



# GASLIGHTING

Discover and Recover  
from Toxic Relationships

@TherapywithKathyDan



## ABOUT ME



## KATHYDAN MOORE

As a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, I have counseled hundreds of people experiencing gaslighting in their personal lives. Although the terms “gaslighting,” “narcissist,” and “toxic relationship” are widely used in our culture, they are rarely understood.

The phrase originated from a 1944 movie called *Gas Light*. In the film, the husband manipulates his trusting wife into believing she can no longer trust her own perceptions of reality. In a pivotal scene, he causes the gaslights in the house to flicker by turning them on in the attic of the house. Yet when she asks why the gaslights are flickering, he insists that it’s not really happening and that it’s all in her mind, causing her to doubt her self-perception.

“Gaslighting” was born.

This worksheet is designed to you understand and identify gaslighting behaviors as well as provide clear steps to get you out of a toxic relationship.

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# UNDERSTANDING THE GASLIGHTING WARNING SIGNS

**Gaslighting** is a type of manipulation that causes you to doubt your own beliefs, sanity, or memory. Learning gaslighting warning signs can improve your resistance to this form of manipulation.



## DENIAL

"I never said that."  
"That's not how it happened at all."

The gaslighter tells the victim an event or conversation didn't happen, or didn't happen the way the victim remembers it.



## MINIMIZATION

"Whatever, It was nothing."  
"It's not a big deal anyway."

The gaslighter makes light of a serious situation or accusation.



## PROJECTION

"Maybe you're the one who's hiding something."  
"Well, I think you're lying to me."

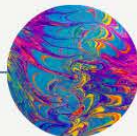
The gaslighter accuses the victim of the very behavior in which they are engaging.



## PUT-DOWNS

"You're an idiot. You have no idea what you are saying."  
"You sound crazy when you talk like that."

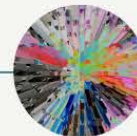
The gaslighter insults and degrades the victim so they come to doubt themselves.



## AVOIDANCE

Turning up the radio during conversation.  
Leaving the house and not returning.

The gaslighter refuses to engage in conversation with the victim or address their concerns.



## THREATS

"If you can't see my point of view, this relationship is over."  
"I will make sure you can't keep the kids."  
The gaslighter threatens negative outcomes for not trusting them or their perspective.

# 8 WAYS TO NAVIGATE GASLIGHTING BEHAVIORS



It can be incredibly painful to remove yourself from a gaslighting relationship. But it is possible. Greater emotional awareness and self-regulation, both in knowledge and practice, are the cure to gaslighting.

- 1** MAKE SURE IT IS GASLIGHTING. True gaslighting develops into a repeated pattern of manipulation. The person gaslighting you generally wants you to doubt yourself and depend on their version of reality.
- 2** SORT OUT TRUTH FROM DISTORTION. Start collecting evidence. Documenting interactions can help track what is happening. When they deny a conversation or event took place, you can check for yourself.
- 3** TALK TO YOUR CLOSE FRIENDS. Get a reality check on your spouse's behavior. Seeking input from different people in your life can help reinforce your knowledge that you aren't confused, "crazy," or losing your memory.
- 4** SPEAK UP ABOUT THE BEHAVIOR. Gaslighting works because it confuses you and shakes your confidence. If you show that the behavior doesn't bother you, the person trying to gaslight you may decide it isn't worth it.
- 5** FOCUS ON SELF CARE. Taking care of your physical and emotional needs probably won't do anything to directly address the gaslighting, but good self-care can still make a difference by improving your state of mind.
- 6** REMAIN CONFIDENT IN YOUR VERSION OF EVENTS. Everyone occasionally remembers things differently. But don't give in to the urge to question yourself - they want you to doubt your reality.
- 7** BE OKAY WITH LEAVING. Part of what makes it difficult to leave the relationship is that the gaslighter may be the one "someone" you have committed to. It's okay to walk away from toxicity, regardless of the source.
- 8** SEEK PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT. Gaslighting can become serious, even abusive and emotional abuse is often difficult to confront. Consulting with a therapist is always a great first step.

# 5 SCRIPTS TO USE IN RESPONSE TO GASLIGHTING



When responding to gaslighters, less is more. Narcissists enjoy combative engagement and you want to minimize fueling those exchanges. Here are responses you can use to shut it down.

- 1 "You're crazy!" "I know what I saw, and I know I'm not crazy. Going forward, I'd love it if we could both avoid name calling."
- 2 "You're too sensitive." "Yes. I have strong emotions and that is part of being human."
- 3 "It was only a joke." "You may see it that way, but I find it insulting. So, I'd love for you to be more sensitive moving forward."
- 4 "This is your fault." "I hope we can work on this together without blaming one another."
- 5 "You made me do it." "We are both adults, and I haven't forced you to do anything."

## ADDITIONAL RESPONSES:

- "We remember things differently."
- "If you continue to speak to me like this I'm not engaging."
- "I hear you and that isn't my experience."
- "I am walking away from this conversation."
- "I'm not interested in debating what happened with you."