

The Two Vows You Can Make to Free Yourself From a Manipulator

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I usually write about the mass-scale manipulations employed by the controllers of the political/media class, but I just wanted to tap out a brief essay sharing a tip I've found helpful for anyone who might be suffering as a result of a manipulative individual in their own life.

Manipulators basically only have one trick: getting you to believe stories which benefit them. This is true of propagandists, it is true of advertisers, it is true of cult leaders, it is true of con artists, and it is true of every amateur manipulator you know in person, whether it's an abusive partner, an ex, a family member, a co-worker, or an acquaintance. The only tool in their toolbox is narrative, and the tool only works if they can convince you to believe it. The only variations are in the specifics of the given story they're pushing, and the techniques they use to persuade you to believe it.

For manipulative individuals, the stories they'll try to get you to believe may change from day to day, and may be quite complex, involving any number of subjects and other people. But the techniques they use to get you to *believe* those stories are consistent and few: **they tell you things about themselves, and they tell you things about you.** If they can

hook you into believing those basic foundational narratives, they can get you to believe other, more complex narratives, which benefit them to the detriment of you and others.

If you have become aware that someone in your life is manipulating you in a damaging way, you will likely find it too complicated and difficult to sort through the specifics of all the spin and distortions in the things they've been saying to you to influence your thoughts, feelings and behavior. This is because they've been spending their whole lives honing their craft, while you're only just becoming aware that you are being manipulated. You can't out-manipulation a lifelong manipulator anymore than you can out-box someone who's been training boxing since they were a child. So don't try.

Instead, make these two simple vows, and keep them:

1. "I promise that I will never believe anything you tell me about yourself."

2. "I promise that I will never believe anything you tell me about myself."

(Now it should be said that the best way to deal with a manipulative narcissist is not to deal with a manipulative narcissist at all. If this isn't someone you have to interact with regularly, definitely don't go out of your way to make these two promises to them, because nothing good will come of it. It's enough to speak them to yourself and keep them. But if they are always in your face with manipulative narratives and you can't get rid of them for whatever reason, you may find that they'll quickly lose interest in you if you make these two promises to them out loud and then repeat them anytime they try to tell you things about themselves or about you. They will not like it, though.)

If you make and keep these two fundamental vows, then none of the tricks they've been spending their lives mastering will

find any purchase within you.

Watch them. Consciously pay attention to any time they are telling you about themselves or about you. You will notice that they do it very often, especially when you're doing something they don't like (in fact this is one revealing feature of a manipulator and can be a useful means of spotting them). They pull at your sympathy by telling you they're hurting, they pull at your loyalty by telling you how much they've done for you, they pull at your love by telling you how much they care about you. They pull at your guilt by telling you you're hurting them and you're being cruel, they pull at your need for approval by praising you, they pull at your fear and insecurities by telling you're defective and you need them.

If they can get you to believe stories about them, then they can begin persuading you that they're trustworthy storytellers and can get you subscribing to the rest of their narratives. If they can get you believing stories about yourself, then they can persuade you that you can't trust yourself to know what's true and what's right. Once they get you hooked with either of these, they have power over you. **If you keep refusing to believe anything they tell you about themselves or about you, they are powerless.**

Apply these tools retroactively, too. Go back in your mind and think about all the things the manipulator has ever told you about themselves and about yourself, and assure yourself on a very deep level that what they said is not to be believed. Actively disentangle your mind from belief in those narratives.

You are the author of your own narratives about the manipulator, not them. *You* are the author of your own narratives about yourself, not anybody else. *You* are in control. *You* are the author of your own narratives. Not them. Not anyone else. Just you.

Remember, people who make a lifestyle out of manipulation aren't like normal people with healthy empathy centers. They simply do not use language in the same way. While healthy people use language to form connections and figure out what's true, manipulators only use it to get what they want, whether it's control, money, sex, service, or whatever. You can't think of their words as normal human relating; you have to think of them more like octopus tentacles trying to reach into your mind and move stuff around. All you can really do is slam the door on those tentacles and refuse to let a single one into your mind. These two vows are how you slam that door.