

UNION OF SAINTS

MODERN SLAVERY

Understanding Hidden Bondage, Personal Liberty, and the Journey Toward Freedom

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Union of Saints, 501(c)(3)

Dedication

Dedicated to all who seek peace, light, understanding, compassion, forgiveness, respect, and personal liberty.

Introduction

This collection explores hidden forms of modern slavery, personal liberty, healthy boundaries, and the pursuit of freedom. It is presented as an educational and reflective work intended to encourage thoughtful discussion, personal growth, and respect for human dignity.

Title List

1. Modern Slavery
2. Understanding Bondage, A Focus on Verbal Bondage
3. Societal Slavery of Individuals, How Communities Enslave Through Actions
4. Healing Strategies, Reclaiming Freedom from Societal Slavery
5. Is it Slavery or Is it Freedom?
6. Self Preservation Before Compassion
7. The Peace Deck, 52 Card Self Preservation and Healing Game
8. Modern Slavery in Relationships, Psychological Manifestations
9. Modern Slavery in Relationships, A Psychological Reflection
10. Healing Strategies, Breaking Free from Hidden Chains

- 11. Modern Slavery Artist, Definition and Profile
- 12. Modern Slavery Artist, The Enslaver, Definition and Profile
- 13. Friendship Slavery, How Friends Can Enslave Individuals
- 14. Healing Strategies, Reclaiming Freedom from Friendship Slavery

Modern Slavery

Union of Saints

Slowing our progress one mistake at a time, one thwart at a time, one stolen good at a time, one devaluing at a time, it all compounds until it is no longer just inconvenience but warfare, no longer just frustration but slavery. What appears small in the moment becomes devastating in the aggregate, the little betrayals, the quiet thefts, the daily diminishment of our worth. These are not accidents, but tactics, an erosion designed to wear down the spirit, to chain the mind, to strip away confidence and freedom until what is left is submission. It is in the steady drip of harm, not always the sudden strike, that whole peoples are subdued. And yet, even in the shadow of such theft and devaluation, rises the beautiful bounty of woman, given by God as a wellspring of life, wisdom, and endurance. Her grace aligns with the spirit, her heart in rhythm with heaven's truth. Through the fire she marches, unyielding, rising steadily with God at her tow. She is the flowering resilience of humanity, turning ashes into gardens, wounds into wisdom, and chains into songs of freedom. What was meant to enslave becomes the soil of her strength, and what was meant to silence becomes the sound of her rising. In her, the eternal strength of God blossoms, a promise that no erosion, no tactic, no warfare will ever undo what heaven has planted.

~D. Cowdrey

Understanding Bondage

● A Focus on Verbal Bondage

• Introduction

When people hear the word bondage, they may think only of physical restraint. Yet, bondage also exists in emotional, psychological, and spiritual forms. One of the most subtle yet powerful kinds is verbal bondage, the way words can bind, control, or limit a person's freedom. Words shape identity, relationships, and even the possibilities someone believes are available to them. Understanding the types of verbal bondage helps us recognize harmful speech patterns and begin to free ourselves and others.

• What is Verbal Bondage?

Verbal bondage occurs when language is used in ways that limit, control, manipulate, or diminish a person. Instead of supporting growth, words become chains that restrict dignity, confidence, and self-expression.

• Types of Verbal Bondage

1. Verbal Harassment

- Definition: Repeated hostile or unwanted comments that cause distress.
- Examples: Persistent insults at work, mocking someone's background or appearance, repeated unwanted "jokes."

2. Verbal Abuse

- Definition: Aggressive, demeaning, or intimidating language meant to harm.
- Examples: "You're worthless," "No one will ever love you," "You'll never succeed."

3. Verbal Manipulation

- Definition: Using words to control another's decisions or emotions through deceit or guilt.

- Examples: “If you really loved me, you’d do this,” “Everyone else agrees with me, why don’t you?”

4. Gaslighting

- Definition: Twisting words and narratives so that someone doubts their own reality or memory.
- Examples: “That never happened, you’re imagining things,” “You’re just too sensitive.”

