



A FREE THE SELF™ GUIDE

GET SOBER GUIDE

BREAKING THE ADDICTION TO THE
OTHER PERSON

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Welcome To Get Sober

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Welcome. I'm grateful to offer some of my insight in how to get sober. My hope is this guide gives you tools that help you navigate this often painful, confusing, and obsessive phase of your healing and liberation from the nightmare of narcissistic abuse and trauma bonding.

You're here because you've gone through a profound series of repeating experiences with someone who love or loved. You had given yourself to them, trusted them, and allowed them into your life. This person may be your parent, a sibling, a friend, or a significant other. That matters, because your relationship to them matters or mattered to you.

Yet, their behavior and actions towards you may have brought you massive pain, distress, and despair. You may feel crazy, foggy, and uncertain if what you've been through is even real. You may be thinking you're crazy or that you're the problem.

This is normal.

Yes. Normal.

And I see you and believe you.

Why?

Because I went through this myself with my own parents and a religious culture I grew up in.

You may feel crazy, but you are *not* crazy. What you've been through *is* crazy-making.

You may feel like the cause, the problem, and the burden. What you feel, though, actually tells the story of what you've *been through*. Those feelings of shame, guilt and fear are normal responses to being lied to, gaslit, attacked, put down, name-called, blamed, controlled, and discarded repeatedly.



Put in other words, you feel what you do because of what you've experienced. That is one of the prime signals of reality for you. You wouldn't be feeling this way, much less reading this guide, had you not gone through something deeply altering, painful, and shattering.

Secondly, their behaviors, their abuse, their antics have pushed you into a corner where you have to make some big decisions.

This is utterly courageous. You're facing down someone who feels like a threat to you, yet you still have to interact with due to various reasons (some of which may be your codependent fantasy talking and some of which are legal or required due to obligations you share with them).

Any anxiety, distress, fear, panic, or desire to run is normal. Your body wants you to survive, and the flight response is one way it can help make that happen.

I know when I've had to interact with my parents, my body was tense and rigid, often subtly shaking. I was hyper-focused on getting through the situation so I could get out of the situation.

This, too, is very, very normal. You're dealing with someone your body sees as a threat. One tool I give my students and clients to help with this is a Permission Question. It goes like this:

"If you could, would you give yourself permission to be scared?"

Then they check in with their body and see what is going on for them. Often they find themselves relaxing a little. That happens because they're giving themselves permission to be OK feeling what they feel.

You see, part of becoming sober is your ability to respond to your emotions without seeking out the abuser for comfort, reassurance, and co-regulation. Instead, it is to believe your experience as real and valid, and to respect your well-being despite the pain it causes right now.

To help you with this, you've got access to my BE CALM™ System to help you regulate anxiety and help you build more safety and care as you move through your experience. It



is 100% free. You can get it here: [BE CALM](#)

So, what is “sobriety”?

I define sobriety as, “Having clear contact with reality and accepting what is.”

This means we’re no longer playing in a game of hope, what-ifs, and possibility. We’re dealing with probabilities, facts, and firm reality.

This is challenging as it requires us to acknowledge we’ve been lost from ourselves and from reality. We’ve been wandering in strange lands driven by hormones, trauma, and fantasy.

Your journey into sobriety requires you to confront and break free from three specific things:

- **Thing One:** Chemical/hormone addiction caused by Intermittent Reinforcement, also known as the “Trauma Bond” (check out the video on this here: https://youtu.be/N_J5_B774sc and here: <https://youtu.be/C8J3to0khgY>)
- **Thing Two:** Your Fantasy about them (check out my video on this here: <https://youtu.be/HgSZHnLvHY>)
- **Thing Three:** Tolerance of abuse and chaos (watch my video on this here: https://youtu.be/Z_YwICc3IWg)

Each of these are intertwined with the other. They work together to reinforce your craving and sense of dependence and enmeshment with the other person. They also outline the road back to sanity and sobriety.

This will not be easy. It will require discipline.

As one of my clients said about their recovery, “I was a heroine addict. That was cake compared to this.”

This is because you are working against your body and brain’s natural impulse to bond and protect it’s attachments to others that its used to protect itself and survive. In reality, its put you in more danger, and by removing yourself from this situation and enmeshment, you become safer and safer.



