

# THE HEALING FROM EMOTIONAL ABUSE PHILOSOPHY

*The 3 Keys to Overcoming Narcissism*



MARISSA F. COHEN





# THE HEALING FROM EMOTIONAL ABUSE PHILOSOPHY™:

*The 3 Keys For  
Overcoming Narcissism*

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***Marissa F. Cohen***





# THE HEALING FROM EMOTIONAL ABUSE PHILOSOPHY™:

*The 3 Keys For  
Overcoming Narcissism*



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# **Healing From Emotional Abuse**

The 3 Keys to Overcoming Narcissism

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## ***What Others Are Saying About Marissa F. Cohen & Her Healing Philosophy***



*“She has a very dynamic personality. She’s very energetic. What she says works. She’s very solid, but she’s also very sweet at the same time. It comes across in a way that people trust her. I think they already do. When she talks, you can feel her passion about it. She’s strong. She’s confident. She’s not threatening. And that’s huge.”*

—Jack Canfield, Star of the movie, *The Secret*  
Author of the Best-Selling Book, *The Success Principles*  
Co-Creator, #1 NY Times Best-Selling Book Series,  
*Chicken Soup for the Soul®*

*“Marissa’s transparency is what convinces people they can do it. She gives people the power to have their voice again.”*

—Patty Aubery, Chief Negotiator & President  
Jack Canfield’s Companies  
Creator of Permission Granted

*“Marissa is very down to earth and easy to relate to.”*

— Maggie C., Healed Survivor

*“Marissa is there for you when you need someone you can talk to honestly, and not feel ashamed or embarrassed. She is a kind-hearted, strong woman.”*

—Vivian B., Healing Survivor

*"I have been through a couple different types of abusive relationships in my life. I've struggled for years to talk about it and move on. Ever since reading Marissa's books and especially after listening to her podcast I feel like I've finally woken up. For the first time in eight years I was able to sit down and put into words what happened to me, what I was feeling, and with the help of Marissa's analytical explanations I was able to lift some of the confusion I've always had about how and why things progressed the way they did. Without Marissa's efforts, I would probably still be in a confused and negative place and it is because of Marissa and the way she continues to help and advocate for survivors that I wanted to break my silence and give my testimony to how much she really does help every single one of us. Thank you Marissa, for sharing your story, for being the warrior that you are, and for being there for all of us."*

—Elizabeth D., Healing Survivor

*"I really loved Marissa's healing tools. They made me think a lot; everything about them lingers in my mind still. Some of the concepts have become a part of my daily routine and decision making, and have really made a difference!"*

—Priscilla L., Healing Survivor

*"Thank you so much for helping me, supporting me, and encouraging me to share my story! I'm so grateful to have you and relieve to finally, after NINE YEARS FINALLY talk about my story publicly. It warms my heart and soul to know my story has already helped one person, and that is enough for me to finally let this horrible time in my life go and move on. I can't thank you enough for everything you've done <3 <3 <3"*

—Liz D., Healing Survivor

*"Marissa is able to openly discuss sensitive topics in a truly empowering way! She uses her own experiences, education and examples to shed light on the power of taking your voice back!"*

—Kendra K., Healing Survivor

*"Marissa was a wonderful, poised speaker. She stimulated a lot of conversation and she moved me with her story. And the discussion about resources was so important."*

— Nursing Licensure Student, at Simmons University  
Attended Guest Lecture

*"Marissa, you are a warrior and I applaud that you have had the courage to work through your hurt to help others. You are so real and I learned so much from you being authentic and transparent."*

— Nursing Licensure Student, at Simmons University  
Attended Guest Lecture

*"We started working with Marissa because my daughter had sexual trauma and PTSD, and we were struggling as a family! I, as a parent, was struggling through my own trauma with domestic violence and the trauma of having a child victimized by her other parent. The frustration from dealing with these problems affected my sleep patterns and affected my moods, and how I dealt with things. Marissa's Healing from Emotional Abuse Philosophy is different because Marissa made me feel understood, and that my feelings were valid. She gave me tools on how to cope, and what I could do to help my children. I knew this was working when I was able to not feel so overwhelmed, and was able to use her strategies and tools in my daily life. That's a big deal!"*

—Melinda P., Healing Survivor and Mom of a Healing Survivor



**Maggs**

1m •



I was talking about one of my partners and I was joking about how he's falling in love with me and I was like "I mean who wouldn't fall in love with me I'm fucking fantastic" without missing a beat and my coworker was like wow I wish I had your self-confidence and wow self love feels amazing. Worth the wait. One true love. 10/10. Will continue to do this. It's amazing what cutting the toxic people out of your life will do for your self worth.



You



**Natalie**

I'm already beginning to feel I'm healing from my rape trauma after lots of hard work and literally blood, sweat and tears I now feel confident, resilient and strong. I feel happy and I don't hold any guilt or fear (or at least it is reduced significantly since a few years ago). 💖 🙏 ✨

3m **Love** Reply



**Marissa Cohen**

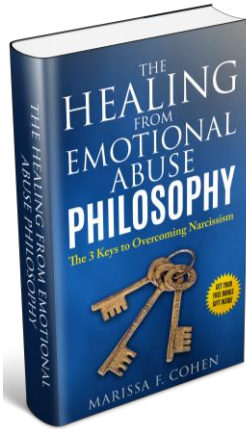
**Natalie** that's amazing!!!

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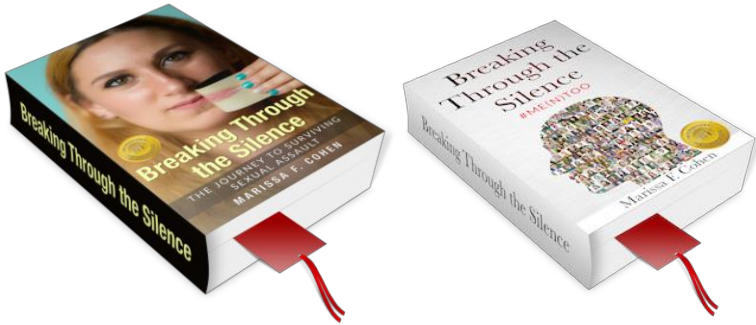
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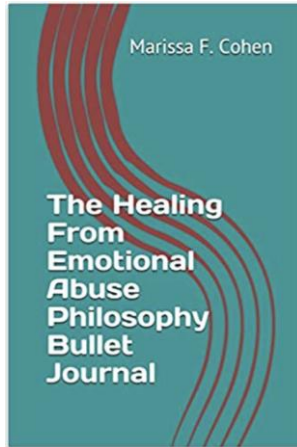
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# ***Dedication***



*This book is dedicated to the millions of amazing survivors of narcissism, abuse and assault in the world who are doing their best to overcome. You are strong and brave. But you're not alone. And this journey you're on is easier and quicker with the help of others. So, let people in. We are here to help you live a Free, Confident and Peaceful life.*

# **The Ideal Professional Speaker For Your Next Event!**

Any organization that wants to build a foundation of understanding, trust, and advocacy for their people, and establish the importance of creating a safe and healthy environment for everyone, needs to hire Marissa for a keynote and/or workshop training!



TO CONTACT OR BOOK MARISSA TO SPEAK:

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# **Be Free, Confident and At Peace!**

If you put a frog in a pot boiling water, it'll jump right out. But if you put a frog in a pot of luke-warm water, and gradually turn up the heat, the frog will acclimate and then burn to death.

Abuse doesn't start off horrible and aggressive, or else we would just leave. It starts off slow, and boundaries are pushed, until it becomes explosive and dangerous.

We experience a lot of deception and confusion, and it teaches us to be more weary of the people around us. But know this, there are people you can trust. There are survivors all around you that can relate to what you went through, and can be an amazing inspiration and support system for you. You have a TEAM around you, willing to be there when you need us, and to help guide you through your healing journey.

You are worthy. You are loved. You are smart. You are capable. You are enough.

Your experience doesn't define you. What you do next to overcome your narcissism and abuse, does.

— **Marissa F. Cohen**

Founder of the Healing From Emotional Abuse Philosophy™  
Best Selling Author of the Breaking Through the Silence series  
[www.MarissaFayeCohen.com](http://www.MarissaFayeCohen.com)

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Acknowledgements .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Foreword .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Recovering From A Narcissist.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Part 1: Release Toxic Energy And Gain Freedom.....</b>	<b>21</b>
TIP #1: WHO CAN I TRUST? WHO DO I TRUST? .....	23
TIP #2: SAFE SPACES .....	26
TIP #3: TRAUMA HEALING MUSIC .....	29
TIP #4: HOW TO RELEASE EMOTIONAL TRAUMA TRAPPED IN THE BODY .....	31
TIP #5: HEALING THROUGH WRITING.....	34
TIP #6: HOW TO START WRITING A JOURNAL .....	41
TIP #7: HOW TO BECOME MORE POSITIVE .....	44
TIP #8: MEDITATION FOR EMOTIONAL HEALING.....	46
TIP #9: HOW TO BE HAPPY .....	49
TIP #10: HOW TO LET GO OF SOMEONE WHO HURT YOU .....	52
<b>Key # 2: Resilience The Meaning Of Resilience &amp; Building Confidence.....</b>	<b>55</b>
TIP # 11: I DON'T KNOW WHO I AM ANYMORE .....	58
TIP #12: HOW TO LOVE MYSELF .....	60
TIP #13: I WANT TO FIND MYSELF .....	62
TIP #14: CONFIDENCE PHOTOSHOOT .....	65
TIP #15: SELF ESTEEM ACTIVITIES .....	68
TIP #16: HOW TO MOTIVATE MYSELF.....	71
TIP #17: GOALS OF LIFE & GOALS IN A RELATIONSHIP .....	74
TIP #18: EMPOWERING MUSIC .....	77
TIP #19: CREATE A SUPPORT GROUP.....	79
TIP #20: BOOSTING CONFIDENCE .....	81
<b>Key # 3: Rebuild How To Rebuild My Life &amp; Find Peace .....</b>	<b>85</b>
TIP #21: WHAT FAMILY MEANS TO ME .....	87
TIP #22: HELPING OTHERS.....	89
TIP #23: MAKE YOUR HOUSE A HOME.....	91
TIP #24: GETTING RID OF NEGATIVE ITEMS .....	93



TIP #25: ESA BENEFIT.....	95
TIP #26: HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP AND SIGNS OF A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP....	98
TIP #27: HOW TO FIND GOOD FRIENDS .....	100
TIP #28: TYPES OF ENERGY HEALING .....	104
TIP #29: HOW TO HAVE A POSITIVE MINDSET .....	108
TIP #30: CREATING A RELAXING ENVIRONMENT .....	110

<b>How To Live Happily.....</b>	<b>113</b>
---------------------------------	------------

<b>Let’s Celebrate!.....</b>	<b>116</b>
------------------------------	------------

<b>References.....</b>	<b>118</b>
------------------------	------------

<b>How To Start Your Healing Independently And Supported .....</b>	<b>119</b>
--	------------

<b>Healing From Emotional Abuse: Heal With Marissa.....</b>	<b>121</b>
---	------------

<b>Start Healing From Emotional Abuse.....</b>	<b>123</b>
--	------------

<b>How To Be A Writer (And How To Publish A Book).....</b>	<b>124</b>
--	------------

<b>Acknowledging Those Who Paved The Way For Healing .....</b>	<b>128</b>
--	------------

<b>About The Author.....</b>	<b>132</b>
------------------------------	------------

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I want to acknowledge the incredible people in my life who have been by my side and supported my journey since October 22, 2009 and January 15, 2010. My TEAM. You have been my rock, and a big part of my healing journey. I wouldn't be where I am today if I didn't have my



amazing friends, family and heart family to hold my hand along the way. I love you all.

Mom, Dad, Alec, Cassidy and Larry - My Home Team. I couldn't do this without you all!

## FOREWORD



You may remember me from being featured on the hit ABC TV show, “Secret Millionaire.” If you do not know of the show, here is the basic premise from show promotions:

*“What happens when business motivational speaker and self-made millionaire James Malinchak is picked up by an ABC television crew, placed on an airplane with no money, credit cards, cell phone, laptop or watch, and is whisked off to an impoverished neighborhood, where he had to survive on \$44.66 cents for a week?*

*The show features Malinchak leaving his current lifestyle in search of real-life heroes who are making a difference in their local community. He ultimately reveals himself as a millionaire and rewards them with a portion of his own money to further their cause by gifting them with checks of his own money totaling over \$100,000. If you watched ABC’s ‘Secret Millionaire’ you know that James is no ordinary entrepreneur. He is a self-made millionaire with a strong passion for giving back and serving others.”*

Amazingly, over 10 MILLION people watched me on the show! Whether I am speaking at a conference, walking through an airport, consulting for an entrepreneur or just hanging out at a coffee shop, I always seem to get asked the same question. “What was it like being on

Secret Millionaire when you had to live undercover in an impoverished neighborhood and how did it affect you?”

My answer is always the same.

The greatest gift you can have is when you simply give in order to help and serve others. There is no better feeling than when you know you have made a positive difference in lives of others.

And that is exactly what my friend Marissa Cohen and her teachings can do for you! She will inspire you through sharing her wisdom and personal experiences.

Marissa is an author, speaker and leader who truly cares about making a positive difference in the lives of others.

In this book you will be inspired by her genuine, caring nature for making a difference in your life. And her ideas can help you to live a more joyful and happy life.

Some of Marissa’s ideas may comfort you while others may challenge your old paradigm. One thing is for certain. Marissa and her ideas will stamp your spirit with an abundance of love, hope and encouragement so you can reach new levels of courage, fulfillment and personal happiness.

It is my sincere honor to introduce to you Marissa and her amazing book!

-James Malinchak

Featured on ABCs Hit TV Show, “*Secret Millionaire*”

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*Recovering  
From  
A Narcissist*



## RECOVERING FROM A NARCISSIST



**I**t was my first year of college, and I was beyond excited to start over. This was a new adventure, and I was going to do it right. I knew exactly what I wanted to do. In high school, I was too quiet and shy to run for student government, and I only joined the clubs where my friends were, because branching out was intimidating for me. This was my opportunity to be brave and go for a leadership position.

I had joined the student government and even ran for Secretary, and was elected in my first semester. It was thrilling, knowing that I had new friends, and was about to embark on some amazing new experiences. It was a new beast for me to maneuver around. I was balancing the freedom of college, working two part-time jobs, club responsibilities, and the brand new dating world. It was a classic circus balancing act.

I met this guy in student government. He was charming, funny, athletic and thoughtful. Every day, we would sit at my secretary desk, eat snacks and stream TV shows. It was a nice break from the tornado of responsibilities happening around me. He was a relaxing person, who would simply spend down time with me.

People started to tease us for spending so much time together, and we both defended that we were just friends. Until one day, he asked me out

on a date. It had to be a secret though, because we didn't want the student government to find out.

It was romantic. It felt sexy having to sneak around. We planned to leave the office several minutes apart from each other, in order to give off the illusion we weren't leaving together.

We changed for the date in our cars, parked in a different parking lot, and then drove together to dinner a romantic restaurant on the beach.

The date was incredible. He said all the right things. The atmosphere was beautiful. And then, we held hands and walked on the beach under the stars. It was a fairytale dream first date.

When he asked me on another date, he told me that he preferred if we continued to sneak around and not let others know that we were dating. But he said it in a way that made it feel sultry. Keeping secrets became a foundation of our romance.

For another month, we snuck around, and I didn't tell anyone. I wanted to preserve that feeling of deviance and also respect my future boyfriend's wishes. But at the expense of getting used to lying to my friends. And although it felt weird lying and sneaking around, I soon became used to holding on to the lies and feelings, to avoid conflict or judgement. This was certainly not a feeling I wanted to be comfortable with.

By Halloween, we were official. He introduced me to his parents, walked around holding my hand, and wanted to spend every waking moment with me. My office hours for the student government were spent sitting with him, doing homework and talking. My time at home was spent texting back and forth and sitting on the phone all night. If we weren't together, we were still connected via phone or facebook.

No matter where I was, he wanted to be able to reach me in case he needed me. And so, I made myself available for anytime he might need me.

I didn't notice how my friendships were suffering. I spent the majority of my time with him, and wasn't as responsive or available to my best friends.

Life started to get hostile with my friends. They were angry that I wasn't making time for them anymore. They didn't understand when I told them my boyfriend required a lot of attention, and I wanted this relationship to work. I loved him.

And like a flash, I felt like I was alone. I still maintained some friendships, but they were rocky and uncomfortable. I felt like the only person I could really trust was my boyfriend.

He would validate the thought that my friends were jealous of our relationship, and they were trying to break us up. He would tell me that I deserved better than to have friends like that, and I believed him.

Soon, I stopped really seeing anyone outside of school. It was Dave and I against the world. And the closer we became, the more brutally "honest" he started to get with me.

We had vastly different opinions on things like politics and the medical field. He grew up in a family of doctors, I grew up with my mom being a homeopath and utilizing alternative and Eastern medicine.

The conversations about these controversial topics usually ended with him telling me that I was stupid and uneducated. And if I wanted to have a real opinion about things, I needed to do better research. I hated fighting with him, because somehow, I was always wrong, and he made it known.



