**enditnow®** Emphasis Day

August 25, 2018

WORDS THAT WOUND:

The Trauma of Emotional Abuse

Written by Katia G. Reinert, PhD, MSN, RN, CRNP, FNP-BC, PHCNS-BC

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General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

Includes seminar

EMOTIONAL ABUSE: What We Can Do

Written by Dr. Katia G. Reinert

**enditnow**®

Adventists Say No to Violence

Children’s Ministries, Education, Family Ministries, Health Ministries,

Ministerial Association, Women’s Ministries, Youth Ministries



Prepared by Department of Women’s Ministries

General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

On behalf of the **enditnow®** team of General Conference departments

12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD, 20904-6600 USA



March 28, 2018

Dear Sisters,

Joyful greetings to each of you. We are happy to send the resource packet for **enditnow®** Emphasis Day 2018, written by Dr. Katia G. Reinert, associate director of General Conference Health Ministries department. Her sermon, “WORDS THAT WOUND: The Trauma of Emotional Abuse,” and her seminar, “EMOTIONAL ABUSE: What We Can Do,” show us the power of words for healing and for hurting others. The emotional scars of psychological abuse may not be visible, but they do have long lasting effect.

You or a loved one might be living in an emotionally abusive situation, or perhaps you are the abuser. Do you know how to recognize emotional abuse? Do you the typical characteristics of an abuser? Do you how to set boundaries to stop abuse? Do you know what *not* to do to help someone who is being abused? Are you willing to surrender to God and allow Him to renew your heart and mind as you recover from abuse or from being the abuser? You will find answers in this resource packet.

When you need help, when you need grace, when you need lovingkindness, when you need words of tenderness and faithfulness, you can trust Jesus. He can take care of you in any situation.

* As the True Husband, Jesus says, “For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future” (Jeremiah 29:11, NIV).
* As the True Lover of our souls, Jesus says, “I have called you by your name, and you are Mine” (Isaiah 43:1, NKJV).

May the message of this packet bring hope and healing as we draw people to Jesus through love, grace, mercy, and compassion.

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Women’s Ministry Department

General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

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# **About the Author**

**Katia G. Reinert, PhD, MSN, RN, CRNP, FNP-BC, PHCNS-BC**

Dr. Reinert wrote the sermon and seminar for **enditnow®** Emphasis Day 2018.

* **Sermon:** Words That Wound: The Trauma of Emotional Abuse
* **Seminar:** Emotional Abuse: What We Can Do

Dr. Katia G. Reinert is a Family Nurse Practitioner and Public Health Clinical Nurse Specialist practicing internal medicine at Shepherds clinic in Baltimore, MD. She is also serving as associate director for Health Ministries at the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Recently she served as the Health Ministries & Recovery Ministries director for the Seventh-day Adventist church in North America.

Dr. Reinert holds a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Washington Adventist University, a Master of Science in Nursing from Catholic University of America with focus in public health and the treatment of vulnerable populations, and a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Nursing from Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, MD, focusing on interdisciplinary research on violence in the family.

Dr. Reinert has served in the nursing profession at Washington Adventist Hospital for 15 years as a critical care nurse, occupational health nurse practitioner, Faith Community Nursing coordinator and Health Ministry Clinical supervisor for Adventist Healthcare. She has been appointed a member of the National Advisory Counsel at the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration (SAMHSA) in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. She has a special interest in lifestyle and preventive medicine and the wholistic treatment of physical and mental/emotional disorders.

Dr. Reinert has lectured and published on these topics while also being involved in faith-based partnerships to improve the health of individuals, families and communities.

Originally from Brazil, she enjoys bicycling, hiking, traveling and exploring the world and its beautiful natural scenery.

# **Program Notes**

Please feel free to translate, adjust, and edit the resource packet *according to your division’s needs,* including the best Bible version for your use. Also, you are free to adapt the packet *according to your cultural audience*. When your division has translated the assigned packet for French, Portuguese, and Spanish, please send us a digital file to share with our sisters who need it.

Our deep appreciation for forwarding the **enditnow®** Emphasis Day resource packet to your division counterparts in order to speed the process of reaching the local churches. The packet is also available on our website, women.adventist.org, under Special Days.

Kindly remember that our logo **enditnow® Adventists Say No to Violence** is registered and trademarked. Always print **enditnow®** with lower case letters, in black bold with dark red “it,” no spaces, and the registered symbol.

Seven departments of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists have joined together as a team to address the problem of interpersonal violence. Children’s Ministries, Education, Family Ministries, Health Ministries, Ministerial Association, and Youth Ministries joined Women’s Ministries in sponsoring the **enditnow®** Adventists Say No to Violence initiative in 2015. Interpersonal violence impacts everyone, and we are delighted that these ministries for young and old, men and women, children and adults, church members and church pastors are part of the coalition to bring awareness to this social and spiritual abuse—a tragedy in all its forms.

General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

Women’s Ministries Department

# **Outline of Service**

Call to worship:

Scripture: Ephesians 4:29, New Living Translation

*“Don’t use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful,*

*so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them.”*

Hymn of praise: #469, “Leaning on the Everlasting Arms”

Pastoral prayer:

Call for the offering:

Offertory music:

Responsive reading: #811, “Peace”

Special music:

Sermon: WORDS THAT WOUND: The Trauma of Emotional Abuse

Hymn of response: #466, “Wonderful Peace”

Closing prayer:

# **Responsive Reading**

**#811, “Peace”**

How wonderful it is, how pleasant,

For God’s people to live together in harmony!

**By the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ**

**I appeal to all of you, my brothers,**

**To agree in what you say,**

**So that there will be no divisions among you.**

**Be completely united,**

**With only one thought and one purpose.**

So then, we must always aim at those things that bring peace

And that help strengthen one another.

**The wisdom from above is pure first of all;**

**It is also peaceful, gentle, and friendly;**

**It is full of compassion**

**And produces a harvest of good deeds;**

**It is free from prejudice and hypocrisy.**

And goodness is the harvest

That is produced from the seeds

The peacemakers plant in peace.

**Strive for perfection;**

**Listen to my appeals;**

**Agree with one another;**

**Live in peace.**

And the God of love and peace will be with you.

—From Psalm 133, 1 Corinthians 1, Romans 14, James, 3, and 2 Corinthians 13, T.E.V.

Reading from the *Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal*, © 1985

# **Sermon**

**WORDS THAT WOUND: The Trauma of Emotional Abuse**

**By Katia G. Reinert**

**Scripture Reading**

The scripture for this morning is taken from Ephesians 4:29, New Living Translation. I invite you to open your Bibles and meditate on these words.

*Don’t use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful,*

*so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them.*

*Ephesians 4:29, NLT*

**INTRODUCTION**

On this **enditnow®** Emphasis Day Sabbath, the Seventh-day Adventist Church comes together globally to raise awareness about abuse and violence in all its forms. We raise our voices bringing to light forms of abuse that dehumanize women, men, boys, girls, and vulnerable senior adults. Why is this **enditnow®** Sabbath effort so important?

**Reason 1**

The first reason to speak up against violence in all its forms is because many children of God globally are either dying or suffering negative consequences for their health and well-being as a result of violence and abuse.