This requires PERSISTENCE. It took me a few years to feel entirely free from the pull of the craving. It still shows up, but I meet it with honesty and then I grieve. Grief is your liberator from this addiction.

Why?

Because grief will take you back to yourself and allow your loss (both in this relationship and past ones, and ultimately the root event) to be legitimized and cared for. Grief is strange that way. It is a nurturing process that allows us to reclaim pieces left after a loss and adapt to the new reality we're living with.

This happens because we're "sticky beings", meaning we attach to people, places, and things emotionally. We feel they're a part of us, and we a part of them. When they are no longer in our lives, we feel the lack of their presence (aka a hole in our soul, an emptiness, a loss).

This is especially acute when we've grown up neglected, experienced significant loss (like parents dying or abandoning us), and have become trauma bonded.

What is a trauma bond?

It is a psychosomatic attachment a person forms with an abuser that results in the survivor feeling love and affection towards the abuser despite what the abuser does. This happens because the survivor's brain doesn't believe it can escape or defeat the abuser, so it goes into a state called "Fawning" (check out my video on that here: <https://youtu.be/gyOWS9mccGc>).

This fawning state triggers the same hormones that we feel when we're in love with someone. This motivates us to appease and appeal to the abuser, hoping that they'll return that to us and we'll be safe.

This is what you are here to break free of. Here's how you are going to do this:

- **Step One:** Identify the reality of the situation
- **Step Two:** Identify the cost
- **Step Three:** Pain Association Practice
- **Step Four:** Legitimize Your Reality



- **Step Five:** Break The Euphoria/Fantasy
- **Step Six:** Take radical ownership of your choices and actions (aka role) in the situation and apply compassionate accountability
- **Step Seven:** Persist in repeating steps 1 – 6

Let's go through each step below:



STEP ONE: Identify Reality

We've got to some "sane making" in order to determine reality. This involves identifying repeating patterns of behavior, results, and impact. This requires you to be bluntly honest with yourself. Be willing to admit to the pain, confusion, and hurt you've been living with. Be willing to see the patterns that are emerging.

Below is an assessment that will help you determine reality. We start with THEM, then YOU.

THEM

QUESTION	ANSWER
Do they consistently treat you with respect?	
How do they respond when you ask for something you want from or with them?	
Do they consistently take responsibility for their behaviors?	
Do they consistently show you empathy, compassion, or understanding when you feel hurt?	
Do they consistently show you empathy, compassion, or understanding when you feel hurt by something they did or didn't do?	
Do they consistently keep their word?	



Do they consistently respect your boundaries?	
Have they broken your trust?	
Do they consistently make excuses for breaking their commitments to you?	
Do they have double-standards?	
Are they or have they abused you, controlled you, or manipulated you in any way?	
Do they control what you do with your time, who you are with, access to money?	
Do they call you names?	
Do they belittle you and shame you?	
Do they violate your boundaries?	
Which of the above happen regularly?	
What pattern do you see in how they treat your pain?	



What pattern do you see in how they treat your needs?	
What pattern do you see in how they take responsibility (or don't)?	
Does it feel like they're always the center of importance in the relationship?	
Are you happy?	

YOU

QUESTION	ANSWER
Do you consistently treat them with respect?	
How do you respond when they ask for something they want from or with you?	
Do you consistently take responsibility for your behaviors?	
Do you consistently show them empathy, compassion, or understanding when they feel hurt?	



Do you consistently show them empathy, compassion, or understanding when they feel hurt by something you did or didn't do?	
Do you consistently keep your word?	
Do you consistently respect their boundaries?	
Have you broken their trust?	
Do you consistently make excuses for breaking your commitments to them?	
Do you have double-standards?	
Do you control what they do with their time, who they are with, access to money?	
Do you call them names?	
Do you belittle them and shame them?	
Do you violate their boundaries?	
Which of the above happen regularly?	
What pattern do you see in how you treat	



their pain?	
What pattern do you see in how you treat their needs?	
What pattern do you see in how you take responsibility?	
Does it feel like you're always the center of importance in the relationship?	
Are you happy?	
What have you discovered by answering these questions?	
What are you ignoring or denying still?	