After a while, I just stopped sharing my opinions. I was afraid to discuss them because I knew it would start a fight, and, in turn, he would get mean. I hated when he called me names or bashed me for disagreeing. I rationalized it by telling myself and others that he was just very passionate, and this was his way of trying to teach me what he believed was right - at the expense of my feelings. I doubted myself, my level of education, and the way I perceived the world around me. I felt like I was crazy.

I changed everything about myself to appease him. I became quieter. I didn't dispute anything he said, because I was afraid of the verbal lashing I'd get. I wanted to preserve the few parts of me he hadn't made me hate about myself. I doubted my major in school, and considered changing it from theater, what I was passionate about and gave me great joy, to something more serious. Maybe something scientific like biology or chemistry.

I became increasingly depressed. Getting out of bed in the morning was a challenge. There were days I didn't leave my bed at all. The normal routine in life, showering, eating, interacting with people, all became too overwhelming for me to try. I would go a week without showering because the thought of it was daunting. I didn't know how to express what I was feeling, and I didn't want anyone to dislike him. Therefore, talking to anyone about it was out of the question.

The few friends I had left were confused, and noticed huge changes in my personality, but I couldn't tell them why. I felt everything that was happening to me was my fault. I was ashamed. I wasn't good enough. I wasn't smart enough. I wasn't driven enough. I made awful decisions. I couldn't trust myself or anyone around me, and I didn't know what was actually happening.

Then, on January 15, 2010, he took everything from me. I was at his house, and we were cuddling before I had to leave. Like a flash, I was on my back and he was on top of me. I couldn't move. I couldn't speak. I couldn't breathe. He was holding my hands down, and I felt this constricting pressure on my neck and torso. I was hopelessly gasping for air, but nothing was happening, and I was frozen. In another flash, it was over. I felt nothing, but I was terrified and confused. I was broken.

I didn't fully realize what happened, but I felt hopeless. I regained control of my body, rolled over, and cried. All I could do was cry. In hysteric droves, tears crashed onto the uncomfortably foreign pillow. All the while, he pulled me closer and scolded me for crying. "You're fine, stop crying," he continually whispered in my ear. He sounded a mile away, but I could still feel his breath on my face and in my ears as his fingers dug into my arm.. My mind was racing through a million thoughts a second, as I unsuccessfully pieced together what happened to me physically as well as emotionally.

About an hour later, I rolled off the bed and ran to the bathroom, locking the door in a panic behind me. I called my mom but couldn't muster words. She only heard gasping, sniffing, and a continued stream of tears., I told her we had sex, and I didn't feel safe driving myself home. Without realizing what happened, she told me to stay overnight and to drive home in the morning in order to keep me safe. She had no idea I was in the most unsafe place of my life.

The next two months were a mess of self-harm, depression, extreme anxiety, suicidal ideations, PTSD, and beating myself up psychologically. Add on top of that the endless sexual abuse and narcissistic behaviors I endured. He had me exactly where he wanted me. I was a pawn he had full control over. And everything I wanted in life, everything I worked for, and everything that made me, me, was

gone. I was no longer me.. I was an empty shell of a human who was controlled and manipulated like a marionette.

I hated myself. I hated my life. I hated everything, and I couldn't understand why someone who loved me would make me feel so badly.

I knew the real him - the man I started this relationship with five months prior. I just wanted that man back - the one who was charming, funny, thoughtful and romantic. I didn't want this monster who took advantage of me and gutted me. On St. Patrick's Day, 2010, I hit rock bottom. We were at a colleague's party, and everyone was drinking and laughing. I didn't drink and I couldn't laugh. I had my yellow notebook, which Dave knew as my journal. He hated that thing. It gave me an outlet, and he wasn't allowed to see what was in it. I sat by myself on the stairs, writing in my journal, and I could feel Dave staring at me from the kitchen table. He was angry that I brought it with me, and that the information of his control could be outed. So he watched me, and he drank. He scolded and embarrassed me in front of our friends relentlessly as he discredited and demeaned me in every area.

And I had enough. He pulled me aside to tell me he was going with a couple of our friends to Rutgers that night to continue to drink and party. I was disappointed because I hoped he would just come to my house and cuddle with me. I wanted to feel wanted.

I finally put my foot down, and told him not to go. I gave him an ultimatum: either he stays with me or we break up. He chose to go to the party. I followed through on my threat and broke up with him on our friend's driveway., The liberated feeling I had hoped for didn't come. Instead, I sank into the tar on the driveway and watched as they drove away.

I woke up the next morning desperate for a phone call from him telling me how sorry he was and he would never choose anything over me again. The call never came.

With two months of school left for the year, he no longer had control of my personal life (or so he thought). Instead, he decided to use his power to undermine and control all the aspects of our environment - the student government.

He used his divine influence to convince others on the student government that I wasn't trustworthy, I was playing favorites, and I was trying to make him look bad. I had yet to tell a soul what happened to me. He was still in my head and controlled my thoughts. My mind was in a constant state of chaos and panic.

I waited anxiously for the school year to end and for the daily torture to stop. I knew I would only feel relief once I was away from him. I was telling myself lie in order to survive.

In the age of the internet, Facebook, and cell phones, it was nearly impossible to be disconnected - especially from someone who desperately craved control. Over the summer, he kept in touch. I did my best to stay away from him. I did my best to forget and move on from his violations. The impossible uphill climb was constantly reinforced with his persistence of being in my ear and my being mute.

I was constantly dating abusive and controlling people, engaging in risky behaviors, disrespecting myself and my body, all in order to find closure or some form of control over my life. The behaviors backfired and caused bigger messes to clean up.

In July, I was able to release the weight I had been carrying. My best friend and I were driving and she said something which triggered me so profoundly she actually had to help me maneuver the car to safety. I was

experiencing a full blown panic attack. As I unloaded on her about the night Dave raped me, she listened with compassion. She reassured me the rape wasn't my fault as she validated my feelings. This amazing friend held my hand as I painfully relived every moment of that ill-fated night. She was my comfort as I allowed myself to release the pain. That moment of clarity and release gave me a taste of freedom. I contacted old friends and started to rebuild friendships. I found support in people who loved me genuinely. I was surrounded by comfort and love. I felt like a seed spreading my roots to grow. But it didn't last long.

On my birthday, Dave sent me the sweetest messages and it felt like the real Dave was back. The one who gave me butterflies and made me feel sexy and loved. I was hesitant to get back into a relationship with him because I didn't like who he became. He made excuses about his home life and the things he was going through and said those things would no longer affect us. He promised he wouldn't rape me again and he would actually go to therapy. He reassured me I had the power to tell him when he was being a jerk, and to please give him another chance. So, I decided to give him another shot. He was showing me how he'd changed.

But as you can imagine, things quickly spiraled downward to exactly where we left off. He was grasping for control in every aspect of my life. I was being isolated from my friends again, who I had just repaired my friendships with. I was starting to feel the weight of depression coming back in full force. I was destroying the lightly mended world I started to rebuild.

Then, a miracle happened. My great uncle offered me an opportunity to study in Israel. It was an amazing offer, and I almost turned it down. I applied and got accepted to the university. Within two weeks, I was 6000 miles away from Dave. You would think that would have stopped him from trying to control me. But it didn't. He continued to keep tabs on

me. He texted me nonstop, checked in on me and saw what I was doing, and I happily obliged. I invited him to come stay with me for the holidays.

I didn't realize how anchored I was to him. Until, one night. I was with a group of my girlfriends from school. Two of them had broken up with their boyfriends the same day. We decided to have a girls 'night with booze and snacks. That was the night Dave called me to verbally berate me. He told me I was lucky to have him because nobody else would love me. He told me how immature I was. How he could never marry someone so stupid. And that I should basically just stay away from everyone because I'm embarrassing myself.

I told one of my friends everything. I told her about my rape, about how Dave spoke to me, how he treated me and made me feel, about my suicidal ideologies, and about how I couldn't escape him 6000 miles away. I was lost and stuck. Anchored to a person who maintained full control over me and my emotions across the Atlantic Ocean.

That release gave me hope. She validated me that everything I was feeling was real, and that I didn't deserve that. I wasn't stupid. I got accepted into this fantastic school in Israel, and I was surrounded by people who loved me for who I was.

I can clearly remember that was the first night I got a full night's sleep in over a year. No nightmares to wake me up. No realistic night terrors or sleep paralysis. Just beautiful, calm, refreshing sleep.

I continued to date him for a few more weeks. I couldn't let go of the person I knew he was. The kind, charming, funny guy who I fell in love with. I was determined to make this work. Then, it happened.

A couple of friends and I decided to go to Tel Aviv and have a night out. I told Dave what we were doing, and I was barraged with messages

calling me demeaning names, and accusing me of things that hadn't happened. Telling me I looked awful in the outfit I was wearing and commenting about my need to lose weight. Basically, he was saying anything he could think of to destroy any semblance of confidence I'd gained since I moved to Israel.

One of my friends took my phone and read the messages. I hadn't told her anything about Dave outside of us being in a relationship. She was floored at the disgusting things he was saying to me. She took one look at me and said, "You don't deserve this. Tell him to suck your dick. Then block him. You're done with this."

My immediate reaction was anger. I couldn't do that. I loved him. And we'd been through so much together. But, all the pieces of the puzzle clicked together perfectly. I realized how unhappy I was. I realized what he'd put me through. I realized he was the root of my depression, my PTSD, and my need for escape. I realized I was still allowing him to treat me this way across several **continents**.

So, impulsively, I wrote, "Suck my dick." and didn't hear from him for the rest of that school year. A wave of relief shot right through me, and I laughed. It was my first real, authentic laugh in over a year. I don't know if they knew why I was laughing, but we all laughed until we cried.

Imagine the scene in every epic action film where the hero falls off the cliff, and in a moment of despair, the audience waits with anticipation, hoping for their hand to grab onto the cliff edge and pull themselves up. And then they do. And you have that huge sigh of relief. That's what it felt like. I felt free.

That night, I danced like I was the only person in the room, with no care in the world about being judged or looking stupid. I didn't care about what I looked like. I just had fun. Incredible, life changing, liberated fun.

But that wasn't enough to sustain my feeling of freedom. I noticed when I spoke about my abuse, and had stopped letting it sit heavily on my chest, that I felt better. So, I kept finding more ways to let my abuse go, little by little. And as time went on, it felt incredible to release. But it wasn't enough. I got it off my chest, but his voice was still in my head, telling me all the nasty things that tore me apart inside, and made me doubt and even hate myself.

Going through my days with my head down, and worrying that I was burdening everyone around me was my new normal. I apologized for everything, even things that weren't my fault, because I just always felt like I was in the way.

I had completely lost my sense of self. And in the process of searching for myself, I became exhausted. I made a lot of risky or wrong decisions which only made me feel worse. I got to a point where I just felt like giving up. But before I did, an incredible friend told me, "Life isn't about waiting for the storm to pass. It's about learning to dance in the rain." And like a miracle, that struck a chord with me. I could either let the circumstances of my narcissist hold me down forever, and keep me hating myself, or I could find some way to build myself back up again. I started researching ways to build resilience in order to keep the pointed words people threw at me from staying around, bouncing in my head, and causing daily blows to my already minimized self-esteem. I started reading books about abuse and manipulation. I wanted to see what helped others heal. I threw myself into hobbies and taught myself new skills. I journaled every day. I listened to a lot of music and wrote some of my own. I did things that made me feel good and sustained that feeling - like completing projects and expressing myself through art.

And all of these things created a strong sense of self. I was learning so much about my new self. We change after abuse. I learned who I was,



and to trust myself and my judgement. To stand on my own two feet, without wavering or looking at the ground.

And I started to attract healthy people around me, in the form of friendships and relationships. People started talking to me and interacting with me differently. I wasn't some trash people used and threw away. I didn't feel like prey anymore. My inner strength shined through, and the people who were intimidated by that strength disappeared. I started to make better choices in all areas of my life.

Now, feeling confident and free, I still felt the aftermath of what happened as it destroyed my peace of mind. Sure, I felt great about myself, but I was still surrounded by his presence. I felt like no matter what, I was returning to a place of chaos, filled with his tornado of negative energy. I had to clean up my life, and rid myself of the trail of toxicity he left behind.

As an act of pure desperation, I purged most of the things that reminded me of him. I painted my walls because I wanted a fresh start. I threw away clothes, pictures, memories, gifts.

I decided to emotionally cut ties with him and the people who supported him. I cut out any toxic friends or peers in my life. They were no longer deserving of my energy. I wanted a whole new life and a new group of friends with new surroundings filled with positive space. I filled my newly painted walls with inspiring quotes and phrases and with pictures of real, genuine, healthy friendships. And I reminded myself daily this was the beginning of my new life.

And it was in those moments the sea parted, and I walked into my new life. A life not held back by Dave, or anyone else who used and abused me. A life where I got to make all the choices, and come from a healthy place to make them. I knew everything had changed. It would all be different now, going forward.

I learned and focused on what I wanted, what I expected from future partners, and I have never accepted less than that. I started volunteering to work with other survivors to show them they aren't alone.

Sometimes, when I look back, that life feels like it was all a bad dream. It's so deep in my past, I truly don't even think about it anymore.

My head is clear. I don't feel heavy or like I'm holding onto baggage. I can talk about what happened to me without any emotional reaction. It's a freedom I never thought I'd have. It no longer influences my emotions or mental health.

I walk with my head up, with genuine happiness and high self-esteem and self-love. And I have created a life for which I am beyond grateful. I have the most amazing group of friends, all who are genuine, and would be there for me when and if I ever needed them.

I found a life partner who's personality compliments mine completely. He knows everything I experienced, and we have open and healthy communication. He speaks to me with respect and kindness. He is loving towards me and our two dogs. He checks-off every box on my list.

Through my healing, I realized, there were three key elements which helped me heal from my emotional abuse. I call them the 3 R's: Release. Resilience. Rebuild.

Those little moments in my story, the moments I released what I had been holding in; the moments I started to feel resilient and let the negativity go and didn't care what anyone said or thought; and the moment I started to rebuild; those were the jumping off points for my healing.

It was those actions that showed me how to survive and overcome narcissism. I learned that I deserved to live with peace, happiness,

confidence and freedom. And I think every survivor deserves to feel this way.

I decided to dedicate my life to helping other survivors overcome their emotional abuse. I started by writing books, the Breaking Through the Silence series, to show survivors that they are not alone, and that what they've experienced doesn't define them. That they can overcome it all.

The books were helpful to a lot of people, but I didn't. Therefore, I began to coach survivors to heal after emotional abuse, and I developed courses and programs to aid in various areas of the healing journey.

I also developed this philosophy, using over eleven years of research and real life experience, to help you heal too. I've drawn up a roadmap, all you have to do is follow it. You don't need to figure it out, I've already done the hard work.

I used this framework with the survivors whom I coach as well as those in my courses and programs. It works. It got me to where I am today and has created new lives for all the survivor participants.

If you want to live a life filled with freedom, confidence and peace, all you have to do is follow the framework I've created.

I am living the life I dreamed of. I am surrounded by love in the form of amazing friendships and an awesome fiancé. I am doing work that revitalizes me every single day. I feel fulfilled and am happy emotionally and professionally. I couldn't ask for a better story.

You can have all of this as well. Don't let your narcissist stop you from living the life you dream of. Take back control of your life. Surround yourself with love, happiness, confidence and positivity.

The Healing From Emotional Abuse Philosophy™ was developed by Marissa F. Cohen based on over 11 years of research and real-life

experience. In order to fully and completely heal from emotional abuse, you need to follow the 3 R's: Release, Resilience, Rebuild.

Releasing is the most commonly acknowledged step to healing. When you're holding on to your emotional abuse, you build stress, feel isolated and stuck, and are more likely to develop other issues, like depression, addiction, or suicidal thoughts. By Releasing emotional abuse, you will instantly start to feel free. Free from that lost, lonely and stuck feeling. Free from the invisible chains of our narcissists. And Free from the sadness, depression and anxiety that overwhelms us.

The second R is Resilience. Once you release it, you're still going to be in a different state of mind, mentally, emotionally, and physically. So, you need to know how to bounce back. And so, when you learn how to be Resilient, you start to instantly feel confident and empowered.

So, now you've Released and you feel free; You're Resilient and able to bounce back with confidence; But now, you don't know where to go or what to do. And that's why the third R is so important, where you Rebuild. And you start piecing together the person that you are now, after your emotional abuse and narcissist. And when you start to Rebuild, you instantly feel at peace.

When you heal from emotional abuse following the 3 R's: first is Release — learn how to let go and feel free, second is have Resilience — learn how to bounce back and be confident, third is you have to Rebuild — create new routines and find good friends, you are able to live a full, happy and peaceful life, with confidence and freedom.

What makes my philosophy different from other's is, all 3 R's have to be working in unison consistently. Many people just teach one, Release the past. Others might teach about having to Rebuild. But based on my 11+ years of research and real life experience, you need all three. When you have all 3 working in unison, what happens for you is, you immediately begin to feel Free, Confident and At Peace.

*Key #1:*

***RELEASE***

*Release Toxic Energy  
and Gain Freedom*



# PART 1

## RELEASE TOXIC ENERGY AND GAIN FREEDOM



**S**tep one in the Healing From Emotional Abuse Philosophy is Release. Releasing the pent up emotions, experiences, and burdens you've been carrying around. Releasing your narcissist's control on your life. Letting go of the burdens you've endured, and the experiences that might still hold you back.

According to the dictionary, the word release refers to being freed from anything that restrains or fastens. To be free from confinement, bondage, obligation, or emotional strain.