Health authorities[[1]](#footnote-1) tell us that 1.3 million people worldwide die each year as a result of violence in all its forms: collective (as in the case of gangs or war), self-directed (as in the case of suicide), interpersonal (as in the case of domestic violence). These deaths account for 2.5% of global mortality each year. In the first 15 years of the 21st Century, about 6 million people have been killed worldwide due to acts of interpersonal violence alone.

But in addition to death, many are victims of non-fatal violence each day. These are survivors of interpersonal violence (physical, sexual, and psychological abuse, or neglect). Non-fatal interpersonal violence is more common than homicide and has serious lifelong health and social consequences. The wounds of interpersonal violence survivors may not be visible, but are felt deeply, and consequences can be crippling and long lasting.

**Reason 2**

A second reason to speak up against violence in all its forms is because we are God’s hands and feet in this world and we represent His love and healing power.

Jesus Himself calls us to treat each other with love and respect when he says, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:24-25, NKJV).

He also calls us to be agents of healing and support to one another: “Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble” (I Peter 3:8, NIV).

Therefore, it is our duty to reach out to abuse survivors with compassion, and to do what we can to prevent abuse and violence in all its forms.

**VIOLENCE IMPACTS EVERYONE**

Although violence impacts everyone, women, children, and elderly people seem to bear the brunt of nonfatal physical, sexual, and psychological abuse.[[2]](#footnote-2)

* One in four adults report having been physically abused as children.
* One in five women reports having been sexually abused as a child.
* One in three women has been a victim of physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner at some point in her lifetime.
* One in seventeen older adults reported abuse in the past month.
* Women report higher rates of lifetime exposure to rape, physical violence, and stalking than do men.

Even though the harms of physical and sexual abuse are real, one form of abuse that is less talked about—and often minimized—is psychological abuse. Someone may say, “But he or she never hits me. Is his or her behavior really abusive?” Well … yes, it is!

Psychological abuse is real and leaves lasting consequences. The scars of physical abuse may heal, but the scars of emotional abuse cannot be seen and can take longer to heal. Emotional abuse can destroy one’s self-worth and result in shame and low self-esteem.

This **enditnow®** Sabbath we are focusing on psychological/emotional abuse. The most common form of emotional abuse is verbal abuse.

**Mary’s Story**

Mary knew she had something to say, but she had to build up the courage to tell her husband, John. She finally told him that she’s been thinking about going back to school for further education.

"Why would you even consider that?" John yelled. "You failed the last courses you took, so you’re obviously not going to make it this time. You are stupid. You’ll never last through the program, and we’re not wasting our money on that."

No punches were thrown in this conversation, but wounds were created. This wasn’t just a casual exchange; this is a classic example of emotional abuse in marriage. The sad thing is, spouses like Mary may have no idea they’re in an abusive relationship, let alone know what to do about it.

**Questions to Consider:**

* If this were you, would you recognize emotional abuse?
* How would you respond if you were being psychologically abused?
* What does the Bible and inspiration say about it?

As we consider these questions we must make it clear that although women tend to experience higher rates of sexual and physical abuse than men, research in the United States of America suggests that in the case of emotional abuse, the rates are similar for both genders.

**PSYCHOLOGICAL AGGRESSION**

In a recent survey[[3]](#footnote-3) conducted in the USA, 8079 men and 9970 women responded to questions about abuse in the past twelve months and also their lifetime exposure to abuse. Almost one-half (just over 48%) of each gender reported a lifetime rate of experiencing psychological aggression through the forms of expressive aggression or coercive control.

Differences show up in the form of emotional abuse. More women than men experience expressive aggression by their intimate partner, but both genders reported experiencing coercive control by their mate by a rate of 4 in 10 people.

 The truth is that both men and women perpetrate high rates of emotional or verbal abuse toward their partner.

The study also revealed the forms of emotional abuse. The form is what it looks like in the home. The most commonly reported forms of expressive aggression for both genders are being called names like ugly, fat, crazy, or stupid, and being humiliated, insulted, or ridiculed. The most common type of psychological aggression used for both men and women is coercive control with the demand to know her/his whereabouts at all times.

Differences show up with women more often being required to report their whereabouts to their mate. Men are more often insulted. They also report witnessing their partner becoming angry in such a way it seemed dangerous.

**The Prevalence of Emotional Abuse Among Adventists**

What about Adventists? Do these behaviors sound familiar? Do they show up in your own home or among family or friends?

Although we do not currently have data on emotional abuse by an intimate partner among a large sample of Adventist adults, Dr. Katia Reinert conducted an analysis of the prevalence of emotional abuse during childhood among 10,283 Seventh-day Adventists adults in North America participating in the Adventist Health Study-2.[[4]](#footnote-4) In this study, 39% of females and 35% of males reported experiencing emotional abuse by their parent (father or mother) before age of 18. Being exposed to this abuse had a negative impact on their physical and mental health, regardless of their age, gender, social status and income, and lifestyle choices, such as healthy eating or exercise. This is a concern and raises questions about the parenting practices that may be detrimental and long lasting.

**Defining Emotional Abuse**[[5]](#footnote-5)

Emotional and verbal abuse can be any treatment that may diminish the identity, dignity and self-worth of someone. In other words, emotional abuse is speech and/or behavior that is controlling, derogating, punishing, or manipulative. It includes insults and attempts to scare, isolate, or control you. It is also often a sign that physical abuse may follow.

Withholding [love](https://www.psychologytoday.com/basics/relationships), communication, support, or money are indirect methods of control and maintaining power. [Passive-aggressive](https://www.psychologytoday.com/basics/passive-aggression) behavior is covert hostility. The passive-aggressor is "a wolf in sheep's clothing."

Abusive behavior dictates where you go, to whom you talk, or what you think. It is one thing to say, “If you buy the dining room set, we cannot afford a vacation,” and another to cut up your credit cards. Spying, stalking, and invading your person, space, or belongings is also abusive, because it disregards personal boundaries.

Unlike physical abuse, emotional abuse has no visible symptoms and often is challenging to detect. You may not think you are being abused if you’re not being hurt physically. But emotional and verbal abuse can have short-term and long-lasting effects that are just as serious as the effects of physical abuse.

An emotionally abused person often feels invisible and insignificant which can leave a more lasting scar than a physical act. A family counselor[[6]](#footnote-6) explains it this way. “Physical abuse says, ‘You are not worth it.’ Emotional abuse and neglect say, ‘You don’t even exist.’”

**How to Recognize Emotional Abuse**

In order to recognize an abusive relationship, it is important to differentiate between abuse and normal conflict. Conflict is common in a marriage or in other relationships and it does not necessarily mean abuse. People need to have their own opinions and be free to express it. But the way one expresses his or her opinion is key.

According to an expert, “It is not emotionally abusive to break up with a partner. It is not emotionally abusive to argue with your partner. It is not emotionally abusive when someone reacts to what you have done with hurt. People react out of their own perceptions, so their reactions do not define your behavior. It is also not emotional abuse to speak one’s mind with blunt honesty. Perhaps the statement lacks tact, but it is not emotionally abusive. Again, just because someone reacts to what has been said with hurt does not mean that one has been emotionally abused.”[[7]](#footnote-7)

 In emotional abuse, there is an intentional dominance, a power dynamic that is chosen by a person who is using that behavior in order to have power and keep the other under control.