5. Verbal Intimidation

- Definition: Threatening or forceful language intended to instill fear.
- Examples: “You’ll regret it if you don’t listen,” “I’ll ruin your reputation if you tell anyone.”

6. Name-Calling and Labeling

- Definition: Reducing a person’s identity to an insult or stereotype.
- Examples: Using slurs, derogatory nicknames, or labels like “loser,” “crazy,” “failure.”

7. Invasion of Verbal Privacy

- Definition: Using words to pry into or disclose personal information without consent.
- Examples: Gossiping, exposing someone’s secrets, or demanding personal details in hostile ways.

8. Verbal Neglect and Withholding

- Definition: Silence or refusal to engage in healthy communication, used as a control tactic.
- Examples: The “silent treatment,” withholding important information, refusing to answer direct questions.

9. Verbal Exploitation

- Definition: Using flattery, promises, or persuasive speech to gain personal advantage while harming another.
- Examples: “I’ll take care of everything, just sign this,” “Trust me, I know what’s best for you.”

• The Impact of Verbal Bondage

- Emotional: Loss of confidence, increased anxiety, feelings of unworthiness.
- Relational: Breakdown of trust, toxic dynamics, isolation.
- Spiritual/Psychological: Diminished sense of identity, internalized oppression, acceptance of false limitations.

• Conclusion

Bondage can be physical but it also lives in words. Verbal bondage is powerful because language shapes thought and belief. By recognizing the different forms it takes, we empower ourselves to reject destructive speech and choose words that bring healing, freedom, and dignity.

Societal Slavery of Individuals

● How Communities Enslave Through Actions

1. Social Conformity & Pressure

- Expecting blind obedience to cultural norms without room for individuality.
- Ostracizing or shaming those who don't "fit in."
- Gossip, ridicule, or exclusion as punishment for nonconformity.

2. Identity Suppression

- Denying or erasing aspects of a person's identity (race, gender, sexuality, religion, ability).
- Policing expression (appearance, speech, beliefs) to enforce sameness.
- Forcing assimilation while rejecting difference.

3. Economic Enslavement

- Creating systems where survival requires submission to exploitative labor.
- Debt cycles, wage suppression, or lack of fair access to resources.
- Communities praising overwork and punishing rest as laziness.

4. Generational Expectations

- Families and communities pressuring individuals to uphold traditions, roles, or careers.
- Treating individual dreams as betrayal of the collective.
- Using lineage or “family honor” as a tool of control.

5. Public Shaming & Surveillance

- Using gossip, rumors, or public call-outs to regulate behavior.
- Communities that monitor one another’s choices and punish deviation.
- Turning social media into a modern pillory for humiliation.

6. Exploitation of Service

- Expecting individuals to sacrifice their time, energy, or care without acknowledgment.
- Normalizing certain groups (women, youth, marginalized) as unpaid caretakers.
- Communities that glorify sacrifice while ignoring personal well-being.

7. Emotional & Spiritual Control

- Using religion, tradition, or morality as tools of fear based obedience.
- Tying belonging to compliance: “Good people in this community act this way.”
- Framing questioning as rebellion or sin.

8. Silencing & Erasure

- Shaming those who speak out about injustice.
- Dismissing or ignoring voices that challenge the dominant narrative.
- Labeling truth-tellers as “troublemakers.”

9. Fear of Exile

- Making belonging conditional on obedience: “If you don’t comply, you don’t belong.”
- Isolation of those who resist the collective’s control.
- Threat of losing community, resources, or safety if one chooses independence.

10. Internalized Chains

- Individuals self-policing to avoid punishment, even when no one is watching.
- Carrying inherited guilt, shame, or duty as though it were natural law.
- Believing one's worth depends on serving the collective above all else. At its root, societal slavery happens when communities value control over compassion, uniformity over individuality, and obedience over authenticity.

