

5 WAYS TO FIGHT AGAINST GASLIGHTING

"Empowerment for Artists, Creators, and Starseeds"

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Over the past few years, the term 'gaslighting' has increased in popularity. Gaslighting is described as manipulative behavior with the intent of causing a person to doubt themselves or think they are crazy, whether it is their ability to recall events or make decisions.

Maybe as you read this, faces and names of people are popping up in your head of people who cause you to doubt your sanity. Don't worry! You're not crazy. It's real.

It's incredibly toxic behavior and has been happening to people for a very long time through politics and marketing tactics, despite the term becoming popular. Also know, gaslighting is very effective because it preys on emotions. Most people have difficulty staying focused through emotional, hot button topics, and gaslighters know this. It IS emotional abuse.

The prevalence of social media in all aspects of our lives. It puts gaslighting in front of us almost at all times since everyone has a platform to voice their opinion.

One distinguishing factor is people who gaslight aim to break down a person's self-esteem. It is calculated, deliberate, malicious, and should not be ignored. Gaslighters may not "label" their behavior as "gaslighting" because they are operating from an unconscious state of awareness, which is unfortunate. If this is the case, they have learned and adapted strategically manipulative behavior due to their upbringing or circumstances. You can be compassionate toward them, but protect yourself.

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Below is a formula to use to assess gaslighting:

$$\begin{array}{|c|} \hline \text{ESTABLISH DOUBT/} \\ \text{BREAKDOWN VICTIM} \\ \hline \end{array} + \begin{array}{|c|} \hline \text{POSITIVELY} \\ \text{REINFORCE VICTIM} \\ \hline \end{array} = \begin{array}{|c|} \hline \text{VICTIM IS CONFUSED,} \\ \text{DEPRESSED, AND DEPENDENT} \\ \hline \end{array}$$

Ask yourself, "do I feel worse after my encounter with this person?"

If you are a high achiever in an underrepresented group, you may be a huge target from people who are jealous of you or want a piece of your talent or success. Let's face it, you make things happen and bounce back quickly, so gaslighters will try to establish doubt or concern where there is none and position themselves as the savior.

I know this isn't easy to accept, but as I began to wake up, some of the people I identified as gaslighters were close friends and family. So keep reading to see what you can do to free yourself!



1. Identify it: Someone trying to gaslight you will constantly lie about events or conversations. And they will do it with a straight face and refuse to accept your version of what happened. It feels like doubt.

That isn't to say someone who lies to you or gets something wrong and refuses to admit it is trying to gaslight you. But if you notice it happening constantly, then this could be a red flag! Listen to the red flag!

2. Document Everything, Write it Down!: Gaslighters will try and convince you differently from what you know and believe. How do you overcome this? Write down what was said via a voice note or a journal. You will thank yourself later when you can bring up receipts about exactly when, where, how something was said. If you're really bold, and the conversation is of utmost importance, ask the person to video record!

This serves two purposes - (1) keeping you sane and (2) proving to others a gaslighter is in your midst. This is very beneficial in work environments to keep your job. Also, relationships with severe trust issues, parental or romantic relationships may benefit from safely documenting occurrences.

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3. Trust In Your Version: People who gaslight are manipulative. They say things like, "you're overreacting," or "you're dramatic."

This is why documentation can be beneficial. It gives you a physical piece of proof that you were right and that they are trying to convince you otherwise! The key here is to trust your version. Be honest, though. If you sway the conversation in a way that benefits you, you will put yourself at risk of also being a gaslighter.

4. Hold Them Accountable: When the person gaslighting you tries to mock and belittle you, do your best to remain calm. It is important to try and not to respond emotionally. Emotional responses fuel "the gas" of the gaslighter and validates their technique.

If you can remain calm and nonchalant and call them out (confidently), it demonstrates that you are not a good target for their manipulation. Even more powerful is it shows that you are aware of what they are attempting to do to you.

5. Don't Be Afraid To Seek Professional Help: Gaslighting is an incredibly toxic and abusive behavior; its sole purpose is to cripple your self-esteem, create self-doubt, and make you question everything. It can be incredibly isolating, especially if it's coming from a group of people toward you. There is absolutely nothing wrong with seeking professional help to cope and affirm you.

Many therapists are trained to help clients identify toxic behaviors and give you strong coping mechanisms to deal with the situation.

It is important to look out for yourself if you suspect you are in this sort of situation!

WHAT ARE TOPICS PEOPLE GASLIGHT?

PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP MATTERS, RACISM, SEXISM, HOMOPHOBIA

HOW TO IDENTIFY GASLIGHTING

"It was a joke, calm down."

"If you weren't so emotional, people would listen."

"Are you sure that's what happened?"

"You're too sensitive."

"Racism/sexism/homophobia doesn't exist."

"You're crazy/this is too confusing."

"You're paranoid/insecure."

"It's your fault I/they..."



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6. HAVE AN ESCAPE PLAN

Finally, when the going gets too tough, or you've identified people who willfully use these phrases, have an escape plan. Emotional abuse in romantic relationships or abusive parents can have physical ramifications. You don't have to deal with this manipulation and owe yourself affirming positive environments.

Remember, gaslighting feels abusive whether the person is aware they are doing it or unaware. It is deliberate manipulation used to isolate people and create dependency.

It can cause long-lasting mental health issues, such as depression and anxiety, and is overall just horrible to experience.

Remember that it is never the victim's fault! You are not responsible for another person being cruel; no matter what, they will try and make you believe.

If you've identified people as you've read this, it may be time for you to make some cuts in your life!



I hope you find this e-guide helpful.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR OF THIS MINI E-BOOK



Ross Victory is a songwriter and author from Los Angeles, CA.


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