Sometimes, there are physical signs as well. The teeth can be clenched due to tension; the heart can start pounding. This is the body telling you that something is wrong. Every time you try to have a conversation like normal people do to resolve a problem or a conflict, it feels like it becomes an attack on you.

Finally, your own behavior can also give evidence of emotional abuse. Do you feel like you’re constantly apologizing for your spouse’s behavior? Do you feel you need to change things about yourself to accommodate to your spouse’s demands? Unwarranted apologies and self-blame are common characteristics of an emotionally abused spouse.

The victim may think, “I need to change this about myself because it is never good enough, it never measures up…what can I do to fix it?"

If you’re wondering if your relationship is emotionally abusive, it probably is. Here is a self-test for you to do right now. Ready? If your spouse or someone else in your life:[[8]](#footnote-8)

* Wants to know what you’re doing all the time and wants you to be in constant contact.
* Demands passwords to things like your phone, email, and social media.
* Acts very jealous, including constantly accusing you of cheating.
* Prevents or discourages you from seeing friends or family.
* Tries to stop you from going to work or school.
* Gets angry in a way that is frightening to you.
* Controls all your finances or how you spend your money.
* Stops you from seeing a doctor.
* Humiliates you in front of others.
* Calls you insulting names (such as “stupid,” “disgusting,” “worthless,” “whore,” or “fat”).
* Threatens to hurt you, people you care about, or pets.
* Threatens to call the authorities to report you for wrongdoing.
* Threatens to harm himself or herself when upset with you.
* Says things like, “If I can’t have you, then no one can.”
* Decides things for you that you should decide (like what to wear or eat).

**How would you respond if you are being psychologically abused?**

It is important to confront the abuser kindly but firmly. Here are five ways counselors suggest a survivor of emotional abuse to respond:

1. **Study the emotionally abusive tactics and learn to be assertive.**

Know who you are dealing with. Manipulators know your triggers. It is important to understand that the intent of the abuser is to control you and avoid meaningful conversation. Abuse is used as a tactic to manipulate and have power over you. If you focus on the content, you’ll fall into the trap of trying to respond rationally, denying accusations, and explaining yourself. The abuser has won at that point and deflected responsibility for the verbal abuse.

1. **Set healthy boundaries.**

Even Christ felt the need to set boundaries in His life. We should do the same. We have our own individuality given to us by God, and with it the right to manage things that are on our “side of the fence”. So, we must not be afraid of confronting abuse or setting limits to how much abuse we will tolerate. Establish boundaries in your relationship. Stay in control of the situation and draw the boundary on yourself rather than your spouse. For example, if your spouse has road rage when driving, say, "Stop driving like that, or I won’t travel with you," rather than, "Can you please slow down when you’re driving?"

In some cases, verbal abuse is best addressed with forceful statements such as, “Stop it,” “Don’t talk to me that way,” “That’s demeaning,” “Don’t call me names,” “Don’t raise your voice at me,” “Don’t use that tone with me,” “I don’t respond to orders,” etc. In this way, you set a boundary of how you want to be treated and take back your power. The abuser may respond with, “Or what?” You can say, “I will not continue this conversation.”

1. **Build your self-worth and self-respect.**

Abuse can slowly chip away at self-esteem. Usually, both the abuser and the victim in a relationship have experienced shaming in childhood and already have impaired self-esteem. Remember, it is not your fault. The Bible contains many wonderful reminders of how precious you are. “I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness. I will build you up again…” (Jeremiah 31:3, NKJV).

Christ would have come to this earth to die just for you. You are the apple of His eye. Speak up. Speak to your spouse with respect, but be honest and vulnerable, rather than keeping everything in and growing bitter and resentful. If your spouse refuses to reach back and reconcile after you speak up and stand up for yourself, tell them that they need to respect you or that you will have to place distance between the two of you.

1. **Seek immediate help of a professional counselor.**

If you are in immediate danger, call the police or crisis number. If you are not in immediate danger, reach out to a trusted friend or family member, therapist, or volunteer with an abuse shelter or domestic violence hotline. Confronting an abuser, especially in a long-term relationship, can be challenging. It often takes the support and validation of a group, therapist, or counselor to be able to consistently stand-up to abuse. Without it, you may doubt your reality, feel guilty, and fear loss of the relationship or reprisal. Once you take back your power and regain your self-esteem, you won’t allow someone to abuse you. If the abuse stops, a relationship may improve, but for real, positive change, both of you must be willing to risk change. Consider individual and possibly couple’s therapy and counseling.

Caution: Preferably don’t start by doing counseling as a couple at this stage. It can be unsafe for the victim to tell the counsellor the whole truth with the abuser present. The abuse isn’t the victim’s fault, and it is something the abuser needs to work through on their own before going through couple’s therapy. How can a spouse safely discuss things in therapy and then endure a ride home filled with the same belittling, blaming and emotional 'beating up' that took them to therapy, even if there's never been a blow landed on the body? Couples work of any sort cannot take place safely and effectively while abuse is still going on.

If the abuse perpetrator is willing to recognize their need, there is hope for change. If not, you may need to ask yourself, what am I willing to live with, and what am I no longer willing to accept? If that person isn’t going to make changes, you can’t make changes for them, and you can’t make them want to change. They have to choose it for themselves. In this case, boundaries need to be reinforced.

1. **Seek comfort, healing and wisdom from God.**

The Holy Spirit is our Comforter and will guide us in all wisdom and truth. He can warm our heart with God’s love in a healing way. He can teach us what words to say. Jesus has suffered all forms of abuse, including psychological and emotional abuse himself. The difference is that he took all the abuse and did not protect himself against it, as we normally do. The pain He felt was much deeper than the pain we feel today, because we often try to protect ourselves from the pain, and He did not do that.

 Ellen G. White writes in *The Desire of Ages:*

He says, “I know your tears; I also have wept. The griefs that lie too deep to be breathed into any human ear, I know. Think not that you are desolate and forsaken. Though your pain touches no responsive chord in any heart on earth, look unto Me, and live.”[[9]](#footnote-9)

**WORDS THAT BRING PEACE or WORDS THAT INFLICT WOUNDS**

The Bible counsels us that our words are powerful. They can edify, bring peace and healing, or they can inflict wounds that may cause someone to carry deep scars for a lifetime. Here are four translations of our scripture text, Ephesians 4:29, to carefully consider.

**New Living Translation:** “Don’t use *foul or abusive language*. Let everything you say be **good and helpful,** so that your words will be an **encouragement** to those who hear them.”

**New International Version:** “Do not let any *unwholesome talk* come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for **building others up** according to their **needs**, that it may **benefit** those who listen.”

**The Message Bible:** “Watch the way you talk. Let nothing *foul or dirty* come out of your mouth. Say only **what helps**, each word **a gift**.”

**New King James Version:** “Let no *corrupt word* proceed out of your mouth, but what is **good** for necessary edification, that it may **impart grace** to the hearers.”

**The Power of Words**

Our words should be a gift to others, they should bring peace, impart grace, and build other people up. They should be spoken with respect, in a wholesome tone, edifying people, especially those we love.

