

## **Where Did I Go Wrong? How Did I Miss The Signs?**

***From the book by Joan T. Kloth-Zanard,  
“Where Did I Go Wrong? How Did I Miss the  
Signs? Dealing with Hostile Aggressive  
Parenting and Parental Alienation”***

### **CHAPTER 1**

#### **DIVORCE IS THE MOST NEGATIVE, DIRTY WORD IN ANY LANGUAGE AND IT DOES NOT HAVE TO BE!**

**D**ivorce, UGH, is one of the ugliest, most negative words; no matter what language you speak. It immediately conjures up negative thoughts, ideas, tears, broken hearts, broken homes and a landslide of financial troubles. But it really does not have to be this way. If people looked at divorce in a positive framework, we would see much less damage, heartache and emotional turmoil. If the courts, families, counselors and agencies took on a more positive attitude toward divorce, it would filter its way throughout the family system.

When the institution of marriage was created, people only lived to be at most 35. They were married for not more than 20 years. Today, people live into their 70's, 80's and 90's. This is three times as long and marriages must endure for three times that length as well. And that means marriages must last for nearly 50 years or more, not 15 years. This is a lot to ask of human beings who go through major personal changes every 7 years or so. And it puts a lot of pressure on the two adults to continue to love, honor, cherish and continue to grow together. If we do not grow and learn together in the marriage, then we grow apart.

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To look at divorce positively, one must first understand that a failed marriage is not about failing in life but about life changes and growing apart. It is about a new stage in their life, much like going from being an infant to a toddler, from a toddler to a pre-juvenile, from a pre-juvenile to juvenile, from juvenile to adolescent, from adolescent to young adult, from young adult to adult and adult to elder. Throughout this entire process we are growing, learning and going through emotional, physical and personal changes.

With this theory in mind, unless the couple is growing in the same perspective and direction, it is no wonder that so many marriages end in divorce. But this does not have to be viewed as a negative concept. Like when an infant becomes a toddler and is just learning to walk, or when an adolescent is finally becoming a young adult with new aspirations and responsibilities, people grow through life cycles changes and sometimes grow apart. When this happens, this should not be a time of revenge, hatred and anger. Instead, we should be seeing this as a new stage or cycle in our lives. It should be viewed as a new opportunity to do the things we might not have done or thought about when we were married. It is a chance to explore a new self.

If we look at divorce as just being another step or stage in our life cycle, then we can view it as just another process in our aging. It should be a time for growth, letting go and going on. It can be a time for us to explore things we dared not do while married. It can be a time to find new partnerships and relationships, which are more compatible with whom we have matured into. And for our children it is a chance to gain new relatives and extended family members. It is a chance to increase our networking potential and have more family and friends to communicate with and count on and even get the other necessary ingredients that make up their hierarchy of needs.

With divorce being so prevalent and the ravages so detrimental, it just stands to reason that we need to find another way of understanding and accepting this new change in our lives, without making it into a horrific event. If we can change our attitude to see divorce as a stepping-stone to the next level or stage in our life, it will open up endless doors of opportunity for all involved.

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But what about the children? Isn't this teaching them to give up too easily on their marriages? Well, this is a fair question. But instead, maybe we should look at this as having more tolerance and understanding. We could teach them to not be so afraid and freaked out about change. Instead, they can view this as a time to get some space from each other and see if they grow back together or further apart. It is a chance to work on our own personal selves, which quite often is very difficult to do in a marriage.

So how do the couples do it that stick it out and stay together all those years? Maybe they still have a special connection to each other. Maybe they have allowed each other to grow and continue to become a better person? Maybe their life stages and cycles coincided together in such a way that they could work through things together instead of alone? This would be a great area of research to help couples find a way to work through their marriages and life stage changes, rather than part.

In the meantime, it would seem to make much more sense to not think of divorce or separation, for that matter, as the end of life, but instead as a new beginning. If we could find a more positive approach to dealing with divorce, we might just find fewer high conflict divorces, fewer troubled and angry children and fewer incidents of hostile aggressive parenting, which ultimately rip the children and parents apart. There would be much less disruption in our children's lives and they could maintain a healthy relationship with both parents. Then, just maybe, we could break the cycle of psychological abuse that accompanies so many divorces these days. Maybe we can make a difference in divorce.

Until the time that divorce and separation can be seen with a more positive approach, it is important to learn all we can about protecting ourselves, our extended families and the children we love from the psychological abuse of Parental Alienation and Hostile Aggressive Parenting.

## CHAPTER 2

### **WHERE DID I GO WRONG? HOW DID I MISS THE SIGNS? AM I STILL A GOOD PARENT?**

So many targeted parents ask, "How could I not see this coming? How could I have not known this was what was going to happen? How could I have been so blind?"