Doesn't that hit the nail on the head? Whether we were physically restrained or emotionally restrained, we were not allowed or capable of freeing ourselves from the emotional burden of our abuse.

Letting go of that restraint, and allowing ourselves to feel free from our abusers is an incredible leap towards happiness.

In this section, I have provided my top ten most effective tips to Releasing your Emotional Abuse, and liberating yourself from your narcissist.



## **Tip #1:**

### **Who Can I Trust? Who Do I Trust?**

**M**ost of the struggle for me was deciding who to tell. After over a year of being manipulated and trained that I couldn't trust anyone, and that my friends were going to judge me, it became incredibly difficult to determine who was a good friend that I could trust. However, holding on to that heaviness wasn't an option anymore either. I needed a release. I needed someone to help me carry and heal from this emotional baggage.

Determining who to tell about your trauma can be really anxiety-inducing. Having an ally in your corner who understands why you're behaving the way you are is helpful while navigating your healing journey. It gives you an outlet, someone who you know you can trust and a friend to call during flare ups and bad days. For the same reason we want friends, having an ally is a connection and support. And that's what we need most when we're overcoming narcissism.

Ultimately, overcoming emotional abuse is not a solo journey. We need people in our corner for when the terrain is too difficult to trek on our own. So, the tradeoff is, you can either feel isolated and lonely, and figure out the path on your own, or you can recruit someone who you can trust to take the trek with you.



Feeling weighed down and overwhelmed all the time does not a peaceful life make. You are missing out on happiness and freedom if you're attempting to do this solo. The first people I told are still some of my best friends. They stick by me on occasional bad days or when I'm feeling triggered or starting to doubt myself. I can't imagine feeling that and being all alone.

Releasing everything that I was holding on to was like taking a deep breath of fresh air. I felt rejuvenated. Refreshed. Reborn. Free. At that moment, I felt like I could finally breathe again. The abuser's hand was no longer on my neck.

Here is how you determine who to release your emotional abuse to. Make a list of all of the people you were friends with before and after abuse. Think about all the people on that list, and which of them you feel would judge you. Cross out all of those people. Then, look at the list again, and think about which of these people won't react with big, overwhelming responses. Who will have your back and just want to support you? Everyone who doesn't fit that category gets crossed out. Finally, ask yourself, who do you trust? Who can you tell that will continue to support you and be there for you after you tell them? Who won't be scared or awkward?

That left five people on my list of over fifty. Those five people were the only ones I told, and they have been by my side ever since. They were the people that I turned to when I needed some reassurance, a pep talk, or some guidance. They have been and will remain my allies.

These people restored my feeling of freedom. No longer held down by the chains of my abuser.

Let's find those people for you.

So, ask yourself these 4 questions:

1. Who do I spend time with? Who are my friends?
2. Who of these friends won't judge me?
3. Who of these friends will respond the way I need them to?
4. Who do I trust?

When you've narrowed down your list to those who fit all four of these descriptions, you've figured out who to release to, break your silence, and take the huge step forward in your healing journey.

## **Tip #2:**

### **Safe Spaces**

**T**he next thing you should think about is where you want these conversations to take place. Are you comfortable in your home, or your room, or in public, or in someone else's house? In what physical space would you feel most comfortable and open to have a heart to heart conversation?

We tend to undervalue the location of this conversation because it's a small detail. Being in a safe and comfortable place when you're telling someone about your experiences is really important for both your wellbeing and mental health.

Being comfortable is important. Knowing and feeling that you're in a safe place will negate the hassle and will make you feel more empowered to wholly release your story. In an uncomfortable environment you'll continue to hold on to the toxicity you're harboring, and you'll miss out the freeing feeling of release.

Some people prefer public places because it will minimize outrageous reactions. While others prefer intimate spaces, like their bedrooms, because it's a safe space for them. It all depends on what you want.

So, answer these questions to determine your preference:

1. Home or Public?
2. Indoors or Outdoors?

3. What comfort food or non-alcoholic beverage will make this easiest for you?
4. Music/Noise or Silence?

Once you figure out a place, you want to set some boundaries. Remember, you are in charge of the situation. It's important for you to determine how you want your listener to respond. Do you want advice, or do you just want to vent? Do you want a hug, or do you not wish to be touched? This is your moment. You set the boundaries and the rules.

Abusers and narcissists take control away from us by manipulating, gaslighting, and using our emotions to exploit us. And for that, we often feel out of control of our environments. Setting boundaries, starting with this one situation, gives us the power back, and teaches us that we have control of our lives.

Not only is this an exercise in releasing, but it's also a gateway to building some resilience.

What do you desire from your ally?

### **Would you rather...**

- They give you advice or let you vent and stay quiet?
- They touch you for comfort or not touch you?
- They coddle you or not make facial expressions?
- They validate how you're feeling or give you their opinion?
- It be a conversation or they just listen to you?

Having these boundaries is a very important step. If you don't set these boundaries, you risk allowing someone else to control a situation where you'll be feeling vulnerable and uncomfortable. Releasing your abuse is

difficult, especially when you're not in full control or in a comfortable situation.

The release comes from the comfort of speaking, and that includes where, when and how. Empower yourself to create the best and most supportive environment you can so your release is powerful and effective.

Remember, the power comes from the freedom you feel in the release. And if the person you're telling is a person you trust, they will respect your boundaries and be the person whom you can rely on through your healing process.

## Tip #3:

### Trauma Healing Music

**M**usic has been proven to be one of the most effective ways to release emotion. There's a reason they say music soothes the soul, because it does. Music is very personal, and gives you an outlet which decreases stress, builds confidence, and allows you to focus and compartmentalize emotions (1). To utilize the benefits of reducing and releasing your stress and heavy emotions with music, the tip is to pick up an instrument and learn to play.

Studies show playing a musical instrument positively impacts the rate at which people overcome PTSD and depression, two major mental health categories people who have endured emotional abuse suffer from.

*"The results showed positive outcomes in both PTSD and depression symptoms after 6 weeks of guitar lessons. One veteran with PTSD who participated in the Guitar for Vets Program stated, 'I came here with some real serious anger issues; this takes my mind off everything.'"* (1)

It's important to give yourself an outlet to release your feelings. Holding on to depression and PTSD can be dangerous and leads to a higher risk for suicide, drug and alcohol abuse, self-harm, and being revictimized. We want to get you out of your comfort zone and into a healthy one. Music gives you the perfect outlet. And there are endless benefits to using music as a healing tool. Music reduces stress, PTSD, depression and anxiety. It helps aid insomnia and motivates focus and drive.

Playing an instrument as a form of releasing can really be a huge asset to your life. Music is a gift with incredible benefits, but none more important than helping you let go of the negative aftermath of abuse. Want to feel free, and I mean really free? Like, feeling the stress, anxiety and overwhelm leave your body? Music.

A client of mine used music as her main tool to let go of her trauma. This is what she said about it:

*“Music is also special to me because it did the same thing for me that drugs and cutting did. My brain always felt like a TV on that, ‘white noise’ snowy screen at the highest volume, and there were a hundred billion things going on -- drugs made that feeling go dark. When you cut yourself, that sound disappears. It makes the billions of thoughts you’re having, and the constant fear and the terror and paranoia and flashbacks just stop. When I play music, that’s what happens. When I play music, it makes everything go away, and I’m focused entirely on the music. I’ll tell you, cutting yourself and doing drugs is not therapeutic, but it does create temporary relief. With music, I can play, and I can feel feelings, one at a time, and address them appropriately.”*

-An excerpt from “Me Too” in Breaking Through the Silence: the Journey to Surviving Sexual Assault (2)

Music is such an asset to our lives. It provides relief, focus, control, ease and freedom. It allows us to express how we’re feeling without words. And that nonverbal release is beneficial. You don’t need anyone around to release if you’re not in the mood to interact with people.

## **Tip #4:**

### **How to Release Emotional Trauma Trapped In the Body**

**I**n working with survivors for over eleven years, I learned a therapeutic trick or two I found helpful in releasing suppressed emotions.

Survivors often feel guilt and shame. We blame ourselves for what happened or for allowing what happened to us — even if we know that it wasn't our faults.. Sometimes we don't leave because we think we can change the abuser back to the good person they were. Sometimes we stay because other people doubted us, and our pride gets in the way.. Whatever the reason may be, ultimately, it's not our faults. But hearing others saying it, or reading it in a book doesn't change our beliefs. We need to do this for ourselves.

For this reason, releasing the self-blame, self-doubt and negative self-talk, I introduce The Therapeutic Chair Exercise.

In this exercise, you will set up two chairs facing each other. You sit in one and leave the other empty. In your mind, put yourself from when you were still being abused in the chair across from you. I want you to have a conversation with that person. Tell yourself how you're feeling, tell yourself the words you needed to hear back then. Tell yourself you forgive yourself and you love yourself. Let yourself know it's not your fault, and you were doing what you needed to do to survive. Remember those words you wished someone said to you when you were in the



middle of your struggles? Say those words to the you sitting in that empty chair.

You are invited to use this exercise as many times as you'd like. It will continue to be effective and help you Release and work through the emotions you're holding on to.

The beauty of this exercise is, you're releasing all of the emotions and anger you're holding on to towards yourself. We survivors often blame ourselves, even though it's not our fault. We didn't deserve the way we were treated, but somehow, our blame falls on us and not the person who hurt us. This is a good way to let that go and learn to forgive ourselves.

This exercise is difficult, and if you do it right, it forces you to face yourself and think about the things that happened to you. But on the flip side, allowing yourself to recognize that you did what you had to do to survive, and that the strength you've gained since leaving will provide a strong sense of freedom and release.

The release you achieve is refreshing and alleviates tension and stress. And who knows, you might learn something new about yourself. It's just another puzzle piece to connect you back to your full self.

If you're feeling really bold, here's an additional challenge to this exercise. In a separate session, with the same set up, you sit in one chair, and in your mind, place your abuser or narcissist across from you. Talk to them. Tell them everything you've wanted to say to them, but never got the chance, or were too afraid to say in person. Get everything off your chest. You can yell, cry, curse, laugh, make fun of them, whatever you need to do to release all the pent up emotion they left you with. Let it go. Leave it on the chair. Get it all out of your system. Let go of that toxicity, negative energy, and emotional baggage. It's not yours to hold

anymore. By holding on to it, you're keeping the power in your narc's hands. Letting it go takes that power away from them, and you are free from their control.

You've left them, that's the toughest part. Now get rid of it for good, relinquish their control over you, because they can't hold you back anymore. You're free.

## Tip #5

### Healing Through Writing

**I**f you didn't take the challenge in Tip #4, there's another way to find the same outcome. Writing a letter to your narcissist is also an effective way to release the tension and the held-on-to negative emotions that contribute to their continued control over you.

It's as simple as it sounds. Start by writing Dear [Insert narc's name], and then just let your heart do the rest. Tell them about the things they did, and how it made you feel. Talk about the ways you've grown, the red flags you missed then but you clearly see now. Tell them about how you will never let anyone treat you that way again. The things you've accomplished, and the way you deserve to be treated. Anything and everything which comes to mind. You don't have to think about it at all, just write.

Getting these emotions and burdens off your chest will give yourself permission to move forward in life. Right now, you're probably feeling pretty stuck, heavy, and overwhelmed — as if you're weighed down. I don't want you to feel that way anymore, and you probably don't want to feel that way anymore. Not that I can blame you. That feeling honestly sucks. So, let go. Let go of all of it. Release it back to your abuser and let them carry their own burden. Writing this letter will allow you the freedom you deserve.

A few clients of mine have used letter writing exclusively to release their inner demons and let go of that heaviness. It has been an incredible tool in their belt. Feeling free, light, and unburdened is the goal. You don't want to carry that exhausting heaviness anymore. In fact, it has been proven that people who don't release the toxicity from past abusive relationships are more likely to choose future romantic partners who are also abusive. They trained their brains to look for comfort in abuse and manipulation. Break the cycle today. Get it out. Get healthy and find someone who shows you healthy love. Writing letters is an amazing step to finding your healthy love.

The next several pages, you will find letters written by survivors addressed to their abusers. Give them a read, then write your own.

***Example Letter #1: “A Letter From A Warrior” from  
Breaking Through the Silence: The Journey to Surviving  
Sexual Assault (2)***

To the guy that sexually assaulted me,

If you think that this is easy, writing this and picturing your face, then you're wrong. Every time I picture your face, I get a knot in my stomach, feel my heart pounding in my chest, and I want to run. I'm not writing this for you, but as a favor to myself, so I can hopefully get over that Monday night in October and move on through life, though six months later, it hasn't been easy. There are some things I'd like to say to you and read carefully because these are the last words you will ever hear out of the girl's life you tore apart.

When I met you, over a Facebook chat a few days prior, I thought you were cute, nice smile, goes to my college, and your eyes seemed like they could bear into my soul. I thought you were safe. I thought wow, he doesn't look like he could hurt me and I needed a little fun. The more I got to know you, the more this observation got proven.

When we finally met to smoke in my room with my two best friends, I doubted anything bad would happen. Just normal people are doing normal college things. Looking back, I was pretty flirtatious and ballsy. While we smoked the “special type of weed” you had, you turn your back, so we had to put blind faith in you, my friends became dizzy, and I felt out of my body—not like a normal high.

After my friends left and we sat on my bed, I was clear about one thing: I didn't want to hook up at all. I kept saying it as we kissed and as we fell on my bed cuddling. I had no control. That night when I kept getting up to check my phone, I was terrified but also thought I could handle it on my own. I thought I wasn't going to get hurt, but I sent a text to my friend anyway, god forbid something would happen.

I don't remember much after sending those texts, just flashes in my memory of my protests and your hands on me. When you left my room to go to class all I could see was you putting on your pants and walking out— without a second look back.

That afternoon, I realized the severity of what happened, and I was terrified. The events that followed you know and now here I am, six months later, still unsure of how you got away with something so horrific. I realize now that you took something from me that night and you knew exactly what you were doing.

Six months later and I can still feel you next to me when I sleep, I can still hear the trippy music you played and your eyes looking into my soul. I still get scared walking in public, afraid that I'll see you and nothing will stop you from hurting me—because nothing did before.

But, let's be clear on something. You did not break me. You didn't tear me to pieces, and you didn't make me beg for forgiveness when I finally realized how bad I was hurt. You didn't prove anything by doing what you did.

What you did do, is take my rights away. You took away my freedom to do what I wished due to fear; you took away my life because going anywhere on campus was a gamble and terrifying. You took away my spark, my fire, and you damaged my fragile pride. You are part of the reason why girls can't walk home at night without being afraid. You are part of the reason why my little sister will go to college being afraid that the same thing will happen to her. You are part of the reason why girls can't walk alone at night without fear in their hearts and pepper spray in their bags. You represent every person who's ever violated an individual, and you are no different from those serving time in prison for the same crime.

I'd like to thank you though. Thank you for proving to me how strong I am. Thank you for showing me who were my true friends and who were just temporary. Thank you for showing me that I am stronger than you. Thank you for taking away everything so I could gain that and more back. I promise to continue to prove you wrong.

—The Girl Who Won

***Example Letter #2: “A Letter To My Perp” from Breaking Through the Silence: #Me(n)Too (3)***

Dear Callan,

We took you in because you told us you had a terrible home life and would do anything to get out from under your controlling and abusive parents. Regardless of the fact that all of that was potentially just lies, you wreaked havoc on my entire family. When you were disrespectful to my mother I tried to brush it off and defend behavior as part of your mental health issues. But then you violated me. Not once, not twice, but three times; and you fed off the fear you caused in me.

You threatened to take my family away from me if I did not comply with your orders. You raped me and had no remorse. You continued to be completely inappropriate and finally, after you sodomized me with a dildo and ripped my anus, I couldn't take it anymore. But I was so afraid to tell, so instead of reporting the stuff, I got suicidal.

Finally, people got out of me what happened, although I still haven't been able to tell the story in full, because of abject terror when I think about your violations. Only therapy will get some of the things that you did out of my mind and into words. I thought of you as a brother, but you became someone I was terrified of. A controlling figure; manipulative, abusive, and sadistic.

The Grand Jury allowed you to walk free from everything you did; they let you win... or so you may think. I am the winner and the loser on this one. While I got no formal justice, you were dragged through the mud almost as much as I was. I will tell everyone I know about you and warn them. I will scream from the rooftops, “I am a Survivor!” I refuse to be your victim. I refuse to be your bitch. I know that things did not turn out the way I wanted them to, but that does not mean they did not happen. You stole something from me - my peace.



Now you are gone. Stay gone. I don't ever want to see your face again, unless it's on America's Most Wanted; And I don't ever want to speak your name unless it is to warn people about predators. That is what you are, a predator. You did not win, I was able to share my story and that will continue. I'm not done. I will become an advocate for transgender survivors. I am trying to get rid of the guilt and shame that has snuck into my mind. But at the end of the day, I did nothing wrong, and even though I don't believe that sometimes, the only way to heal is to purge the memories and practice self-love.

I love myself. You can't take that away. I am strong, courageous, and a devoted family member and boyfriend. To be honest, you lead me to get therapy for all my traumas, cemented my relationships with my immediate family members, and introduced me to survivors who have triumphed over their trauma, and who inspire me every day. So thank you.

Eventually, forgiveness will come, because forgiveness is not for you, it's for my peace and serenity; and I am reclaiming that.