The story of Nabal and his wife Abigail provides a sharp contrast between words that edify and heal and words that disrespect and hurt others.

**1 Samuel 25:2-38:** 2Now there was a man in Maon whose business was in Carmel, and the man was very rich...3The name of the man was Nabal, and the name of his wife Abigail. And she was a woman of good understanding and beautiful appearance; but the man was harsh and evil in his doings (1 Samuel 25:2, 3, NJKV).

*[Read the full passage of Bible verses and recount the story of Nabal’s words to David as well as Abigail’s response to David.]*

The Bible describes Nabal as foolish, harsh and evil in his ways. As with many who abuse words and regret them later, Nabal is **intoxicated** with alcohol.

David and his men have assisted Nabal’s workers, protecting his sheep at night. David feels they rightfully deserve to be included in the feast of sheepshearing with the other shepherds. In response to David’s polite request, Nabal (whose name means “foolish one”) uses words of **disrespect** toward David. “Who is David, and who is the son of Jesse?” (v. 10). This is an insult with the purpose to make someone feel **invisible**. In addition, Nabal asserts that David is **insignificant** when he dismissively alludes to the anointed future king as a runaway slave.

When it is discovered that the angry David and 400 men are marching toward Nabal, a servant brings the frightening news to Abigail. He reports that Nabal **insulted** David. Apparently, Nabal is **verbally abusive** to his own servants because the servant calls him a scoundrel and mentions **no one can talk to him**. It seems not at all unusual for the servants to interact with this woman of good understanding—the kind and wise Abigail. The servant gives her the respect of the true power and authority of their household and business and begs her to do something.

Abigail immediately decides her course of action without consulting her husband. Perhaps she wants to avoid a verbal war. It is highly likely that Nabal is **emotionally abusive** not only with the servants, but also with his wife and others in the household; they seem to be adept at avoiding the risk of abuse by making decisions and implementing actions without involving him. Later Abigail **takes the blame** on herself and **apologizes profusely** to David for her husband’s foolishness, perhaps indicating she normally must do so **to smooth people’s ruffled feelings** following his harsh **outbursts**.

**The Power of Abigail’s Words**

Filled with the Spirit of God, Abigail meets David with words of kindness and “gifts” of food. Her most precious gift is not the food, but her wise words of counsel. Her words bring peace, impart grace, encourage and edify the hearer, and fit the need. David himself acknowledges this (v. 33). The pen of inspiration confirms this.

Ellen G. White writes in *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 667*:*

Abigail’s words “could have come only from the lips of one who had partaken of the wisdom from above. The piety of Abigail, like the fragrance of a flower, breathed out all unconsciously in face and word and action. The Spirit of the Son of God was abiding in her soul. Her speech, seasoned with grace, and full of kindness and peace, shed a heavenly influence. Better impulses came to David, and he trembled as he thought what might have been the consequences of his rash purpose…. David’s passion died away under the power of her influence and reasoning.” Abigail soothed the irritated feelings of the man anointed to become king “by words of calm and well-directed wisdom.[[10]](#footnote-10)

**The Power of Tender Words**

Ellen G. White writes in *The Signs of the Times,* Nov. 14, 1892:

In many families there is a great lack in expressing affection one for another. While there is no need of sentimentalism, there is need of expressing love and **tenderness** in a chaste, pure, dignified way. Many absolutely cultivate hardness of heart and in word and action reveal the satanic side of the character. **Tender affection** should ever be cherished between husband and wife, parents and children, brothers and sisters. Every hasty word should be checked, and there should not be even the appearance of the lack of love one for another. It is the duty of everyone in the family to be pleasant, to speak **kindly**.[[11]](#footnote-11)

**The Power of Respectful Words**

Ellen G. White writes in *Adventist Home*, p. 106:

Neither husband nor wife is to make a plea for **rulership**. The Lord has laid down the principle that is to guide in this matter. The husband is to cherish his wife as Christ cherishes the church. And the wife is to **respect** and love her husband. Both are to cultivate the spirit of kindness, being determined never to grieve or injure the other.... **Do not try to compel each other** to do as you wish. You cannot do this and retain each other's love. Manifestations of self-will destroy the peace and happiness of the home. Let not your married life be one of contention. If you do, you will both be unhappy. **Be kind in speech and gentle** in action, **giving up your own wishes**. Watch well your words, for they have a powerful influence for good or for ill. Allow **no sharpness** to come in.[[12]](#footnote-12)

That is our duty. To have a home that is a little Heaven and where God and the angels can abide in. But here is the good news! Even when the relationship has not been healthy, and emotionally abusive patterns exists there is hope!

**The Power of Surrendered and United words**

Ellen G. White writes in *Ministry of Healing*, p. 362:

Men and women can reach God's ideal for them if they will **take Christ as their helper**. What human wisdom cannot do, **His grace will accomplish** for those who give themselves to Him in loving trust. His providence can **unite hearts in bonds** that are of heavenly origin. **Love** will not be a mere exchange of soft and flattering words. The loom of heaven weaves with warp and woof finer, yet **more firm**, than can be woven by the looms of earth. **The result** is not a tissue fabric, but a **texture that will bear wear and test and trial**. Heart will be **bound** to heart **in the golden bonds of a love** that is enduring.[[13]](#footnote-13)

**The Power of God’s Word for you**

If you recognize that you are in a dysfunctional abusive relationship, remember to see yourself in the context of Biblical truth. You may not be able to talk to anyone about this yet. That is ok. Don’t believe what your abuser says about you, but rather, focus on what God says about you: “…I have **called you by your name**, you are **Mine**” (Isaiah 43:1, NKJV). Here are some beautiful Biblical truths about you.

**Psalm 139:13, 14:** For You created my inmost being; You knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise You because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Your works are wonderful, I know that full well (NIV).

**Ephesians 2:10:** For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them (NKJV).

**Jeremiah 29:11:** For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope (ESV).

In any abusive situation, remember it is not your fault.

**APPEAL**

May each of us, men and women, young and old, *seek wisdom* from God.

May we do like Abigail and like David, and *humbly* allow God to teach us how to relate to each other in the way that is pleasing to Him and in ways that *reflect* His character.

More importantly, may the words of our mouths and the actions our heart *honor* Him as *we share His love with one another*. For that is how the world will know we are true disciples of Jesus Christ.

**CLOSING PRAYER**

**—THE END—**

# **Seminar**

**EMOTIONAL ABUSE: What We Can Do**

**By Dr. Katia G. Reinert**

**Mary’s Story**

This morning we talked about Mary. Her husband, John, was a leader in their church, but verbally abused her and discouraged her from going back to school. Even so, Mary still has a difficult time saying she was abused.

Her husband knew the Bible well and proclaimed his Christian faith boldly. They studied Scripture together, prayed together, and hosted Bible studies in their home. But a domineering nature lurked behind his confident, God-fearing front. He spent years tearing down Mary's sense of security and self-worth.

“I had things broken around me, threats made to me, emotional games played on me—a knife held to my throat, a gun held to my head," Mary says. "The Bible itself was even used as a weapon against me—always out of context, mind you, but used nonetheless.”