Don't blame yourself. You just were not raised this way. You do not think this way. So why would you have thought otherwise? Unfortunately, the signs were probably there all the time but we just did not know to look for them, or we were struggling so hard to survive that we just did not want to see it or hear it or maybe it was something we thought was normal because that is the way we were raised. Either way, in most of the cases I have dealt with, the signs and symptoms of Hostile Aggressive Parenting (HAP) and Parental Alienation Syndrome (PAS) were always there but we just did not recognize them. Denigrating our families, refusing to allow the kids to keep gifts from the other side of the family, berating the targeted parent (TP) with the kids there, and bad-mouthing the TP in front of friends and family, are strong indicators of HAP AND PAS. But sometimes the signs are even subtler, like ignoring the other parent when they talk, or throwing out their personal stuff "accidentally", or not including them in decisions or making snide comments that indirectly put the TP down. These are all signs, but when we are in the thick of it, we just cannot see through the muck. In reality, the TP is just as much of a victim of the AP's bullying as the children are.

I am going to describe something that I pretty much see in 99% of the alienated parents. They are the passive, go with the flow, peacemaker, whatever you say honey person in the relationship. The other parent is/was the controller. They are like this because this is what they saw when they were growing

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up and this is what they learned or associated with in their Family of Origin or FOO. These two people were unconsciously or subconsciously attracted to each other because of their FOO upbringing. The aggressive parent is attracted to the passive easy to control person because they can be manipulated. And the passive parent is attracted to the controller because this is familiar to the way they were raised. It is when the passive parent finally stands up for themselves and takes back the control that all hell breaks loose. Why? Because the aggressive parent is now no longer in control.

*AN writes:*

*I don't think the behavior comes up all of a sudden. I think there are hints and under currents. There were in my case. And, I think our culture convinces us that everything will be ok, to turn the other cheek, that "God only gives us whatever to make us stronger, etc."*

*RH writes:*

*It's been over 5 years. Oh, I know now that ex was committing HAP for a very long time. I wasn't aware of it when it was happening. That's how sneaky they (AP) are. Everything is done behind your back. My older one assisted him in the alienation too. And I know she has been paid off. I have proof from an old online diary she had been keeping for several years, which I found last year. Unfortunately, none of this could be brought out into the open, such as showing it to the judge. My older one was always treated like a princess and the younger one like a 2nd class citizen (same as me). In fact, the younger one has had a student loan in her name for a community college and I know that my ex could very well afford a few thousand dollars a year for a community college. Also, I know that he goes around telling people that I'm not allowed to have contact (and everyone believes him.... including my daughters) and that I'm violating court orders (which are non-existent) and that I'm not paying child support (untrue). This is a sick*

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*parent who goes around telling people lies and of course the kids don't even question him.*

*Anonymous writes:*

*Yes, my family member's ex was committing HAP all along too. She started it while they were married, putting the husband down in front of the kids, his friends and anyone else that would listen, right in front of him. And she denied the children a relationship with anyone on their father's side of the family; even making the kids return Christmas gifts when they were 4 and 6 years old. In this case, she actually made enemies out of all the other people, because they knew what a nasty narcissistic woman she was. But this did not stop the kids from believing her because she kept them away from anyone who would have set the kids straight.*

*In another of my family members cases, the ex was also doing it all through the marriage. At first, she only directed it at her husband's side of the family. She even tried to convince her then husband, how horrible his side of the family was, including claiming that my daughter was a bad influence. Yes, a child, who was a competitive figure skater, competitive dancer, advanced art and honor roll student, who was always so busy and involved after school, that she was a troublemaker. Yes, my daughter, who was nice to every one; was extremely focused, disciplined; hates drugs and alcohol, was not safe to be around. Yes, my daughter was such a horrible influence that she was constantly asked to assistant teach ice skating and dance and work with other kids in school who were struggling to learn things. Yes, my daughter who would not hurt anyone because she thinks it is mean. Yet, her own daughter is downright rude, nasty, arrogant and could careless whose feelings she hurts. Oh, and my whole side of the family is crazy.*

*But of course, this ex's own mother is the perfect mom, a chronic gambler, whom the Targeted Parent had to bail out constantly. Oh, and the ex's father is no better, having cheated on the ex's mother all through*

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*their marriage with his secretary whom he had two kids out of wedlock with. Yes, her family is so much better than everyone else's. But you get the point; they were setting these spouses and their kids up from the start because of their own insecurities.*

AP's are very insecure and just like the bully at school; they need to make sure that they are revered. They pick fights, start rumors and lie just to boost their own image. They pick on anyone they think they can over- power and control. It is the definition of a bully. I think these Dictionary definitions of bullies describe the AP perfectly. If this is illegal for children to do to another child, then why is it allowed by an adult to do to another adult or child?

bul·ly<sup>1</sup> (bl)

*n. pl.* bul·lies

1. A person who is habitually cruel or overbearing, especially to smaller or weaker people.
2. A hired ruffian; a thug.
3. A pimp.

