by not falling for it.

- Main your boundaries.
- Be cautious of the information you share with a manipulative person because they will use it to their benefit.
- Know that an emotional manipulative person has learned that this is how they need to conduct themselves in life in order to get their needs met. Their unhealthy distorted ways of thinking is a reflection upon them and not a reflection upon you in any way.
- You are not the cause of their manipulative behavior, nor are you responsible to fix it.
- Practice self-care strategies after you've spent time around a manipulative person.
- Re-read these tactics as often as you need to doing so will not only validate your experiences, but will help you better understand and more quickly identify these tactics.

Why do people emotionally manipulate others?

Manipulation can be a result of unhealthy learned behaviors to get their needs met that stem from a person's childhood experiences, feelings of not being good enough, deep insecurity, fear of abandonment, and/or a sense of entitlement over others.

Everyone experiences insecurities throughout life to some degree, but not everybody choses to manipulate others.

People who are generally secure with who they are don't need to resort to manipulation to get their needs met.



Recommended reading to learn more about dealing with emotional manipulators:

In Sheep's Clothing: Understanding & dealing with manipulative people by Dr. George Simon Ph.D

Malissa Page
Licensed Clinical Social Worker, Inc.