Healing Strategies

● Reclaiming Freedom from Societal Slavery

1. Awareness & Recognition

- Notice the ways community norms pressure or limit your choices.
- Name the behavior: "This is conformity, not care," or "This is shaming, not guidance."
- Recognize the difference between healthy social cohesion and coercion.

2. Reclaiming Identity

- Affirm your individuality daily: "I am allowed to be myself."
- Explore your values, passions, and expression outside societal expectations.
- Celebrate aspects of your identity that may be marginalized or suppressed.

3. Setting Social Boundaries

- Limit time or exposure to people or groups that shame or control you.
- Use respectful but firm communication:
 - "I honor my path, and I hope you respect it."
 - "I choose differently, and that doesn't change my worth."
- Protect your mental and emotional space proactively.

4. Building Supportive Communities

- Seek like-minded, empowering networks beyond restrictive groups.
- Mentors, friends, online communities, or support groups can provide affirmation and guidance.

- Surround yourself with those who value freedom, individuality, and respect.

5. Releasing Internalized Control

- Challenge self-critical thoughts rooted in social pressure.
- Question inherited guilt or shame: “Does this obligation serve me, or the collective?”
- Practice self-compassion and self-validation.

6. Advocacy & Voice

- Speak up gently but firmly when norms or behaviors harm you or others.
- Educate yourself about rights, laws, and social protections where applicable.
- Share your story safely, personal narrative can be a powerful act of liberation.

7. Financial & Practical Independence

- Cultivate skills or resources that reduce dependence on restrictive systems.
- Manage finances consciously to create mobility and choice.
- Plan for long-term autonomy while maintaining safety in the present.

8. Spiritual & Mental Reframing

- Transform fear based teachings or traditions into empowering principles.
- Affirm: “Authentic belonging comes from respect, not compliance.”
- Use mindfulness, meditation, or ritual to center yourself and reclaim agency.

9. Strategic Navigation

- Learn when to engage, when to detach, and when to resist within community structures.
- Choose battles consciously, protect energy for meaningful change.
- Recognize subtle influence tactics (gossip, shaming, reward/punishment cycles) and avoid internalizing them.

10. Daily Freedom Practices

- Morning affirmation: “Today, I honor my choices and my truth.”
- Evening reflection: “Where did I act freely today? Where did I feel pressure, and how did I respond?”

- Journaling, creative expression, or meditation to process societal influence and reclaim autonomy. These strategies empower individuals to live authentically within society while refusing to be enslaved by its pressures, expectations, or control systems.

Is it Slavery or Is it Freedom?

In every moment, we are called to discern, to see clearly the forces that shape our lives and to choose wisely between bondage and liberation. Modern slavery does not always come with chains or bars. Often, it comes cloaked as obligation, expectation, or even “opportunity.” It appears in relationships that drain rather than uplift, in work that diminishes the soul, and in systems that profit from our compliance. At the Union of Saints, we teach that true freedom begins within. Freedom is the absence of restraint, it is also the presence of vision, choice, and purpose. To discern freedom from slavery, one must ask:

- Does this path honor my dignity?
- Does this choice expand my ability to love, create, and serve?
- Does this relationship, this work, this commitment align with my highest self and sacred truth?

When the answer is “yes,” we walk in freedom. When the answer is “no,” we recognize the chains, however subtle, and begin the work of release. Discernment is an act of spiritual courage, a willingness to face uncomfortable truths and claim sovereignty over our lives. The Union of Saints reminds us that we are never alone in this process. As a ministry, as teachers, as guides, and as fellow travelers, we offer support for the journey from oppression to liberation. Healing, learning, and reclaiming power are steps that cannot be rushed, but every step toward awareness is a step toward freedom. Freedom is not given. Freedom is claimed. And in claiming it, we honor both the divine within us and the sacred bond we share with our community.