*v.* bul·lied, bul·ly·ing, bul·lies

*v.tr.*

1. To treat in an overbearing or intimidating manner. See Synonyms at intimidate.
2. To make (one's way) aggressively.

*v.intr.*

1. To behave like a bully.
2. To force one's way aggressively or by intimidation.

Free Dictionary 2009 on line at

<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/bully>

bully<sup>1</sup>

*n pl* -lies

1. a person who hurts, persecutes, or intimidates weaker people
2. *Archaic* a hired ruffian
3. *Obsolete* a procurer; pimp

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*vb* -lies, -lying, -lied  
(when *tr*, often *followed by into*) to hurt, intimidate, or persecute (a weaker or smaller person), esp. to make him do something

*Collins English Dictionary – Complete and Unabridged 6th Edition 2003. © William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd 1979, 1986 © HarperCollins Publishers 1991, 1994, 1998, 2000, 2003*

In hindsight, the APs were probably hostile aggressive people all along, while the TP started out as the passive one who would do anything to keep the peace. When the balance of control is shifted, the relationship begins to fall apart. If these tendencies are picked up on early on during either the marriage or the divorce process that maybe effective therapy can result in a healthier relationship and the prevention of PAS should the couples' relationship ultimately break up. Below is an excerpt from a letter by a client who did just this and got therapy for both her and her spouse.

*PC writes:*

*My husband and I have been in counseling with several local services for over a year. The counseling I feel made a HUGE impact, and I honestly think that if that had not happened, we might still be in an extremely tense and stressful situation, for all of us, including the kids. Though we continue to live separately with separate households, we have been able to work through this and are working on saving our marriage as we both do still love each other very much. Currently, we share custody of all 3 children, and are able to cooperate very well and be flexible with that.*

*The other day, my husband told me our kids would not be better off without me, and that I am a good mother. That is the point both parents must be at, knowing that for their kids' sake, their kids need both parents, not just the one parent. Both parents have to keep trying, and sometimes the alienated parent must try even harder, to make the other parent open up and talk about why things have gotten so difficult, how they both can make things*

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*better, and how they can both be a part of their kids' life.*

*There are no easy or quick answers. Both parents must cooperate together, and maybe even work on themselves, in order to make the situation better, especially for the kids. We continue to make sure our kids know they are important and we love them, and that it is ok for them to love us:)*

*I think one of the many huge reasons the counseling helped, is it made it possible for us to realize why this happened ( a combination of midlife crisis brought on by our 3rd planned pregnancy; my husband's parents both dying; and him suddenly thinking I would kidnap our kids back to the US when he demanded a divorce). Counseling also helped us understand that in spite of everything, we still deeply love and like each other, still share a deep friendship, humor, numerous common interests, etc. and that we both wanted to have a better relationship again, share custody, and work on our marriage. I think that as much as I want our marriage and love to keep us together, and to be a family together with our kids in our house...at this point, I feel the counseling has made it possible to also, in the worst scenario to be divorced amicably and sharing custody, amicably.*

*\* So, maybe it helps to know WHY the alienating parent feels so strongly they must alienate the other parent, and counseling helps by helping that alienating parent realize they don't have a reason to be so scared/angry to keep the other parent from their own children.\* Counseling also helps the alienated parent deal with all their emotions, pain, anger, hurt, frustration...and forgive, so they can move on and continue to be a good parent.*

**SO ARE YOU A GOOD PARENT, PARENTING TEST:  
ARE YOU PRACTICING GOOD PARENTING  
TECHNIQUES?**

**Created by Alison Benitz**

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Take the following test to find out how good you are at parenting after a separation or divorce.

- 1) When talking to your child do you ever refer to their other parent by their first name?
- 2) If your child refers to their other parent by their first name, do you allow it?
- 3) Do you allow your child to decide whether or not they want to spend time with the other parent?
- 4) Do you have fights with the other parent in front of your children?
- 5) Are you so honest with your children that you tell them everything including about divorce court and child support?
- 6) Do you ever tell your child they are just like the other parent?
- 7) If your child has done something wrong, do you tell the other parent the child is just like they are?
- 8) Do you ever tell the child to ask the other parent for something you know they cannot deliver?
- 9) Do you tell the other parent about school functions, doctor visits, and the children's accomplishments/disappointments?
- 10) Do you ask your child to sit with you to write encouraging/positive letters and send good happy pictures to their other parent?
- 11) Do you call the other parent just so your child can talk to them?
- 12) Do you help your child remember the other parent's birthday, Mother's or Father's Day, Christmas or other special holidays?

If you answered "yes" to any of the question from 1-8 or "no" to any of the question from 9-12, you may be practicing a form of abuse known as parent alienation. For the sake of your child, please seek help. It's your child who will be hurt far more than your ex.

If your responses indicated that you are a good parent, DO NOT STOP HERE. This book is not about being just a good parent. It is about being a better parent and preventing the other

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parent from stopping you from being the best parent you can be to your children.

