Ready to leave your passive aggressive relationship?
LEAVING YOUR PASSIVE AGGRESSIVE RELATIONSHIP FOR GOOD?

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Prior to moving to the US to finish her conflict resolution degree, Nora was a clinical psychoanalyst in Buenos Aires, Argentina, dedicated to her private practice. Her clients have known her as a creative and bright therapist, always finding new angles and ways to understand and solve conflicts.

Her straightforward approach to life’s dilemmas created a supportive, clear and doable strategic model for people to grow out of most challenging relationship conflict traps. Her model, named: “One HourConflict Map,” allowed her clients to have a snapshot of their own situation and to strategize ways of moving out of the conflict entrapment to move forward to a better life.

She completed her BA in Clinical Psychology in Argentina, a Masters in Social Sciences by FLACSO, and finished her post graduate Ph.D. level studies at the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Program on the Analysis and Resolution of Conflicts, of Syracuse University, NY.

While doing her dissertation work in Washington DC, she was granted a Peace Scholarship from the United States Institute of Peace, where she received additional training in international conflict resolution interventions by working with field leaders.

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LEAVING YOUR PASSIVE AGGRESSIVE RELATIONSHIP FOR GOOD?

How to end your passive aggressive relationship

You have been all over the map with this relationship: first excited, then getting serious as you settled into this relationship, and then slowly, the step by step process of discovering that he is not up to the commitment of building a stable couple with you. With anybody

The process of discovery has taken you from surprise, to shock, to anger and finally to the sad realization that he is a passive aggressive person sabotaging everything that you try to do together. Everything becomes a battle between his hidden resistance and opposition and your proposals for joy and happiness. Slowly, your appreciation of the situation tells you that is impossible to continue a life in common with this person, regardless his nice words of understanding and support. He can’t help it but to be use his dirty tricks on your self-esteem and you can’t take it any longer.

So, you are thinking on breaking up this relationship, right?

Even when it looks like as if you don’t merit your partner’s complete attention and devotion ever, you don’t know how deep can be his need for attachment in this relationship. Without you, the PA person will have a very hard time balancing his emotions, because he needs to do it through doing passive aggressions to anybody, now it happens to be you. If you leave, this precarious balance gets disrupted and he will need to recover.

This is the reason, his emotional imbalance, which can make the break up very complicated, noisy and dramatic at the last moment, just when you are ready to go. You can never underestimate the emotional manipulation you will get if and when you announce your decision to split.

This is the reason that you need a route map to plan your detachment from a relationship with a PA person.
PART 1. THE DECISION TO EXIT

How did you get to the decision that this relationship is over and you need to split?

It is possible that you have traveled a very tortuous path, from falling in love, making plans to be together, organizing your common life, and then begin the daily discouraging routine to observe your lover doing always exactly less than needed to keep both of you happy. Good reasons, lengthy explanations and long silences were provided, but nothing replaces for you the feeling of shouldering responsibilities in an equal way. You began to feel taken advantage of in so many petty things as to be nauseated.

You have been through assertive messages, and deeply felt conversations; probably you dragged him to some counselor’s office for two or three sessions that ended badly; you have tried recruiting your family and friend’s help to contain your hubby’s negative comments...to no avail.

Now comes the last straw: What did you do to try once more and it failed?

Your “last straw” story has a bitter flavor, and I could figure out what is its aspect that gave you the most anger....
What was it: the repetition of the same stupid behavior like badmouthing you after you told him so many times that was a no no?

Was it the way of not taking responsibility for his actions and the impact of his actions on the relationship?

Was it his way of finally blaming you for the emotional pain caused by his decisions?

Now, look inside....Sometimes you can recognize a subtle first step: somehow your energy is not there anymore. You stop arguing, debating or discussing issues. You don’t talk anymore about what a good relationship looks like to you.

The reason is very deep: inside you, the love energy has disappeared and there is no more life in it. It can take some time for you to realize that in your soul, there are no more expectations on relationship changes... It’s done, finished. You don’t care for change any more!