He blamed his outbursts on Mary, and for years she bought the lie that she was partially responsible. “I had to have been doing something wrong if things weren't going well in a relationship that included God, right? I tried so hard to be godly … and the Bible told me to submit to my husband. Maybe God just wanted me to suffer a bit, to make me more holy. Besides, it wasn't that bad—he could also be loving and kind sometimes.”

John abused Mary, but it could have been the other way around. Women also inflict as much emotional abuse towards men. So, let’s reverse the story. Can you picture this? Mary says disparagingly to her husband, “You can’t back to school! You never liked school. You don’t have the brains for that.”

**Here are a few questions we would like to pose this afternoon:**

* What **techniques do emotional abusers use** through their words, indifference, actions?
* What is **a self-assessment** for emotional abuse?
* What are **the effects** of emotional abuse?
* How should the **Christian respond** to someone being abused?
* What if you are the one being emotionally abusive toward someone you love? Are you willing to recognize and change your behavior?
* What if you are the survivor? **Are you willing to seek help?** Do you know where to turn to?
* What are **helpful resources** for emotionally abused survivors?

**WHY IS EMOTIONAL ABUSE DIFFICULT TO RECOGNIZE?[[14]](#footnote-14)**

Emotional abuse may be hard to recognize because it can be subtle, and because abusers often blame their victims. They may act like they have no idea why you are upset. Additionally, you may have been treated this way in past relationships, so it’s familiar to you and harder to recognize. Over time, the abuser will chip away at your self-esteem, causing you to feel guilty, doubt yourself, and distrust your perceptions.

Other aspects of the relationship may work well. The abuser may be loving between abusive episodes, so that you deny or forget them. You may not have had a healthy relationship for comparison, and when the abuse takes place in private, there are no witnesses to validate your experience.

**THE PERSONALITY OF AN ABUSER[[15]](#footnote-15)**

Many men and women assume that if they're not being physically abused by their partner, then they're not being abused. That's not necessarily true. You may be in a relationship which is draining something from you—your partner is eroding your self-esteem and happiness—and you might not have recognized it.

**Abusers typically want to control and dominate**. They use verbal abuse to accomplish this. They are self-centered, impatient, unreasonable, insensitive, unforgiving, lack empathy, and often are jealous, suspicious, and withholding. To maintain control, some abusers “take hostages,” meaning that they may try to isolate you from your friends and family. Their moods can shift from fun-loving and romantic to sullen and angry. Some punish with anger, others with silence – or both. It’s usually “their way or the highway.”

**Characteristics of Male Abusers[[16]](#footnote-16)**

* **The Demand Man.** Very entitled, easily enraged and extremely critical, often overvaluing his household contributions.
* **Mr. Right.** Sees his own perspective as the ultimate authority and doesn’t value his spouse’s feelings. He also distorts his spouse’s rational logic into something absurd, causing the spouse to regret even having her own opinion.
* **The Water Torturer.** Manages to verbally assault his spouse without shouting or raising his voice. These quiet attacks can cause his spouse to get angry, making it appear to as though the abusive one is the spouse.

According to research, these profiles are manifestations of a distorted belief system. In their book, *When Love Hurts: A Woman’s Guide to Understanding Abuse in Relationships*, Jill Cory and Karen McAndless-Davis write that abusive men believe they are central, superior, and deserving.

“The man uses abusive tactics in order to impose his belief system,” they write. “The abusive tactics allow him to stay in control and to have more power than his partner. An abusive man will use whatever form of abuse he needs to ‘win’ and get what he wants.”

However, as noted earlier, men experience emotional abuse by women just as much as women experience emotional abuse by men.

**Characteristics of Female Abusers**

* **She was verbally abused as a child**, witnessed it in her own family, or was verbally abused by a previous partner.
* **She has low self-esteem**.
* **She has an intense temper**, triggered by minor frustrations and arguments.
* **Her sense of power or control depends on her partner's acquiescence** and his performance per her demands. She feels “in control” only if her partner is totally passive and giving in to all of her preferences and decisions.
* **She has rigid expectations or fantasies of marriage**, partnership, or men, and will not compromise. She expects him to behave according to her expectations of what her partner should be like; perhaps the way her parents’ marriage was, or its opposite. She demands that he change to accommodate her expectations.
* **She projects the blame for all relationship difficulties onto her partner**. She wouldn't get angry if only he would be who she wants him to be. She wouldn't drink if he didn't make her unhappy. She denies the need for counseling because there's “nothing wrong with her, only with him.” She might not want him to get counseling because she’s threatened by the risk of an outsider “taking sides” with him.
* **Abusers are extremely possessive and jealous**. They experience an intense desire to control their mates.
* **Abusers often have superficial relationships with other people**. Her primary, if not exclusive, relationship is with her husband/boyfriend.
* **She may be described as having a dual personality**—She is either sweet or exceptionally cruel and sharp. She is selfish or generous depending on her mood.
* **A major characteristic of abusers is their capacity to deceive others**. She can be sweet, calm, charming, and convincing.
* **The mate is usually a symbol**. The abuser doesn’t relate to her partner as a person in his own right, but as a symbol of a significant other. This is especially true when she’s angry. She assumes that he is thinking, feeling, or acting like that significant other—often her father (or other family member or authority figure).

Our culture excessively, irrationally accepts the “I’ll Change Him” philosophy, where a woman selects and then “molds” a partner to her liking. “Marry the man today – and change his ways tomorrow!”—Lyric from Broadway musical *Guys & Dolls*

Certainly, equal loving partners may decide to change their physical HABITS to please each other, but a partner should never demand that the spouse change LIFESTYLE, PERSONALITY, HOBBIES, or CAREER CHOICES against her/his will for the sake of the partner.

It is important to understand that abusers are not hopeless people and they may have a painful experience of their own. **Research points out that abused people tend to abuse others.** So abusive behavior can sometimes come from feelings of fear and shame that may have resulted from abuse they suffered prior to marrying their spouse. This often results in the need to control their shame through subsequent abuse. The abuser may tell themselves, ‘I will never be that frightened little boy or girl again…I will never be in that place of vulnerability again, so I will stay in control.’[[17]](#footnote-17)

**WHAT ARE THE TECHNIQUES USED IN EMOTIONAL ABUSE?[[18]](#footnote-18)**

**1. Emotional Abuse Through Words**

* **The Overbearing Opinion**. The person who refuses to consider your opinion and forces you to always accept his or hers.
* **The Person Who is Always Right.** The person who must always be right and have the last word whenever a disagreement occurs.
* **The Judge and Jury**. The person who incorporates harsh judgments of you, as a person or your behavior, to produce your personal shame and guilt.
* **The Put-Down Artist.** The person who uses comments like “You’re crazy! How could anyone think such a stupid thing?” to devalue your decisions and feelings.
* **The Stand-Up Comic.** The person whose use of sarcasm is meant to dig up past issues, drive home a point of view, or belittle you as an individual.
* **The Great Guilt-Giver.** The person who uses unrealistic and undeserved false guilt to control your behavior.
* **The Historian.** The person who says you’re forgiven but then proceeds to bring up every past issue again and again to shame you into accepting his or her decisions and feelings.