**CHAPTER 3**

***PARENTAL ALIENATION IS DOMESTIC  
VIOLENCE***

Abuse is one of the most gut-wrenching issues in our times. Whether it is the abuse of a child, a woman, an elder or a man, it is heinous. Abuse comes in three main forms: physical, sexual and psychological (also known as emotional abuse.). It is the mental and emotional abuse caused by a spouse's deliberate attempt to destroy the Targeted Parent in the eyes of the children that will be the focus of this chapter. Parental Alienation, also classified as Hostile Aggressive Parenting, Enmeshed Relationships, Cross-Generational Coalitions, Relationship Triangles and Alienation, is a growing epidemic in divorce proceedings. It is time to change this and make a difference for the children and Targeted Parent of these psychological abuses.

During a high conflict divorce involving visitation or custody, there are more false cases of domestic violence and abuse filed according to the various departments of protection and the courts. (DHHS, 2001 Statistics) This issue is one of international alarm because false reporting takes massive amounts of resources away from true victims. In addition, the psychological ramifications and loss of reputation for the accused can ruin their lives forever, which is usually the intention with the false allegations. Unfortunately, these types of abusers drag their innocent children into their bogus stories, which force the children to lie and go through horrendous tests and interviews, which emotionally scar them for life. Even if the accused parent has not committed the crime, the accusations cost the accused thousands of dollars and years to prove their innocence, while the abuser commits defamation and slander. By all documented accounts, (see Fiebert's Reference) it is apparent that the gender of the abuser does not matter. Both genders are equally aggressive using both physical and psychological abuse.

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It is the mental end of this abuse that Bill Kuhl speaks about in his article “Violence Knows No Gender”. Abusers are devious and use covert physical attacks to catch their prey off guard. Kuhl refers to this as the “element of surprise”. (Kuhl, Violence Knows No Gender) This is not only devious but also psychologically stressful. The targeted parent never knows if and when it is coming or how; much like a soldier during a sniper attack. They must live their lives as if they are constantly at war, on edge and in fear. Psychologically they become worn out with nowhere to turn to for help.

This psychological abuse and the toll that these victims pay come at a great price. If they stay, they chance being seriously injured if not killed. If they leave, they are faced with the humiliation of ‘allowing’ someone to abuse them. In the course of this, they will lose everything, including their children. Most victims stay in their abusive marriages for the same reason; that is, they have nowhere to go, are being threatened with losing everything, scared for their children and have been beaten down emotionally and they can no longer stand on their own anymore. For men, this is a double indemnity, because it is the humiliation and ridicule that a woman has abused them, which prevents most men from reporting the abuse they encounter and prohibits them from leaving home. For women, it is not so much the humiliation as the fear of further attacks as well as fear of not being able to make it on their own. The one fear that stigmatizes both genders is the loss of their children and that relationship.

When a parent is denied a relationship, it is the same as isolating the children from the parent. It can be legally termed as an alienation of affection, criminally referred to as domestic violence and psychologically referred to as Parental Alienation, Parental Alienation Syndrome (soon to be in the DSM V), Hostile Aggressive Parenting, an Enmeshed Relationship, Triangles in Relationships, Cross-Generational Coalitions or Alienation and Denigration. No matter what it is named, it is not only abusive to the Targeted Parent (TP), but also abusive to the children. The Alienating Parent (AP) sees the children and/or their relationship with the other parent as a possession that they have power over, which in turn controls the TP. By refusing to allow a healthy relationship to exist between the children and the

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TP, the AP maintains a sense of control and what they feel is a bargaining chip to possess the other parent. Whether it is returning the TP to the AP's life or revenge 'for not loving them anymore', the AP has absolutely no regard for any of the other victims. Their only goal is to destroy the TP anyway they can.

This abuse is so subtle and slow, that when the parent realizes what is occurring, it is often too late and the children are refusing to have a relationship with the TP, especially in the case of high conflict divorce with custody/visitation issues. The once naturally healthy relationship and bonds of a parent with their offspring have been destroyed; their children's lives are filled with treachery and uncharted waters. The psychological community is just now beginning to understand the ramifications of this type of abuse, while examining a definition to be included in the DSM. Alienation is an insidious type of abuse because proving its existence is a nightmare that is still on going. The psychological community is baffled as to how to stop it and correct the damages to the children.

### **PAS OR PARENTAL ALIENATION SYNDROME DEFINED**

Dr. Richard Gardner, of Cresskill, NJ, a child psychologist, was one of the leading authorities on children of dysfunctional families. What he found in his research is that no matter the financial or cultural background, alienation of one parent from the other could occur. ([www.rgardner.com](http://www.rgardner.com))

According to Dr. Richard Gardner, PAS is described as "a disturbance in which children are obsessively preoccupied with depreciation and/or criticism of a parent. In other words, denigration that is unjustified and or exaggerated." ([www.familycourts.com/pas.htm](http://www.familycourts.com/pas.htm)) In effect, these children are taught to hate the other parent to the point of wanting to eliminate them from their lives. Dr. Gardner considers this psychological abuse and it is the only form of psychological abuse that has clear-cut unmistakable signs and symptoms and therefore the only psychological abuse that can be easily diagnosed.

