

# Personal Growth Concepts™

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Q&A Forum - Review

## Warning Signs of An Abusive Relationship, 2008-04

Fellow Q&Aers,

Greetings! I have two very important messages for you before we get to the Q&A and bonuses.

First, I am pleased to announce that Personal Growth Concepts, Inc. has established a contractual relationship with Kathleen Morgan, CS, MSN, APRN to provide medication evaluation and medication management to some of our clients. Kathy has been with us for a few months now while we have been helping her get on managed care panels. She is currently on the Anthem, Cigna, United Behavioral, and Value Options panels. Our agreement with her requires that any clients she sees are already Personal Growth Concepts, Inc. clients and are being seen in regular therapy by either myself, Janice or Jeff, our intern.

If you are a current client and would like to see her, please contact your therapist who will arrange an initial evaluation with her.

If you are a former client and would like to be seen, please call Pat in our business office (203-375-5782, ext 4) to have your case reactivated. Your therapist will then be able to set up the initial appointment with her.

If you are not a client and would like to become one, please call our office and leave a message at 203-375-5782, vmail box 1 for new or prospective clients. Kathy is with us part time and, to accommodate our clients, she is available by appointment only in our Stratford office on Wednesday afternoons and Saturday mornings. You can read more about Kathy on our website, [www.personalgrowthconcepts.com](http://www.personalgrowthconcepts.com). Click on "Our Team" and scroll down.

Second, as Personal Growth Concepts, Inc. continues to evolve, I have decided to replace our periodic Q&A with a quarterly e-newsletter. The e-newsletter will incorporate Q&A into it, as well as quotes and bonuses. Changing to a newsletter format will also allow us to communicate with you on a variety of other mental health, personal growth and spiritual issues. The e-newsletter will be no more than 4 pages and we will print out several copies and have them available in our waiting room for those clients who do not have internet access. This change will start in the first quarter of 2009. My intent is to convert the Q&A mailing list to the newsletter list. If you want to receive the e-newsletter, you do nothing. Your name and email address will be on the e-newsletter list. If you do not want to receive the e-newsletter you will need to send me an email as soon as possible so that I can remove your name from the list. Finally, there will be at least one more Q&A before the end of the year with an update on the newsletter. However, I encourage you to continue to receive the newsletter until you see what we have to offer. As always, Personal Growth Concepts, Inc. protects your identity and will not

release your name, email identity or any other information about you without your written consent.

Now to the Q&A.

Q: What are the warning signs of an abusive relationship (physical, emotional and verbal)?

A: Perhaps the over-riding symptom indicative of an abusive relationship is a lack of respect for the other person. This would cut across the full span of abuse that you outlined in your question ranging from verbal, emotional, physical and including intellectual and sexual abuse. Other symptoms may include being blamed for his/her anger and a history that includes violent behavior.

Controlling behavior on the part of the abusive partner is also a hallmark sign. This may include things like telling you what to or not to wear, who you can or can't talk to, when you can use or how to use the phone, etc. Over time, the controlling becomes more and more and the person being abused is frequently separated from their support systems (family, friends) and limited in their activities as the abuser seeks to obtain more absolute control. Frequently, but not always, alcohol and drug abuse are contributing factors in an abusive relationship.

Control in relationships frequently plays out in the manipulation or withholding of: information, money or sex.

Here are some thoughts/definitions of types of abuse.

Verbal abuse includes verbal put downs, intimidation, excessive swearing (anger), excessive cynicism or sarcasm and frequent noisy arguments that may include name-calling and threatening.

Emotional abuse is a violation of your emotional boundaries. Violent language, sarcasm, destructive criticism, silence and neglect all constitute emotional abuse. Whenever your own unique emotional reality is denied or discounted, you are being abused. Emotional abuse includes ignoring, discounting or dismissing the other person's feelings and ideas, refusing to acknowledge or hear contrary perspectives.

Intellectual abuse occurs when your opinions and ideas are ignored, discounted or ridiculed. You have an innate right to think for yourself, formulate your own opinions, puzzle things out and make mistakes (be in ERROR), and when your intellectual processes are interrupted or interfered with, that is abuse.

Physical abuse is anything done to your body without your consent. Period. Any invasion of your physical boundaries, of your person, constitutes physical abuse, and this can range from a slap on the back to a fist in the face or worse. Also included are: slapping, hitting, shoving, pushing, kicking and other inappropriate, harmful and other unwanted violations of your physical space.

Sexual abuse is any un-consented-to sexual invasion of either your physical or emotional boundaries, and ranges from the overt (rape) to the covert (sexual innuendo, deprivation of privacy). This may include inappropriate touching, restraint and the forcing of unwanted sexual acts through constraint, intimidation or fear.

Any abuse in a relationship is inappropriate and is usually determined by what makes one of the partners uncomfortable.

When abuse occurs in a relationship, it eliminates trust which is an absolute requirement for a healthy relationship. Once lost, trust is extremely difficult to rebuild - further abuse will decrease the likelihood of the relationship ever working out in a healthy way.

People frequently stay in abusive relationships out of fear and/or guilt. It usually takes professional assistance and support to extricate oneself from such a relationship. Connecticut has a good network of non-profit and for-profit resources to help those in an abusive relationship. Please feel free to contact me if you need to access some of these resources.

Once out of an abusive relationship, I believe it is imperative for the person to explore why/how they got into the relationship in the first place and to learn how not to accept unacceptable behavior again. If this does not happen, they are likely to end up again as a victim in another equally or worse, abusive relationship.