The only thing remaining is attachment to the comfort of the routine of sharing day to day life with someone. Can you see it?

Now, look outside you: Assuming that your partner has resisted changing his behavior and, despite your best efforts to work things out so that you are not feeling so much abused, he persists in the snide remarks, negative descriptions of you and all kind of manipulative behaviors that leave you alone and bereft, you will have to accept reality.

Once you’ve recognized this passive aggression for the emotional abuse being downloaded on your shoulders, you will likely be sick of it and want to split, even when you still have some lingering feelings for this person.
Whatever is the core element of your present anger, righteous indignation, hurt pride or deep self-esteem wounds, let’s use its energy to make the final decision now! Now is the time to see clearly what the only way left is; now is the time to leave him for good!

**THIS IS THE MOMENT OF DECISION:**

**BREATHE DEEPLY, SEVERAL TIMES, FEEL YOUR MIND CLEAR, AND SEE THIS MESSAGE ON THE SCREEN OF YOUR MIND:**

1. I am leaving him now;
2. It’s my own decision;
3. It is for my own good!
4. I am free of him and his toxic behaviors
5. All is for my own good!

FEEL THE CHANGE OF ENERGY RUNNING THROUGH YOU... NOW YOU BREATHE IN YOUR JOY OF BEING INDEPENDENT OF HIM, AND BREATHE OUT ALL THE PAST MISERY YOU WENT THROUGH. ENJOY!
PART 2: PLANNING HOW TO LEAVE

What to do now?

You need to be very careful now. There is a whole series of moments where he got the impression that he could dominate you by doing his tricks, and now, even if he doesn’t want to do any change in order to keep the relationship alive, still will want to control you. Because you are making the decision to end this relationship, you are taking the control from his hands.

Steps after you take the decision:

- **Be very aware of who you tell about it.**

  a) Anybody near him can tell and put you in a difficult situation, so keep the decision under wraps

  b) re-establish ties with all those friends, relatives and things you left behind while your judgment was clouded

  c) Prepare for the backlash when you tell him. First there will be a phase when he will gladly promise to deliver whatever you desired - just long enough to keep you attached;
d) Stringing you along with little bits of what you need or want makes you want to believe that he has heard you, understands your needs, and is finally willing to change. You could imagine that you made him change at last!

e) As soon as you settle back into the relationship, his negative behaviors will be back, and you will know that you’ve been trapped again.

**• Have everything prepared to leave at once**

That’s because it’s so hard to leave - particularly if you decided a face-to-face farewell was necessary. But you really must go fast.

This step implies that you have prepared most of the things you need to take with you. Either everything is already in a safe place, or in your car, but you can’t be gathering things at the same time you are saying that you are leaving him.

At this moment, under the surprise your partner will likely become very manipulative and turn things around to the conflict being your fault and will try to gain your sympathy by crying or blaming you or making you the guilty person who is destroying a wonderful romance out of selfishness.

Whatever the means for controlling you he could use, say that you will return to have a new discussion at a later time, and refocus him on the "I’m leaving now, thanks for everything." Or: "I just wanted to say this in person. I’m leaving; our relationship has not worked out for me. I wish you well, but I can’t continue this," then walk out.

End the conversation immediately and begin walking to the door.

It’s better to end the conversation abruptly, because this is one you will not win. You don’t want him offering to drive you somewhere (only to have car problems) or offering to do something else for you he will not deliver…Nothing that he can offer to you at this point is a
safe offer...so be gracious, say “Thanks, I don’t need any help” and keep moving.

- **Have your network prepared to receive you**

Quietly contact your family and supportive others. Determine what help they might be able to provide — a place to stay for the first week, protection and emotional support, financial help, etc.

It is probable that living with a PA person has eroded your self-confidence...to the point that you need to remember who you are and what a good, capable and independent person you can be. This is the time, or perhaps before if you can find some therapeutic help, to call. You need some sessions to help you go through the initial fears of making the decision, such as

- What will be of me?