PAS can be further described as a form of psychological kidnapping ([www.familycourts.com/pas.htm](http://www.familycourts.com/pas.htm)) where the child's

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mind has been forced to prejudicially believe and discriminate against the other parent. This is perpetrated by creating fear, not of the only of the TP/outsider parent, but of the parent whom the child must reside with, or as Gardner calls it, the “hostage taker” parent. ([www.familycourts.com/pas.htm](http://www.familycourts.com/pas.htm)) It is also called the Stockholm Syndrome and best compared to the Patti Hearst kidnapping.

In these cases, the hostages are so isolated from the outside world that they begin to associate with their hostage takers. Actually, refusing to accept any overt actions from the outside that contradict their captor’s motives. This has been documented in cult situations where the followers are literally brainwashed to believe that the cults objectives are the only way to think, act or believe.

This also applies in PAS where the children learn to side with the aggressor and avoid being victims of the same abuse. As Roland Summit (Kemp, P. 16) and John Briere (Kemp, P. 239-240) call it, *Abuse-Related Accommodation*. Abuse-related accommodation occurs when a person’s natural survival instincts have enabled them to “adapt” to the abuse. This adaptation includes distortions of thought, altered emotions (such as depression and anxiety), and dissociation by disconnecting from the trauma. It is these adaptive techniques that will determine whether a child will develop personality disorders such as multiple personalities, anti-social behaviors or psychotic tendencies. (Kemp P. 239). Briere further breaks it down into 3 stages of adaptation. First is the initial reaction stage of fear, anxiety, hurt, betrayal or abandonment, because they are so isolated they have nowhere to turn. In the second stage, accommodation to on-going abuse, they try to pacify and soothe the abuser. With children of PAS this might be avoiding issues that trigger anger, such as positive comments about the other parent. Finally, in the 3<sup>rd</sup> stage called Long-Term Elaboration and Secondary accommodation, the victims life centers around avoiding and living with the abuse, which now affects every mechanism for coping and behavior. The abuse actually becomes so internalized that their entire world changes to accommodate it. A PAS victimized child might denigrate and spew hatred about the targeted parent with no valid and justifiable reasons.

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No matter how we describe it or compare it, the ultimate truth is that PAS destroys the children and the parents it is directed at. Despite our courts supposed protection of children from this kind of abuse, it is happening even more. This type of abuse is directly correlated with marital issues involving parental separation, divorce, custody and visitation. It became even more prevalent in the 60's with the introduction of No-Fault Divorce. Despite the high incidence of this type of abuse, it is barely recognized in the courts until recently when it passed the Frye Test, to determine admissibility of scientific evidence, validating its existence ([www.rgardner.com/ref/pas](http://www.rgardner.com/ref/pas)), which now permits its open testimony and use in court. With the passage of the Frye test, the State of Connecticut mandated Court Support Family Services to get training in Parental Alienation Syndrome. Unfortunately, at present this training is very inadequate and riddled with missing data. If only we can finally get the courts to put aside their prejudices against men and non-custodial parents.

### **HOW DO WE RECOGNIZE AND DIAGNOSE PAS?**

The following is a list of behaviors exhibited by children of PAS according to Richard Gardner. See link below.  
[www.rgardner.com/ref/pas\\_intro.html](http://www.rgardner.com/ref/pas_intro.html))

- 1) A campaign of denigration
- 2) Weak, absurd, or frivolous rationalizations for the deprecation.
- 3) Lack of Ambivalence
- 4) The “independent thinker” phenomenon
- 5) Reflexive support of the AP in the parental conflict
- 6) Absence of guilt over cruelty to and/or exploitation of the Alienated Parent
- 7) The presence of borrowed scenarios
- 8) Spread of the animosity to the friends and/or extended family of the Alienated Parent.

In effect, PAS is a form of prejudice and discrimination that isolates the children from the TP, and extended family and

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friends. Through a series of actions, the alienating parent is able to influence the children to hate the targeted parent and extended family. In particular, the AP instills such loathing and anger toward the TP that it could easily be classified as a hate crime.