STEP TWO: Identify The Cost

You've paid a cost for being in this relationship. There's been an impact. This impact includes how the relationship has affected your:

- Health
- Wealth
- Well-being
- Friendships
- Family Relationships
- Self-concept
- Self-worth
- Career, business advancement
- Dreams and desires
- Sanity

It is time to account for that impact. Be honest with yourself about your answers. This will be confronting and can be very intense. Use the Distress-to-Rest tool to help comfort you: <https://youtu.be/PbweDXr829A>

QUESTION	ANSWER
Describe the impact of this relationship on your health. What has it done to your body? To your diet? What was it before the relationship?	
Describe what this relationship has done to your finances. How much debt has it brought you? What is your living situation? What was it before the relationship?	



<p>Describe the impact this relationship has had on your sense of well-being and peace.</p> <p>What was that before the relationship?</p>	
<p>Describe how this relationship has impacted your friendships. What have your friends done?</p> <p>What was your friendships like before the relationship?</p>	
<p>Describe how this relationship has impacted your family relationships.</p> <p>What was your family relationships like before the relationship?</p>	
<p>Describe how this relationship affected your sense of who you are.</p> <p>What was that sense of self like before the relationship?</p>	
<p>Describe how this relationship affected your sense of worth.</p> <p>What was that sense of worth like before the relationship?</p>	



Describe how this relationship impacted your career or business or desires in these areas. What were these things like before the relationship?	
Describe how this relationship has impacted your desires, dreams, and aspirations for your life. What were these like previous to the relationship?	
How has this relationship impacted your sense of sanity? What was your sanity like before the relationship?	
Are these acceptable costs to you?	
What have you discovered by answering these questions?	
What are you ignoring or denying still?	



STEP THREE: Pain Association Practice

This will feel a bit cruel and uncomfortable at first. This step is necessary for helping your brain see reality – that being with this person creates PAIN and HARM in your life. This isn't about making them a bad person. This is about getting sober about the IMPACT the relationship has on you.

This helps break the euphoria and fantasy feelings you have about this person. It is painful. It is uncomfortable. And it can also be really calming, paradoxically. This calmness means you're now responding to reality rather than gaslighting yourself by telling you things are different than what they actually are.

We do this with a question practice. These are hypothetical questions based on The Sedona Method™. They're meant to be answered as hypotheticals. This approach helps you psychologically open up to new truths and perspectives. It goes like this:

- Read the question out loud to yourself
- Pause and listen to how your body feels
- Reflect on any awareness that arises

Here are the questions:

- If you could, would you acknowledge the pain this person's brought into your life?
- If you could, would you accept the pain you've felt is real and valid?
- If you could, would you accept that your pain is a result of this relationship and not a flaw in who you are?
- If you could, would you let yourself acknowledge that how they treat you is harmful to your well-being?
- If you could, would you acknowledge that your fantasy about who they are is a lie?
- If you could, would you accept that the pain you feel is a signal they're not healthy for you?
- If you could, would you accept the pain you feel matters more than the love you feel for them?
- If you could, would you accept that their behaviors are caused by them, not by you?
- If you could, would you respect your pain?



These are challenging questions. They're deliberately that way. This is about your sobriety – and your future well-being and happiness. Practice asking these and allow yourself to explore what you discover. Answer the questions below to record and reinforce your discoveries:

QUESTION	ANSWER
What did you experience emotionally?	
What, if any, shifts did you experience in your perception of the other person?	
What, if any, realizations did you have?	
What will you do differently now?	



STEP FOUR: Legitimizing Your Reality

What you've been through is real, but your brain has been through being made to feel crazy. You've likely been told you don't understand things right, that you're remembering things wrong, or that you're simply just crazy. This is called "gaslighting", and it is designed to get you to question your reasoning abilities, memory, and understanding of things.

The way out of this is to legitimize your reality. Legitimization means to "endorse as real and valid". It is a technique I developed years ago to heal from the gaslighting impact from my parents and culture I grew up in.

Watch this video on it before proceeding to the practice: [Legitimization](#)

You will be legitimizing, or endorsing as real, several aspects of your experience. They're outlined below. You can use the Legitimzer Tool to help with this. It is linked below each topic.

