



Isolation: Intentional Cause, Unintentional Effect, A Resource to Shed Light on Its Origins

This resource discusses patterns of emotional manipulation that can be painful to revisit. Please take time and pause if needed. Engagement with this information is entirely within your control. Safety and well-being are what matter most.

Isolation: *the state of being separated or detached from others*

Isolation is often associated with physical separation from family, friends, coworkers and community. In emotionally and psychologically abusive relationships, isolation is also emotional distancing. Isolation is not only caused by the abuser. After constantly hearing false narratives about loved ones or those in the receiver's inner circle, the receiver unknowingly becomes an unintentional participant. This is the cause and effect.

A person may be surrounded by others and still feel profoundly alone, disconnected or detached. Isolation can be created intentionally through manipulation, criticism, guilt, conflict and control. It can also occur gradually when reaching out, sharing openly or maintaining important relationships becomes emotionally exhausting.

Isolation builds slowly and steadily once the abuser perceives the relationship is on solid ground through words of affirmation and a noticeable shift in attachment. It will begin with comments, questions, observations and subtle suggestions about friends, family members, coworkers and others – "I'm not sure I'm accepted," "I received a strange look and didn't like it," "I heard a not nice comment about me from a family member." This tactic also introduces another tool in the abusers toolbox called "triangulation." Whoever is being spoken about isn't there to defend, confirm or deny the false narrative. Causing the receiver to doubt their trusted circle. Cause and effect.

Over time, those comments – false narratives - create doubt, hesitation and cause distance. The abuser forces a wedge between and the receiver slowly creates distance. What begins as psychological manipulation from one side can slowly become withdrawal from the other. Before long, a once strong support system feels unfamiliar, strained or completely gone. And trust erodes because the receiver is now only hearing "the strongest voice," that of the abuser.