

*"This book should be the required reading handbook  
for everyone who has ever been betrayed."*

—THELMA SOARES, mother of Lori Hacking,  
whose life ended because of betrayal.



shattered

A HANDBOOK FOR DEALING WITH EMOTIONAL ABUSE

*Six steps  
from betrayal  
to recovery*



*Fay A. Klingler and Bettyanne Bruin*

## **Shattered: Six Steps from Betrayal to Recovery**

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# Table of Contents

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Foreword by Thelma Soares xii

Foreword by Rita Smith xvii

Acknowledgments xix

Introduction xxi

## **Chapter One, Awareness 1**

*Ask to see things as they really are. Trust your instinct. Acknowledge reality. Look for the signs.*

## **Chapter Two, Acceptance 17**

*Acknowledge and accept your reality and take responsibility for your future. Emotionally disconnect. Recognize patterns of behavior. Manage your fear and anger.*

## **Chapter Three, Action 37**

*Get on your knees and ask for God's blessings and direction, then stand on your feet and do what is right. Act, don't just react. Consider what you want from the confrontation. Consider where you will confront. Consider when you will confront. Consider how you will confront. Observe quietly. Set reasonable limits. Consider how you will evaluate the confrontation. Try again. Ensure your safety. Take the risk of making life better. Rely on God. Trust what you know to be true.*

## **Chapter Four, Authorization 83**

*Give yourself permission to talk, to listen, to rebuild trust, and to act with confidence. Share your experience with family. Share your experience with friends. Write your experience in a journal. Look to others for support. Develop faith in God. Trust and care for yourself. Seek professional help when necessary. Rebuild your trust in mankind.*

## **Chapter Five, Accountability 113**

*In fairness, hold yourself and others accountable, and free yourself through forgiveness so you can visualize beyond your past and look with hope into the possibilities of the future. Own your part in the betrayal. Develop your bill of rights. Hold others accountable. Forgive the other person. Forgive yourself.*

## **Chapter Six, Advancement 139**

*With belief in yourself, take charge of your life, and chart a new course to advance and bloom. Visualize your camp. Control the outcome. Follow a plan. Commit time and effort. Create balance. Believe in yourself. Lighten your load. Serve others. Keep your perspective.*

Epilogue 165

Suggested Reading List 167

About the Authors 171

Index 173

# Foreword

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*by Thelma Soares  
Mother of Lori Hacking,  
whose life ended because of betrayal*

This book is a significant breakthrough—it should be the required reading “handbook” for everyone who has ever been betrayed. Fay and Bettyanne have gone to great lengths to bring awareness to the physical and emotional abuse of betrayal that temporarily clouds the minds and destroys the hearts of many innocent people. The title, *Shattered*, describes exactly how I feel, and as I read the book, I am impressed with the timeliness of its message and Fay and Bettyanne’s insight borne of personal experience. I wish I’d had this book years ago as I was struggling through a painful divorce.

Domestic violence is still considered to be primarily physical abuse, and while great efforts have been made to reduce the degrading and disgusting behavior of physical abuse, emotional abuse—specifically in the form of betrayal—has yet to be fully recognized for its tragic and devastating effects. Unlike physical abuse, emotional abuse leaves no visible physical scars but instead penetrates unseen to the very core, leaving in its wake silent, debilitating destruction of the inner spirit. What follows betrayal is a lengthy struggle

(usually many years) to understand and deal with this emotional and mental trauma.

My daughter, Lori Hacking, suffered the ultimate betrayal, and her death has changed my life and the lives of my extended family forever. I do not now, nor I may ever in this life, comprehend everything that went so wrong amidst a world that seemed so right. I will mourn for her until the day I die. The domino effect is in full force. But the wisdom found in *Shattered* and the loving support of people around the world have helped me cope with this tragedy.

I hope Lori will be remembered for the remarkable young woman she was and for her natural ability to find the best in everyone she met. My heart goes out to all those who find themselves, through the goodness of their hearts, in a situation similar to hers. May you have the courage and fortitude to take the necessary steps now to protect yourself against being innocently caught up in a web of lies or tolerating anyone who attempts to break you down through any type of physical or emotional abuse—specifically in the form of betrayal.

May those who have suffered from the effects of betrayal find the peace and solace you need to move beyond this highly misunderstood and painful act to the life you desire and deserve.

Lori was an exceptional student at the University of Utah, where she received the President's Award for outstanding scholastic achievement. She was selected as the George S. Eccles Intern in Business Policy through the Hinckley Institute of Politics. She was also nominated for membership in Beta Gamma Sigma, the honor society for collegiate schools of business. Lori graduated cum laude in December 1999 with a bachelor's degree in Management. In her honor, the Lori Kay Soares Hacking Memorial Scholarship is awarded to a woman in the David Eccles School of Business who

## FOREWORD

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is disadvantaged through abuse, family difficulties, or other life circumstances, providing tuition for her junior and senior years. Contributions to the scholarship fund can be made online at [rememberlori.com](http://rememberlori.com) or [lori.utah.edu](http://lori.utah.edu), by calling 1-800-561-LORI, or by mailing contributions to: Lori Kay Soares Hacking Memorial Scholarship Fund University of Utah Development Office, 201 Presidents Circle, Room 302, Salt Lake City, UT 84112

Everyone is invited to honor Lori's memory by making a contribution to her scholarship fund that will share the values and ideals she exemplified with future generations of students.

*Thelma Soares*

# Foreword

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*by Rita Smith*  
*Executive Director, National Coalition*  
*Against Domestic Violence*

Devastating emotional violence is what a person feels after being victimized by one who has betrayed.

The authors of *Shattered* have put together an empowering book, including firsthand accounts of what it feels like to be innocently absorbed into, survive, and escape the painful world of betrayal. There are no miracle cures for abuse and violence. The advice and counsel provided in these pages can provide a path away from the violence. It comes from those who have been there, experts who know all the ins and outs of this life-altering tragedy and how to recover and once again lead a happy, successful, and productive life.

Betrayers may think they are not doing anything wrong. Or they may think they won't get caught, or that they can talk their way out of any given situation. If they can't talk their way out of it, they may think the consequences will be too light to necessitate a change in their behavior. But in reality, the betrayer or abuser is solely responsible for choosing his or her actions.

The suggested steps in *Shattered* enable a betrayed person to break the vicious patterns of victimization. These steps are based on an individual's core beliefs

and his or her ability to build healthy self-respect and self-value; to act, not just react; to develop strategies for creating and achieving sound goals and overcoming obstacles.

There are many local domestic violence programs that provide batterer's education or intervention services in communities across the United States. If you would like to talk to someone or find out about the domestic violence resources in your community, contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline, 1-800-799-7233, or go to [www.ndvh.org](http://www.ndvh.org).