### **CLASSIFYING PAS AS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

According to Kemp in his book Abuse in the Family, domestic violence is defined as “A form of Maltreatment perpetrated by a person with whom the victim has or had a close personal relationship.” (Kemp, P.36) Furthermore, the clinical and textbook definitions and categories of Child Psychological Maltreatment found in Table 3-1 of Alan Kemp’s book, Abuse in the Family, on pages 72-77, can easily be applied to PAS showing it as a form of Domestic Violence via Psychological Maltreatment. This book is a technical training book for Students studying for their Masters in Counseling and Social Work. It is just one of many textbooks used to teach the students and professionals about Psychological Maltreatment and the categories that make it up. Those categories are:

- Rejecting (spurning)
- Terrorizing
- Corrupting
- Denying essential stimulation, emotional responsiveness, or availability
- Unreliable and inconsistent parenting
- Mental health, medical, or educational neglect
- Degrading/devaluing (spurning)
- Isolating
- Exploiting

As we correlate the above definition, we will see how it fits in classifying PAS as Psychological Maltreatment and thus Domestic Violence. For example, by deliberately alienating the victims from other family members and social supports, isolation is occurring. The whole premise of PAS is to isolate and alienate the children from the Targeted Parent or any other individual who supports the Targeted Parent. If the alienator uses threats or denigrating tactics, to force the victims to comply, this can be

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seen as terrorizing. (Kemp, P. 225-228) As well, verbal denigration, harassment and exploitation of the Targeted Parent is very prominent and a key indicator of PAS. In addition, DV includes the exploitation and use of the children for personal gain. Thus, in PAS when the children are used to destroy the Targeted Parent by denying visitation or a relationship between TP and the children or is used for monetary gains such as excessive expenses beyond child support, they are in affect committing Domestic Violence. It is for these reasons that PAS or alienating the children from the Targeted Parent can be considered as a form of domestic violence.

Let's take this a bit further in its application. When a parent REJECTS a child because the children show any love or affection for the Targeted Parent that is a form of abuse. This is not only a form of rejection, but TERRORIZATION. In fact, a child's refusal to come to the Targeted Parents home for fear of losing the Alienating Parent's conditional love is fear and fear is terror.

Next, there is CORRUPTING. When an Alienating parent refuses to comply with court orders and tells the children they do not have to either, this is corrupting. It is teaching the children that they are above the law and therefore immune to the courts authority. When a parent files false allegations of abuse and convinces the children to do the same, this is corruption. When an Alienating parent tells the children lies about the Targeted Parent, and that anything having to do with the Targeted Parent is illegal, immoral and disgusting, this is corrupting. In fact, this is a form of discrimination and prejudice, which corrupts the children's minds.

Next, let's look at DENYING ESSENTIAL STIMULATION, EMOTIONAL RESPONSIVENESS, OR AVAILABILITY. By refusing to allow the children to have a relationship with the Targeted Parent, for no reason other than their own need to control the ex-spouse, the Alienating Parents are denying them the basic elements of stimulation, emotions and availability with the Targeted Parent. In fact, the Targeted Parent has little to no opportunity to defend themselves against the false allegations. Though they will have you believe that they or the children feared for their lives and that the Targeted Parent was

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abusive, this is usually unsubstantiated or proven by the courts to be a fabrication. With no basis for this denial, the Alienator refuses their children a warm and loving relationship with the Targeted Parents. Thus, it causes UNRELIABLE AND INCONSISTENT PARENTING. Since the children have been denied a relationship with the Targeted Parent, they have also been denied a reliable and consistent parenting situation and the Alienating Parent has proven that they cannot parent consistently and reliably in the supporting of a two-parent relationship with the children.

This brings us to the MENTAL, MEDICAL AND EDUCATION NEGLECT. When an Alienating Parent refuses to comply with numerous separate court orders for counseling, they are denying their children's mental health. Thus, mental neglect has occurred as defined in the DSM IV as Malingering. (V65.2) and by Neglect of Child (V61.21).

If despite numerous court orders or request and recommendations, the alienator continues to insult, verbally abuse and denigrate the child's Targeted Parent in front of them, this behavior DEGRADES AND DEVALUES someone the children once respected and loved and in most cases, secretly want a relationship with. This disdain and disrespect for the Targeted Parent in front of the child(ren) is another form of Psychological Maltreatment as it permanently affects their view of that Targeted Parent, which transfers to their view of themselves. This creates a distorted sense of reality, of themselves and their ability to trust and accurately judge others.

When a parent deliberately sabotages a relationship with the Targeted Parent by refusing to allow visits, calls, or any form of healthy communication, with no evidence of abuse, this is called ISOLATION. Furthermore, when a parent has initially allowed continuous contact with the children during the separation and divorce period, but reneges on this refusing them visitation, especially when they find out their ex-spouse has a new partner, this is isolation and abuse. This is also called Remarriage as a Trigger for Parental Alienation Syndrome and can be further reviewed in an article by Dr. Richard Warshak, there is no doubt this is isolation and thus psychological abuse. (<http://www.fact.on.ca/Info/pas/warsha00.htm>)

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And finally, EXPLOITATION. When a parent uses the children as pawns to get back at their ex-spouse for not loving them anymore or to control them further, this is exploitation. When an Alienating Parent uses the children, and makes false allegations of abuse, terrorizing the children to state they hate the Targeted Parent, this is EXPLOITATION. When a parent uses the children for monetary gains, but yet does not allow the children a relationship with the targeted parent, this is EXPLOITATION.

