

# How Loving a Narcissist Hurts You

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Occasionally, a **really good book** comes along that explains a situation or specific healing needed by many divorcing women. Something that many of us can relate to and benefit from a little more education. That's when I feel it's important enough to share what I've read and learned in a blog post.



In his book, Dr. Hawkins explains that married, separated, and divorced women come into his office seeking help for their toxic marriages and troubled lives after. He goes on to explain that what they've been dealing with is a narcissist who is emotionally abusive.

It is important to determine whether your relationships have been healthy and life-giving or you have given up too much of yourself in the process. – David Hawkins

Looking for the *road map* to surviving divorce?

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## Life with him is/was an emotional roller coaster.

I will never forget the angry men in my life slamming their fist down on the table to gain control over me or my children. Times where simply asking kindly would have given him better results, but instead, he chose to use rage to scare and intimidate. (Abuse is about power and control.)

[He] has learned to react to any perceived slight. They have learned they have power and have learned to use it to control others. They use their aggression to make sure you back off and stay off—very primitive ways to maintain emotional balance.

They react to issues that aren't issues at all. They see intentions when intended actions are not there. They read people's minds, judge their thoughts, and are ready to react. Having perceived an intended slight, they come out angry and aggressive. – Hawkins, Page 60

I can recall conversations that started with me trying to kindly, yet assertively, state how I felt about the fact that we never had date-nights, how sports, work, and friends were his priority, and how him secretly talking to other women made me feel insecure about our marriage. (I now coach women dealing with these same issues.) Those conversations never go well, ending with him enraged, spewing all the things you've done wrong while trying not to end up in a puddle of tears.

This is the roller coaster many women describe. They can never predict how their emotionally abusive mate will act. They can never satisfy all the requirements proclaimed by this childish tyrant. – Hawkins, Page 60

It's like your needing any sort of attention, care or concern sets him off. He can't understand your heart, accept responsibility for his busyness and admit the need for some changes. Instead, he has to attack you for even asking.

[T]hey are on the hunt for anyone who dares to question them. They will hurt anyone who dares to hurt them—and this makes them dangerous. – Hawkins, Page 60

Then he's the one proclaiming that your words hurt him, the expectations are too high for him to meet, and how controlling you are for even asking for anything from him. All of a sudden, we're the one being blamed for what should have been a conversation about bettering the relationship.

It's crazy. We're the ones who have been beaten up by them, yet they are forever screaming about having been mistreated. – Hawkins, Page 61

The narcissist plays on others' empathetic need to not hurt people. He has learned on some primitive level, he has the power to make others obey him. He has learned that others will feel bad for what they have said and done. – Page 62

**...even when we've done nothing wrong!** You're walking on eggshells because this is how he keeps the power and control in the relationship. This is the emotional roller coaster of living with a narcissist. There is no peace, only the uncertainty of when the chaos will come up again. It's not a matter of if he'll rage, but when the next episode will happen.

They broadcast nonverbal and verbal cues about being easily offended so that others will walk carefully around them. – Hawkins, Page 62

The emotional abusers' defenses are all crafted to protect them from feeling healthy shame and vulnerability. They hate feeling bad and would rather you feel hurt and wounded. – Page 100

[You may also enjoy: [6 Steps to Find Peace After Divorce](#)]

## Trying to understand and explain the abuse.

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This emotional roller coaster is not easily explained to someone who doesn't understand. On the outside, you may look like "the perfect family" with a nice house, two brand new cars, kids in school activities, weekly church attendance, and more. But inside the home, is a very different story!

She lives with anxiety and fear because she hopes beyond hope that [he] will wake up one day and realize what he's doing. Sadly, that is magical thinking. This cannot happen without an intervention\*. – Hawkins, Page 102

That's why we call it hidden abuse. Only the victims know about the abuse, yet they're the ones being blamed so it makes it even harder for us to say "we are being abused." We end up losing ourselves trying to make him happy, keep the peace, and stop the emotional roller coaster.

[She] also wants to be accepted. She walks on eggshells so she won't take the brunt of his criticism, victim stance, and blame shifting. Though tempted at times to explode at [him], she stuffs her feelings in an attempt to save their marriage. – Hawkins, Page 102

Saving the marriage at all costs becomes our main focus, until that final straw. We live in a fog until we're able to separate (for a long period of time) to process the difference between this toxic behavior and normal behavior. It's the only way to get healthy.