Self Preservation Before Compassion

Compassion begins with caring for yourself. When we continuously give without caring for our own needs, our energy becomes depleted, our spirit becomes heavy, and our inner peace becomes difficult to maintain. Compassion is a beautiful expression of love, but it requires balance. Caring for others while honoring your own limits creates a healthier and more sustainable way to serve, support, and connect. Self preservation is an act of respect for your own life, your own energy, and your own well being. When you protect your peace and restore your strength, you create space for genuine compassion to grow. When you are rested, centered, and whole, the kindness you offer comes from a place of abundance rather than exhaustion. You are able to show up with a clearer heart, a stronger spirit, and a better sense of purpose. Choosing healing, rest, and personal care is a way of honoring yourself and the life you have been given. Protect your peace, ground your energy and nurture your spirit. From a place of wholeness, compassion can flow naturally while you remain connected to yourself.

The Peace Deck

52 Card Self Preservation and Healing Game

The Peace Deck is created to encourage reflection, healing, self respect, and inner peace. Each card offers an opportunity to practice healthy boundaries, restore your energy, and strengthen your relationship with yourself. Draw 1 to 3 cards each day and follow the guidance. Each completed card earns Peace Points as a reminder to celebrate your growth and commitment to your well being.

• Boundaries

1. Say “no” today with confidence and respect. (+10 Peace Points)
2. Identify one situation that drains your energy and imagine creating healthy distance from it.
3. Reflect on a time you honored a boundary. How did it strengthen you?
4. Remove or limit one digital connection that affects your peace.

5. Write three boundaries that support your well being.
6. Write down one thing you choose to no longer accept.
7. Practice saying “I need space” with kindness and honesty.
8. Give yourself permission to pause before responding.
9. Notice what your body feels when your boundaries are challenged.
10. Affirm: “My time and energy are valuable.”
11. Protect your peace by making one choice that honors your needs.
12. Imagine yourself surrounded by safety, calm, and protection.
13. Step away from a conversation or situation that disrupts your peace.

• Healing

1. Take five slow breaths and place your hand over your heart.
2. Write three things you choose to forgive yourself for.
3. Write about something painful and release it through a healing ritual.
4. Spend ten minutes in quiet reflection.
5. Stretch your body gently and intentionally.
6. Journal: “What does healing mean for me today?”
7. Offer yourself kindness for a mistake you have made.
8. Practice grounding by noticing your breath and your surroundings.
9. Spend time outside and connect with nature.
10. Affirm: “I deserve patience, care, and healing.”
11. Recognize a wound you carry and respond with compassion.
12. Take time for a calming self care practice.
13. Choose rest and restoration when your body needs it.

• Nourishment

1. Drink water and appreciate the care it provides your body.

2. Eat something that supports your health and energy.
3. Write three foods that help you feel your best.
4. Slow down and enjoy one meal with awareness.
5. Move your body in a way that feels good.
6. Spend time in fresh air or sunlight.
7. Affirm: "I nourish my body, mind, and spirit with love."
8. Choose one positive habit to strengthen today.
9. Replace one harsh thought with a compassionate one.
10. Rest for fifteen minutes without distractions.
11. Do something that brings you joy.
12. Listen to music that lifts your spirit.
13. List three things that nourish your soul beyond physical needs.

• Strength

1. Honor a boundary you have created for yourself.
2. Repeat aloud: "My peace is my power."
3. Write three strengths you have developed through your experiences.
4. Celebrate a small victory from this week.
5. Reflect on the ways you have grown.
6. Take one meaningful step toward a personal goal.
7. Affirm: "I have the strength to protect my peace."
8. Visualize yourself standing confidently in your own light.
9. Write three reasons you are proud of yourself.
10. Remember a challenge you overcame and recognize your resilience.
11. Do one action today that strengthens your confidence.
12. Stand tall, breathe deeply, and connect with your inner strength.
13. End your day by saying: "I honor my strength, my healing, and my journey."

Modern Slavery in Relationships

● Psychological Manifestations

1. Control Over Autonomy

- Parents or partners dictating life choices (career, relationships, lifestyle) under the guise of “knowing best.”
- Children treated as extensions of their parents, rather than individuals with their own identity.
- Lack of freedom to express true feelings without fear of punishment or withdrawal of love.