When you add all these factors up, it is easy to see how Cross-Generational Coalitions, Parental Alienation, Parental Alienation Syndrome, Enmeshed Relationships, Triangles and Borderless Boundaries can be classified as Child Psychological Maltreatment in a divorce situation. When you put it all together, the DSM sums up the Alienator quite nicely under Cluster B Personality Disorder, Antisocial Personality Disorder, (301.7). The Alienating Parent willfully and without regard to the child(ren) or the targeted parent's welfare, or the innocent extended family's welfare, continually violated their rights and disregarded their needs for a relationship. The Alienating Parent uses and exploits the children. The Alienating Parent isolates the children from a nurturing parent and family. The Alienating Parent denies the children their basic needs of love and belonging from the Targeted Parent. The Alienating Parent thus neglects the children's mental welfare. They rejected the children's and Targeted Parent's testimony of love and need for each other. The Alienating Parent terrorizes and corrupts the children. The Alienating Parent callously puts their own desires, wants and needs above those of everyone else including their own children. This all adds up to one thing, PAS is Domestic Violence in the form of Psychological Maltreatment.

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### **CHAPTER 4**

#### **ALL ABOUT THE ALIENATOR**

#### **THE ALIENATING PARENT'S PSYCHOLOGICAL MAKE- UP**

NOTE: In the 1980's it was believed that women only committed PAS. Over the years this belief has changed to a non-gender specific issue. For that reason, I have chosen to use gender neutral terms such as AP (Alienating Parent) for any person who refuses or destroys the relationship between the children and the other parent; and TP (Target Parent) to represent the targeted parent.

**W**hy does the AP do what they do? To begin with, it may come from unfounded feelings of entitlement. When a person feels slighted by another, even if only in their imagination, they experience intense emotions of anger and use every tactic they can conceive of to harm the target and fill the void in their heart. They have no impulse control over this anger and rage that triggers a need for revenge.

They actually believe that filling this hole in their heart using revenge and anything that will hurt the other person will actually make them feel better. It is as if they were never taught how to self soothe or feel better using positive actions. This is especially true in high conflict divorces where the AP will use contrived scenarios of domestic violence or rape to manipulate the children, courts, attorneys and counselors. They must convince them that they are the better parent and that the other parent is a horrible, terrible person. They will denigrate the TP, alter information and do anything to maintain control over the ex because they want to continually inflict pain, suffering and they fear abandonment.

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Further research reveals that that they are probably narcissistic or megalomaniac, believing that the world evolves around them and only them. (Baron and Byrne, P. 456). In other words, rules are made for everyone but them. For example, the AP may refuse to abide by court orders regarding visitation, counseling and denigration of the other parent. The rules do not apply to them. Then, hypocritically, they will immediately file contempt charges if child support is one day late.

Furthermore, narcissistic individuals are especially affected by negative interpersonal experiences, which explain why the AP might deliberately destroy the TP's relationship with the kids. If the AP cannot have the TP, then no one, not even the children, should be allowed to have anything that resembles a relationship with the other parent. The TP is not permitted any happiness.

Their egotism causes them even more frustration by not being able to manipulate everything they want. They have lost control and their "holier than thou" image appears tarnished. In fact, re-marriage by the TP can trigger even more abuse when they realize that the ex-spouse is no longer available. (Warshak, <http://www.fact.on.ca/Info/pas/warsha00.htm>) Their pronounced anger and loss of control is evidenced by their methods of retaliation, which include denied visitations, and further denigration of the TP.

Also known as Frustration-Aggression, they became exceedingly more dangerous in their disregard for the children and ex-spouse's safety, security and emotional states. (Baron and Byrne, P. 443) In their mind, they depersonalize the TP and all associated with them. In fact, the covert aggression gets so out of control that they will deliberately lie about such things as telephone contact and mail contact from the other parent. Another example of Frustration-Aggression might be repeatedly telling the other parent the children are not around and then telling the children that the other parent never tries to contact them.

AP's belligerently try to control the formation of any relationship between the children and the other parent. Their anger is so consuming that it extends to any family member who sides against them. Repeatedly, they will even try to destroy the

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new marriage by using continual court harassment, which may include the serving of a subpoena in the middle of the night. They will also try to destroy the new marriage by backstabbing the TP and his family, which further alienates the children.