**2. Emotional Abuse Through Actions**

* **The Commander-in-Chief.** The person who desires to control every aspect of your life—from your thoughts to your actions—by rigid, militaristic behavior and expectations.
* **The Screamer.** The person who uses screaming, yelling, and name-calling as weapons to control you.
* **The Intimidator.** The person who uses intimidation, fear, anger, and inappropriate threats to get his or her way.
* **The Roller-Coaster.** The person whose moods and behavior swing from one extreme to another, removing any sense of safety and consistency from your relationship.
* **The Person Who Plays Favorites.** The person who displays favoritism by saying, “Why can’t you be more like…” making it clear that you do not measure up to someone else.
* **The Role Reverser.** Relational roles become confused and reversed, with the parent taking the role of child, the child assuming the responsibilities of the parent, or the child being put in the role of the emotional spouse.
* **The Wrath of God.** The person who misuses Scripture to get his or her own way and who equates his or her own opinion with that of God.
* **Gaslighting.** The person who causes you feel like you are losing your mind or memory is gaslighting. It occurs when she/he denies an event happened, calls you crazy or overly sensitive, describes an event as completely different from how you remember it. When you question your mind or memory, you may be more likely to feel dependent on the abuser and stay in the relationship. Gaslighting happens over time, and you may not notice it at first. [[19]](#footnote-19)

**3. Emotional Abuse Through Indifference**

* **The M.I.A. Parent.** A parent physically removes himself or herself from any interaction in your life.
* **The Absent Caregiver.** A parent removes himself or herself emotionally from interaction in your life.

**WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS OF EMOTIONAL ABUSE?**

**Staying in an emotionally or verbally abusive relationship can have long-lasting effects on your physical and mental health, leading to chronic pain, depression, or anxiety.**

**You may also:**

* **Question your memory of events: “Did that really happen?” (Gaslighting)**
* **Change your behavior for fear of upsetting your partner or act more aggressive or more passive than you would be otherwise.**
* **Feel ashamed or guilty.**
* **Feel constantly afraid of upsetting your partner.**
* **Feel powerless and hopeless.**
* **Feel manipulated, used, and controlled.**
* **Feel unwanted.**

**Your partner’s behavior may leave you feeling as though you need to do anything possible to restore peace and end the abuse. This can feel stressful and overwhelming.**

**WHAT IS A SELF-ASSESSMENT FOR EMOTIONAL ABUSE?[[20]](#footnote-20)**

Take a moment to consider these questions. Your partner might have behaved as though these things were okay, even though it's obvious that they aren't okay.

1. Do you feel that you can't discuss with your partner what is bothering you?
2. Does your partner frequently criticize you, humiliate you, or undermine your self-esteem?
3. Does your partner ridicule you for expressing yourself?
4. Does your partner try to isolate you from friends, family, or groups?
5. Does your partner limit your access to work or material resources?
6. Has your partner ever stolen from you? Or run up debts for you to handle?
7. Does your relationship swing back and forth between a lot of emotional distance (clammed up) and being very close?
8. Do you sometimes feel trapped in the relationship?
9. Has your partner ever thrown away or destroyed things that belonged to you?
10. Are you afraid of your partner?

**HOW SHOULD THE CHRISTIAN RESPOND TO A FRIEND WHO IS BEING ABUSED?**

If a friend comes to you and shares snippets of her/his life and they sound anything like what has been described here, please know that she/he is trusting you with her/his heart and that she/he may be scared. Your friend may be desperate for help, and she/he has chosen to reach out to you, possibly under a threat that if she/he were to ever tell someone, things could get even worse for her/him at home. Keep in mind if the abuse is severe, a danger assessment is advised.[[21]](#footnote-21)

General guidelines for dealing with this kind of situation:

* **Acknowledge her pain and that it is indeed real.**She/he may not believe that what is going on is truly that bad.  She/he’ll need to hear from someone else if it really is.
* **Ask gentle questions.**Try to gain more information such as how long it’s been going on, and what kinds of abusive acts are being done. But know when to pull back a bit if it becomes too painful for her/him to talk about.
* **Be careful not to lay blame*.*** Odds are, she/he’s been blamed for too long for how things have ended up, so try not to say that if maybe she were to change something specific, he might not fill-in-the-blank anymore.  Though every relationship takes two, there will be plenty of time later for her/him to figure out her/his part in the dysfunction.
* **Do not give your friend marching orders to simply do more of something.** She/he’s probably thought of all this anyway—pray more, serve more, praise more, cook more, initiate sex more—and it probably hasn’t changed much of anything for more than a few days or weeks. (That’s what is called the honeymoon phase…where things seem to be getting better, but it never lasts.)
* **Do not try to help her/him all on your own*.*** Determine what kind of help she/he might need, whether it be a visit with a pastor (choose wisely) or a Christian counselor.
* **Offer to go to any meetings.** Your friend might be ashamed or scared. Taking the first few steps out of abuse can be terrifying and she/he’ll need support.
* **Do not advise any rash decisions.**It will not help to say, “I don’t know how you’ve lived this way so long,” or “If I were you, I’d meet with a lawyer right away.” It just might serve to further paralyze her/him. Your friend needs to take small, steady steps into health and healing. And you might just be overlaying your past or emotional scars onto the situation when it doesn’t really apply.
* **Check in with your friend.**Victims often feel isolated. Asking for help took courage; asking for more help may take more courage than she/he has if you do not follow up, and your friend might not reach out again.
* **Point your friend to Scripture.** Share Bible texts thataffirm your friend’s worth in God’s eyes and that assure us of God’s power to heal and be our strength. She/he needs to be reminded repeatedly that she/he is loved, that she/he is precious, that she/he is being taken care of.
* **Pray.**Pray with her/him. Commit your friend to God and keep bringing her/him before Christ, asking for divine healing to wash over her/him.

These thoughts just scratch the surface of a hugely controversial topic. If you or someone you love is in this kind of situation, please get help. There may not be a black eye, but a heart is being broken a little more each day.

**FINAL QUESTIONS**

* **What if you are the emotional (verbal) abuser?** Are you someone who has used these techniques to abuse another? If so, are you willing to recognize it and seek professional help to change your behavior? Are willing to seek help from above?
* **What if you are the survivor of emotional abuse?** Are you willing to confront the abuser with kindness, but with firmness, and to set healthy boundaries? Are you willing to seek professional help? Are you willing to seek healing and wisdom from God in dealing with this situation?

I pray you will!

**Ellen G. White’s Counsel for Couples in Dysfunctional Relationship**

*Adventist Home,* p. 107:

Let each give love rather than exact it. Cultivate that which is noblest in yourselves, and be quick to recognize the good qualities in each other. The consciousness of being appreciated is a wonderful stimulus and satisfaction. Sympathy and respect encourage the striving after excellence, and love itself increases as it stimulates to nobler aims.

*Adventist Home*, pp. 111, 112:

Love can no more exist without revealing itself in outward acts than fire can be kept alive without fuel. You have felt that it was beneath your dignity to manifest tenderness by kindly acts and to watch for an opportunity to evince affection for your [spouse] by words of tenderness and kind regard. You are changeable in your feelings and are very much affected by surrounding circumstances.... Leave your business cares and perplexities and annoyances when you leave your business. Come to your family with a cheerful countenance, with sympathy, tenderness, and love. This will be better than expending money for medicines or physicians for your wife. It will be health to the body and strength to the soul. Your lives have been very wretched…. You think it beneath your dignity to manifest love, to speak kindly and affectionately. All these tender words, you think, savor of softness and weakness, and are unnecessary. But in their place come fretful words, words of discord, strife, and censure....