2. Emotional Coercion & Guilt

- Guilt-tripping (“After all I’ve done for you, you owe me.”)
- Conditional love (“I’ll love you if you do what I say.”)
- Fear-based control (“If you leave, you’ll fail without me.”)
- Families using shame to enforce compliance with traditions, beliefs, or duties.

3. Invisible Chains: Dependency

- Financial dependency engineered to limit freedom (e.g., parents withholding financial resources unless rules are followed).
- Emotional dependency fostered by alternating between affection and withdrawal (trauma bonds).
- Learned helplessness, where a person stops believing they have agency, because their voice was ignored or punished repeatedly.

4. Psychological Bondage in Communication

- Constant verbal criticism that breaks confidence (“You’ll never be good enough”).
- Silencing tactics (ignoring, stonewalling, dismissing ideas).
- Redefining reality through gaslighting (“That’s not what happened, you’re imagining it”).
- Labeling independence as betrayal (“You’re selfish for wanting your own life”).

5. Roles that Mimic Servitude

- Children expected to be caretakers of parents at the cost of their own development (“parentification”).
- Older siblings forced into caretaker roles without recognition.
- Family members pressured to sacrifice dreams to uphold family image, business, or obligations.

6. Intergenerational Transmission

- Parents unconsciously repeating cycles of control they experienced.
- Trauma bonds passed down as “tradition” or “discipline.”
- Cultural or religious teachings misused to justify dominance and submission.

• Core Psychology Behind It

- Power Imbalance: One person benefits from another’s compliance.
- Fear & Obligation: The “slave” fears rejection, abandonment, or punishment if they resist.
- Loss of Self: Identity and autonomy are suppressed in favor of duty, service, or compliance. In essence, psychological modern slavery in family dynamics is when love and belonging are tied to obedience, and individuality is sacrificed for control.

Modern Slavery in Relationships

● A Psychological Reflection

Modern slavery may seem like chains of iron, however often it takes the form of invisible cords, expectations, fears, and unspoken obligations, that bind us within our closest relationships. In families, in partnerships, and in the ties between parents and children, we often see subtle forms of bondage that echo the ancient patterns of control and servitude.

At the heart of this psychological slavery lies control over autonomy. Parents, for example, may dictate their children’s choices in career, marriage, or lifestyle, not out of malice, but out of fear or a desire to protect. Yet when protection becomes

domination, individuality is stifled. The child learns that their worth is conditional, that love and acceptance arrive only when they obey. Over time, this fosters a deep sense of bondage, an internalized belief that freedom is unsafe, and that one's life must always be lived under the shadow of another's expectations.

Another chain is emotional coercion, where guilt and shame are the tools of control. Families may speak the language of sacrifice, "After all I've done for you, you owe me", or enforce conditional love: "I will be proud of you if you follow the path I approve." These invisible weights create an economy of emotional debt, where individuals feel enslaved to repay love that should have been freely given.

Modern slavery also shows itself in dependency. This may be financial, where resources are withheld unless the individual complies with rules, or emotional, where love is alternated with withdrawal in a cycle of trauma bonding. Such tactics break a person's sense of agency, teaching them helplessness and keeping them bound to the will of another. In communication, slavery manifests as silencing. Gaslighting, constant criticism, and stonewalling strip away a person's trust in their own voice.

When independence is labeled as betrayal, when questioning is framed as rebellion, the natural growth of the self is suppressed in favor of servitude. These patterns often become roles that mimic servitude. Children may be forced into adult responsibilities, caring for siblings or even their parents, losing their own childhood in the process. Others may be expected to uphold family reputations, surrendering dreams to preserve the family's image. What should be nurturing bonds become systems of extraction, where the individual's life-force is consumed for the sake of the whole.

Perhaps most tragically, this cycle is often intergenerational. Parents repeat what was done to them, mistaking control for love, discipline for care, and guilt for guidance. Cultural and religious traditions can sometimes be twisted into chains, sanctifying domination in the name of loyalty or faith. Yet, awareness is the beginning of freedom. When we recognize these subtle forms of slavery, we begin to loosen the chains. Healing comes from reclaiming autonomy, setting boundaries, and redefining love not as control but as liberation.