LEGITIMIZE	RECORD YOUR RESULT
Legitimize the PAIN you've discovered in the past 3 steps Here's the Tool: The Legitimzer	
Legitimize the COST you've discovered in the past 3 steps Here's the Tool: The Legitimzer	
Legitimize the sadness, loss, or grief that surfaces Here's the Tool: The Legitimzer	



Legitimize your disbelief about what has happened to you

Here's the Tool: [The Legitimizer](#)

Legitimize your sober reality and what you're realizing as you do these practices

Here's the Tool: [The Legitimizer](#)



STEP FIVE: Break The Euphoria

Euphoria is the reason you keep going back. Euphoria happens when your brain doses you with a rush of oxytocin, dopamine, and serotonin through invoking fantasies, what-if scenarios, and when you encounter the other person in some way.

Euphoria tends to erase the pain you've felt and tends to make it hard to remember the pain and abuse. This is *normal*. The brain is attempting to defend its major source of identity, attachment, and belonging.

You will help yourself promote your well-being by breaking the euphoria. There are three steps to this:

- Step One: Recall The Pain
- Step Two: Use the Euphoria Breaker
- Step Three: Acknowledge And Allow Grief
- Step Four: Outline Your Gains

STEP	RECORD YOUR RESULT
Step One: Recall The Pain Review your answers to steps 1 – 3 above and look at what this has cost you. Allow yourself to FEEL it and connect with that emotional impact.	
Step Two: Break the Euphoria with the Euphoria Breaker. Click here for the Tool	



Step Three: Allow Yourself To Grieve. This is critical to moving through your pain and back to sobriety.

Share your grief by writing it down.

Here's The Grief Tool to help: [TOOL](#)

Step Four: Identify Your Gains

What have you gained since leaving this relationship?

How does that feel?

If you could, would you amplify that feeling and let it replace the euphoria?



STEP SIX: Taking Ownership

This step requires you to identify how you are playing into and enabling your own destructive addiction to the other person. This involves:

- Acknowledging what behaviors you're tolerating from them
- Acknowledging the fantasy you're harboring and living in
- Acknowledging what behaviors you're doing that put you back in harm's way
- Acknowledging what you need to confront and change in your life – not theirs
- Outline what you will change and how you will do it
- Doing it

You can complete this by answering the questions below:

QUESTION	ANSWER
<p>What behaviors are you tolerating from them that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are harming or hurting you• Are affecting your well-being, wealth, and health• You've been ignoring• You've been trying to fix	



What fantasy are you harboring. Here's some options:

- They'll change eventually if I love them enough
- I can change them
- Their trauma is causing this
- They are the only one that will love me
- I need them because they complete me
- I know who they really are and I am responsible for helping them become that person
- They need me

What behaviors are you doing that put you in harm's way:

- Going back after ending the relationship
- Checking on their social media
- Emailing them
- Entertaining fantasies of them of any kind
- Ignoring their patterns of behaviors
- Justifying their abuse because "of trauma" or "bad days"
- Reconnecting to get "closure"
- Not doing your therapy and self-accountability work
- Hoping it gets better



What are you ignoring in your life that needs your attention? Here's some options:

- Your loneliness and emptiness
- Your pain
- Your sense of worth
- Your health and well-being
- Your dreams and desires
- Your job or business
- Your choices and actions that are harming you

Based on your answers to the above questions, what do you need to focus on and change?

What actions are you taking to make that change a reality?



STEP SEVEN: Repeat As Needed

You'll be repeating Steps 1 – 5 as you practice getting sober, especially as you first exit the relationship.

It is also normal to have relapses. Check out my video on relapses here: [Handling Relapses](#).



Your Next Steps

Good work getting here. I recommend the next steps for your healing and sobriety:

- Get a therapist and begin working on healing your trauma bond
- Join The Community and get support, tools, and guidance. Join here: [The Community](#)
- Join the 5-Day Freedom From Codependency Workshop (\$47.00) here and go deeper on your healing: [The 5-day Freedom From Codependency Workshop](#)

Thank you for downloading my guide. My hope is that it will add to your well-being and happiness and assist you in your healing.

You can learn more about me, my courses and work, at:

- My Website: [Free The Self](#)
- [My Facebook Page](#)
- [The Thriving Beyond Codependency Community](#)
- [My YouTube Channel](#)
- [My Instagram](#)

To your healing and happiness,

Marshall Burtcher



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