In answering your question, I have supplemented my own clinical experience and information, with that found in some handouts I have and some information gained from the internet. I thank you for the opportunity to share some of these thoughts and ideas with you and those on our list. Peace, John

**Quote: Families are like old quilts - although they tend to unravel at times, each can be stitched back together with love**

Bonus #1

## PET RULES

To be posted VERY LOW on the refrigerator door - nose height.

Dear Dogs and Cats,

The dishes with the paw prints are yours and contain your food. The other dishes are mine and contain my food. Please note, placing a paw print in the middle of my plate and food does not stake a claim for it becoming your food and dish, nor do I find that aesthetically pleasing in the slightest.

The stairway was not designed by NASCAR and is not a racetrack. Beating me to the bottom is not the object. Tripping me doesn't help because I fall faster than you can run.

I cannot buy anything bigger than a king sized bed. I am very sorry about this. Do not think I will continue sleeping on the couch to ensure your comfort. Dogs and cats can actually curl up in a ball when they sleep. It is not necessary to sleep perpendicular to each other stretched out to the fullest extent possible. I also know that sticking tails straight out and having tongues hanging out the other end to maximize space is nothing but sarcasm.

For the last time, there is not a secret exit from the bathroom. If by some miracle I beat you there and manage to get the door shut, it is not necessary to claw, whine, meow, try to turn the knob or get your paw under the edge and try to pull the door open. I must exit through the

same door I entered. Also, I have been using the bathroom for years --canine or feline attendance is not required.

The proper order is kiss me, then go smell the other dog or cat's butt. I cannot stress this enough!

To pacify you, my dear pets, I have posted the following message on our front door:

**To All Non-Pet Owners Who Visit & Like to Complain About Our Pets:**

1. They live here. You don't.
2. If you don't want their hair on your clothes, stay off the furniture. That's why they call it 'fur'niture.
3. I like my pets a lot better than I like most people.
4. To you, it's an animal. To me, he/she is an adopted son/daughter who is short, hairy, walks on all fours and doesn't speak clearly.

Remember: Dogs and cats are better than kids because they:

1. Eat less
2. Don't ask for money all the time
3. Are easier to train
4. Normally come when called
5. Never ask to drive the car
6. Don't hang out with drug-using friends
7. Don't smoke or drink
8. Don't have to buy the latest fashions
9. Don't want to wear your clothes
10. Don't need a gazillion dollars for college, and...
11. If they get pregnant, you can sell their children.

**Bonus #2**

**God and the Spider**

During World War II, a US marine was separated from his unit on a Pacific island. The fighting had been intense, and in the smoke and the crossfire he had lost touch with his comrades.

Alone in the jungle, he could hear enemy soldiers coming in his direction. Scrambling for cover, he found his way up a high ridge to several small caves in the rock. Quickly he crawled inside one of the caves. Although safe for the moment, he realized that once the enemy soldiers looking for him swept up the ridge, they would quickly search all the caves and he would be killed. As he waited, he prayed, "Lord, if it be your will, please protect me. Whatever your will though, I love you and trust you. Amen." After praying, he lay quietly listening to the enemy begin to draw

close. He thought, "Well, I guess the Lord isn't going to help me out of this one." Then he saw a spider begin to build a web over the front of his cave.

As he watched, listening to the enemy searching for him all the while, the spider layered strand after strand of web across the opening of the cave. "Hah, he thought. "What I need is a brick wall and what the Lord has sent me is a spider web. God does have a sense of humor." As the enemy drew closer he watched from the darkness of his hideout and could see them searching one cave after another. As they came to his, he got ready to make his last stand. To his amazement, however, after glancing in the direction of his cave, they moved on. Suddenly, he realized that with the spider web over the entrance, his cave looked as if no one had entered for quite a while.

"Lord, forgive me," prayed the young man. "I had forgotten that in you a spider's web is stronger than a brick wall."

We all face times of great trouble. When we do, it is so easy to forget what God can work in our lives, sometimes in the most surprising ways. And remember with God, a mere spider's web becomes a brick wall of protection.

### Bonus #3

An American investment banker was at the pier of a small Mexican village when a small boat with just one fisherman docked. Inside the small boat were several large yellow fin tuna. The American complimented the Mexican on the quality of his fish and asked how long it took to catch them.

The Mexican replied, "Only a little while."

The American then asked, "Why didn't you stay out longer and catch more fish?"

The Mexican said, "With this I have more than enough to support my family's needs."

The American then asked, "But what do you do with the rest of your time?"

The Mexican fisherman said, "I sleep late, fish a little, play with my children, take siesta with my wife, Maria, stroll into the village each evening where I sip wine and play guitar with my amigos, I have a full and busy life."

The American scoffed, "I am a Harvard MBA and could help you. You should spend more time fishing; and with the proceeds, buy a bigger boat: With the proceeds from the bigger boat you could buy several boats. Eventually you would have a fleet of fishing boats. Instead of selling your catch to a middleman you would sell directly to the processor; eventually opening your own cannery. You would control the product, processing and distribution. You would need to leave this small coastal fishing village and move to Mexico City, then Los Angeles and eventually New York where you will run your ever-expanding enterprise."

The Mexican fisherman asked, "But, how long will this all take?" To which the American replied, "15 to 20 years." "But what then?" asked the Mexican.



The American laughed and said that's the best part. "When the time is right you would announce an IPO and sell your company stock to the public and become very rich, you would make millions."

"Millions?... Then what?"

The American said, "Then you would retire, move to a small coastal fishing village where you would sleep late, fish a little, play with your kids, take siesta with your wife, stroll to the village in the evenings where you could sip wine and play your guitar with your amigos."

End of bonuses ....

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