True love empowers rather than enslaves. True family nurtures individuality rather than suppresses it. In this light, we can see that modern slavery in our relationships is not inevitable. It is a shadow we can name, confront, and ultimately transform. By choosing honesty over manipulation, freedom over fear, and compassion over control, we break the generational chains and open the path for relationships rooted in dignity, respect, and authentic love.

Healing Strategies

● Breaking Free from Hidden Chains

1. Awareness & Naming the Chains

- Journal specific moments where you felt controlled, silenced, or guilty.
- Label the behavior (“That was guilt-tripping,” “That was conditional love”) to reduce its power.
- Recognize the difference between love freely given and love used as leverage.

2. Reclaiming Autonomy

- Begin making small independent choices daily, even if they’re symbolic (clothing, hobbies, routines).
- Affirm: “I am allowed to live a life that is my own.”
- Distinguish between advice offered and commands disguised as care.

3. Setting Boundaries with Grace

- Use clear, calm language:
- “That doesn’t work for me.”
- “I need to make this choice myself.”
- “I hear your opinion, but I choose differently.”
- Step away when conversations turn manipulative or coercive.
- Remember, boundaries are not rejection, they are protection.

4. Healing from Guilt & Shame

- Challenge guilt-inducing thoughts by asking, “Is this truly my responsibility, or am I carrying someone else’s burden?”
- Release shame through affirmations: “My worth is not determined by obedience.”
- Therapy or support groups can help dismantle inherited guilt systems.

5. Rebuilding a Sense of Self

- Practice self-reflection: What are my values, passions, and desires?

- Explore activities outside of family roles to rediscover identity.
- Celebrate small acts of independence as victories of freedom.

6. Addressing Trauma Bonds

- Notice cycles of affection and withdrawal, see them as manipulation, not true love.
- Build connections with safe, supportive people who offer consistency.
- Replace trauma-driven loyalty with conscious, chosen loyalty.

7. Financial & Emotional Independence

- Strengthen financial literacy and stability to reduce dependence.
- Seek spaces (mentorship, therapy, community) where emotional support is freely given.
- Practice making decisions without needing external validation.

8. Intergenerational Healing

- Acknowledge that parents may have repeated patterns unconsciously.
- Decide consciously what you will not pass on to the next generation.
- Speak aloud or write new family values rooted in freedom, respect, and compassion.

9. Spiritual Reframing (Optional)

- Reframe family or cultural teachings that were used as chains into messages of empowerment.
- Practice affirmations:
- “True love liberates, not enslaves.”
- “I break the cycle and choose freedom for myself and those who come after me.”

10. Creating a New Narrative

- Instead of identifying as “the obedient child” or “the caretaker,” create new self- identities: creator, healer, dreamer, leader.
- Share your story of breaking free, it not only heals you but can inspire others.

- See yourself not as a victim of invisible slavery, but as a chain-breaker, a cycle-shifter. Healing does not mean we have to reject family outright, it's about choosing freedom while holding compassion. You can love someone and still refuse their control. You can honor where you came from while walking into who you truly are.

Modern Slavery Artist

● Definition and Profile

Union of Saints as Modern Slavery Artists, Freedom Makers.

• Definition

A Modern Slavery Artist is a creator, visual, literary, performing, or multimedia, whose work explores, exposes, or transforms the hidden systems of control, manipulation, and exploitation present in contemporary human relationships and society. Their art reflects the lived experience of oppression, the struggle for autonomy, and the reclamation of personal power, often using the mechanisms of abuse as subject, metaphor, or material.