You have not the elements of a contented spirit. You dwell upon your troubles; imaginary want and poverty far ahead stare you in the face; you feel afflicted, distressed, agonized; your brain seems on fire, your spirits depressed. You do not cherish love to God and gratitude of heart for all the blessings which your kind heavenly Father has bestowed upon you. You see only the discomforts of life. A worldly insanity shuts you in like heavy clouds of thick darkness. Satan exults over you because you will have misery when peace and happiness are at your command.

Without mutual forbearance and love no earthly power can hold you and your spouse in the bonds of Christian unity. Your companionship in the marriage relation should be close and tender, holy and elevated, breathing a spiritual power into your lives, that you may be everything to each other that God's word requires. When you reach the condition that the Lord desires you to reach, you will find heaven below and God in your life.

**—THE END—**

**Resource List**

**LIST OF RESOURCES FOR EMOTIONAL ABUSE**

**Resources for Abusive Marriages**

What can appear to be the perfect marriage, behind closed doors, can be one of domination and emotional abuse. With the damage that words can cause, women need to be able to identify signs of emotional abuse. We know that this is a difficult and touchy subject. We hope you will find these resources helpful so that you can see the red flags, as well as how to respond when you or someone you know needs help.

**General Conference Women’s Ministries Resources**

<https://women.adventist.org/enditnow-day>

**Organizations and Websites**

[Life Skills International](http://www.lifeskillsintl.org/index.html) Telephone: 1 (300) 340-0598

Life Skills International focuses on reaching out to individuals in broken and strained relationships.  They are a nonprofit organization created by Paul and Judy Hegstrom.  Paul spent over 18,000 hours in research while developing the curriculum for programs concerning domestic violence that would aid both the abuser and the victim of abuse.  The organization is based out of Aurora, Colorado and has expanded into an international program with over 100 centers.  The website hosts a radio broadcast, information concerning the signs and red flags of both emotional and physical abuse, as well as live seminars.

[National Domestic Violence Hotline](http://www.thehotline.org/)  Telephone: 1 (512) 794-1133

National Domestic Violence Hotline provides information on the different types of domestic abuse as well as signs of domestic abuse. It also has resources for victims to find help, information on how to help a friend, and how to locate resources in one’s area.

**Resources for Growing Beyond Emotional Abuse**

<http://www.webheights.net/GrowingbeyondEmotionalAbuse/articles.htm>

[Homepage of Patricia Evans](http://www.verbalabuse.com/). Lots of good information in addition to marketing for her books and seminars.

[Emotional Abuse: the hidden form of maltreatment](https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/emotional-abuse-hidden-form-maltreatment), Adam M Tomison and Joe Tucci.

**Books**

[Wounded by Words: Healing the Invisible Scars of Emotional Abuse.](https://www.amazon.com/Susan-Titus-Osborn-Invisible-Emotional/dp/B01FOD672M/ref%3Dsr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1466695880&sr=8-1&keywords=Wounded+by+Words%3A+Healing+the+Invisible+Scars+of+Emotional+Abuse++By+Susan+Titus+Osborn%2C+Karen+L.+Kosman%2C+Jeenie+Gordon)By Susan Titus Osborn, Karen L. Kosman, Jeenie Gordon.

In Wounded by Words, the authors explore how emotional abusers isolate, disorient, and indoctrinate their victims and how their unkind words leave lasting scars. Through the study of God’s Word, prayer, and advice from a counselor and other victims, readers will see their distorted self-images begin to change. As they lay down a new life foundation, with Jesus Christ being the cornerstone, readers can begin to erase old, destructive tapes that replay in the mind and gradually renew hope and faith.

[The Emotionally Destructive Relationship: Seeing It, Stopping It, Surviving It](https://www.amazon.com/Emotionally-Destructive-Relationship-Stopping-Surviving/dp/0736918973/ref%3Dsr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1466695913&sr=8-1&keywords=The+Emotionally+Destructive+Relationship%3A+Seeing+It%2C+Stopping+It%2C+Surviving+It++By+Leslie+Vernick). By Leslie Vernick.

With godly guidance and practical experience, Vernick offers an empathetic approach to recognizing an emotionally destructive relationship and addresses the symptoms and the damage with biblical tools. Learn how to recognize abuse, stop it, and survive its impact on your life by embracing God’s freedom. Readers will understand how to reveal behaviors that are meant to control, punish, and hurt, and how to confront and speak truth when the timing is right.

[Mending the Soul: Understanding and Healing Abuse](https://www.amazon.com/Mending-Soul-Understanding-Healing-Abuse/dp/0310285291/ref%3Dsr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1466695937&sr=8-1&keywords=Mending+the+Soul%3A+Understanding+and+Healing+Abuse+By+Steven+R.+Tracy). By Steven R. Tracy.

Abuse is far more rampant than many Christians realize—and the long-term damage to a victim’s soul is profound. But healing is possible with God. In this well-researched, biblically and scientifically based resource, Dr. Tracy surveys the nature and effects of physical, verbal, sexual, and spiritual abuse—as well as strategies for prevention and recovery. Just as surely as abusive relationships have tremendous power to wound the soul, so healthy relationships have tremendous power to nurture and heal the soul.

[The Power of Words.](https://www.amazon.com/Power-Words-Nancy-Leigh-DeMoss/dp/094011044X/ref%3Dsr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1466695961&sr=8-1&keywords=The+Power+of+Words++By+Nancy+Leigh+DeMoss) By Nancy Leigh DeMoss.

In this study, you’ll discover the connection between your heart and your words. You will be challenged to examine your heart and to consider the consequences of your words. And you’ll gain practical insight on “tongue control” from the Word of God.

[Finding Peace for Your Heart: A Woman’s Guide to Emotional Health](https://www.amazon.com/Finding-Peace-Womans-Emotional-Health/dp/0785270388/ref%3Dsr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1466695983&sr=8-1&keywords=Finding+Peace+for+Your+Heart%3A+A+Woman%E2%80%99s+Guide+to+Emotional+Health+By+Stormie+Omartian). By Stormie Omartian.

In Finding Peace for Your Heart, Stormie Omartian offers personal insight on emotional healing as she guides you to transforming your inner self. Join her on a personal journey as she walks you through issues such as recognizing that God is on your side and showing you how to live in obedience so that you can gain the wholeness you desire.

[Angry Men and Women Who Love Them: Breaking the Cycle of Physical and Emotional Abuse.](https://www.amazon.com/Angry-Men-Women-Love-Them/dp/0834121522/ref%3Dsr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1466696007&sr=8-1&keywords=Angry+Men+and+Women+Who+Love+Them%3A+Breaking+the+Cycle+of+Physical+and+Emotional+Abuse+By+Paul+Hegstrom)By Paul Hegstrom.