**-- A Warrior**

## **Tip #6:**

### **How to Start Writing A Journal**

**S**nowballing-off letter writing, using a journal, bullet journal or creative art journal can be valuable tools to releasing your trauma. Journalling is a way to get the million thoughts in your head, out. When you write down what you're feeling, it frees it from your mind.

A large part of overcoming emotional and narcissistic abuse is putting together the puzzle of what happened and who you are. When you're enduring abuse, manipulation, gaslighting, and the other mind games that narcissists play, a tangled web gets weaved, and we leave feeling lost, confused and oftentimes not knowing what happened.

The gaslighting and manipulations might have you wondering what's real and what's not. Was it my fault or was it a manipulation? Who can I trust? Who am I? Can I trust myself? Am I the abusive one? Why did they do the things they did to me? Did I deserve it?

Writing is a form of reclaiming your voice and processing what happened. When our brains are so twisted and we feel nauseous from the ups and downs, journaling is a healthy way of expressing your truth and acknowledging what happened.

Journaling is about expressing your thoughts, feelings, experiences, observations and stories. It allows us to speak our innermost truths in the safest of ways.

Most people who endure narcissistic abuse experience some form of mental health issue, including PTSD, C-PTSD, depression or anxiety during and afterwards. In order to heal from your abuse, you have to process and work through the pain. Finding ways to release in safe ways is critical. Otherwise, you can feel stuck, depressed, and overwhelmed for many years to come.

So here's what you can do to start healing from you narcissist. Start documenting, writing and sorting through your emotions.

- Write about the details of what happened during different events
- The words they've used to hurt you, and changing them
- Doodle your favorite quotes
- Make lists of the people who are supportive and loving in your life
- Make a list of the things they took from you
- Write a poem
- Stream of consciousness writing
- Draw pictures of the life that you want
- Detail how you want to feel when you're healed
- List the qualities you want in friends and relationships
- Talk about good times you've had with other friends
- The life lessons you've learned since leaving and healing

- Allow yourself to write and release the events in your life that take up your brain space and make you feel bad

By doing this, you're allowing yourself to process and release the atrocities you endured. They will no longer burden you or take up space in your mind. You can purge them in a safe way to free yourself from the restraints of your narcissist. You can do this. It will dissolve the power they have over you, giving you control of your life once again. Give yourself the opportunity to release and become free.

## Tip #7:

### How to Become More Positive

**C**ognitive-behavioral psychologists emphasize the importance of the mind-body connection. The theory is that if you change your mindset, it will shift your feelings. When your feelings change, your behaviors and actions will also change. *Mindset + Feelings = Behavior* or  $(M+F=B)$

Your mindset is the way you view the world, or your perspective (because perspective is reality) of where you stand and who you are. Your mindset is the most important part of yourself, and you are in full control of it. It's what manifests the world around you.

Eighty-percent of survivors enter into multiple abusive relationships, and it's because of mindset. The people you attract are the people who share your mindset. Your feelings directly influence your actions. Are you more likely to engage in unhealthy behavior when you're stressed (like overeat, smoke a cigarette, use illegal substances, abuse alcohol, engage in intimate activities with people who don't show you respect), or would you be more likely to read a book, journal, play an instrument, do some cardio or practice self-care? The way you feel impacts the decisions you make and the actions you take.

When you are in a positive headspace, you will make better judgements and recognize the positivity in people. You enable yourself to be surrounded by those who will positively influence, inspire, and motivate

you. You attract the people who think, feel, act, and have the same values as you.

A really effective way to shift your mindset is to write affirmations. An affirmation is a goal, written in the present-tense, to give you the feeling as if you've already accomplished it.

*I am so happy and grateful to be walking down the street feeling free and unburdened by my abuse.*

Writing affirmations and stating them out loudly every day is the most effective way to attract positive energy into your life.

Start with the phrase "I am so happy and grateful..." and write your goal. It doesn't have to be about love. It can be about anything. For example:

*I am so happy and grateful to have found a partner who shows me respect, listens to me, and makes me endlessly happy.*

Write three strong affirmations. Put them on notecards and leave them next to your bed. Read them first thing in the morning, out loudly, and then visualize the entire scenario in your head. Repeat this exercise again at night before you go to sleep. This is a recipe for a mindset and life change.

## **Tip #8:**

### **Meditation For Emotional Healing**

**S**urvivors who overcome narcissistic and emotional abuse usually have difficulty processing the pain and trauma of their experiences. Meditation provides clarity and a safe space for the processing to take place. Even if you don't realize there are things you haven't processed, buried deep in your subconscious are situations and emotions you haven't fully explored. Meditation allows you to bring up these emotions and process them in a healthy and safe environment.

The seeds of abuse are planted and grow, and affect many areas of our lives, if we let them. Meditation is like weeding out those plants. We are able to calmly identify, process and weed them out, allowing ourselves to heal, one seed at a time.

Meditation is a strong, beautiful way to help you become more self-aware and introspective. It can help build emotional strength and connection.

Meditation is all about breathing - taking deep breaths and emptying your mind. Then, amid your breaths, allow one thought to come at a time, process it, and then release it. It's a simple, repetitive process, and it takes practice. Especially for those of us who have racing minds.

You can meditate anywhere. I know people love to meditate on top of mountains or on the beach. Although that would probably be an

incredible experience, not everyone has access to beautiful, natural healing spaces. I recommend creating a space in your room or your home, and designating it a meditation space; A place where you can go and collect your thoughts in a safe space.

Meditation is an incredible tool for survivors of emotional and narcissistic abuse to use to heal.

Studies show that meditation:

- **Quiets the “trauma voice.”** It allows you to decompress and silence the loudness and negative thoughts which are bouncing around in your brain.
- **Empowers survivors to set boundaries**
- **Allows survivors to process fear and seek safety**
- **Shows survivors how to uncover their inner voice and power**
- **Helps people prepare for emotionally stressful events, like facing your abuser, divorce, or leaving**
- **Teaches us the truth about ourselves, our situations, and the things that happened to us**
- **Teaches us to trust ourselves**
- **Helps us find healing**
- **Allows us to process our emotions and release them**

Find a quiet space, play some relaxing, instrumental music, and sit on a chair with your feet firmly planted on the ground.

*Take ten deep breaths, counting to four seconds. Hold that breath for sixteen seconds.*

*Then breathe out for eight 8 seconds.*



Just focus on the counting, and any thought bubble that pops into your mind, push it away and refocus on counting.

After ten of these, see how you feel.

If you do this when you wake up every day, you're starting your day from a place of positivity, consciousness and release. And as we discussed in Tip #7, shifting your mindset and learning to love yourself will give you the most incredible, positive freedom.

## **Tip #9:**

### **How to Be Happy**

**V**isualization exercises consist of using your imagination and your mind's eye to see what you want to do, be, accomplish and have. It's creating your future now, by seeing what you want, and how to make it happen.

Visualization exercises are one of the most effective tools in jogging blocked memories (4). As well as an incredible device in helping you accomplish your goals.

When it comes to releasing your abuse, it can serve as a means of identifying memories that are holding you back from healing, as well as breaking through the chains of your abuse, limiting beliefs and self-doubt. It's powerful.

Using visualization exercises to train your subconscious mind of what you want, and allows the Universe to find and provide it for you. That's why it's so effective, and being specific is so important. It's like a genie in a magic lamp. If you wish for a million bucks, you get a million male deer. But if you really identify, think about and visualize the scenario you'll come home to after work, where your dream partner has dinner ready, the house smells like your favorite meal, and you see, taste, feel, smell and hear an incredible, healthy relationship, then you know exactly what you'll get when it comes true, and you'll be shocked that when it really happens, how powerful your visualizations are.

The reward of using visualization techniques is a no brainer. There are no downsides. There aren't any pitfalls and possible negatives. It's a healthy, effective way to create the future that you want, and release the old habits, and expectations. In addition, it forces you to consider the positives, and only focus on those - what you want instead of what you don't want. The more you focus on what you want, the clearer your future is to your subconscious.

As an easy jumping-off point to get you familiar and comfortable with visualization, the easiest thing to do is refer to the affirmations you wrote in Tip #7. Reread your affirmation, then visualize the scenario. What do you see, smell, hear, taste and feel. Imagine it from beginning to end. Play the entire situation through,

I'll use one of mine from Tip #7 as an example:

*I am so happy and grateful to be walking down the street feeling free and unburdened by my abuse.*

For me, I am walking down a street in Breckenridge, Colorado with shops lining the streets. I smell pine, and feel a chill in the wind hitting my face. It's not too cold, but there is a brisk breeze. There are tons of people walking on either side of the street, which is closed to traffic, but I'm not nervous. I don't feel the pressure of being watched. I feel comfortable walking without having to look over my shoulder.

I am taking deep breaths of the fresh Colorado air, inhaling freedom, and exhaling, releasing the pent up anxiety, fear, stress. I look up at the blue sky and see my future. No more pain. I look next to me and see my partner, a healthy, happy man who wants to hold my hand, who allows me to be me with no rules or expectations. We walk into stores together and laugh and browse. We're looking for trinkets and decorations for our new home, sitting on top of a mountain.

For two minutes, play out your affirmation from beginning to end. Use all five of your senses. The more detailed you make it, the more effective your visualizations, and the more thrilled you're going to be when it happens in real life.

Use this tool as much as you can. Not only is it fun, but it immediately makes you feel better, especially when you're having a bad day. My recommendation is every morning when you wake up, and every evening before you go to sleep make reading and visualizing your affirmations a part of your routine. It's a great way to start and end to your day.

Bonus: The last 45 minutes of your night are the most important because they set up the next day. So, if you spend some of that time visualizing your healthy new life, you're transforming your life faster and more efficiently than anyone else. You're winning the life competition.

**Tip #10:**

**How to Let Go Of Someone  
Who Hurt You**

**T**he key to releasing your abuse, is finding forgiveness in yourself, and for your abuser. I mean like really forgiving, not just saying an apology is accepted and still feeling negativity towards them and yourself. I mean, forgiving yourself for everything you blame yourself for where it involves your abuse, and also, letting go of the feelings you hold towards them. It sounds radical and ridiculous at first though. Why on EARTH would I forgive the person who hurt me, and caused me years of confusion, pain and self-loathing?

The very blunt truth is, when you're holding a grudge, or holding onto anger towards someone else, they don't feel that. They don't hurt. But it is creating a toxic ball inside of you, that will manifest into something ugly. The forgiveness towards them isn't for them. It's for you. It's to detoxify your mind, your body and your soul. By holding on to abuse and negativity, you are proactively stopping yourself from moving forward. Why would you self-sabotage when you've come this far?

Forgiveness comes from within. Forgiveness comes when you accept what happened to you, and recognize that you did exactly what you needed to do in the moment to survive.

In trauma, your logical brain shuts down, and your survival brain takes control of operations. You're still here, which means your brain did its

job. Looking at it from that angle, and accepting and forgiving yourself for everything you've been through could be a good first place to start. Knowing that you did what you needed to do to survive is important. And then, you can forgive your abuser - not for their benefit but for yours.

Much to their dismay, The second you release and forgive, they lose control of you.

Imagine yourself pulling something you love out of their hands. By forgiving them, that's what you're doing. You're pulling control, abuse, your life and your voice, out of their grasp, and allowing you to start fresh and new. Allowing yourself to move forward to the next part of your life, without being held back by a person who hurt you for so long — someone who didn't deserve your past, and certainly doesn't deserve your present and your future.

Physically and emotionally take your life back by learning and accepting the beautiful reality that your life is yours now. You have the strength, courage and determination to do it. You're free.

*Key #2:*

***RESILIENCE***

*The Meaning of  
Resilience and  
Building Confidence*



# KEY # 2

## RESILIENCE THE MEANING OF RESILIENCE & BUILDING CONFIDENCE



**T**he second key to overcoming narcissism is becoming resilient. Being resilient is defined as, “Springing back or rebounding. It is recovering from illness, depression, adversity or the like.”

And the best way to become resilient in the wake of abuse, is to do exactly what your abuser was afraid of. It's about building confidence, self-esteem and self-love. The more confident you are, the less anyone else can hurt you. It's like building healthy, protective walls which negative, toxic, and abusive people cannot penetrate. Their bullets will bounce right off.

Before we get to the tips, there are some myths and facts about building confidence that I wanted to clarify.

**Myth:** Confidence comes from other people

**Fact:** Your confidence comes from how YOU feel about yourself.



Nobody can determine your confidence level. You are solely responsible for the way you feel about yourself. Other people can influence your confidence with their words, but their words are powerless if you don't allow them to have that influence. We'll get more into this concept in the next chapter.

**Myth:** You either have confidence, or you don't

**Fact:** Confidence is a muscle and you have to learn to flex it.

Just like your ability to do anything, you have to learn how to do it and then practice. The first time you rode a bike, did you just jump on and ride, or did you fall a few times? If you just jumped on and rode away with no issues, then I want to shake your hand, because that's an incredible and nearly impossible feat. We usually fall, and swivel, scrape our knees, then get back up and do it again.

That's like building confidence. We don't *literally* fall and scrape our knees, but it's an internal fight to truly begin to feel your confidence growing.

**Myth:** All extroverts are confident, and introverts aren't

**Fact:** *What?* Confidence doesn't manifest as your social comfortability. Confidence is 100% how you feel about yourself. It's your view of and love for yourself, and has nothing to do with being introverted or extroverted. Plenty of extroverts have very little self

esteem, and look for validation from others. And many introverts are exceptionally comfortable with who they are, and love themselves, but might not be as comfortable with other people.

It's your reflection of yourself. If you look in the mirror and love who you see, that is your confidence.

**Myth:** When I am fully healed, I'll feel confident

**Fact:** When you feel confident, you'll heal.

Your healing doesn't affect your confidence. Rather, your confidence affects your healing. You have to learn to like yourself to feel confident, and also to heal. You have to appreciate yourself and the valuable, incredible person you are, and everything you have to offer the world, to heal, and that, my friend, comes from confidence.

In this section, I have provided you with ten tips about how to effectively build a strong sense of confidence, and become resilient.



## **Tip # 11:**

### **I Don't Know Who I Am Anymore**

**I**n my eleven years of working with survivors of abuse and sexual assault, I have learned we all have one common outcome. “I don’t know who I am.” We lose our identity. We lose our sense of self. We also learn that self-doubt is the new normal. It’s crazy how much someone can impact the way we look and think about ourselves. What’s even crazier is how much someone can take away our identities, confidence, and self esteem.

After I left my abuser, I felt as though I didn’t have an identity. I was simply floating around.. I didn’t know who I was. I didn’t have any direction or aspirations. I felt like I was merely existing. Piece by piece, I started to put myself back together again. It took me a lot of work, but I figured out a way for you to put the puzzle together without the strenuous, heart-wrenching amount of work I put in.

Identity impacts self-esteem. When you aren’t sure of who you are, you start looking in unhealthy and toxic places to find yourself first. The “low hanging fruit,” as it’s often called. And that is where we become revictimized, meet people who make our situation worse, gaslight us, and continue the downward confidence spiral.

Living in this mindset is what amplifies mental health issues like depression, self-harm, anxiety, agoraphobia, and continuing to pick abusive and toxic partners. All of this can be avoided. And a big part of that is discovering who you are now. So, let's put together your puzzle.

You're either going to need a partner, or google translate, a timer and a device you can use to record yourself, like a phone or computer.

This resilience activity is really simple. Find a partner, or friend to do this with, and I recommend you choose someone who you trust, who won't judge you. You can either do it online or in person.

Sit facing each other. Have your friend ask you, "Who are you?" And you answer with, "I am," and then fill in the blank. I am Marissa. I am a woman. I am strong. I am a dog mom. And keep going.

At first the answers will be simple. *I am a survivor. I am a warrior.* Keep doing this for two minutes and see what you come up with. Remember to record the session.

If you don't have a partner, no worries. Type "Who are you?" into google translate. When you're ready, start the timer and the recording device, and click the audio button and have her ask you who you are. And answer the way you would if someone else was asking.

It's an easy resilience building exercise, and it'll give you insight into who you are now.

## **Tip #12:**

### **How to Love Myself**

**M**irror work is exactly what it sounds like. It's using a mirror to work on building self-esteem and resilience. There are a hundred different techniques and activities that can help boost your confidence, self-love and self-esteem with a mirror, and they are really beneficial to your healing process.

Mirror work is important because it forces you to face yourself in a loving way, which is so dramatically different than we've endured through our abuse. We are trained to doubt ourselves. To not trust ourselves. To dislike and sometimes even hate ourselves. For me, looking in a mirror was difficult, because I was so repulsed by who I was from the awful things Dave said about me, to me.

The things they say to us that demean us and force us to focus on our flaws are hard to ignore, but easy to hide from. Meaning, the words they use follow us and stay in our heads, and leave us feeling like they are the truth, and so we can't face them or ourselves. And by not facing them, we are allowing them to continue to diminish us, and control our lives - starting with the way we feel about ourselves. Become resilient to the words of our abusers, and become resilient to the toxic people of our present by facing your demons and yourself.

When you do face yourself, and you recreate those words to support and empower you, it's like being reborn. You're taking the power out of those words, and providing yourself with complete freedom from your

narcissist. You will love yourself again. You'll choose friends and relationships that are healthy, that make you feel good, that give you reasons to smile.