• Key Themes in Their Work

- Control & Coercion: Highlighting manipulation, guilt-tripping, conditional love, and fear-based obedience.
- Identity & Autonomy: Exploring the suppression of individuality and the reclaiming of selfhood.
- Emotional Bondage: Representing trauma bonds, enmeshment, and emotional exploitation.
- Social & Societal Chains: Critiquing conformity, public shaming, economic exploitation, and cultural or institutional pressures.
- Generational & Relational Cycles: Examining how abuse patterns are inherited and perpetuated across families and communities.

- Freedom & Radical Self-Determination: Celebrating acts of resistance, personal boundaries, and liberation.

• Artistic Strategies & Techniques

1. Visual Metaphor & Symbolism: Using chains, cages, nets, shadows, or mirrors to represent oppression and freedom.
2. Narrative Storytelling: Depicting relational, familial, or societal abuse through poetry, prose, or performance.
3. Interactive or Participatory Work: Inviting audiences to experience constraints or choices, simulating power dynamics.
4. Juxtaposition & Contrast: Placing oppression and liberation side by side to highlight struggle and resilience.
5. Transformative Materials: Using materials that suggest constraint (barbed wire, rope, metals) or liberation (light, open spaces, fabric) to evoke physical/emotional sensation.

• Profiles & Approaches

- The Witness: Captures or documents the abuses of modern slavery in communities or relationships.
- The Survivor: Creates from personal experience, turning trauma into testimony and healing.
- The Activist: Uses art as a tool for social justice, exposing systemic or societal exploitation.
- The Metaphysician: Explores modern slavery as a spiritual or psychological phenomenon, linking oppression to human consciousness.

• Purpose & Impact

- Raise Awareness: Educates audiences about hidden systems of control and exploitation.

- Empower Survivors: Provides validation and language for those affected by psychological slavery.
- Inspire Action: Encourages boundary setting, autonomy, and systemic change.
- Transform Trauma into Art: Converts abuse into creative expression, offering catharsis and reclamation.
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• Example Artistic Statements

society, turning confinement into a canvas of liberation.”

- “I explore the spaces between obedience and freedom, showing how power, guilt, and control shape human lives.”
- “My work exposes the silent violence of emotional and social slavery, inviting viewers to reclaim their voice and agency.”
- Union of Saints, 501c3 is a church and charity which promotes freedom, personal protection, truth and peace.
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Modern Slavery Artist

● The Enslaver, Definition and Profile

• Definition

A Modern Slavery Artist is an individual who creatively and systematically manipulates, coerces, or controls others, often through psychological, relational, social, or economic means. They are adept at crafting environments, narratives, and interpersonal dynamics that bind others to their will, using subtle and overt forms of domination. Their “art” lies in orchestrating dependency, obedience, or fear to maintain power.

• Core Characteristics

- 1. Manipulator of Autonomy:**
 - Controls choices, decisions, and behaviors of others.
 - Uses conditional approval, guilt, or shame to enforce compliance.
- 2. Expert in Emotional Coercion:**
 - Employs guilt-tripping, gaslighting, and trauma bonding techniques.
 - Alternates affection and withdrawal to maintain psychological control.
- 3. Social & Relational Strategist:**
 - Exploits social norms, community pressures, and cultural expectations.
 - Leverages friendships, family ties, work hierarchies, or housing dependency to maintain power.
- 4. Narrative Engineer:**
 - Crafts stories or frameworks that justify domination.
 - Makes others believe obedience is duty, love, or moral obligation.
- 5. Invisible Chains Specialist:**
 - Their control is often subtle and hard to detect, manifesting as micro-abuses:
 - Conditional support
 - Emotional enmeshment
 - Public or social shaming
 - Economic or resource based manipulation

• Tactics & “Mediums”

- Relational Chains: Manipulating family, friendships, and romantic ties.
- Institutional & Societal Leverage: Exploiting workplace hierarchies, cultural norms, or legal structures.
- Psychological Techniques: Fear, guilt, humiliation, and dependency as tools of control.
- Resource Control: Using money, housing, or opportunity as leverage.