- How can I cope being by myself?

- Will I suffer a lot of loneliness?

- Is there someone who will want me now, etc?

Even when those are thoughts and feelings coming from the prolonged situation of helplessness you were under, you need to deal with them. If you can’t find an individual therapist, or a support group offered by some organization in your neighborhood, you can always work on yourself using books, readings, writing on your diary and keeping a few good friends around.

Remember that you are responsible for your own life, and if there were some aspects on you that helped his passive aggressive actions to be possible, the time to discover and heal them is now. Perhaps you valued much more his company than being respected and appreciated? Did you have any fears of being by yourself, so you did put
up with a lot of mistreatment only not to be alone? Whatever your reasons were to accept this kind of relationship, now your task is to work on them. Lovingly, examine your own life and discover how you can strengthen certain ideas or concepts that help you feel weak, helpless and unlovable if you don’t have any man with you...
PART 3: LIFE AFTER LEAVING A PASSIVE AGGRESSIVE PERSON

A) Close the relationship for good:

1.- Stay away.

Don’t accept phone calls, answer emails, IMs or text messages from him. Doing so will only create false hope. It’s likely to end in a terrible scene where you will be accused and blamed again, and things will be worse than ever - you won’t just have an angry, upset ex, you will be charged with everything that went wrong in the relationship.

Remember again: this person has manipulated you for such a long time, now who will say anything to get you back, and that is all this contact will be about. It will be another edition of “promises and not facts,” as you are used to, this time with a frenetic quality of conversation.

Once you have broken away, stay away. Having dinner, “just to talk” or “for the kids’ sake” will destroy your resolve, and will also give your controlling ex the power he seeks again. Cut it clean, and let it go.

2.- Avoid mutual friends who are still in contact with your ex for some time after the breakup. The last thing you need is the passing, even inadvertently, of fuel into the fire in the weeks and months after the end of the affair.
If you can’t avoid contact with these friends, keep your remarks to them carefully neutral, and don’t share details of the breakup, your feelings, or your insights on your ex with them - you can almost be assured these remarks will find their way back to your ex, and that will come back to haunt you.

3.- **Remain focused on your new life.** In order to build your new life, you need all the energies that you can muster; so don’t look back, be open to new acquaintances and relationships, and watch yourself the next time someone makes a snide comment or a caustic joke on you, so you can practice your self-defense tricks from the start!

B) **Work on repairing yourself**

1.- **A look at your deep needs:**

What were your needs that supported the presence of this toxic relationship in your life? You could have deep needs of:

To depend on someone;
To be protected as when daddy protected you before;
To be rescued from loneliness;
To be spared the daily fight for life that adults have;
To be given the appreciation and recognition you don’t find inside

2.- **What were you good at before?**

Here is the place to recover all of your aspects you were proud of: go back to the times of school, of college, of your first job, and gather without false shame all the compliments you did receive. How other people saw you, and what were the good qualities they told you had?

It’s important that you recover the voice of external witnesses that saw you performing well. It has to compensate the poisonous comments of your ex about your invented weaknesses he made so much fun about.
3. A healing plan for yourself

Should we need to be reminded to take care of ourselves? The sad truth is that many of us, especially during difficult times, relinquish our need for taking care of ourselves, for the pull to care for others.

While it is noble to want to care for those around us before, it is ultimately a poor allocation of our depleted resources to expend even more energy on others when we most need it ourselves. You need all your inner resources dedicated to your own healing now!

During your separation, there may be days when all you want to do is sleep. The practicality of that may not allow you to indulge, but there must be a way to find a few minutes to support your body and mind’s need for rest and recovery.

Please take as much time as you need to complete the following questions.

1. What types of activities would you consider opportunities for self-care? What do you remember doing in the past which brought joy and happiness to you, even when they were small things?