*Rita Smith*

# Introduction

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You have been betrayed. Perhaps at this moment, you cannot imagine how your life could be put back together. What does the future hold for you? How do you get this type of traumatic pain behind you? Can you ever trust again?

The pain of betrayal is excruciating. This particular kind of victimization is emotionally all-encompassing. Yet, unlike Humpty Dumpty, you can, with the help of a strong, external support system and a firm, internal belief system, put your life together again.

Betrayal is defined as the act of not being loyal to a person who believes you are loyal to him or her, often by doing something that hurts that person. Synonymous words showing up in the thesaurus are: cheating, dishonesty, duplicity, treachery, disloyalty, deception, and perfidy. One definition of perfidy sums up well the act of betrayal: A deliberate breach of faith; a calculated violation of trust.

Be it an affair or leading a double life, the consuming pain created in the wake of betrayal is nearly insurmountable. Gone is trust. Erased is the reality of what one's life was expected to be. True love is replaced with feelings of being used. Reasoning of the human mind can scarcely take in all of what happens with this subtle crime. Betrayal is often unseen, has no smell, no sound, no whistling bells or honking horns. But it

creeps, little by little, into a person's life, and for hours, days, years, or a lifetime a person can be victimized without even realizing it, until the betrayal is identified.

Having suffered the devastating effects of betrayal, or perfidy, as described above, Fay Klingler and Bettyanne Bruin, at one time, perhaps like you, wondered how they would ever put their lives back together. Yet, with the help of family, friends, professionals in the field of betrayal, great books, faith and prayer, years of hard work, and forging ahead (sometimes, it seemed, against all odds) they survived, and *you can too*.

During their survival process, Fay and Bettyanne, individually, met many people who also survived betrayal. These betrayed but courageous people shared their stories about survival and how they have since built emotionally healthy lives. As a result of meeting these incredible people, a collaborative book emerged.

*Shattered* is meant to help and encourage all who desire to recover from this unwelcome, uninvited devastation, whether you are the one who was betrayed, the loved one of a betrayed person, or someone who hopes to avoid ever being betrayed.

Interwoven within this carefully scripted book are the stories of exceptional people who found a way to recover from one of life's biggest traumas. Their stories are real, but other than Enid Greene (whose story is nationally known), their identities have been masked to prevent any violation of confidence. In sharing their true-life accounts, Emily, Martha, Sarah, Todd, Enid, Whitney, Kami, and Barbara illustrate the emotional bombs that were unexpectedly dropped onto their hearts and temporarily shattered the well-being of their lives. There are remarkable similarities in their sources of strength to recover. This is the magic of it all—the power of the human mind and heart that allows a person to

overcome all odds and re-emerge emotionally healthy.

Emily was an editor taken advantage of by her writer friend Ann.

Martha struggled with her husband over finances.

Sarah found porn sites on the history of her husband's computer.

Todd's wife left him for another man.

Enid's husband duped her, embezzling her campaign funds and "borrowing" millions of dollars from her father.

Whitney chose to stay in her marriage, even after discovering her husband was having an affair.

Kami feared her violent husband would take her life.

Barbara experienced the pain of her husband's repeated indiscretions.

As these individuals and various aspects of their stories are discussed, you may want to refer to the index in the back of the book, where they are listed by first name, in order for you to be able to follow their stories.

All of the factors for your recovery are encompassed in *Shattered*. You just need to recognize and act upon these survival skills. In this book, professionals in the field of betrayal recovery show how to enjoy all the happiness life, love, and laughter can bring. Fay and Bettyanne would now like to join whatever motivation caused you to pick up this book and help you move forward to regain the life you desire and deserve.

We begin with the story of Emily...

## CHAPTER ONE

# The First Step—Awareness

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*Real knowledge is to know the extent of one's ignorance.—Confucius*

Little did Emily realize when she met Ann at a writers' conference that her world was about to be turned upside down. And understandably so. Ann was an older, intriguing person with an international background.

A professional editor, Emily felt uncomfortable when Ann was with her, but still she pursued the relationship. Her instinct or gut told her Ann would use her, but her brain said she could learn from her. Ann appeared knowledgeable about women from other countries, and Emily wanted to gain some of that knowledge.

Ann was in the process of writing a book. As an editor and as a new friend, Emily offered to look over her materials. Ann was an exceptional writer, and Emily learned a lot by reading Ann's work.

The more work Emily did for her, however, the more Ann requested. She would call at Emily's office to tell her she just faxed over another piece of her book. "Could you take a look at it *now*?" Ann asked. "I need it for a meeting with my publisher this afternoon."

Emily's daughter said Ann was using her because she only called when she wanted something. Emily's husband began to resent the time she gave to Ann. At last, the pressure became so great that Emily felt she had to confront Ann.

The next time Ann called, Emily told her she couldn't work any longer for free. Ann said, "Oh, you didn't think I was going to let you do all that work for nothing, did you? Of course I'm going to pay you. The next time I see you, I'll give you \$500. I really need you to take a few minutes, though, and look at the piece I just faxed to you. Could you do that?"

Of course the money was never paid. And without explanation, the phone calls and requests ceased for several months. Then out of the blue one day, Ann called and said sweetly. "Hello, Emily, did you think I had dropped off the face of the earth? You could have called me, you know!"

Emily's gut said, *This is manipulation. She's trying to make me feel like I failed to do something so I'll feel obligated to say yes to what she is going to ask.* And sure enough, another request was made.

Who was the betrayer and who was the betrayed?

Emily admits she allowed the *using* to go further than she should have. "I just gave her too much benefit of a doubt and didn't speak up from the start about what I would and wouldn't take. I did learn from her, but I should have asked to be paid in the beginning."

## Trust Your Instinct

Martha's husband was always unpredictable and moody. Sometimes he was physically abusive to her and to the children. But she wanted so badly for the marriage to work that she bandaged reality, bandaged it with so many layers the wounds were hardly visible.

Because she could not tolerate contention, she never stood up to him for any length of time. “I used to think of myself as a mouse, actually,” she confides. “I just couldn’t stand arguing or the ugly feelings that followed. I admit I was afraid of him. I knew if I pressured him for information about finances, he’d threaten to hit me. So I learned to let it go for long stretches of time.”

Martha admits her instinct hinted something was wrong, something way beyond his loss of temper.

“One day, I was walking with a neighbor and she told me how she heard of men having private post office boxes to hide mail from their wives,” said Martha. “I told my neighbor my husband would never do anything like that!” She remembers briefly weighing the possibility in her mind, but honestly believing what she said about him.