• Impact on Victims

- Loss of autonomy and personal power
- Emotional exhaustion, anxiety, or depression
- Erosion of self-trust and identity
- Chronic dependency on the enslaver
- Difficulty setting boundaries due to trauma bonds

• Artful Aspect

The “artist” element comes from their skillful orchestration of manipulation, how they can control environments, people, and perceptions to maintain dominance, often leaving no visible trace of the chains they’ve placed. This makes them particularly insidious: they craft bondage as if it were invisible, natural, or deserved.

• Summary Statement

A Modern Slavery Artist (enslaver) is someone who treats power over others as a craft, blending emotional, psychological, social, and economic tools to maintain control. Unlike physical slavery, their mastery is subtle, making obedience, fear, or dependency appear voluntary, even to the victim themselves.

Friendship Slaveries

● How Friends Can Enslave Individuals

1. Emotional Manipulation

- Guilt-tripping: “If you were a real friend, you’d...”
- Playing the victim to control your choices or time.
- Alternating affection and coldness to keep you off balance.

2. Conditional Support & Loyalty

- Friendship only exists when you comply with their wishes or expectations.

- Threats of withdrawal or ostracism if you disagree or act independently.
- Rewarding compliance and punishing autonomy subtly.

3. Social Pressure & Conformity

- Expecting you to adopt their opinions, behaviors, or lifestyles.
- Shaming or ridiculing your differences or choices.
- Creating fear of exclusion or judgment for stepping outside the group norms.

4. Energy Exploitation

- One-sided relationships where you constantly give emotional, social, or practical support.
- Demanding attention, validation, or resources without reciprocity.
- Using you to boost their social status or reputation.

5. Jealousy & Competition

- Undermining achievements to maintain control or superiority.
- Keeping you dependent to avoid being “left behind” or outshined.
- Encouraging rivalry or comparison rather than genuine support.

6. Silencing & Control

- Dismissing your opinions or ideas to maintain dominance.
- Criticizing your voice or perspective to weaken confidence.
- Spreading gossip or influencing mutual friends to isolate you socially.

7. Emotional Enmeshment

- Creating dependency where your emotional state revolves around their mood.
- Making it difficult to say no, take space, or prioritize your own well-being.
- Blurring boundaries between friendship and obligation.

Healing Strategies

● Reclaiming Freedom from Friendship Slavery

1. Awareness & Recognition

- Notice patterns of guilt, pressure, or one-sided energy in friendships.
- Name toxic behaviors: “This is manipulation, not care.”

2. Reclaiming Boundaries

- Clearly communicate limits:
- “I can’t do that right now.”
- “I need space to make my own choices.”
- Be consistent, even if the friend resists at first.

3. Evaluating Reciprocity

- Assess whether the friendship is mutually supportive.
- Reduce energy spent on relationships that consistently drain you.
- Practice self-care without guilt, your needs are valid.

4. Building Supportive Networks

- Cultivate friends who respect boundaries and celebrate individuality.
- Seek groups that empower rather than control or judge.

5. Detaching from Manipulation

- Recognize cycles of affection and withdrawal refuse to internalize them.
- Use journaling or therapy to process feelings without guilt.
- Avoid reacting to emotional blackmail, respond with calm assertiveness.

6. Reclaiming Identity & Autonomy

- Pursue interests and activities independent of the friend group.
- Affirm: “I am allowed to be myself, even if it makes others uncomfortable.”
- Practice saying no, taking space, and making independent choices.

7. Strategic Engagement

- Choose when to engage and when to step back from controlling friends.

- Limit exposure to gossip or social pressure.
- Avoid internalizing criticism or comparison from toxic peers.

8. Daily Freedom Practices

- Morning affirmation: “Today, I honor friendships that respect my freedom.”
- Evening reflection: “Did my relationships empower me or drain me? How can I adjust?”
- Celebrate moments of authentic, balanced connection. Friendships should uplift, not enslave. Recognizing subtle control or manipulation allows you to maintain authentic connection without sacrificing autonomy or self-worth.

With Loving Regards

Peace.

Love.

Forgiveness.

Grace.

D. Cowdrey

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