You'll live life in the way you've always wanted. And train yourself to be resilient to all the abusers and irritants that try to infiltrate your strong sense of confidence. Who doesn't want that?

So, for this particular confidence boosting exercise, I want you to think of three things that you love about yourself. They can be physical, emotional, or mental. Anything.

*I love my heart.*

*I love that I am kind.*

*I love my how creative I am.*

And I want you to write them down on a piece of paper. Go now and tape that paper on a mirror, either in your bedroom or bathroom.

Then, look yourself in the eyes, and say these three things you love about yourself to yourself. And say it like you mean it.

Do this exercise three times every day. When you wake up, sometime in the middle of the day, and before you go to sleep. Each time, look yourself in the eyes and say it like you mean it. Hear yourself saying it and feel the love coming through. The more you do this, the more resilient you'll feel, and the more confidence you'll build.

You can periodically change or add to this list, but don't stop using this tool. This easy and simple technique can and will perk you up on your worst bad days. You want to build and sustain resilience, because the partner of your dreams and the friends who will best suit you are attracted to confidence, self-love and self-esteem. Be the person you never thought you'd see again. Feel the confidence growing and shining through you.

## Tip #13:

### I Want to Find Myself

A bucket list is traditionally a list of all the things you want to do before you “kick the bucket.” And that stands true, still, but in a more eloquent way, it’s a list of the amazing experiences you want to have and goals you want to achieve.

Making a bucket list is a way to inspire yourself, and push yourself to learn about what you want, who you are, and accomplish the many incredible things you’re capable of. It gives you a chance to dig deep into your desires, think about the incredible life that you will have, and encourages you to accomplish the things you want to.

The cool thing about building resilience is that it’s already inside of you. It’s just stuck below the negative self-talk and the experiences you’ve endured. It’s just about finding it and strengthening it.

The real choice here is, do you want to grow, or do you want to stay where you are? Staying where you are will benefit nobody except your abuser. It will allow them to still maintain power and control over you and your life, without having to do anything.

But growing, engaging your resilience, building your confidence and self-esteem, and living your life with purpose, meaning and happiness, that’s what a bucket list gives you. Do the things that give you strength and joy, and give you your life back.

Making a bucket list is easy. It might take some research, but the fun kind. When I was writing mine, I watched the Travel channel a lot, and spent hours looking for the coolest places on earth and fun and exciting activities that I wanted to try. And it made my imagination soar. What was supposed to be a 101 item bucket list has grown into a 300+ item bucket list. So get started!

Make a list of 101 Things you want to do, have, see, be and accomplish in your lifetime. The options are endless, and there are no wrong answers. If you need some inspiration, I recommend listening to podcasts, exploring Pinterest, talking to friends, and searching online. You can also take a look at my personal bucket list at [www.marissafayecohen.com/meet-marissa](http://www.marissafayecohen.com/meet-marissa).

If this seems like a daunting or overwhelming task for you, you can also break it down. Make 5 separate lists.

1. *20 Things I want to do*
2. *20 Places I want to see and explore*
3. *21 Items, Possessions and Experiences I want to Have*
4. *20 Things you want to be or titles you want to have,*
5. *20 Things I want to Accomplish*

Get creative. One of my bucket list items is to explore the Titanic. Don't hold back. If there is something you want to do that seems a little bit outrageous, write it down. Where focus goes, energy flows. You never know what this life will bring you, but wanting something badly enough will help you accomplish it.

And now that you've written it, start checking them off. Find one item on your list that you can accomplish this week, or this month. Give yourself a Bucket List head start and build confidence. When we accomplish something we've wanted to do, our brains release dopamine



and serotonin. These are two neurotransmitters that play a huge role in the feelings of happiness and pleasure, and in turn, building our confidence.

When you accomplish a bucket list item, instead of crossing it out, I recommend highlighting it, writing “Victory” next to it, and dating it. That way, you can look back and see the amazing things you’ve accomplished and be reminded of how powerful and incredible you are.

## Tip #14:

### Confidence Photoshoot

**B**ody positivity is a huge part of building confidence and resilience. Narcissists and abusers will often use our bodies as a weapon, insulting us and pointing out our flaws, as a tool to make us feel inferior or unattractive, to maintain control. They know that by breaking us down and teaching us that we are unattractive, we will be less likely to leave them.

And sometimes survivors of narcissism and abuse will use body image to protect ourselves in an unhealthy way. For example, people will intentionally gain weight, cut their hair or make some other dramatic cosmetic change in order to push away potential partners by making themselves “less attractive,” so they won’t be preyed upon.

*“There were a lot of really bad things I used to cope for a while, and a lot of the time I didn’t even realize that coping was what I was attempting to do. One of the things that I turned to after my incident was a very messed up relationship with food. Because I felt like my self-esteem was so beaten down when I was with my ex, and he was so specific about certain things that did and did not make me attractive, I developed eating disorders. I would binge, and then restrict my food intake, and my system was so out of whack that in the two or three years since this has happened, I have gained about 100 lbs... There is still such a stigma about how people look in society. I feel like I started seeing the*

*differences in how men treated me when I looked a certain way...as I started gaining this weight, as I didn't wear makeup at all, didn't put my hair down, and dressing differently. I just felt like I could hide very well, but it was not a healthy camouflage."*

-An excerpt from "I Was Prey In A Pit Of Lions" from Breaking Through the Silence: The Journey to Surviving Sexual Assault (2).

An effective and empowering way to overcome that stigma is to have boudoir photos taken. Boudoir photos refer to photographs (of women specifically, but not exclusively), in their private life, and are usually taken in bedrooms or homes, and dressed in sexy lingerie, nude or riské outfits. They serve as a means of boosting confidence, body positivity, and enjoying the part of us that once made us feel the most inferior or uncomfortable.

We have this body that was once weaponized against us, and was used to objectify us, hurt us and break us. Boudoir allows us to turn fear into bravery and hopelessness into empowerment.

There are photographers all over the world who offer boudoir shoots. They are easy to find. Getting there is the hardest part. You can have a friend take them for you, but with something like this, where you're out of your comfort zone, you might want to consider a professional. It truly makes a difference.

Doing something bold and brave like a boudoir shoot is pushing you out of your comfort zone. We grow the most outside of our comfort zone. You'll develop self-love, self-esteem, confidence, body positivity, and have some beautiful reminders of the strong, incredible, gorgeous person that you are.

These photos are for you. Having them, and seeing your light shining as you stunningly roll out of bed in your sexy PJ's is a constant reminder of your resilience. Anyone who tries to insult you or tear you down

won't even get the time of day from you, because you can physically see your beauty illuminated in these photos.

Do this for you, because there is nothing more empowering than gorgeous sexy photos of yourself, reminding you that you're worth it.

## Tip #15:

### Self Esteem Activities

**R**esilience comes from knowing who you are, loving who you are, and using activities that you enjoy, to build you up. We have, "knowing who you are," and, "loving who you are," covered in previous tips. Now, it's time to focus on doing something that you love.

Picking a hobby or "hobby shopping," as I call it, is a way for you to control your down time, and fill it with something that you enjoy doing, that is also productive. Productivity, and accomplishing tasks is a really effective and positive way to build resilience.

*"Roller derby is such an empowering space. It is centered around women, and queerfolx and femme-identifying people, and a lot of sports aren't dominated by these types of bodies. And I find it gives women, queerfolx, trans-folx, people who don't fit in to the binaries, who don't fit into normalized sports, an opportunity to use consensual violence as a means of working through shit. You can hit your friends and skate, and it's the most amazing sport I've ever been a part of. My derby team is like my family. It's kind of funny. I've always found that and activism cross paths a lot of times. It made me see that I wasn't alone."*

- An excerpt from Breaking Through Our Silence : Abuse in the LGBTQA+ Community [Working Title] Coming in 2022 (5)

Hobbies can range from arts and crafts, music, to fitness, sports, physical training, and beyond. There are millions of options. Different hobbies

work for different people. The point is to find an activity that is both productive and makes you feel empowered.

It's important to find a means of expression and release that you can build on, because when you have a hobby you can build on, it builds your self-esteem. Da Vinci wasn't born an incredible artist. It was a hobby he perfected and practiced until he became incredible. Building a skill and seeing yourself improve builds confidence.

Finding a hobby you love is important for many reasons.

- 1. It gives you an enjoyable activity to do in your downtime**
- 2. Focusing on it helps you process emotions in a healthy way**
- 3. You meet like-minded people and develop relationships through hobbies**
- 4. It builds confidence to see yourself improve**
- 5. You learn more about yourself and can put together more of your puzzle**
- 6. It makes you feel good to have an outlet that doesn't numb you**

So now, how do you find a hobby? Well, Pinterest might be a good place to start. Look on Pinterest for things that interest you. For example, I love arts and crafts, and have recently taken up Macrame as my newest hobby. I went to Pinterest and searched "macrame," and out popped tutorials, videos, knot step-by-step PDF's. What do you like to do? Or what have you always wanted to try? Search for it on Pinterest.

And if you don't see anything you like there, look on Google, ask your friends, go to local recreation centers, art centers and stores, music stores, etc. Like I said, the options are endless. But the first thing to do is think about the things you've wanted to try.

And if you do something and it doesn't stick, do something else. This is an "at your pace" kind of healing tip. But I recommend getting started because there is nothing more relaxing than my nighttime macrame sessions. It's my zen, and my time to focus on me and what I need.

## Tip #16:

### How to Motivate Myself

**A**n Accomplishment Jar is a place where you write down and store all your accomplishments. Simple enough, right? But the real beauty of an Accomplishment Jar is you get to watch your jar fill up, and see the amazing accomplishments you've completed over the course of the year.

It's a simple activity that promotes self-awareness, encourages you to complete activities and boosts confidence simultaneously.

Being able to track and see your accomplishments pile up over the year will make you feel more successful, because it's a measure of your many successes. And it's not just about the big things. Small accomplishments add up, and should be noted and celebrated, because they are still a measure of your success.

It's important to celebrate all of your accomplishments. We have been trained to be self-defeating, to downplay the small things we accomplish, to downplay everything we accomplish. But it's time we take that back.

Every accomplishment, big or small, is important to our growth. Did you wake up and make your bed this morning? Put it in the jar! That's the first thing you've accomplished today!

Did you make yourself a healthy breakfast, or make a healthy choice instead of a bar of chocolate and cup of coffee? Put it in the jar. It can be



little things like, “I took a walk today” or bigger things like, “I wrote about my trauma, and I’m okay”. Anything you identify as a success goes into the jar. When I start my day by making my bed, that’s an accomplishment. As minuscule as that may seem for other people, it encourages me to start my day on a positive note.

These small successes will build you up to feeling confident and resilient. They also contribute to building a healthy routine, but we’ll get more into that in Part 3.

A tradition we have in our house is, throughout the year, we fill our Accomplishment Jars with our accomplishments and the dates we accomplished them. Then, on New Year’s Eve, we dump out the jar and review everything we’ve accomplished that year. It’s fun to look back and see all the positive, amazing things that we’ve accomplished. It closes out the year on a positive note and encourages us to compete with ourselves the next year for bigger and better accomplishments.

Making your jar is really easy. Take an empty, clean jar, and make it a label that says, “Accomplishment Jar.” Tape it on. Then cut 3’x3” pieces of paper, ideally colorful paper, and put them inside the jar. Leave the jar next to your bed, on your desk, or somewhere you’ll see it. Think about what you’ve accomplished this week.

You’re working on yourself by reading this book. Write it down and put it in the jar. What else did you do this week? Did you meditate? Did you go for a walk or a run? Did you start a new hobby? Did you say your three “I love” statements? Did you write a new affirmation? Did you make a friend? Did you learn something new about yourself?

Anything you feel was a small or large accomplishment, write it down and put it in the jar. Building yourself up and boosting your self-esteem is building resilience. The unshakable confidence that nobody can break. By learning more about yourself and celebrating the person you

are, you are becoming unshakeable. And for that, your narcissist is losing their control over you. You should be incredibly proud of yourself.

Put that in your jar.

## **Tip #17:**

### **Goals of Life & Goals In A Relationship**

**V**ision boards are a constant visual reminder of who you are, and what you want to accomplish. It's taking items you want to do or have, and see, and words to describe what you want to feel. It's a beautifully creative way to see them every day. They are made to encourage you to achieve your dreams, reach your goals, and create that resilient, flourishing life you desire.

There are a lot of benefits to having a vision board, especially while healing from emotional trauma. Our narcs taught us we can't achieve or accomplish anything, we aren't worth anything, and we can't do anything right. A vision board serves to debunk that efficiently and immediately.

Creating a vision board as a survivor of abuse is necessary in order to get clarity about your life future. Vision boards help you get clarity on what is important in your life, your family life, and your dreams. Then encourages you to figure out how to make those dreams come true by setting goals, and identifying tools and resources you need to reach your goals.

Feeling stuck, alone, and lost are all aftereffects of narcissistic abuse. In order to combat that and gain clarity, this tip is a resource that I highly recommend you utilize.

It's a fun, easy project that allows you to get really creative and focus on the life you want, the ways you want to feel, the goals you want to accomplish, and the resilience and confidence you want to develop.

Here's what you'll need:

- poster board - any color
- some old magazines
- markers
- scissors
- some glue or tape

Follow these steps below to create your vision board.

1. Cut out images from magazines (or draw your own) that represent your ideal life, vision, goals, dreams, and plans
2. Paste or tape the images on your poster board
3. Use your markers to write your personal mantra, affirmations or other favorite quotes onto your vision board
4. If you like, frame your vision board and hang it on your wall. Make sure you display your vision board somewhere you'll see it every day and be inspired! In your bedroom next to your bed, the living room, office. Somewhere that will remind you of the amazing, incredible things that you'll accomplish.

Like I said before, resilience is already inside of us. And by focusing on the things that we want, learning more and more about ourselves every day, and continuously inspiring ourselves to stay on course toward our best lives, we are building the resilience muscle.

Vision boards are a great way to keep yourself motivated and focused on your healing. It's also a great tool to use with children and friends as well. There are so many amazing benefits to vision boards, in addition to being a fun outlet of self-expression.

## Tip #18:

### Empowering Music

**M**usic is very personal and gives you something to relate to. This why it's powerful. It allows you to feel with someone. We feel supported, empowered, and understood by music. And the feeling of being a part of something contributes to building your resilience.

*“When I listened to the song, ‘Treacherous’ by Taylor Swift for the first time, and she sang the line, ‘I’ll do anything you say if you say it with your hands’, shivers went down my spine, and my fingers went numb. I would do anything he said because he did say it with his hands...his hands against my ribcage. I’m unsure what that song means to Taylor, but to me, the interpretation of that song is about my abuse.”*

- An excerpt from “You’re Not A  
Disappointment! You Are Worthy!”

Breaking Through Our Silence: the  
Journey to Surviving Sexual

Assault (2)

Listening to music and creating playlists which help you feel heard and understood can be a very powerful tool to help you heal. I have playlists for everything. I have a playlist filled with empowering music that makes me feel strong. I have a playlist that describes my journey through my

abusive relationships to healing. I have a playlist specifically for when I'm having a bad day and need to have a good cry.

What songs would you put on your playlists? What songs make you feel the way you need to be feeling?

Create your customized playlist. Music helps us understand emotions we don't realize we have, and it helps us resolve problems and think clearly. It's beautiful that way.

Another way to utilize music is to write it! In the same way writing stories helps, writing songs allows us to express our emotions in a rhythmic and melodic way. Even if you don't play an instrument, find a song you like and rewrite the lyrics to it in a way that expresses your personal feelings. Or, you can write some lyrics and collaborate with a friend you trust to put music to it. That's what I did. I wrote a song about the abuse to release what happened and to build my confidence. I knew it would help people relate to me. It also served as a way for me to be heard.

Writing the song and having a friend read the lyrics and put his music to it brought it to life, and it was empowering.

Each of these activities contribute to building a confident, resilient person, and to being able to develop a new healing technique. Having music that makes you feel heard, understood, and acknowledged is an asset to your healing and your self-esteem.

## **Tip #19:**

### **Create A Support Group**

**I**n the Release section, we discussed identifying people in your life who are positive, inspirational, and dependable. You're going to need them for this tip.

As survivors, sometimes expressing ourselves verbally is quite difficult. Sometimes we're feeling lost or depressed, and we just can't explain why. That's okay. That's normal. So, to combat those days where you need someone to be there for you, and you don't know why or how to explain why, I recommend creating a codeword.

A codeword is a word which wouldn't normally come up in conversation. It is an agreed upon SOS trigger word notifying your team you need them. It is there for bad days, times you need reassurance, to talk, validation, love and support. And you and your team will have identified a word in advance so that when it's used, there is a sense of urgency, love and support.

It is important to have this agreement because the emotional abuse we endured causes our mental health to fluctuate. There are those moments we need the comfort and support of friends, and it's difficult to reach out. We feel alone, misunderstood, dramatic, needy and clingy. We feel as though we are burdening people with our barrage of emotions.



Having a codeword system set up negates the need to explain what's going on or why we need to talk. It also allows our team to know of the emergency.

So many survivors who don't have a system like this will turn to easy and toxic coping mechanisms including alcohol or drug abuse, self-harm, engaging in promiscuity, or other risky behaviors. If these behaviors are ignored, they can easily become coping habits. In turn, the coping habits can swiftly become another crutch.

In order to avoid forming another crutch, this system allows your team to know you're feeling at risk, and you need them.