A week or so later, Martha was looking for something in her husband’s nightstand drawer and noticed an envelope addressed to him. But the address wasn’t for the home—it was for a post office box. When she first confronted him, he made light of it and turned the conversation around, asking why she was prying through his things. When she pressed the confrontation further, he got angry. “Loud and angry,” she remembers. Taking a risk, she stood her ground and insisted the post office box be closed and demanded there be no more secrets. She requested to know everything about their finances and asked to take over the bill paying. Their explosive conversation died down with his agreement.

Even after what he claimed to be full disclosure, Martha’s uneasiness increased. The months that followed were filled with tension and lots of questions. “Now tell me again why we have this bill,” she pleaded with him. His answers were elusive and accompanied with anger. “I was exhausted,” Martha said. “Trying to persist with the pulling and tugging for information

wore me out. So I fell back into my old, mousy pattern and gave the finances back to him. He promised to pay off the loans and get us out of debt.”

As the years passed, Martha’s uneasiness grew. “Sometimes I’d look at him and wonder if he was leading a double life. I even commented to him once, ‘It feels like we’re in two different worlds, like there’s a whole part of your life I don’t know about.’” But she never pressured him beyond the surface. “I should have followed up on that gnawing feeling,” she said later.

The marriage lasted nine more years. That uneasy feeling was so strong by then that Martha did something she’d never before had the courage to do. “I knelt in prayer,” she said. “I asked God, ‘Let me see things as they really are.’” She pleaded over and over to see reality.

Reality hit like suddenly opened floodgates. Her teenage son suspected his father had stolen his savings from his bank account and asked Martha to investigate. The bank confirmed her husband had removed \$200 each month, leaving nothing in her son’s account. Her husband claimed the bank made a mistake.

Her ecclesiastical leader called to ask Martha if she knew about all the welfare money that had been provided by the church to her family over the past months. He didn’t seem surprised that she was totally unaware. By investigating, she found the money had been used to pay for their motorhome and boat, along with her husband’s business long distance calls.

She found over forty charge cards and loans with her name attached. When she called the banks and companies, the answers to her questions were always the same. “But I don’t know anything about this loan,” she would say. “How did my name get on that card? I didn’t apply for it.” The response: “We have your signature on the application.”

Collection agencies started calling. Loans that her husband told her had been closed were still owing, with increased balances. And yes, there was again a secret post office box!

Who was the betrayer and who was betrayed?

## Acknowledge Reality

Although they were innocent betrayers, in the sense that they allowed or enabled Martha's husband and Ann to take advantage of them, Martha and Emily betrayed themselves. Often during her marriage, Martha felt uneasy. Like Emily, she admits she was partly to blame. "I should have followed up on that gnawing feeling."

Fundamentally, Emily and Ann did a trade—editing for knowledge. A trade, that is, until Ann said she was going to pay but never did. There was no real harm done, other than a loss of time and money for Emily perhaps. But in Martha's case, that enabling held an expensive price tag, a life-changing domino or ripple effect that made a difference for her and for everyone who knew her.

Whether consciously or unconsciously, Martha chose to deny or ignore reality. But what is denial? As defined in *Webster's Dictionary*, denial is "a refusal to acknowledge." In this case, Martha refused to acknowledge her instincts and the warnings and happenings of real life. In fact, what she really did was create a *reality* that worked for her but was far from *real*.

According to Dorann C. Mitchell, a licensed clinical social worker with a diploma in psychoanalytic psychotherapy, "Denial is an unconscious defense mechanism that must be called into the conscious mind before decisions can be made regarding a person's

reality.” (Dorann C. Mitchell, in interview with Bettyanne Bruin.)

With this thought in mind, it is important to understand that *healthy denial* is an instinctive self-defense or coping mechanism that helps a person adjust to traumatic situations, like death or divorce. This type of denial is a temporary, slowly releasing state of shock that can soften the blow of troubling events. However, *unhealthy denial* is the tool that stops an individual from seeing (and effectively dealing with) another person’s harmful words and actions. In the case of unhealthy denial, the other person’s harmful words retreat into the betrayed’s subconscious mind. The result is a masking of the facts and an unwillingness to recognize and respond to reality.

When reality is out of control or difficult to manage, a person may attempt (either consciously or unconsciously) to stay in his or her comfort zone and not deal with the pain. Instead, he or she might retreat into the safe cave of denial, where a person can be surrounded by the feeling that everything is under control.

Because of the manipulative tactics used by the betrayer, denial is sometimes difficult to understand and identify. Some forms of denial include:

- Ignoring or allowing any kind of abusive behavior
- Overlooking the obvious or just skimming across the surface of a problem
- Disregarding or burying one’s instincts
- Letting important things pass by
- Creating a delusional world that helps one to cope

Dorann C. Mitchell also states, “Some might feel that denial is a wonderful place for a person to be, but it certainly creates a lot of problems for the people around him or her as they scramble to fill in the blanks

for the person unable to deal with real life” (ibid.). In this case, the person unable to deal with real life is the person being betrayed.

In addition to disregarding her instincts or that “gnawing feeling,” as she put it, Martha’s fears got in the way of her accepting reality. “I couldn’t fail! It never even entered my mind that I could allow our marriage to end. But looking back, I see I went overboard in my attempt to make it succeed. I think he took advantage of my unquestioning, complete commitment.” Martha continues, “There were many times I feared him. At one point in our marriage, I realized it wasn’t safe to leave the children with him. He was so unpredictably explosive. So I tried not to go out in the evenings, once he came home.” In the name of commitment, Martha continued in the relationship. “I had to make it work,” she stated.

When a person is in the state of unhealthy denial, the world of reality threatens to disrupt how the person wants life to be, which is one of the reasons why a person backs off so easily and continues to ignore things as they really are.

Martha often bypassed the *who*, *what*, *where*, *when*, and *why* of volatile issues. She told herself she needed to think the best of her husband and make the best of the situation (which is one of the traits of a person prone to denial). Until she asked to see things as they really were, Martha followed the victim’s creed that “people don’t lie, especially to the one they love.” She skimmed over important details, and, blinded by her commitment, moved on, never even questioning her husband’s integrity.

By the time Martha ceased to deny reality, her husband had crossed so many lines that, to her, no more lines could be drawn. With nothing more to lose, reality replaced her fear of loss. The more she investigated,

the more she found. Finances were not the only problem. Before their divorce was final, Martha discovered her husband had secretly married another woman in another state.

Denial's greatest ally is fear—fear of what one might lose. As long as a person fears losing something, denial has a place to grow.

Change can only happen in the *real* world.

## Look for the Signs

Sarah was a confident, outgoing mother of four. But, when month after month she consistently found porn sites on the history of her husband's computer, she feared the worst. Was Richard hooked on pornography? Had he stepped out on her? And if he had stepped out on her, should she leave him? How would her children survive without a father? Afraid of what answers might come as a result of those questions, fear became Sarah's driving force. Once again, as she had done so many times in the past, Sarah set the issue aside, denying its importance.

