

Unlearning your toxic behaviours

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Humans are wired to adapt. Just as a child gets moulded in a family, a healthy relationship can also be the mould to an individual's self-growth. Relationships get toxic when one person or the other causes hindrance in personal growth.

Toxic behaviours sprout from the overexertion to get unmet needs satisfied or simply because of the lack of a proper coping mechanism. As much as it is draining to be stuck in an abusive dynamic, the more liberating it is to break free.

It takes great strength and courage to leave a toxic relationship, be it familial or romantic. Even after being well aware of what a toxic person does, you might find yourself expressing some of their traits. In psychology, there is a term called "Social Proximity Effect" or "Proximity Principle" which sheds light on the tendency of people picking up the mannerisms of the people who they stayed in close proximity with. Emulation or imitation of behaviour is critical to development, but when you notice yourself exhibiting the belligerent patterns of your toxic partner, parent or a friend, things get a little alarming. You find yourself mired in the mud and muck of your past which stains your future possibilities. Although these instances may leave a lasting effect on the psyche, it is not impossible to unlearn these toxic behaviours.

Step back and give yourself time: Abuse is a cycle and this cycle doesn't come into being in the blink of an eye. Shattering the cycle also requires patience and time. Unravelling the cycle aids in recognising underlying problems behind the bad habits. Breaking down the patterns and assessing them helps to tackle the problems.

Open the doors to empathy: Most relationships become toxic because of the lack of understanding. People try to inflict what they feel on the other person rather than evaluating both sides of the coin. It is important to encompass the understanding of emotions of all the parties.

Analyse your feelings: It's perfectly fine to feel vulnerable or weak and there is nothing to hide. Be one with your feelings. Write your thoughts down and let your frustrations fly out. Try being gentle with yourself and others around you.

Make space for your strengths to shine: Prolonged periods of emotional stress and trauma unnerves one. Building a passion for self-improvement and playing to your strengths makes you more self-assured. You will be able to reel out your insecurities with such aplomb that it will seem insignificant.

Know your worth: Ask yourself why you are getting triggered and how you can solve it. Cut, block, delete.

Detoxifying is hard but not unattainable. It's never too late to try.

Farnaz Fawad Hasan thinks of herself to be the fifth member of The Try Guys. Send her stuff to try at farnazfawadhasan@gmail.com



It's payback time!

FARIHA S. KHAN

There is a reason Shakespeare once said, "Neither a borrower, nor a lender be" — money has the ability to cause great turmoil in any relationship. We all have that one friend: they ask you for money, say they'll pay you right back and that's the last you'll hear of them. If you're lucky, they'll stick around to listen to you uncomfortably nudge them for your money and because you are a good friend, you ensure that your nudges don't make them too uncomfortable. But whether it's a hefty amount in the thousands or a menial one in the hundreds, it's clear what not to do when it comes to approaching friends who won't pay you back: be subtle.

But before you take any measures, consider this: *why won't your friend pay you back?* If you know of any financial troubles your friend is having, it's best to not pick around the topic of money, especially if the amount isn't too hefty. Maybe approach them once you know they're financially stable or set out a monthly payment plan that is suitable for both of you, stressing on the terms and conditions and how often the payments must be made. However, if this is a friend who has constantly defaulted payments, you should demand that the outstanding loans be repaid before even considering giving any

more money to that friend.

I know, you hate asking for money because how uncomfortable it is, but it has been months and you really need your money to splurge on a new purchase. Admittedly, it goes without saying that you should give gentle reminders to your friends every few weeks. Your friend may have forgotten they borrowed money from you at all. However, if that fails, consider getting hostages, as in, collateral. If there is something you know your friend could not live without (like a PS4, a laptop or other valuables), ask to take it as collateral until their debts have been repaid in full. This can be a great strategy to incentivise your friend to pay you back faster.

Of course, if the amount itself isn't too big, perhaps it would be a good idea to write it off if it hasn't been repaid in a few years than to let it ruin a good relationship. At the end of the day, it's important not to let the lending of money interfere in your relationship, so if you can make do without the money, ensure you're not crossing any lines and don't be too aggressive in your endeavours.

It's great to help out a friend, but make sure you keep track of how much you're giving out in order to protect yourself from subsequent lending.