Write your team a message sharing with them the concept of a codeword. Tell them why you want to implement this system and ask them if it's something they could help you with.

With the people who agree, pick a code word that wouldn't normally come up in conversation. Pick a word that if you were to text it to them, they'd know you need someone to call you or come spend time with you.

For example, two of my best friends and I use the word "Pineapple," when we're in a dark place and need support. When the word "pineapple," is texted into our group message, one or both of us will call the person who sent the text to check in. We implemented this system in 2018, and it has been an asset to our group ever since.

It's a relief to know you have support. Over time, knowing you have people in your corner no matter what, builds your resilience, and you won't need to use it as often. You'll know you are loved, validated and understood. In turn, you will grow in confidence, resilience, and control.

## Tip #20:

### Boosting Confidence

**O***nce you achieve something as a trauma victim, something triggers in the mind that brings along euphoria, and you're less afraid to take the next risk, no matter how large or small."*

- An excerpt from "The Re:Definers" from Breaking Through the Silence: The Journey to Surviving Sexual Assault (2)

It is very normal for us to overlook our achievements while we highlight our failures. This has to do with our experience of being compared to others by our abusers in an effort to demean us. In my personal story, everything I did, someone else did it better. No matter how much makeup I wore, or how I did my hair, someone else was prettier or looked better, or tried harder. We learn that we will never be good enough. I might have left my abuse, but someone did it much faster. This toxic culture of comparison is what keeps our confidence and resilience low. Regardless of the beautiful, amazing and impressive strides we've made in our lives, we believe someone else has already done it or has the capacity to do it better.

This way of thinking is not healthy nor true. It's a mindset we need to change and subsequently avoid for the rest of our lives. It traps people in the victim mentality and stops us from falling back in love with ourselves and living our best lives. Looking at the glass half full, and reminding ourselves of every little thing we do right, is an

accomplishment. It is a pathway to a peaceful and full life filled with self-love and confidence.

We are ten times more likely to remember bad experiences over good experiences. Therefore, the goal is to recognize and acknowledge the good experiences and accomplishments. Another way to really build up your resilience is to recognize and acknowledge *past* successes. This truly and deeply impacts your level of confidence. The more self-esteem you have, the more risks you're willing to take, and the more you'll grow. Research shows that the more you recognize past successes, the higher level of confidence you have, and the more likely you are to successfully accomplish new goals you set for yourself. The more risks you take, the more wins you will have.

Here's an exercise to help you relive your past successes. Split your life into three time periods. I'm 30 years old (at the time of publication), so my three time periods will be from birth to age 10, ages 11-20, and ages 21-30. Now, think back to three major accomplishments you had during each time period. Mine are:

### **Birth - Age 10**

1. Had the highest cookie sales in my Brownie troop
2. Made my first lifelong best friend
3. Performed in my first theater production

### **Age 11 - Age 20**

1. Was accepted to the Fine and Performing Arts Center (FPAC)
2. Moved to Israel
3. Survived my abusive partner

### **Age 21 - Age 30**

1. Published my first book
2. Started Within Your Reach, Inc., my nonprofit for survivors of abuse and assault
3. Founded Marissa F. Cohen LLC, creating resources to help survivors Heal From Emotional Abuse

It can be anything: landing a jump while ice skating, scoring your first goal playing soccer, or surviving events throughout your abuse. Anything in your life you're proud of gets added to the list. Don't worry, you won't have to limit yourself to only 9. I want you to see how successful and powerful you truly are.

Once you start to recognize your power, you'll build this amazing wall of resilience. You have accomplished so much just in surviving, let alone the rest of your life. What have you done that you're proud of? You deserve the pat on the back, and the confidence, self-love, self-esteem and resilience that go with it. Rebuild.

*Key #3:*

*REBUILD*

*How to Rebuild My  
Life and Find Peace*



# KEY # 3

## REBUILD HOW TO REBUILD MY LIFE & FIND PEACE



*"It is the things that we are most afraid to do that provide the greatest liberations and growth for us".*

-**Jack Canfield**, America's #1  
Success Coach, and Best-Selling Author of *Chicken Soup For the Soul*  
and *The Success Principles*

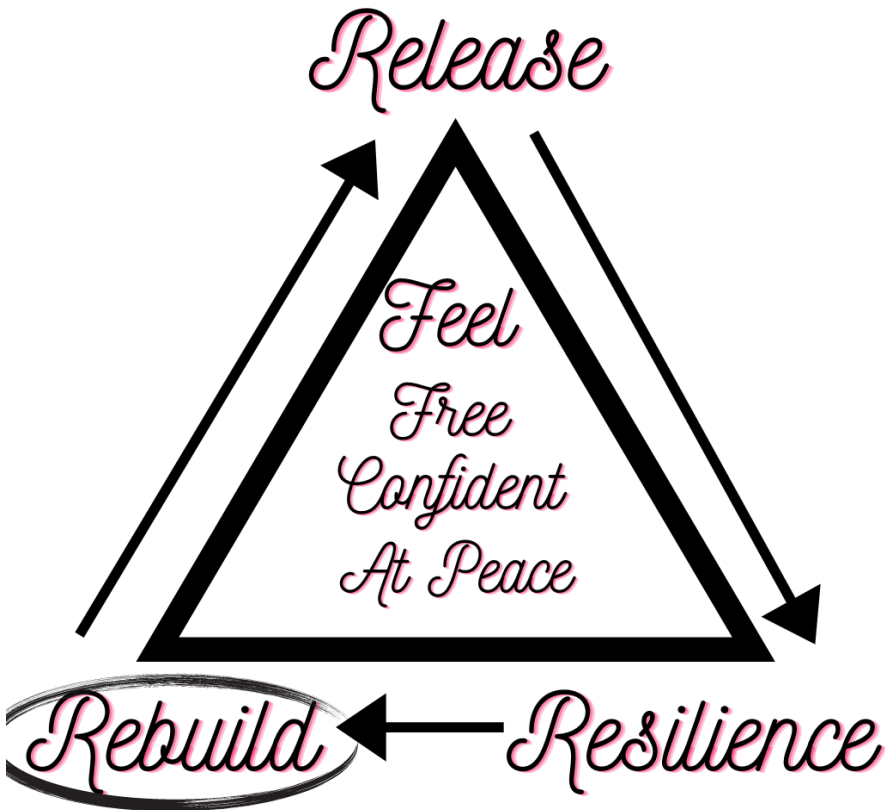
**T**he third key in Healing From Emotional Abuse is Rebuilding Your Life and Routine. Rebuilding your life and routine is the step which will be the most uncomfortable because you're changing the life that you know. This step pushes you to cut the toxicity; which will create for you the healthiest and happiest life you can imagine. Once you detoxify and rebuild the life you're unhappily comfortable in, you will truly feel free, confident and peaceful.

In the first two steps, we've created habits that can and should be used every day to create a healthy routine, and encourage growth, confidence

and freedom. By implementing these tools into your everyday life, you'll see immense growth in your personal and interpersonal life.

I usually receive a ton of push back when my clients get to this section, because they want to stay comfortable, and continue to be around the same toxic people. You've come this far and changed so many aspects of your life. You have become a stronger, more confident person. *And yet, you're willing to stop your own progress for those who are minuscule?*

In this section, I share my 10 favorite tips to rebuilding your life after abuse.



## Tip #21:

### What Family Means to Me

**O**ur family isn't always the people who are connected to us by blood. Sometimes, it's our families who are the toxic people in our lives. It's a really difficult spot to be in; accepting that a family member could be a narcissist. We are so programmed to love and unconditionally respect our family members, so when they are the ones who are abusing us, societal standards and programming make it very difficult to cut them out of our lives. Just because people are connected to us through blood, doesn't always make them healthy or good people. Cut or limit toxic ties, and build a Heart family. That's why I am a big advocate for creating a Heart Family.

Heart Families are the people who you rely on for emotional support, who love you unconditionally and who are there for you when you need them. We *can* choose our families.

Your heart family is the people who make you feel accepted, wanted, loved, and appreciated. Who normalize the things you're feeling, and don't blame you or demean you for feeling or acting the way you are. My Heart Family is some of my best friends. They are the people I turn to when I feel out of place, isolated, or like I'm crazy.

Knowing you are loved and supported is one of the most important healing tools. And having a family unit, blood or not, you can run to,



lean on, have support from, is undeniably the most effective asset on your healing journey.

While we are in the process of rebuilding our lives, that might entail also rebuilding the people we surround ourselves with. Rebuilding our family is just another step in that process.

Imagine trying to rebuild your life after your abuse while living in a home with your abuser. Or while relying on your abuser for emotional support. That doesn't make any sense. If your abuser is a family member, it makes healing more difficult.

Having your Heart Family there for you to validate and support you is a key ingredient to recognizing healthy relationships, and making healthy choices in future partners.

Your heart family can be the same people you created your codeword with. It can be the people who are on your team. The one caveat is they have to be healthy. They are the family you choose because family is so important.

Identify the people in your life who are your Heart Family. The people who take the place of the people in your life who are blood related and are abusive. You're looking for the people you can depend on and with whom you can spend the day talking, drinking coffee, and eating snacks.

Remember, not everyone deserves your time and energy. If someone is blood related and is treating you badly through manipulation or narcissism, they don't deserve your time. Turn to your Heart Family for the needs your blood family isn't filling. We all need family, but the best families aren't always the ones that we're related to.

## Tip #22:

### Helping Others

**E**very survivor I have worked with, interviewed or coached, stated that their motive for healing was to help other survivors heal. I'm not exaggerating. *Every single person*, regardless of gender, age, socioeconomic status, race, etc... everyone's #1 motive was to help other survivors heal after their abuse. This is because they know what it feels like to be in your shoes. It pains us to see other people suffering.

Volunteering time to work with your community (whether it be a survivor community, animal shelters or any nonprofit) is an amazing way to give back and rebuild your life. It contributes to our feeling good and helpful.

As a large part of rebuilding your life, designating time to contribute to others plays a big role in determining the outcome of your healing. We are in the last leg of the healing process, and contributing to others leads to enhanced confidence, a feeling of significance, and rebuilding your routine. We heal ourselves by helping others.

As a part of my rebuilding, I chose to continue working within the survivor community because it fills me with joy to see survivors transform their lives. By speaking to, advocating for and empowering others to share their stories and heal, I am contributing to making a change in the world. The thought of a future and society filled with compassion and understanding for survivors and the hurdles we jump to get back to a baseline we don't know makes me hopeful.

One of the best ways to heal is to help others. We have this newfound freedom and confidence, so using that to rebuild our routines and adding to other people's lives is a win-win.

After you leave a narcissistic relationship, and start to heal, you have knowledge others don't yet have. Being able to pay it forward and spend time helping your community, makes you feel good and puts positivity into your routine.

We want to fill your days and life with happiness, kindness, positivity, freedom, and peace. And an incredible way to achieve peace is to help others.

So, how do you start implementing volunteering and contributing into your routine? Find a place or a demographic you want to work with. If you want to help survivors of emotional abuse and narcissism, call your local domestic violence nonprofit. They are always looking for advocates and hotline workers to answer phones and help people find safety.

If you prefer to work with animals, look for a local animal shelter or ASPCA, and see what they have available for volunteering. Incorporating this kindness and positivity into your routine helps others while it's guiding you to growth. It helps you find a peaceful balance between the chaos and craziness of overcoming narcissism and the life that you want to live.

There are a million and one ways to get involved in your community. Call nonprofits and see how you can help. Some suggestions of places to volunteer are The Boys & Girls Club, a food bank, or a soup kitchen.

Rebuild your life from a place of generosity and kindness. That is what really grants us peace.

## **Tip #23:**

### **Make Your House A Home**

**O**ur home is our safe space. Creating a peaceful and empowering environment in our safe space benefits us tremendously. When you get home after a stressful day of work or school, and you just want to fall on the couch and relax, having a place filled with positive energy, surrounded by things that make you smile is necessary.

A large part of rebuilding your life post narcissist is creating your own safe haven or oasis to escape to. You've been trapped in a toxic environment for too long. It's time that you empower your space.

It's important to wake up and feel at peace. A peaceful household creates a peaceful life. Imagine waking up every morning and the first thing you see is a beautiful, inspiring quote, something that gives you peace of mind and makes you grateful for your new life. You have a great stretch, and roll out of bed. You walk into your bathroom, and as you look at yourself in the mirror, next to your beautiful, smiling face, is a picture of you with the biggest, most sincere smile you've smiled in a long time. Who is that picture with? What were you doing?

Then, you walk into your closet to pick out the perfect outfit to match this, so far, perfect day. As you're getting dressed, you're surrounded by loving quotes and messages from yourself that hype you up. Then, you go to the kitchen to make yourself some coffee or tea before leaving.

And right over the coffee pot is a small, wooden decoration with a positive, inspiring message to follow you on your way out.

Could there be a better morning? Just thinking about it makes me smile, and I imagine it's doing the same for you. Fill your home with that type of happiness and positivity. How would you feel if you were so surrounded by positivity, and positive energy all the time?

Incredible, right? In my office, I have cork boards with inspirational quotes, beautiful paintings and art my friends have made, a gorgeous hanging Tree of Life shelf for all of my essential oils, and little knick-knacks that I picked up to remind me of amazing memories. I do not have anything in there that makes me feel stressed out, overwhelmed, unhappy, or negative. My space is sacred and safe.

It's an unstoppable, on top of the world feeling to be surrounded by peaceful, loving happiness. So, what are you waiting for?

Go room by room and eliminate all the negativity, and all the items, objects and memories from those rooms making you feel heavy, uneasy, chaotic, or hold bad energy.

Replace those things with inspirational quotes, pictures of happy times, positive memories, and things that make you smile.

Take computer paper and write and decorate your favorite quotes, good things people have said about you, and words that will inspire you. Hang up your vision board, your *I Love* statements, pictures and items from your bucket list.

Rebuild the inside of your home and make it a place that relaxes you and brings you peace and confidence. It's so important you have a space where you feel completely at home. Make your space work with you to aid your healing and encourage you to keep rebuilding your life.

## **Tip #24:**

### **Getting Rid of Negative Items**

I can't speak for everybody here, but a lot of survivors tend to hold on to things for sentimental value. And that's totally fine. I do that too. But there is a fine line between holding on for sentimental value, and refusing to let go of things that are tied to the negativity and abuse of the narcissist. As much as we wish they were better people, they weren't, and holding on to things that remind us of them, simply brings toxicity into your newly rebuilt home.

Everything and everyone in life gives off energy, especially when you associate an object or memory with an emotion. For example, a picture. When you see a picture that reminds you of a good memory, your vibrations are raised. It's a positive energy you're surrounding yourself with. On the other hand, if it's a picture that you associate with a bad memory, your vibration lowers and you are surrounding yourself with negative energy. The things filled with bad memories and negative energies are the things to get rid of.

Holding on to negativity and keeping it inside your house, your safe space, and your mind is allowing the narcissist to still be a persistent part of your life. The toxicity is still clinging to the walls of your safe space. Get the crap out and burn it all!

So, what I propose is a bonfire. Gather the items you've removed from your home to detoxify your space and burn them in a ceremony with

your team. This ceremonial gesture will allow you to fully release your painful past and embrace the rebuild of your new life.

Usually, people might view this as immature or impulsive. But the release you get from watching their control over you go up in flames, giving you a pathway to rebuilding your life, is truly surreal. The freedom and peace you receive from letting go of these objects and memories relinquishes the hold they have on you.

Make it a party. The people who you have chosen to be on your team, and the people who support you and make you feel good to be around, can watch you let go of your old, toxic life, and start fresh with a new freedom, a new confidence, and new peace of mind.

A burning ceremony is a transformative ritual traditionally performed as a way of releasing something which no longer serves you. During a burning ceremony, fire is portrayed as a powerful symbol of freedom, confidence, and peace. It is an inspirational practice to release the past from negative habits to unhealthy relationships. It's the time to leave it all behind and start fresh.

Be positive and genuine about your feelings. The ceremony should be performed when you're in a peaceful mood and ready to start your new life. Celebrate the end of the burning ceremony with the acknowledgment that you have closed the door on the part of your life that brought you sorrow and negativity.

You should start by writing what you want to let go of and burning that piece of paper. Watch it turn to ash and float into the air. Follow this up with pictures, clothes, or any other object tying you to your narcissist. And as each object or item burns, if you feel sadness, let it out. If you feel release, embrace it. You will likely feel a range of emotions throughout this process.

You have your team assembled by your side, as well as the knowledge of moving forward to a better and more peaceful life of freedom.

## **Tip #25:**

### **ESA Benefit**

**E**motional Support Animals (ESA) are animals recommended by a specialist to help people cope with mental illness or trauma. ESAs are especially helpful for people who suffer from PTSD.

Since World War I, a considerable amount of research has been done about the effectiveness of animals to help service members overcome or manage PTSD symptoms. People who suffer from severe PTSD, C-PTSD, and Depression have had incredible improvements in their behavioral and mental health after working with an emotional support animal.

In 2015, when they developed the ESA program, they found that survivors of emotional abuse thrived after bringing ESAs into their healing plans, for a lot of different reasons.

1. Having an Emotional Support Animal gives you something to take care of, which builds confidence and compassion.
2. Animals, especially dogs, show nonstop unconditional love, which is something that survivors crave.
3. If the animal is trained to respond to triggers, it provides an additional safety service. For example, they can be trained to recognize PTSD triggers, panic and anxiety attacks and to respond to them by calming you down or finding help.