As mentioned before, not all denial is bad. A healthy dose of denial can be a blessing at a time when a situation in its entirety is too painful to accept. With the death of a loved one, for example, it is fortunate that denial sets in and allows a person to accept the unacceptable in small doses. But in Martha's situation and in Sarah's case, denial became an unhealthy tool used to avoid dealing with the problems that encompassed their painful realities.

In the case of betrayal, once the stage of denial is passed, reality must be explored. Who is the betrayer? Why does one person betray another? How does a person know if he or she has been betrayed, and what are the signs to look for?

Unlike Emily and Martha, true betrayers do not act from a point of innocence. They have a hidden, selfish agenda. They want something and intend to get it regardless of any moral cost. Deceptive and disloyal, they are ready to betray a trust to fulfill their goals. Their faithlessness can lead to seduction, emotional or physical abuse, or desertion.

Betrayers do not discriminate. Men and women are both betrayed. Victims include the wealthy and the poor, the young and the old, the educated and the uneducated.

Why do they betray? For some, it is as simple as wanting something for nothing, like Ann befriending Emily to get editing without paying for it. For others, it is because they have developed that pattern of living—either by watching someone betray another to achieve a goal, or by practicing betrayal themselves, little by little deceiving others and getting away with it. As a person becomes accustomed to deceit, lying feels more comfortable than telling the truth. Some individuals simply find reaching their goals easier through betrayal rather than through acts of integrity. Others enjoy the thrill of conniving and manipulating to fulfill a plan.

Betrayal comes in many forms. These forms can be termed as follows:

#### ■ Emotional betrayal

At times hardly noticeable, emotional betrayal is the act of manipulating someone's mind to achieve a specific purpose. It may be gaining support by telling someone you love them, when in reality your affection is seated elsewhere. In other words, emotional betrayal includes leading an individual to believe one thing when you know reality is something else. It can be a withholding of information or communication. Or it could be ridiculing someone or directing his or her

thoughts to produce the feeling that he or she is incapable of doing anything other than what the betrayer asks to be done.

### ■ Financial betrayal

Financial betrayal is using someone's name or money without consent, or refusing to spend money on things that are necessary. Financial betrayal can also be exerting power to control, such as in the case where a man ensures his wife has no financial independence or, on the other hand, where he exploits her earning ability.

### ■ Environmental betrayal

This type of betrayal is conducted through fear. Often it prevents the betrayed from ever breaking free. For example, the betrayer gains an individual's confidence and then exerts power over him or her, either physically or mentally, so the individual feels isolated and fears the negative consequences of talking to others or seeking help outside the betrayer's environment.

Environmental betrayal may also include neglect, such as not responding appropriately to illness or injury.

### ■ Sexual betrayal

Sexual betrayal may be adultery or just a flirtatious affair. It also includes inappropriate intimate demands, such as when a woman is ill or recovering from childbirth and her husband tells her he loves her, but insists he must have sex now, even though it may be harmful to her health.

Regardless of the term, betrayal occurs whenever someone, especially an individual perceived to be trustworthy, violates another. Betrayal is usually subtle, but almost always involves determined manipulation and deceit.

Like a whale rising to the surface for air, betrayal has its surface points. These points come up like dots in a dot-to-dot book. But it's not just the connecting dots, like unpaid bills or observations of porn on the Internet, that create a clearly drawn picture. What dwells in the spaces between the dots is just as important, and sometimes far more, than what becomes visible on the surface. Some signs or spaces between the dots might be:

■ Unreasonable defensiveness and a resistance to open communication or participation

Most questions, especially to an intimate partner, should not generate resistance. A defensive attitude can be a sign that the partner is protecting someone, something, or a certain situation.

Emotionally healthy people usually don't feel threatened by being asked to respond to questions. If an individual truly cares about another person and is anxiously concerned about their well-being, he or she will do whatever it reasonably takes to help him or her work through concerns or questions. When it comes to healthy relationships, if a reasonable question is asked in a reasonable manner, a reasonable answer should be expected.

■ Minimization/maximization

Minimizing can be compared to a telescope. The focus on you is enlarged while the focus on him or her is reduced. Many times, in the face of betrayal, minimizing/maximizing takes place, meaning one minimizes the problem while attempting to maximize the focus somewhere else. "If you think I have problems, what about the guy down the street? My problems are little compared to his." Your relationship, however, isn't

with the guy down the street. So that kind of statement is not a valid comparison but an effort to distract.

Minimizing might also be reducing the act to a generalized judgment. “Your concerns are so petty.” A concern is not petty when it comes to a wife having no idea where a husband has been, and then he comes home at two in the morning, smelling of women’s perfume. What caring person minimizes his or her partner’s feelings as petty?

### ■ Entitlement

Continually there are right choices and wrong choices placed before us. Within a couple’s relationship, there are issues, standards, activities, and behaviors both parties agree to abide by within the framework of, and out of respect for, the relationship. These commitments or understandings become the *right* things to do. Actions and decisions made outside this agreement become the *wrong* things to do. Sometimes, as in the case of betrayal or other matters of discontent within marriage, entitlement enters the picture. When this happens, entitlement becomes just another word for rationalization.

Professionally, when time is invested in a job, a worker is entitled to receive a paycheck because performing his or her duties and receiving pay in return is the agreed *right* thing to do. An employee is entitled to be paid. However, entitlement is wrong when it is used to protect a *wrong* thing or choice—used to justify or rationalize. In this case, it becomes a warning sign or a waving, red flag, as in the case of a marriage where a certain couple agreed both partners would work to pay their bills. When the husband reneged on his end of the deal, the wife complicated the situation by the distraction of entitlement. “Because I work and not you,” the wife said, “I am *entitled* to spend money any

way I see fit, even if it means paying three hundred dollars of my hard-earned money for this pair of pants instead of paying the bills we agreed on.”

Instead of reframing a *right* path for the couple by discussing why the partner couldn't work, or if he could, when and how, the wife chose actions based on what she felt was right for her personally, ignoring her responsibilities to the relationship.

Many times, a betrayer, in his or her mind, uses entitlement as a means of justifying behavior. Oftentimes, this unreasonable behavior surfaces in a betrayer's normal expression of thoughts, ideas, or explanations of actions or events.

### ■ Manipulation

“You're crazy, I wouldn't do something like that.”  
“You're making it look worse than it really is.”

Betrayers are usually good at playing mind games. They take advantage of your trust and your willingness to take what he or she says as truth and question only yourself. The betrayer's fabricated *truth* becomes your *reality*.

### ■ Rationalization

Rationalization comes in the form of excusing a partner's poor behavior. “Bill had to leave for three days. But it's okay that he didn't tell anyone where he was going because he's under so much stress at work.”