Through a fascinating, yet thorough examination of the psychological components of various types of abuse, along with true examples from his own life and others, Hegstrom points the way back to wholeness and freedom. An invaluable aid for the man who batters, the woman who feels trapped, and the pastor, counselor, or friend who desperately wants to help them both, Angry Men and the Women Who Love Them offers straight answers for those willing to overcome the cycle of violence.

[Overcoming Hurts & Anger: Finding Freedom from Negative Emotions](https://www.amazon.com/Overcoming-Hurts-Anger-Negative-Emotions/dp/0736901965/ref%3Dsr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1466696045&sr=8-1&keywords=Overcoming+Hurts+%26+Anger%3A+Finding+Freedom+from+Negative+Emotions+By+Dwight+L.+Carlson). By Dwight L. Carlson.

Overcoming Hurts & Anger has been helping people deal with the hurt feelings and angry responses that wreak havoc in many relationships. In this thoroughly revised and expanded edition of his bestselling book, Dwight Carlson presents balanced, biblical insight for openly and honestly dealing with powerful emotions that everyone experiences at one time or another.

*Emotional Abuse Hurts* Brochure, by University of Michigan.

Describes emotional abuse, its symptoms and resources. <https://www.med.umich.edu/abusehurts/abuse_emotional.pdf>

**Other Books[[22]](#footnote-22)**

1. Patricia Evans, *The Verbally Abusive Relationship: How to Recognize It and How to Respond*, Holbrook, Ma. Bob Adams, Inc. 1992
2. Patricia Evans, *Verbal Abuse Survivors Speak Out: On Relationship and Recovery*
3. Patricia Evans, Teen Torment: *Overcoming verbal abuse at home and school*.
4. Gregory L. Jantz, *Healing the Scars of Emotional Abuse*
5. Susan Forward and Donna Frazier, *Emotional Blackmail: When the People in Your Life Use Fear, Obligation, and Guilt to Manipulate You.*Perennial Currents, 1998*.*
6. Albert Ellis and Marcia Grad Powers. *Secret of Overcoming Verbal Abuse: Getting off the Emotional Roller Coaster and Regaining Control of Your Life*(Wilshire Book Company, 2000).

**—THE END—**

# **Activity**

**CASE SCENARIOS**

**Responding to an Abuser by Setting Healthy Boundaries**

*Choose a partner sitting in the seminar and discuss your responses to verbal abuse. Take turns playacting the* ***Abuser*** *and Victim-turned-****Survivor****.*

1. Sometimes, you can **deflect verbal abuse with humor**. It puts you on equal footing and deprives the abuser of the power they seek in belittling you.
2. **Repeating back** what is said to you also has an impact, **followed by a calm boundary**.

**Abuser:** “You are stupid.”

**Survivor:** "Did you say you think that I don't know what I am doing?"

**Abuser:** (*answers with a defiant repetition of the insult)* “Yes, you are dumb.”

**Survivor:** *(calm follow-up responses)* "I disagree," or "I don't see it that way," or "I know exactly what I'm doing."

1. In some cases, verbal abuse is best addressed with **forceful statements.**

**Abuser:** “You are stupid.”

**Survivor:** "Did you say you think that I don't know what I am doing?"

**Abuser:** “Yes, you are dumb.”

**Survivor:** “Stop it,” “Don’t talk to me that way,” “That’s demeaning,” “Don’t call me names,” “Don’t raise your voice at me,” “Don’t use that tone with me,” “I don’t respond to orders,” etc.

1. In this way, you set a **boundary of how you want to be treated** and take back your power.

**Abuser:** *(make up a controlling or ridiculing statement)*

**Survivor:** *(choose one of the forceful statements)*

**Abuser:**“Or what?”

**Survivor:** “I will not continue this conversation.”

1. Typically, a verbal abuser may become more abusive; in which case, you **continue in the same manner** to address the abuse.

**Abuser:** *(make up a controlling or ridiculing statement)*

**Survivor:** *(choose one of the forceful statements)*

**Abuser:** *(make up a threatening response):*

**Survivor:** “If you continue, I’ll leave the room,” and do so if the abuse continues.

If you keep setting boundaries, the abuser will get the message that manipulation and abuse won’t be effective. The relationship may or may not change for the better, or deeper issues may surface. Either way, you’re rebuilding your self-confidence and self-esteem, and are learning important skills about setting boundaries.

**—THE END—**

1. WHO Report “Global Status report on violence prevention” 2014.

[www.who.int/violence\_injury\_prevention/violence/status\_report/2014/report/report/en/](http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/status_report/2014/report/report/en/) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. CDC National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey 2010 Summary Report. Retrieved March 2, 2018. <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/nisvs_report2010-a.pdf> . In the 2010 National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey conducted across all 50 US states, 18,049 people (9,970 women and 8079 men) responded to various questions about their lifetime exposure to abuse as well as abuse in the last 12 months. In this study, 48.4% of women and to 48.8% of men (nearly half) reported a lifetime rate of experiencing any psychological aggression (expressive aggression or coercive control). The gender difference was in the type of emotional abuse. Less men (32% or 3 in 10) reported experiencing expressive aggression by their intimate partner than women (40% or 4 in 10), but coercive control rates were similar (42.5% in males and 41.1% in females – about 4 in 10). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Reinert, K. Campbell, J., Bandeen-Roche, K., Sharps, P., & Lee, J. (July 15, 2015), Gender and Race Variations of the Intersection between Religious Involvement, Early Trauma and Adult Health. Journal of Nursing Scholarship, 47(4), 318-327. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4969318/> The 10,283 participants included 6,946 women and 3,333 men. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Fraser Health Authority says emotional abuse takes place when "A person is verbally assaulted, insulted, yelled at, threatened or humiliated by someone close to them." In Canada, the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority defines emotional abuse as: "Any treatment that may diminish the sense of identity, dignity and self-worth." [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Karin Gregory, a registered counsellor at Focus on the Family Canada. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/traversing-the-inner-terrain/201609/when-is-it-emotional-abuse> [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. <https://www.womenshealth.gov/relationships-and-safety/other-types/emotional-and-verbal-abuse> [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 483. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 667. Retrieved online March 2, 2018 <http://www.whiteestate.org/books/pp/pp65.html>. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Ibid. *The Signs of the Times*, Nov. 14, 1892, AH 198.2 <https://m.egwwritings.org/en/book/128.877#896> [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Ibid. *Adventist Home,* AH 106.4 <https://m.egwwritings.org/en/book/128.459> [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Ibid. *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 362, AH 112.4 <https://m.egwwritings.org/en/book/128.488> [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/toxic-relationships/201704/forms-emotional-and-verbal-abuse-you-may-be-overlooking> [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. <https://www.focusonthefamily.ca/content/words-that-bruise-are-you-emotionally-abusive> [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. <https://www.focusonthefamily.ca/content/words-that-bruise-are-you-emotionally-abusive> [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. National Association for Christian Recovery. <http://www.nacr.org/abusecenter/verbal-and-emotional-abuse> [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. <https://www.womenshealth.gov/relationships-and-safety/other-types/emotional-and-verbal-abuse> [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. <http://www.lilaclane.com/relationships/emotional-abuse/male-victim-abuse.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. <https://www.dangerassessment.org/> [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. [Ibid.](http://www.nacr.org/abusecenter/verbal-and-emotional-abuse) [↑](#footnote-ref-22)