4. ESAs allow the survivor to develop increased self-sufficiency skills. The animal can help with daily tasks, medication compliance, and deeper sleep. Survivors can feel safer living alone and functioning independently.
5. Service animals can reduce anxiety and stress, which leads to decreased flashbacks and night terrors. With a lessened need for hyper-vigilance because of the animal's support and the survivor's increased trust, cortisol levels can return to normal for longer periods of time, improving the survivor's ability to think rationally and respond to stressful situations without losing their sense of control. (6)
6. ESAs also provide a greater range of coping skills. This comes in part from observing the dog's behavior and cues, and in part from being more grounded in the present moment due to the dog's presence, playfulness, and deep, loving commitment. As survivors become more self-sufficient and less anxious, they have an easier time implementing other aspects of their treatment protocols and opening up to accepting help from others. (6)

Someone who has experienced years of verbal abuse may rely on the calming and grounding their service animal provides. Those who may be uncomfortable with any kind of physical touch or affection can learn through ESAs how to feel safe while in close proximity to another living being. Animals are intelligent and observant creatures and make great healing companions.

Having an ESA enables you to work through your triggers and reservations with assistance and love. You are more capable of rebuilding your life with the support of an ESA. There are so many

benefits for survivors to have an emotional service animal. I can personally vouch for them.

There is no downside to feeling safe, secure, loved, protected, free, and peaceful. Getting a solid night's sleep after abuse is like it's own vacation. Sleep restfully and heal with the assistance of a stress reducing presence.

If you're interested in getting an Emotional Support Animal, talk to a doctor, therapist or psychiatrist. They will be able to write you a letter stating that they recommend an ESA for your healing. And they will most likely have local recommendations for locations to find one or adopt one.

## **Tip #26:**

### **Healthy Relationship and Signs of A Healthy Relationship**

**Y**ou have committed to rebuilding your life, and for that you should be incredibly proud. But there is always the fear in the back of our minds, what if we end up with another narcissist? Why do I keep falling for people that hurt me? Well, there is an easy explanation. What qualities are you looking for in a partner?

Chances are, you've encountered more than one narc in your love-story journey. There is a reason for that. The first narc sets the tone for us to get comfortable with bad behaviors and traits. We became programmed to accept the treatment we received because it was comfortable for us, even though it was unhealthy.

Breaking the pattern and recognizing the toxic traits we unconsciously find comfortable is the best place to start. It's important to identify the commonalities between our abusers so we can change the way we process them in our search for love and acceptance. Otherwise, throughout your life, you're going to find yourself back at square one, confused as to why this keeps happening to you, and why the wrong guys keep sweeping you off your feet.

Let's break that pattern right now.

What are some red flags from your narcissist(s) you missed during the relationship, but see clearly now? Think back to each person and what

they did. You'll start to see patterns, character traits and actions. Write them down. Once you identify them, you will be more aware of these characteristics in the future.

Now, let's look at the qualities you want in your future partner. Being specific about the qualities you want in your dream partner, for example, will allow the Universe to locate the person you desire. Instead of saying, "I don't want anyone mean", state your vision with a positive outlook. "I want to find someone who is passionate," will allow the Universe to look for someone passionate. Our subconscious doesn't recognize the word "not." So, if you're focusing on the word "mean" even if it's "not mean," you'll receive "mean."

Recognizing the characteristics you need to satisfy your love/connection is important. After leaving abuse, some people need someone who is more understanding and compassionate. Other people prefer partners who aren't touchy-feely or require a lot of physical intimacy. It's very personalized to you and the types of things that you need.

The problems it can cause if you're not considering these things can affect communication in future relationships. If you're rebuilding your future, do it completely. Understanding the *Do's and Don'ts* will make selecting future partners easier, and also, allow you to understand and identify possible triggers and abusers.

Think about the characteristics you want and need in your ideal partner. Remember, keep it positive. If you want someone who won't raise their voice, I suggest using the word, calm.

Then, focus on these characteristics. Visualize situations you'll share with them which will be handled in a healthy, productive manner. Visualize the life you want with the person that treats you the way you deserve. If you do, it'll come true.

## Tip #27:

### How to Find Good Friends

*“The therapeutic value of empathy is unparalleled”.*

- An excerpt from *“The Therapeutic Value of Empathy is Unparalleled,”* from Breaking Through the Silence: The Journey to Surviving Sexual Assault (2)

**T**hroughout this book, I've mentioned and recommended being selective of your Team, or the people that you spend time with. It is critical to find the people who inspire, motivate, support, love, and validate you. These are the people you'll rely on through your healing journey and for the rest of your life, and vice versa. You need people in your corner who will be there without judgement or negativity. You're rebuilding your life to be the most positive, freeing, peaceful life you can imagine. This would be the best time to rebuild your friends list as well - if necessary.

Think about the people you surround yourself with. Are they confident, beautiful people, with good hearts and a positive mindset? Or are they negative people who are always complaining about things and living a life filled with self-pity? How do they behave? What actions do they take? Are they positive or negative? Do they constantly put you down, or do they build you up?

Whether or not you believe it, we absorb mannerisms, characteristics and behaviors from the people around us. My favorite quote of all time is:

*"You are the average of the 5 people you spend the most time with."*

**-Jack Canfield**

Chances are, there are some Negative Nancy's in your life whom no longer deserve a place there. It's time to clean out and rebuild your inner circle and the toxicity that radiates there.

The cool thing about the Universe is, it will never let you go without. If your hesitation to start detoxifying your friend group is having "history" or the fear of being lonely, look no further. The Universe will always make sure you have your bases covered. If you cut out someone in your life, the Universe will fill that spot with someone better. However, it's *your* job to focus on exactly what you want, just like we did in Tip #26 with future romantic partners. Do you want someone compassionate, kind and empathetic? Or do you want more people to surround you with negativity, and encourage some bad coping skills? I'm hoping you want the former. Your friendships and the circle of people you surround yourself with are extremely important to your overall well-being.

Healing isn't meant to be a lonely road. You should absolutely have people who love and support you, whether they can relate to this experience or not. But the people who you allow into your rebuilt life have to be the best for you. Otherwise, all of this work is for nothing.

Allowing negativity and toxic friends into your life is systematically undoing all of the work you've done to rebuild. We rely on our friends for support, guidance, acceptance, validation and love. If you have a toxic mouse in the house, the whole house is affected.

You want to make sure your support network is filled with healthy people who will empower you through your healing. And, you want to surround yourself with people who inspire you to heal and grow.

The best way to evaluate your friendships is to make a list of all the people who are currently in your life. This includes family, friends, coworkers, and anyone else who you associate with.

After you make that list, put a plus symbol (+) or minus symbol (-) next to their name to signify if they are a positive person in your life or if they are a negative person in your life. Do they empower you or discourage you?

Finally, I want you to write one way to either cut the “minus” people out of your life or limit interactions with them to as few times per year as possible. Sometimes, you don't have the choice to cut them out completely, although it's best to do so. If you want to take this one step further, make an escape plan about how you can make sure you're safe if you *do* have to see and interact with them.

For example, a Champion I work with has a family member who is T.O.X.I.C. TOXIC! Unfortunately, her close-knit family doesn't appreciate when she doesn't attend family events. So when she's in a situation with her toxic family member, she is cordial and polite at the beginning of the event, then escapes and plays with the kids for the rest of the event. That way, she avoids toxic or unhealthy conversations and situations.

Another example: if you have a friend group, and there are one or a few people in that group who might be toxic, it's difficult and to cut the entire group out. Instead, at gatherings you choose to attend, have an escape plan. Come up with an excuse to leave early if you start to feel overwhelmed or uncomfortable, or if the toxic person/the toxic people

start to harass you. Leave. Get yourself out of the situation, and keep yourself and your well-being safe.

Now that you've cut the bad, let's surround you with the good. Look at that list you made earlier. Look at the people with a plus symbol next to their names. I want you to go through that list and put a star (\*) next to all of the people who motivate you, inspire you, and have characteristics you want to emulate. These are the people who you should be spending more time with. These are the people to fill in that empty space with. These are the people who will bring your average up.

If you want to rebuild a better life, you have to surround yourself with better people.

Keep evaluating. People who are good for you now might not be good for you later. As we grow and change, so do other people. And sometimes, we grow in different directions. That's okay. Just make sure you know your worth and never let your standards waiver.



## Tip #28:

### Types of Energy Healing

**E**nergy healing can mean a lot of things to a lot of different people. It can mean finding religion or spirituality, or it can be energy healing work like reiki, energy cleanses, and meditation. Whichever you choose, energy work is truly amazing.

*“I was in a reiki/body work session one day, and the practitioner told me, ‘Your energy is blocked in your pelvic region’. I didn’t think much of it at the time, and quickly disregarded it. However, when she said this, it planted a seed. I had an hour and a half session. She did massage work and energy work. Cheers to energy work! I felt everything in my body open up.”*

- An excerpt from “Cheers to Energy Work” from Breaking Through the Silence; #MenToo (3)

I can give you testimonial after testimonial to show you how turning to religion has helped people heal from their abuse. (Stay with me here.) The boundless community and resources available can be amazing. It also provides hope, which is crucial. Some people say talking to God through prayer has led them to the resources they’ve needed. That’s a very fortunate, and amazing experience to have. I hope everyone finds a community, religious or not, that lifts them up and makes them feel accepted, loved and healed.

*"I started with prayer, which is meant to be a way to talk with God. Having learned to pray and meditate, I was able to have a one-on-one with God, and was guided to the resources I needed".*

- An excerpt from "He Knew What He Was Doing" from Breaking Through the Silence; #MenToo (3)

However, it isn't for everyone. I will maintain that I am not a religious person. I am more spiritual than religious. I believe in the healing power of energy and created a community around that mindset. Things like Reiki and doing an energy cleanse can also be helpful and useful, and pairing those with essential oils (which I'll get to in a moment) can make the capacity for healing even stronger. Meditation is a strong, beautiful way to help become more self-aware and introspective. Once you understand yourself and what you're going through, it will help empower you to find the best fit resources for you. It gives you a knowledge and understanding of your psyche and creates connections to parts of your brain and body that have disconnected from abuse.

In some situations, like the case of sexual assaults, our brains can intentionally block out (or suppress) events in an effort to help us survive. It's a means of protecting us, but our conscious selves become confused and feel disconnected. Although I can't promise you'll remember these memories after meditation, it can help build emotional strength and connection. That, in my opinion, is way more important. You can meditate anywhere. I know people love to meditate on top of mountains or on the beach. I feel like every Google search of meditation pictures is set in one of those two places. Although that would probably be an incredible experience, not everyone has access to beautiful, natural healing spaces. I recommend creating a space in your room or your home, and designating it a meditation space; A place where you can go and collect your thoughts and is safe.

Any and all of these methods might seem strange or "out there," to you, and that's okay. Not everyone has been subjected to energy work, Reiki and meditation before -- but I implore you to be brave and try it all. There is no harm in trying something new. You never know! You might actually enjoy it.

Finding freedom and peace in the form of belief is a very common means of healing for survivors. Religion isn't always for everyone, but it's absolutely a possibility and option for someone. I choose to believe in the Universe. But belief in something is an amazing crutch when you need it.

Belief provides support, community, and certainty, all of which support a peaceful mind and life. Having a foundation of belief and support elicits hope, which is a key ingredient in both rebuilding and healing.

Religion can be a great tool to use if you're struggling to find certainty and hope. It is a built-in community filled with people who are like minded, and oftentimes you'll find others who have undergone similar challenges as you. Here are a couple examples from survivors who I have personally worked with, that used religion as a coping mechanism to overcoming their abuse.

1. *"Find a religion! Every survivor I've spoken to that has been proactive in a religion has healed much faster than those who are not religiously proactive."*

-An excerpt from *"He Knew What He Was Doing"* from Breaking Through the Silence: #Me(n)Too (3)

2. "I chose Paganism as a religion, because Paganism is peaceful, and all about loving the Earth around you and showing love to everyone that gives you a positive outlook on life. My religion became my outlet. I go for walks, where I can listen to all the

earth around me, and talk to the earth and thank it for giving me life and giving me the strength to carry on.”

- An excerpt from *“It’s Not For Anyone To Take What Doesn’t Belong To Them”* from Breaking Through the Silence: The Journey to Surviving Sexual Assault (2)

As I’ve stated, religion was not on my personal journey. However, others have benefitted from religion, and therefore, it is an important option to mention.

## Tip #29:

### How to Have a Positive Mindset

**T**here is one more important part to belief outside of the organized religion area — shifting your mindset. If you choose not to use religion as a coping skill to rebuild, then I highly recommend you work on shifting to a positive mindset.

When you are in a positive mindset, you tend to make better judgements and recognize the positivity in people. You are enabling yourself to be surrounded by those that will positively influence, inspire and motivate you. You attract the people who think, feel, act and have the same values as you.

I know I'm really pushing this principle pretty hard, but that's because it's so important. Once you shift your mindset to be more positive, you will collect and create a better team, make better decisions, and live a more fulfilling and peaceful life. I want you to write this down:

*"The Universe is working FOR me."*

It's all about your mindset. The gifts you receive from the Universe, and the way you perceive the world, are literally ALL about the mindset you have. You can have anything you want with the right mindset. By staying positive, you are inviting positivity into your life; from the Universe, from other people, and even from situations.

In order to realign to a more positive mindset, you have to take full control of your life. Starting in this moment, regardless of what happened to you in the past, take on the mindset that everything in life is happening FOR me, as a result of my actions.

What I'm basically saying is, your life is in your hands. And the ways you choose to live your life, and the people who you include it in, will directly affect the outcomes you encounter. Your life is now one hundred percent in your control. Nothing that happens to you is anyone else's fault. Blaming others and complaining about your circumstances is not allowed in your new, positive mindset. And the less you complain and blame, the more good things will happen to you, because you're in control. You'll realize more and more how intensely outside influences affect your energy and life. It'll be a good wake-up call to recognize the negativity and toxic relationships in your life, and you'll be more apt to cut them out.

This is your life. You're rebuilding something amazing. Do it with absolute control over your circumstance, and you'll be living the life of your dreams.

When you're in that dark place, it becomes significantly more difficult to recognize the people and love around you. But that's the key: finding ways to change your mindset so you can feel the light again, and so that you can have that positive mindset and positive perception of the world standing *with* you instead of standing *against* you. That's when you truly open yourself to starting your healing.

## **Tip #30:**

### **Creating A Relaxing Environment**

**I**n Tip #23 we spoke up ridding the negativity from your environment and replacing it with positive quotes, pictures, memories and energy. I want to take that one step further with this tip.

The homes we live in are less than perfect. No matter where you live, there are small things that bothered us at first, but we've learned to tolerate. Well, that won't fly anymore. We are rebuilding our lives, and therefore, creating a space where we are completely and utterly satisfied so we can start fresh.

In the spirit of rebuilding, we are also going to reorganize. When our environment is clean and organized, we feel calm and at peace. As I've mentioned, feeling peaceful and calm in our environment contributes to our healing journey in many ways. When we live in a disorganized environment, it negatively impacts all aspects of our lives. When our home is chaotic, we feel chaotic.

- It spikes anxiety and stress levels
- Disorganization leads to a lack of focus
- We tend to get overwhelmed and disoriented

As we've now redecorated our homes, and purged the negative energy and negative-associated items from our safe space, let's reorganize and fix it up as well.

To execute this, we make a Tolerations List. Room by room, I want you to list all the small projects that need to be done. Any redecorations, small fixes, drawers to organize, unfinished projects, everything you've been putting off.

When you're done listing all the things in each room, I want you to take a look at your lists. What of these items can be done in a couple hours? Write a 1 next to those tasks. What of these items can be done in a day? Write 2 next to those. What items can be done in a weekend? Write 3 next to those. And what items are time consuming, and could take longer than a weekend to finish? Write a 4 next to those.

Now, identify one item labelled 1, one item labelled 2, and one item labeled 3, and write a due date for each of them. These are your first three projects. Do your best to finish all three of these within the next month. Not only will it push you to revitalize your environment and finish something that bothers you, but finishing each of these and checking them off your list is an accomplishment. It'll make you feel good to be successful and accomplish something to add to your Accomplishment Jar.

Once you finish those three, pick three more. And you can take an item from the list labeled 4, as well, and work on it. Keep doing this process until all the items, fixes and projects are crossed off your list. You'll feel like you're living in a new home, with new, positive energy. You'll feel self-sufficient, stronger, more confident, and peaceful, because those little annoyances will no longer be in the back of your mind.

Rebuilding your life is a ton of little steps that all come together in the end.





*How to  
Live  
Happily*



## HOW TO LIVE HAPPILY



**S**o now what? Among the other things you've accomplished today, you've finished this book. But your journey is just beginning. Now, you have a choice, and the ball is in your court. You can put this book on the shelf, and not touch it or think about it ever again. You can cross it off your reading list and not take action, which would leave you exactly where you are. Or, you can follow the Healing From Emotional Abuse Philosophy and take your life back. You can feel free, confident and at peace. But in order to do that, you have to use this framework and mix it into your new, rebuilt routine.

I don't need to hear any of this stuff, I didn't write it for me. I wrote it because I've been where you are. I've sat exactly where you are -, sulking and wishing my life was different.