Loving, intimate relationships do not work this way. A partner does not leave for three days without telling where he or she is going. An enabler makes excuses for his or her partner to create in the mind's eye a fantasy that represents the person they wish to be married to.

“My wife drinks because her father did.” In reality the wife’s father did not force her to drink. She drank because she chose to drink. Using rationalization to excuse poor behavior is enabling because, when it really gets down to it, there is *no* excuse for poor behavior.

Can you show up for work late and rationalize that you never learned as a child to be on time? In certain situations there is cause to understand and make room for human error. But rationalizing chronic behavior is simply a form of denying reality.

### ■ Guilt transference

One tool of the betrayer is shifting blame to someone else. “If only you wouldn’t make me so mad, then I wouldn’t have to lie.” The person being betrayed plays into the betrayer’s hand when he or she becomes convinced the greater problem or solution is with him or her, not with the betrayer. To deflect responsibility, instead of focusing on the lie, the betrayer concentrates his or her efforts on the person being betrayed. Convinced the betrayer is rational and reasonable, the person being betrayed tries to find ways to make personal changes that will positively affect the betrayer. “Maybe if I was a better listener (more patient, more open-minded... ) like he says, then he wouldn’t have to lie to me.” “Maybe if I was nicer, then she would want to come home to me instead of that other guy.”

An individual’s choice to lie (or to commit adultery) is a character flaw that has nothing to do with anyone else’s choices or behavior.

■ Emotional disconnection or consistent preoccupation—the “anybody home” syndrome—coupled with unexplained agitation and anger

Betrayers might stare off in the distance as though in another world, or shrug their shoulders and appear not to care about important issues. They may have a delayed reaction or no reaction at all to real-life situations, or never reveal their emotional thoughts or feelings. When emotional disconnection occurs, a person can become so preoccupied with his or her *hidden* thoughts that unexplained agitation takes place as the outside world becomes a nuisance to the disturbing thoughts inside. It is as though the person *checks out*—builds up a wall to protect his or her secrets or hidden motives.

■ Coercion

Coercion is the use of force, either real or implied, through fear and intimidation, especially in response to something that is not necessarily wrong. A betrayer might say, “If you call your mother like that again, I’ll shut off our long distance.” “Do what I say, or else there is going to be trouble.” And most of these unreasonable attempts to coerce are to cover a world unknown to the person being betrayed.

Most attempts to coerce begin with the word *if* or include the words *or else*.

For the victim of betrayal, the desire to be loved and the desire to trust are far more powerful than the desire to see reality or to believe someone is betraying him or her. But like early cancer detection, if the shield of denial is lowered and the first signs of betrayal are discovered and confronted, there can be hope for repair, hope of a turn in the road—a healthier path followed, and a hope of healing.



# INDEX

---

## A

- abandonment, fear of, 17
- ability, to choose more  
    confidently, 75; to do, 28,  
    104; to exact revenge, 28;  
    to form and keep  
    friendships, 110; to fulfill  
    goals, 157; to make good  
    decisions, 59, 111; to  
    move forward, 110, 138,  
    158; to see things as they  
    really are, 72; to succeed,  
    153; to take action, 16; to  
    visualize, 157;  
    exploitation of earning,  
    10
- abuse, identified, 123; and  
    PTSD, 107; cope with,  
    28; faithlessness leads to,  
    9; list of, 21–27; not  
    serious enough, 20; talk  
    about, 161, walk away  
    from, 121
- abuser, begin relationships  
    as, 123; rid yourself of,  
    97
- abusive actions, history of,  
    63; recognize, 62. *See*  
    *also* list, abusive actions
- accepting, acts of betrayal,  
    17, 130; an apology, 133;  
    challenges, 149; emotions  
    as truth, 105;  
    responsibility, 58, 68,  
    117–118, 125, 136; the  
    Lord’s will, 81; yourself,  
    105, 127. *See also*  
    acceptance
- acceptance, a pivotal point,  
    35; can only occur when,  
    17; defined, 18, 56; is a  
    choice, 118; new level of,  
    56; of reality, 16, 37, 56,  
    77, 98–99, 104, 119, 131;  
    similar to grieving, 27; to  
    imagined camp, 166; fear  
    in the way of, 7; painful,  
    8
- accountability, 113–119; 124–  
    127; can take you to, 166;  
    learn about, 141. *See also*  
    accountable
- accountable, for good or bad,  
    114; for own actions,  
    116–117, 124, 129, 138;  
    to hold, 47, 80; other  
    person, 116, 121, 123–  
    129, 131, 138. *See also*  
    accountability
- actions, define personal  
    values, 38, 41, 61, 74,  
    143; determined by other  
    party, 42, 47, 58–59, 64,  
    128; in isolation, 20; may  
    be criminal, 20; to bring  
    about change, 16, 50, 53,

- 57, 62, 75, 77–82, 91, 128, 166; to cope with abuse, 28, 53, 62, 121; to demonstrate change, 137, 152, 163; to mend the wounds, 27; to prevent future hurt, 31; to stop betrayal, 29, 32, 37, 101; wrong things to do, 12–13; dealing with, 6; destructive choices, 62, 89; explanations of, 13, 133; face facts with, 17; fraudulent, 40. *See also* accountability; abusive actions; list, abusive actions
- adultery, choice to commit, 14; sexual betrayal may be, 10
- advancement, 139–163; to imagined camp, 166
- affair, Barbara's husband, 109–110; sexual betrayal may be, 10; Veronica's husband, 69; Whitney's husband, 59
- agency, of others, 77; is supreme power, 118–119; to make the relationship work, 58; to overcome loss, 110; defend, 119; right of, 124; gift of, 140
- agitation, unexplained, 15
- Alcoholics Anonymous, 98
- Allredge, Ida Romney, 92
- anger, 28–35; drive actions, 37, 129; chronic, 118; cope with, 92; dealing with other person's, 56; emotionally paralyzing, 136; focus on, 51; give up, 130–131, 133, 139–140; unexplained, 15
- attitude, determines view of behavior, 38; defensive, 11; deviant, 33; other party's, 32, 49, 54, 57, 60, 126; people with healthy, 102; people with unhealthy, 102; power of, 103; responsibility for, 115, 118; your 55, 73, 77, 103, 157–158
- aware, of accountability, 127; of surroundings, 149; of the good things, 73; of the power, 92; of trigger points, 108; of what you say, 103; genuinely not, 32; support is based, 95. *See also* awareness
- awareness, act with, 57; helps avoid betrayal, 109; is a choice, 118; to imagined camp, 166; confrontation can provide, 32; rely on, 134; self, 75. *See also* aware