______________________________________________________
______________________________________________________
______________________________________________________


______________________________________________________
______________________________________________________
______________________________________________________
3. Now, really make a plan to indulge yourself. What would you consider decadent activities that you can barely remember being able to enjoy?

______________________________________________________
______________________________________________________
______________________________________________________

4. Are there activities that can be done with others? Or better alone? Which do you prefer and why? Who would you invite?

______________________________________________________
______________________________________________________
______________________________________________________

5. How will you schedule the time, money, and/or energy to make at least five items from #1 a reality within the next two weeks?

______________________________________________________
______________________________________________________
______________________________________________________

6. What would it take for you to put you first in your list of people to care for?

______________________________________________________
______________________________________________________
______________________________________________________

7.- Which of these suggestions is calling your attention now?

- a delicious lunch at a favorite restaurant

- a walk along a park pathway

- going to the library and signing out a type of book you wouldn’t normally read
• find an organization you always admired and volunteer

• get pampered getting a massage, facial or your nails done

• clean out a closet - ridding yourself of outdated clothes and the old image of yourself that went with it

• having a purging ceremony where you eliminate from your environment the clutter that prevents you from making room for a new life

• sit quietly in meditation and celebrate how strong you are and how you will come out of this experience a better person.
CONCLUSION

Leaving such a draining relationship as the one with a passive aggressive person is a big decision...

Probably the healthier decision you can make, once you got to the point of accepting that this is a lost battle, your partner is far from accepting that he must change to be at the level of an adult, mature marriage, and your own energy is depleted.

In a personal level, you know now when you will have the inner conviction about the decision of staying and leaving.

If this is the time in your life that you decide to keep on growing up, developing your life purpose and being happy, then congratulations!

We are here to support your needs for validation of you as a valuable person who deserves to be loved and respected. Please, don’t accept anything less.

To your happiness,
Nora Femenia

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Resources

Fair fighting for couples
http://www.positiveconflicts.com/FairFightingForCouples/

Recovering from passive aggression
http://www.passiveaggresive.com

Test to know if you are passive aggressive
http://www.lifescript.com/Quizzes/Personality/Do_You_Have_A_Passive_Aggressive_Personality.aspx?

Creative conflicts blog
www.creativeconflicts.com

Coaching by Coach Nora

Visit Coach Nora’s web site and claim your special gift: you will be able to email her and ask specifically what you need help with,

www.norafemenia.com/coaching

Turning conflicts into true love
http://www.myrelationshipsaver.com

Healing emotional abuse
http://healingemotionalabuse.com
Recover from anger
http://www.recoverfromanger.com

**Articles**

- Are You Getting the Cold Shoulder from Your Loved One, and You Don’t Know Why?

- Fight Back Passive Aggressive Actions With 5 Guerrilla Tactics!

- Top 5 Indicators of Passive Aggressive Behavior
  http://ezinearticles.com/?id=1735443

- How do you know it is PA behavior?
  http://passiveaggresive.blogspot.com/2008/04/how-do-you-know-it-is-pa-behavior.html

- How do you know if this Person is Passive Aggressive?
  http://www.passiveaggresive.com/articles/how_do_you_know.php

**Passive Aggressive Links:**

Healthy boundaries
http://www.in-two-one.com/boundaries.htm

How to identify abuse:
http://www.mjbovo.com/PotentialAb.htm

Emotional abuse test:
http://www.thingsarelookinup.com/Abuse/test.shtml
How to identify passive aggressive behavior:
http://www.mcg.edu/students/mentalhealth/PAbehavior.htm

Emotional Dynamics of dysfunctional relationships:
http://joy2meu.com/Dynamics.htm

Angry reaction to PA behavior:
http://www.angriesout.com/couples8.htm

How to identify if you are PA
http://www.passiveaggressive.homestead.com/Prevention.html

How to build up self-esteem
http://www.getnewvisions.com/se/10crse_immediate_help.html

A success story
http://passiveaggressive.homestead.com/Success.html