Finally, I decided I wanted to make a change. I wanted to start having healthy friendships and ridding myself of the toxic energy. I wanted to take my life and voice back from Dave and start healing. I wanted to feel free, and light, and at peace. I wanted the constant chatter and negative self-talk in my head to just shut up. I made it all go away. I did that by following this philosophy.

Abuse isn't the end of your life. It doesn't define you. And it can't stop you unless you allow it. Release it, be Resilient, and Rebuild your life.

The person who did this to you isn't worth the amount of control you're giving them. So force their voice out of your head.

A brave survivor allowed me to share this story with you. She took her life back and is living the life she dreamed of four years ago.

*"I left my narc 4 years ago. I was married to him for 8 years and friends for longer. Just as a wee bit of positive inspiration. I want you to know we do make it.*

*I went unconditional on a house today that I never thought I'd be able to buy. I'm going to live by a beach. I'm able to live peacefully. My kids are by my side and are my best friends.*

*My new friends I made after leaving my narc ex 4 years ago are helping me celebrate moving and helping me move, of course.*

*Continue knowing who you are. Continue being who you are. We are all fu\*king amazing people who have survived. Now it's about living.*

*Have the peace and knowledge knowing that we were discarded because we deserve better. We survived them... And we will always fight for better and will get it."*

As a survivor-sister, I could not be prouder of her and her incredible accomplishment. This could be your life, too. There is nothing stopping you but your own reservations, fear and self-doubt. Release that, build resilience, and rebuild your life. If I can do it, so can you.

# LET'S CELEBRATE!

## Congratulations!



I have one more task for you before I let you start living your best life. Think back to the moment just before you opened this book for the first time. Reflect on the emotions you were living with; the way you felt in your heart, mind and soul. Think about the way you interacted with the people around you. Were you more cautious? Apologetic? Timid?

And now, think about your last few days. Can you measure the difference in the life you're living now, versus the life you were living before? Small changes are the real big changes. The littlest habits and things that you've adjusted, are the ways that will define your newest, bravest, boldest self. Be so proud of your transformation. I know I am. And you'll only grow from here.

When you start living your life unapologetically, and not consumed by the opinion or control of someone else, you are truly free.

Take this opportunity to start trekking the beautiful path that you're headed down. And know, more than anything else, you're not alone. We are a TEAM. A Heart Family. And we support you.

“

**"Life isn't about waiting for the storm to pass. It's about learning to dance in the rain."**

**--Vivian Greene**

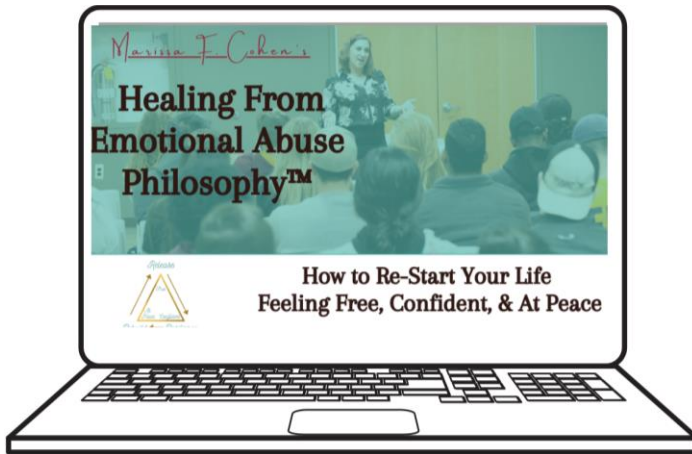
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*Don't just live with trauma. Overcome it.*



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## HEALING FROM EMOTIONAL ABUSE: HEAL WITH MARISSA

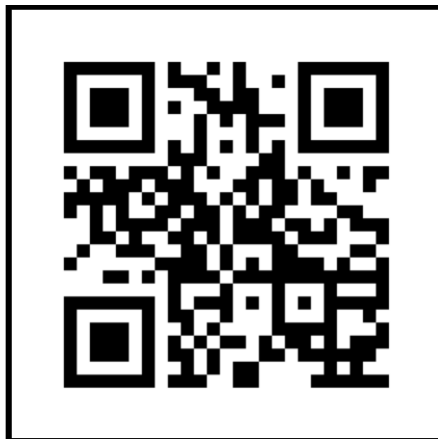
Using my signature healing philosophy, The Healing From Emotional Abuse Philosophy, together, we identify the area's where you're struggling to overcome your trauma, and build you a program around that. This is a personal journey, but you're not alone.

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*"I really loved the healing tools. It made me think a lot, everything about it lingers in my mind still. Some of the concepts have become a part of my daily thinking and decision making and it has really made a difference!"*

—Priscilla L.  
Healing Survivor



*"This program is different because Marissa would call me when I needed to just talk and she made me feel like my feelings were valid. She gave me ideas on how to cope and what I could do to help my children. I know this was working when I was able to not feel so overwhelmed and was able to decompress and work through things with logic."*

—Melinda P.  
Healing Survivor



*"Thank you so much for helping me, supporting me, and encouraging me to share my story. I'm so grateful to have you and relieved to finally, after NINE YEARS FINALLY talk about my story publicly. It warms my heart and soul to know my story has already helped one person and that is enough for me to finally let this horrible time in my life go and move on. I can't thank you enough for everything you've done <3 <3 <3"*

—Liz D.  
Healing Survivor

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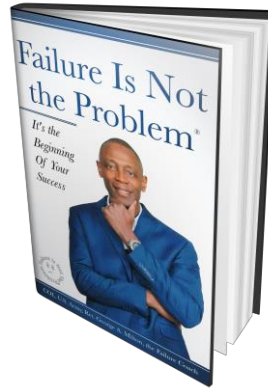
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# HOW TO BE A WRITER (AND HOW TO PUBLISH A BOOK)



Writing and Publishing my story in Breaking Through the Silence: The Journey to Surviving Sexual Assault, was a game changer for me. More than ever before, I felt strong and supported in my experiences, and was contacted by friends and strangers to tell me how much my stories helped them break their silence, and start healing from their abuse.

It is my belief that writing is one of the strongest ways for us to release our emotional abuse and trauma. I urge you to consider doing the same. There is no better revenge than a life well lived. And to do that free of your trauma and the chains it used to hold you down with, AND while helping other survivors find their voice. That's the best revenge you can have.



*Before I connected with Marissa and her publishing company it was a nightmare trying to understand how the process work. I emailed and called several organizations prior to linking up with Marissa. During those conversations the potential publishers were either aloof, too expensive or demonstrated very poor customer service skills. There was one who even thought they were entitled to my book; And I would be lucky to work with their organization.*

*My frustration with these organizations were twofold. One, I thought it would be easy to find a skilled, customer service focused publisher. Looking for a company proved to be extremely difficult landscape to navigate. Two, way more costly than I anticipated. Of course it's a business but I thought there would be organizations who would be more reasonable than what I found.*

*What I really enjoyed about Marissa right up front was her customer service focus. From the moment I met her and long before I used her to help me publish my books, she was willing to give me great advice on how the process worked. She is unbelievably knowledgeable and made me a lot smarter about how the publishing arena operates. Her diversification in regard to connecting me other services which promotes and support*

*publishing a book was second to none. I had no idea how to publish a book.*

*I am someone who puts a lot of emphasis on researching the topic that I am involved in. Because I had spoken with several companies over about a two-month period of time almost daily, by the time I began my conversations with Marissa, it was immediately clear that any issues and concerns I had reference to her assisting me with publishing my books would be resolved. And her work proved to be right.*

*After utilizing Marissa to help me with publishing my first books, life has gotten much better for me. I am more confident in my abilities to understand the publishing process, I now have a company who I am comfortable with in helping me publish my future books, and finally, I am a published author which give me credibility.*

—George A. Milton,

**Colonel (Retired) United States Army  
Founder of Failure Is Not The Problem  
Canfield Success Coach**



*I had four books completely written and edited, but didn't know what to do from there. I was on my own, and I'm not very computer savvy. It felt like a dead end. It was all very frustrating. Then I met Marissa, just when I was at a boiling point, and thought all this work wasn't going to go anywhere. She offered to take care of the difficult part, so I could continue to focus on being creative.*

*Seeing my book on Amazon, and then, hitting the best seller list in two categories in the first day was incredible. Marissa does all the research for you, so you don't have to worry about anything. I got to bask in the success of my book, not only being published, but also becoming an Amazon #1 Bestseller in two categories on day 1! Wow! Marissa has made this process easy, stress free, and so much fun. She's great to work with, and handles all the tough, technical stuff.*

**—Wanda Parker,  
Amazon Bestselling Author of  
Caught In A Web of Gaslighting**



# ACKNOWLEDGING THOSE WHO PAVED THE WAY FOR HEALING

I wanted to take one last opportunity to thank those that have paved the way for us to speak out truth. The people who jumped into the fire and gave us the strength and encouragement to take our voices back.

Christine Blasey Ford  
Anita Hill  
Brock Turner's Survivor  
Reese Witherspoon  
Lady Gaga  
Terry Crews  
Evan Rachel Wood  
Anthony Rapp  
Corey Feldman  
Allie Sheedy  
Alyssa Milano  
Gabrielle Union  
Lena Dunham  
AnnaLynn McCord  
Amy Schumer  
Brendan Fraser  
Viola Davis  
McKayla Maroney *and the US  
Olympic* Gymnastics Team  
Jane Fonda  
Rose McGowan  
James Van Der Beek  
Taylor Swift (*Won her lawsuit  
against Radio DJ*)

Abigail Breslin  
Minnie Driver  
Amber Tamblyn  
Nigel Barker  
Kesha  
Padma Lakshmi  
Cheryl Burke  
Margaret Cho  
Jamie King  
Jep Robertson  
Ashley Judd  
Jade Roper  
Oprah Winfrey  
Shia LaBeouf  
Teri Hatcher  
Tyler Perry  
Fiona Apple  
Rita Hayworth  
Fran Drescher  
Fantasia  
Tim Roth  
Queen Latifah  
Maya Angelou  
Kelly McGillis

Sandra Dee  
Billie Holiday  
Rufus Wainwright  
Sid Vicious  
Tori Amos  
Scott Weiland  
Mackenzie Phillips  
John Peel  
Anne Heche  
Clyde Barrow  
Connie Francis  
Junot Diaz  
Mariska Hargitay  
Amber Rose  
Tiffany Haddish  
Aly Railman  
Anna Faris  
Asia Argento  
Madison Beer  
Adrienne Bailon  
Halle Berry  
Jana Kramer  
Ali Vincent  
Rihanna  
Tisha Campbell  
Ashley Graham  
Reese Witherspoon  
America Ferrera  
Jennifer Lawrence  
Molly Ringwald  
Melanie Lynskey  
Bjork  
Patricia Arquette  
Isa Dick Hackett  
The Cast of *The Royals*  
Hilarie Burton  
Annamarie Tandler

Javier Munoz  
Jenny Slate  
Rosario Dawson  
Anna Paquin  
Anika Noni Rose  
Debrah Messing  
Felicia Day  
Kimya Dawson  
Ilana Glazer  
Trace Lysette  
Charlyne Yi  
Maureen Ryan  
Candy Cartwright  
Liz Savage  
Thunder Rosa  
Jack Canfield  
Tony Robbins  
Janis Hirsch  
Laura Dern  
Jessica Barth  
Gabby Douglas  
Hayden Panettiere  
Melissa Benoist  
Charlize Theron  
Drew Barrymore  
Madonna  
Shakira  
Pamela Anderson  
Christina Aguilera  
Marilyn Monroe  
Christina Applegate  
Farrah Fawcett  
Julianne Hough  
Richard Nixon  
Whitney Houston  
Ozzy Osbourne  
Marilyn Manson

Janice Dickinson  
Brett Butler  
Dave Mustaine  
Gabriel Byrne  
Henry Rollins  
Missy Elliott  
Axl Rose  
Ella Fitzgerald  
Robin Givens  
Meat Loaf  
Tom Arnold  
Mary J. Blige  
Patsy Cline  
Drew Carey  
Carlos Santana  
Kirk Hammett  
Nicole Brown Simpson  
Maynard James Keenan  
Mike Patton  
Duane Lee Chapman  
Rosie O'Donnell  
Eleanor Roosevelt  
Jewel  
Chevy Chase  
Lee Daniels  
Tina Turner  
Rudyard Kipling  
Tavis Smiley  
Rosie Perez  
George Orwell  
Ludwig van Beethoven  
Antwone Fisher  
Jonathan Davis  
Joyce Meyer  
Monica Lewinsky  
And Millions More...

Anne Sexton  
Chester Bennington  
Erin Gray  
Rain Pryor, and her siblings  
Eve Ensler - *Creator of the  
Vagina Monologues*  
Derek Luke  
Johannes Brahms  
Pat Conroy  
Paula White  
Johnny Depp  
Alice Liveing  
Gwyneth Paltrow  
Mariah Carey  
Stacey Solomon  
Common  
Ellen DeGeneres  
Sally Field  
Anthony Edwards  
Mike Tyson  
Vanessa Williams  
Tom Roth  
Sarah Hyland  
Jasmine Gonzalez  
Jessica Simpson  
Tyra Banks  
Alanis Morissette  
Sharone Osbourne  
Ana Ortiz  
Brooke Shields  
Alaina Hampton  
Jack Canfield  
Johnny Depp  
Angelina Jolie

***Thank you all for doing your part to  
create an atmosphere of openness, safety  
and community for people healing from  
emotional abuse, sexual abuse, rape,  
intimate partner violence, etc.  
We are grateful for your support.***

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Marissa F. Cohen is the Founder of the Healing From Emotional Abuse Philosophy™. She is the Award-Winning and Best-Selling Author of the Breaking Through the Silence™ Anthology series, in which survivors break their silence and tell their stories of survival.

In her first book, Breaking Through the Silence: The Journey to Surviving Sexual Assault, she breaks her own silence about her sexual assaults starting at age nineteen. This book was awarded by Readers Favorite International Book Awards.



In addition to writing, Marissa uses her experiences as a platform to help others overcome the abuse, sexual assault and narcissism that survivors face daily. She feels that survivors have been shamed and silenced for too long, and it's time that we take our voices back, take our lives back and teach society that Enough is Enough!

Her podcast, Healing From Emotional Abuse, has ranked Top 100 Podcasts in two categories, internationally (South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand), and can be found on any podcast streaming platform, as well as KXFM in Laguna Beach on Monday Nights.

On International Women's Day 2021, she was recognized as a Top 10 Most Inspirational Female Entrepreneur.

For over 11 years, she has been working to help survivors of through private and group coaching, online and live programs, and creating resources, using the same tools and techniques she used to overcome her own.

Marissa currently resides in Chicago with her two dogs, Charlotte and Eevee, and her fiancé, Larry. New York pizza is better than Chicago pizza, and pineapple doesn't belong on either of them.

*"Marissa gives survivors the power to have their voice again, after experiencing abuse and narcissism. She guides survivors through her process in a way that is quick and painless. She's what's next. This is coming."*

-- Kevin Harrington, Original Shark on Shark Tank

*"Marissa has simplified a process that in the past has taken decades for some, and compiled it into a quick and easy method for healing. Anyone who has endured emotional or physical abuse at the hands of a narcissist will greatly benefit from her methodology. The tips she provides are easy to follow, and instrumental to living a free, confident, and peaceful life."*

-- Jack Canfield, Star of the movie, *The Secret* ; Author of the Best-Selling Book, *The Success Principles* ; Co-Creator, #1 NY Times Best-Selling Book Series, *Chicken Soup for the Soul*

*"Marissa's Healing From Emotional Abuse Philosophy works to help survivors heal from the inside out. Her tips reconnect the mind and body, healing all aspects of a person who has endured any type of abuse."*

-- Joe Theismann, World Champion QB and Entrepreneur

*"This book is the secret weapon that every person experiencing challenges in their life can use to help them to overcome and get right back on their feet. Marissa F. Cohen has put together a unique collection of steps that help you heal and recover to be the best person you can be all into an easy and readable guide. This book is incredibly noteworthy and so valuable to many people dealing with today's challenging world! 'The Healing From Emotional Abuse Philosophy' is truly magical! Well done!"*

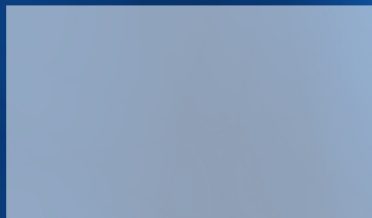
-- John Formica, The "Ex-Disney Guy", America's Customer Experience Speaker, Trainer & Coach

*"It doesn't matter where you are coming from. All that really matters is where you are GOING! And where you are going is only limited by your own imagination!"*

-- Brian Tracy, President of Brian Tracy International

*"Marissa is an unstoppable force! The Healing From Emotional Abuse Philosophy eliminates the struggle to find healing and stability after enduring abuse and narcissism. The tips she provides are easy to follow, and instrumental to living a free, confident and peaceful life."*

-- Jill Lublin, 4x Bestselling Author, International Speaker & Publicity Strategist



THE HEALING FROM EMOTIONAL ABUSE PHILOSOPHY

MARISSA F. COHEN

# THE HEALING FROM EMOTIONAL ABUSE PHILOSOPHY

## The 3 Keys to Overcoming Narcissism



## MARISSA F. COHEN

Creator of the best selling Breaking Through the Silence series