**B**

- balance, achieving, 83; is the key, 160; create, 154–156; maintaining 154–156, 160–162
- Barbara, xxii–xxiii, 109–111, 129, 131, 136–137, 140, 165–166
- battering, 75
- behavior, addictive, 98; alternative, 61; and therapy, 108; betrayer's explanation of, 47; change, 132–133; combative, 56; justifying, 13, 114, 117, 126; ignoring or allowing abusive, 6, 13–14, 34, 56;

- manipulative, 54;  
 objectively look at, 19,  
 151; positive, 60, 127;  
 recognize patterns of, 20–  
 28, 93, 109; responsibility  
 for, 115–116;  
 unacceptable, 84, 125;  
 unreasonable, 13, 56;  
 view of betraying, 38;  
 violent, 62, 66
- belief in yourself, 28, 100,  
 106, 152–153, 158, 163
- belief system, against, 29; 34;  
 foundation, 46, 166;  
 frames code of conduct,  
 38–39, 99; included in  
 mission statement, 148;  
 of self-confident people,  
 102; shines, 162; define,  
 39; religious, 99, 109,  
 149, 166. *See also* Bill of  
 Rights; personal value  
 system; value system
- Benson, Lee, 40–41, 76, 91, 167
- betrayal, accepting, 18;  
 accountability, 114–118,  
 124, 136; ignored, 27; pain  
 felt, 17, 62, 109; and PTSD,  
 107; support groups, 94–98,  
 108; surface points, 11–15;  
 when man is victim, 87;  
 avoid, 109; betrayed’s  
 contribution, 27;  
 confronting, 47–68;  
 defeating, 28–29, 37, 71,  
 106; define xxi, 10;  
 discovering, 15, 17, 19, 32,  
 40, 47–49, 52; forms of, 9–  
 10; response to, 42, 49, 52,  
 54–55, 64, 117; sexual, 33;  
 steps in recovering from,  
 16, 35, 82, 112, 138, 163
- betrayal trauma, 83, 106
- betrayed, fabricated truth, 13,  
 52; manipulative tactics  
 used, 6, 13, 47, 55, 84,  
 115–116, 125; apology  
 from, 133; confronting,  
 47–48, 62, 68; innocent,  
 5; forgive the, 129–136;  
 response, learn from, 48;  
 tool of, 14; true, 9
- Bill of Rights, develop your  
 118–123; emotional, 120;  
 financial, 120;  
 intellectual, 121;  
 physical, 120–121;  
 sexual, 121; spiritual,  
 122; value system, 125
- blame, admits, 5, 136;  
 shifting, 14
- boundaries, explain, 57;  
 respect, 127; right to set,  
 120; stretch, 58
- C**
- care, about another person,  
 11, 65–66, 90; about  
 important issues, 15. *See  
 also* self-care
- change, accept what you  
 cannot, 98–99, 103, 119,  
 124; can happen, 8, 58,  
 62, 119, 132–133, 157–  
 158; is difficult, 68, 124;  
 bring about, 16, 31, 38,  
 54, 58–60, 99, 115, 119,  
 133, 140–142, 157–158;  
 fear of, 144; willingness  
 to, 137
- character, 14, 38, 149
- checklist. *See* reality  
 checklist
- choice, accept others’, 35, 40,  
 56, 116, 131, 151; in  
 relationships, 12, 14, 31–  
 33, 35, 40, 42, 46, 58, 61–  
 62, 68, 72, 116–117, 119,

- 126; to gather facts, 17;  
in charge of, 68, 72, 74–  
75, 101, 103, 114, 117–  
119, 124, 131, 136, 140–  
143, 149; personal values  
defined, 38, 77, 105, 109;  
reward for, 79, 124; seek  
safety, 66; spiritual, 122;
- chronic, behavior, 14
- coercion, 15
- commitment, to recover, 124;  
to value system, 37; to  
marriage, 86; right thing  
to do, 12; took advantage  
of, 7, 115
- confident, 102, 143, 151
- confrontation, clarify true  
intentions, 32–33, 37, 42,  
45–68; in safety, 47, 49,  
50, 62–67; restore  
relationship, 15, 32;  
define, 47
- confused, 47, 54, 74
- contention, 3, 136. *See also*  
confrontation
- conversation, manipulate, 3.  
*See also* confrontation
- cope, 6, 28, 41, 79, 92, 94, 108
- core, 38
- counselor, 50, 52, 85–86, 95,  
108
- courage, to do, 4, 59, 67, 88,  
99, 119, 124, 149, 152; to  
stand ground, 66–67, 88,  
124, 149
- creativity, relieves pressure,  
155; write poetry or  
stories, 73
- D**
- Daffodil Garden, 141–142
- dangerous, 50, 62–64, 107.  
*See also* confrontation
- death, cope with, 6, 8, 27
- deceive, 9, 51, 72, 115, 129
- defensive, attitude, 53, 65, 87
- defensiveness, unreasonable  
11
- delegate, 158–159
- denial, define, 5–6; healthy, 6,  
8, 15, 163; unhealthy, 6–  
8, 14, 55, 80
- depression, 69, 79, 87, 93,  
108
- desertion, 9
- deserve, 124, 127, 136, 161
- desire, and to be loved, 15,  
57, 127; and to deceive,  
33; and to forgive, 132,  
140; and to reach out,  
161; and to see reality, 4,  
15, 17, 73; and to trust,  
15, 127
- discernment, 51, 55, 60, 93,  
124
- discovery, of betrayal, 8, 15,  
17, 30, 33, 47–49, 52, 59,  
80, 89, 117; denied, 55;  
state accurately, 53; and  
your contribution to the  
betrayal, 27
- disloyal, 9, 109, 140
- divorce, choice of, 43, 46, 61,  
67; cope with, 6, 68, 110,  
141, 151, 160
- domestic violence, 62–67
- double life, 4, 33, 80
- E**
- egg, ix, 153, 165
- elusive, 3, 28
- Emily, xxii–xxiii, 1–2, 5, 9,  
39–40, 165
- emotional abuse. *See*  
emotional betrayal
- emotional betrayal, 9–10, 21–24
- emotional disconnection, 15,  
19, 125