Emotional abuse, whether overt or covert, is powerfully damaging. For your health, it must stop. When you are connected to someone covertly manipulative and silently or secretly devious, you are being victimized. You deserve a life of safety, protections, and honor. – Hawkins, Page 105

\*Dr. Hawkins talks about having an intervention by standing up to the abuser. I would not suggest anyone trying this tactic without a large support system of people, therapists, and church elders to back you up and protect you. In many circumstances, this could put you in an unsafe environment.

[You may also enjoy: [How to Know if Divorce is the Best Option For You](#)]

## Why you feel so very alone.

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I have felt abandoned by three separate churches. None of these churches understood what exactly I was experiencing – not fully. Even when I tried to explain to the final church I was attending during my divorce, I was shunned. They actually believed, like many at the time, that he was a “nice guy.” Their answer was always, “Pray for him; he’ll come around.”

Too often the church not only fails to protect abused women but also refuses to hold men accountable for their abusive and narcissistic abuse. Often the church offers men protection while shaming women into going back to the abuse, all in the name of faith. – Hawkins, Page 124

Many women are patronized and told everything will be okay. They find church leadership refusing to delve deeply into matters or take critical stands. – Page 127

Many times the abuse was highly hidden or brushed off as just marital conflict, that a good marriage book or Christian counseling would cure. (Even the affairs were blamed on me for not providing my “wife duties” – when who would feel safe to be intimate in these conditions? I hear from clients all the time that don’t feel safe to do what many guilt us into doing as “Christian wives.”)

Secondary abuse is when others stand by and allow you to be abused. Secondary abuse is when pastors, therapists, friends, and family refuse to take a stand against abuse, leaving the victim to fend for herself. – Hawkins, Page 108

I would seek help and seek help, and seek help... but no one knew how exactly to help me. Even after my divorce, very few have understood. Not even our children who witnessed much of it. Very few still get what happened, why it happened, and I’m still being blamed. (Not that I take the blame.)

Women in narcissistic relationships feel alone because they are alone. Their mate cannot satisfy their emotional needs for empathic understanding and intimate connection. When seeking help, they are likely meet with ineffective therapy, friends who don't understand, and pastors who will pray with them but do nothing else. **It's like screaming in the middle of a crowded room and no one is coming to help.** – Hawkins, Page 80 {Emphasis mine.}

This is why “marriage counseling” is not suggested when dealing with a narcissist. Like Dr. Hawkins shares in this book, these men have tried to manipulate him – even threatening him or using other tactics. Not only will the narcissist use everything you've said in the safety of therapy against you, but he may also get the counselor on his side to convince you that you are the one with the problem.

[You May Also Need: When Divorcing a Narcissist Becomes Dangerous]

## Reclaiming your life.

Dr. Hawkins goes on to say that there's no black and white answer to “*should I stay or should I divorce*” when married to a narcissist. This answer lives in the gray areas of our lives, and I totally agree. That's why I've never told a woman she needs to divorce. That's not my place. Like he said...

Be wary of those who offer simplistic, black-and-white answers. – Page 172

Many of us weren't given a choice, while others had the courage to seek a separation and divorce. But no matter what road we're on, we all need to reclaim our lives – the person you were before you married the narcissist. The person God created you to be! **A woman of valor!**

To be fully and perfectly you will require receiving validation for what you have experienced.  
– Page 154

Reading and participating in this community, other online communities, support groups, reading books, and/or counseling with a qualified therapist or mentor to process through everything are great steps to finding validation and reclaiming your life.

When you find your safe place, you must tell your story. [Continued...] Offer yourself the unconditional positive regard and validation you deserve. Begin to experience empowerment as you move through the emotions associated with your losses. When you grieve your losses, you begin the healing process. You continue your healing when you sit with an understanding soul who grieves with you. – Hawkins, Page 154

Great stuff, *right?! Sounds like something I'd say. Too good not to share!*

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Women are SCREAMING in the middle of a crowded room (the Church) and NO ONE is offering the help they really need.

A final note...

God is not asking you to suffer in an abusive relationship. He has a much better life designed for you. – Hawkins, Page 70

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**Can you see how loving him has hurt you? Feel free to share your experiences in the comments.** (Real name not required.) **Planning on getting this book or have you read it?**

God bless your healing journey,







