

Emotional Abuse

Cris Paulson

That sick feeling when you know something is wrong, but you just can't name it. The dread that rolls your stomach when you see that person. Your stress rises when you hear their voice. You want to run but you can't—you have to be polite and listen. Or you spend hours trying to figure out what's REALLY wrong with your marriage.

The old song that says "Killing me softly, with his words..."

- You feel wrong for your choices, your personality, your sense of humor...
- You feel trapped or manipulated in every conversation.
- You feel dismissed and ignored, or stupid and unreasonable.
- You feel labeled, mishandled, roughed up.
- You probably wonder if you're crazy.

Is it a **Bully** who Accuses you, Belittles you and Overrules your choices... **the Wall** who gives you the Silent treatment... **the Victim** who rehashes all past hurts in threatening ways... **the Controller** who invades your privacy, is obsessive about where you are, when, who you are with, disregards Boundaries you have set... **the Memory Keeper** who never lets you forget the mistakes or confusion of the past, or remembers differently, then accuses you of lying... **the Narcissist** who doesn't even see you?

BUT GOD... is still there for you. He hasn't left you and will never leave you. He will give you wisdom to live with that person and not be erased.

1. It is not possible to stop emotional abuse through logic or reasoning because an abuser is not forming their actions through rationality or logic. It's often impossible to explain their patterns or cycles, but it's often helpful to identify patterns (paydays, phone calls from mom, worry, failures...)
2. Practice *quiet answers* (*Proverbs 15:1*). Stop fighting and tell them you won't fight any more. You will discuss like adults, if they are reasonable and are willing to solve the problem, not attack you.
3. Tell them God is your only Holy Spirit. They can't judge your heart, correct your thoughts or motives. You only have to answer to God, not a person. You only trust God totally, not them. If they say you're never logical enough (patient enough, sexy enough, understanding enough, respectful enough...), remind them that only God is perfect, and you need grace every day—God's and theirs.
4. Find things, people and activities that feed into you and give you joy. Life is more worth living if you have some "off" time every week. Develop your spiritual gifts, and your natural talents. Give to people, love on them, don't let threats or control stop this (as long as you can).
5. Talk to a trusted friend. Take the risk of telling them the truth about this relationship. Get help. If it gets really bad, or life-threatening, get out and stay out.

RESOURCES

Hope Ahead the book/classes by Barb Mulvey and Cris Paulson ("Spin Masters" in Chapter 7)
Books by Patricia Evans (not Christian, but super helpful)
What to Do When You're Being Abused by Your Husband by Robert Needham and Debra Pryce

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