- emotionally paralyzed, 17  
empowered, 122, 143  
encourage, 84, 103  
energy, 92; invested in the relationship 123; to take action, 16, 29, 31, 88, 119, 130, 132, 143, 152–154, 156, 158  
Enid, xxii–xxiii, 40–41, 75–76, 83, 91, 165–167  
entitled, 72, 137. *See also* entitlement  
entitlement, 12–13  
environmental abuse. *See* environmental betrayal  
environmental betrayal, 10, 24–25  
epitaph, 150–151  
escape, 50, 62  
excuse, 13–14, 20, 117, 126, 155  
expectation, 39, 44, 77, 100, 102, 105, 152
- F**  
faith, in your ability, 59; provides power, 81, 100, 110, 140, 158, 161; a test of, 67; develop, 98–100; fear and anger deplete, 28  
faithlessness, 9  
family, share experience with, 86–90, 95–98, 120, 156, 160  
fear, denial’s ally, 8; driving force, 8, 10, 15, 28–29, 31, 37, 51, 57, 62, 66, 86; emotional reaction, 7–8, 10, 15, 28, 105; in conversation, 50–51, 55, 117; of asking for help, 158; of being hurt, 10, 15, 17, 19, 62, 66, 90, 107–108; of change, 144; of experiencing the richness of the process, 162; of loss, 7–8, 10, 15, 19, 133; of oneself, 118; of standing still, 139; express, 85; manage, 28–35, 37, 67, 73, 81, 92, 106, 108, 149, 152, 163  
fifth step, accountability, 138  
financial abuse. *See* financial betrayal  
financial betrayal, 10, 24. *See also* Martha, Enid  
first step, awareness, 16  
forgive, betrayer, 44, 129–135, 139, 156–157, 166; yourself, 135–138, 156–157. *See also* forgiveness  
forgiveness, most effective tool, 130; written about, 130; 140, 157, 166; define, 130–131; demand, 27, 30; gradual process of, 132–133, 139; steps of, 132. *See also* forgive  
fourth step, authorization, 112  
freedom, 17, 24, 153  
friends, share experience with, 90–92, 95–98, 120, 156, 160  
future, control over, 35, 140, 142; hope in, 72, 93, 138, 140, 142, 155
- G**  
gnawing feeling, 4–5, 7, 19, 27–28, 47. *See also* instinct  
instinct  
goals, ability to fulfill, 157; common, 57–58, 61; deceptive to fulfill, 9; focus on, 81, 139;

- formulate, 73. *See also*  
goal setting
- goal setting, 93, 121, 139,  
142–154, 157, 161–162
- God, power of, 51, 81–82
- Greene, Enid. *See* Enid
- Greer, Dr. Jane, 29–30, 41,  
74, 132, 168
- grieving, 27, 75–76
- guilt, about feeling angry, 31;  
a by-product of discovery  
of betrayal, 27, 46;  
dealing with, 94, 105–  
106, 136–137, 140;  
paralyzed by, 133;  
vulnerable to, 87
- guilt transference, 14
- H**
- Hacking, Lori, xiii–xv
- happiness, 35, 72, 82, 115,  
140, 142, 156, 160, 163
- healing, power, 154; hope of,  
15; process of, 92–93,  
130, 133, 136, 139, 140–  
141, 161–162; share  
process of, 58; source of,  
160; work of, 31
- healthy denial. *See* denial
- healthy people, 11, 31, 91,  
102, 149, 162–163
- healthy relationships, 11, 57,  
84, 91, 120–122, 127–129,  
156, 158
- hidden agenda, 9, 15
- hidden thoughts, 15
- honesty, 38, 61. *See also*  
integrity
- hope, in self, 28; of change,  
17, 144; of healing, 15;  
provides power, 72, 80–  
81, 88, 143, 158, 166;  
cannot go without, 69;  
dissolve, 60, 125; fear
- depletes, 28; invested,  
123; source of, 69, 100,  
102, 106; step toward, 35,  
57–58, 69, 93, 138, 152;  
values include, 38
- I**
- ignore, reality, 5–7, 17, 27, 32–  
33, 56; responsibility, 13
- inappropriate, acts, 10, 114,  
121; words, 53, 114
- independence, emotional, 74;  
financial, 10
- indiscretions, 19, 109, 132, 140
- innocent, actions, 20;  
betrayed individuals,  
114; betrayers, 5; real  
intent is, 51
- insight, 77, 136
- instinct, 1–7, 18–19, 27–28,  
47, 63, 80. *See also*  
gnawing feeling
- integrity, acts of, 9; act with,  
28, 32, 37–38, 41, 116,  
124, 128, 143, 149, 151,  
166; anger’s ally, 32;  
question, 7, 61, 108–109.  
*See also* honesty
- internal voice, 103–106
- intuition. *See* gnawing  
feeling, instinct
- isolated, 10, 132
- isolation, 20, 84, 92
- J**
- journaling, 73, 93
- justify, 12–13, 27, 113–114,  
117, 126
- K**
- Kami, xxii–xxiii, 64–67, 71,  
95–98, 126–127, 161–162,  
165–166
- kindness, 97, 136

- L**  
laughter, 80, 141; power of, 92  
learn, about laws, 63; from choices, 136; from the betrayer, 48–49; lessons, 80, 111; to cope, 41, 87, 94, 97, 105–106, 137–138, 158; to forgive, 132; to listen, 73; to pray, 74; to trust, 63, 69; right to, 121  
lies, 54  
life, double, 4, 33, 80  
list, of abusive actions, 20–27; of using emotional abuse, 21–24; of using environmental abuse, 24–25; of using financial abuse, 24; of using physical abuse, 26; of using religious abuse, 27; of using sexual abuse, 25–26  
loneliness, involves a feeling of loss, 124; ease feelings of, 92  
loss, accepting, 27, 68; fear of, 7; feeling of, 17, 68, 93, 110–111, 124  
love, genuine, 34, 44, 59–60, 72, 81, 100, 131–132, 137, 141, 156, 161, 163  
loyal, 44–45, 101, 149, 166
- M**  
maintaining balance, 154–156, 160–162  
manipulation, 2, 10, 13, 40, 125  
Martha, xxii–xxiii, 2–5, 7–9, 19, 30–32, 61, 63, 88–89, 108–109, 116, 140–141, 165–166  
Means, Marsha, 69, 168  
minimization/maximization, 11–12  
mission statement, 148–151  
Mitchell, Dorann C., 5–6, 31  
music, power in 78
- N**  
National Center for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, 106–108  
National Coalition Against Domestic Violence xvii–xviii, 62, 169  
National Coalition for Emotional Abuse Awareness, 171  
National Domestic Violence Hotline, xviii, 63, 169  
neglect, 10, 107
- O**  
obituary, 151  
obstacles, 81
- P**  
pain, of betrayal, 17, 62, 109, 140; deal with, 17–18, 31, 44, 62, 68–69, 80, 83, 91, 93–94, 99, 124, 129–130, 132–133, 140, 158; not deal with, 6, 19, 62, 68, 160  
pattern of living, 9  
patterns of behavior, 20–27, 41, 61–62, 93, 97–98  
peace, gain 17, 35, 41, 74, 81–82, 99, 111, 131, 133–134, 137, 143, 155–156; God promises, 73; power of 130  
personal value system, 28, 34, 37–39, 99–102, 111, 122, 124–125, 143, 149, 156–158, 162–163, 166.

- See also* belief system; value system
- perspective, 44, 49, 84–85, 160, 162–163
- physical abuse, 9, 17, 26, 107
- physical betrayal. *See* physical abuse
- pornography, 8, 11, 25, 32–34, 37, 86–87
- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, 106–108
- powerless, 17, 62, 119
- power, of making peace, 130; to control, 10; to take action, 16, 37–38, 61, 81–82, 115, 118–119, 129, 154, 156–158; don't give away, 74; personal, 98, 152
- Prayer of St. Francis, 161
- protect yourself, 28, 49, 62–67, 95–98, 125, 162–163
- R**
- rationalization, 12–14
- reality checklist, 47, 54, 56, 76, 93, 115
- reasonable, 11, 14, 54–57, 62, 100, 102, 105, 119, 125
- recognize, and patterns of behavior, 20–27, 41, 62; and reality, 6, 17, 86, 95, 98, 102, 127, 132
- recovery, 17, 72, 83, 98, 108, 124, 140, 166
- red flag, 12, 106
- reject fear of failure, 152
- rejection, 68, 90, 131
- relationship, repair, 27, 32, 38, 47, 56, 58–61, 131–133. *See also* Whitney
- relationships, healthy, determine what you want from, 39, 42–44, 57, 59, 61. *See* healthy relationships
- relationships, unhealthy. *See* unhealthy relationships
- relationship with God, 156
- religious abuse, 27
- religious betrayal. *See* religious abuse
- resiliency, 165
- resistance, 11, 116
- resources, 29, 63, 90, 93, 97, 148, 161
- responsibility, to deflect, 14, 116, 118, 141, 159; to take, 35, 56, 58, 68, 101, 107, 115–118, 125–127, 134, 159
- results, 6, 8, 27, 33, 56, 78, 80, 87, 93, 113, 118, 143, 158
- ridicule, 9, 67
- S**
- second step, acceptance, 35
- safe house, 63
- Sarah, xxii–xxiii, 8, 32–34, 37, 40, 79–80, 86–87, 129, 150–151, 165–166
- seduction, 9
- self-awareness, 75
- self-belief, 111
- self-care, 101, 108, 120
- self-confident, 102, 143, 151
- self-defense, 5–6, 96
- self-dialogue, 105, 137
- Serenity Prayer, 98–99, 119
- self-esteem, 18, 102
- self-respect, 17, 28, 160
- service, 39, 63, 143, 159–162
- sexual abuse. *See* sexual betrayal
- sexual betrayal, 10, 25–26, 32
- shattered, ix, xxii, 69, 110–111, 165
- shelter, 20, 63, 160
- shelter workers' list, 20–27

- shocked, ix, 34, 60, 87, 165  
 signs, 41, 133; interpret, 18,  
     90; look for the, 8–15,  
     161–163  
 silence, 84  
 six steps, summarized, 16,  
     35, 82, 112, 138, 163  
 sixth step, advancement, 163  
 Smith, Rita, xvii–xviii  
 Soares, Thelma, xiii–xv  
 strength, 57, 96, 99, 131, 149,  
     157; emotional, 66, 86;  
     gain, 77; God is our, 73,  
     111; hope and faith give,  
     81; individual, 41, 98,  
     101–102, 105–106, 111,  
     152; pray for, 72; season  
     of, 111  
 subtle, 10, 49  
 subtlety, 40  
 success, 152–154  
 successes, 103  
 successful, 42, 58, 100, 118,  
     142, 149, 154  
 suffer, 106  
 suffered, 67, 81  
 suffering, 72, 107, 129, 131  
 support, system, 91; entitled  
     to, 137; gain, 9, 29, 86–  
     87, 93–98, 101, 120, 133;  
     lack of, 90, 163; provide,  
     85–86, 100, 109, 137  
 support group, 85, 87, 93–95,  
     98, 120, 158–159, 163  
 supportive dialogue, 50, 103–  
     106, 137  
 survival, 83, 89, 161;  
     instincts, 28  
 survive, 8, 86, 106, 109, 129  
 survived, 85, 94, 109
- T**
- task, 44, 77, 143, 149–150,  
     153–154, 162
- therapy, 92, 95, 108  
 third step, action, 82  
 three-step process, 85  
 Todd, xxii–xxiii, 18–19, 45–  
     46, 68, 87–88, 116, 131,  
     160, 165–166  
 tolerate, 3, 58, 115, 117  
 tragedy, 129, 140  
 traits, 7, 154  
 trauma, 68, 77–78, 83, 85,  
     106–108, 165  
 traumatic, 6, 84, 106–107,  
     130  
 traumatizing, 91  
 trust, can be rebuilt, 57, 59,  
     83, 112, 131, 133–134;  
     care for yourself, 100–  
     106; God, 73, 81–82, 99–  
     100, 166; in mankind,  
     108–112; model, 127–  
     129; that gnawing  
     feeling, 28, 47; what you  
     know to be true, 75–77;  
     your doctor, 100; your  
     instincts, 2–5, 63, 98,  
     115, 119; your judgment,  
     51, 69, 74, 83, 120, 163;  
     betray a, 9; breach of, 28,  
     30; desire to, 15; lack of,  
     33, 117–118, 130–131;  
     someone you, 86, 88, 125;  
     take advantage of your,  
     13; worthy of, 30  
 trustworthy, 10, 38, 55, 59, 87
- U**
- unacceptable behavior, 84  
 understand, 6, 14, 28, 47, 52–  
     53, 56, 59, 65, 99, 105,  
     111, 121, 124–125, 127,  
     131, 161  
 understanding, 12, 46, 60, 84,  
     96, 100, 128, 133, 137,  
     161

uneasy feeling, 4–5. *See also*  
gnawing feeling  
unhealthy denial. *See* denial  
unhealthy people, 102  
unhealthy relationships, 12–  
13, 28, 33, 57, 67, 114–  
115, 118, 136. *See also*  
Barbara; Emily; Enid;  
Kami; Martha; Sarah;  
Todd; Whitney  
unreasonable, attempts, 15;  
behavior, 13, 15, 56;  
defensiveness, 11

## V

value system. *See* belief  
system; Bill of Rights;  
personal value system  
victimization, 107  
victimized, 90, 108, 115, 130  
victims, 9, 20, 63, 106  
violates, 10, 83  
violence, 63  
violent, 47, 62  
vulnerable, 54, 60, 87, 90,  
101, 116

## W

Wellington, Terra, 93  
Whitney, xxii–xxiii, 59, 132,  
157, 165–166  
why, 3, 7–9, 13, 28, 33, 52, 54,  
60, 65, 67, 71, 92, 111,  
117, 125, 140, 152  
Williams, Dr. Richard L., 38,  
53, 85, 127–129, 169  
withholding, 9  
worthy, 17, 30, 136

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