The above examples of outrageous responses are forms of Obstructionism. (Baron p. 466) Although this term usually applies to business situations, Obstructionism is classified as behaviors designed to impede the TP's relationship and performance. (Baron & Byrne, P. 466) In some cases, their refusal to let the children receive telephone calls, have visitation and see their mail, are clearly obstructive and classifiable as isolation and thus a form of domestic violence. Returning mail and failing to give sport schedules to the TP are also obstructive. Sometimes, they attempt to control contact times and allow visitation only when the other parent is supposed to be working. They know this interferes with the TP's ability to pay child support and could force the TP to postpone his visitation. Their attempts to get revenge are similar to crimes of passion. (Baron & Byrne, P. 453)

Though most do not use physical force, they use indirect aggression techniques intended to destroy any close relationships for the TP or their family. In fact, their hostile personality and intentions are indicative of a very stressful Type A personality. (Baron & Byrne, P. 455) They aggress with the prime objective of committing intentional harm upon innocent people. And though, according to Kemp (*Abuse In the Family*), females are thought to be less physically aggressive, this fact has been clearly refuted by the numerous reports and research by Mark Fiebert (Fiebert, M. S. *References Examining Assaults By Women on Their Spouses or Male Partners: An Annotated Bibliography*. <http://www.csulb.edu/~mfiebert/assault.htm>). In addition, if a woman attacks, they often sustain injuries from the man who is trying to defend or protect himself. When this happens, the women are quick to file false accusations of domestic violence in order to frame the men.

These false accusations, in fact, are one of the prime indicator issues that Dr. Richard Gardner speaks about repeatedly (<http://www.rgardner.com>). According to Dr. Gardner, false allegations of abuse associated with PAS can surface in two

ways. First, they may be the result of thwarted efforts to be rid of the TP or they may be related to an underlying psychiatric disorder of the AP and surface prior to the separation or immediately after the separation. (Rand, Deirdre, [http://www.robin.no/-dadwatch/pasdir/rand\)1.html](http://www.robin.no/-dadwatch/pasdir/rand)1.html)). In fact, these behaviors are quite typical of Narcissistic APs and can be more detrimental to the children than if the actual abuse had occurred because the children are not emotionally able to handle the discrepancies between illusory truth and lies. (Rand, Deirdre, <http://www.robin.no/-dadwatch/pasdir/rand1.html>)

The AP's personality can further be described as Manipulated Affiliation behavior. When an AP does not have people, who are thinking and behaving their way, they deliberately do everything in their power to make sure that at least the children are on their side. This reaction comes out of fear that they will be abandoned and alone in their own thoughts and anger toward the other parent and that eventually the children might turn against them. AP's biggest fear is that of abandonment. To boost their own self-esteem and to perpetuate their "demented" perceptions of the ex-spouse, they psychologically abuse the children with fear or terror to enlist the children in the denigration and hatred of the other parent. With the children on their side, they preserve their self-esteem, self-concept and other personal images. Without the children's support, they are alone and vulnerable to the truth about their own anger, fear and irrational behavior. Without the children, their biggest fear, (a fear of abandonment), becomes a reality to them. All of this anger and hatred has traumatic life-long effects upon the children. If nobody intervenes and immediately corrects the maltreatment it will persist into the children's own adulthood and affect their own relationships and families, and become a multigenerational process.

When anger becomes this evolved it is abuse. Abuse of any kind is about control, not gender. When a person feels that they have lost the power to control their ex-spouse, they resort to various methods of abuse from physical to mental to gain back that control. For example, in a relationship situation where one partner refuses to do as the other partner demands, the aggressor or abuser will attempt to force the person to listen and do, as the

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abuser wants. Furthermore, if the relationship is failing but one spouse does not want it to end, they might use the children as pawns to keep the spouse. This is the same idea as a female who deliberately gets pregnant with the hopes that the man will love them more and that it will fix the marriage or relationship. In a situation where the children are already in existence, the spouse might feel that denying a relationship between the other spouse and the TP's children will put the control in their hands because they believe they can make them return. If the first denial of visitation does not work, then they begin to manipulate the children to change how the children feel about the other parent. The ultimate motive is to gain and keep control.

With their inability to act and think rationally or with appropriate emotions and feelings, they become a megalomaniac and damage all around them, particularly their children. In fact, these people are stagnant in this stage of understanding of how their actions affect others. Their emotional development becomes stunted and they continue on this downward spiral, unable to function in their own lives. It is a selfish stage and one where they are afraid of being abandoned. Taking this idea one step further, we can look at their emotional development as being immature or underdeveloped. They are usually narcissistic, a personality trait that stems from low self-esteem and low self-worth. Because they truly do not think they have what they need to be loved and wanted, they resort to all sorts of horrible tactics to get that love and devotion. One way to guarantee this love and devotion is to make sure the children hate the other parent and refuse to have anything to do with them. The children become solely dependent upon the AP for all their human needs, especially love. The TP is pushed out of the picture and the AP is guaranteed lasting love and devotion from the children.

Experts are uncertain whether the cause of the AP's disorder is organic. That is, there has been some speculation that the Alienating Parent (AP) may have a physical or mental dysfunction in the Amygdala of the brain. The Amygdala is located at the base of the brain and is responsible for understanding and sensing emotions and the feelings of others. (<http://www.sci.uidaho.edu/med532/amygdala.htm>) Some scientists feel that if the Amygdala shrinks, atrophies or is

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damaged in some way, it prevents the person from appropriately responding to emotions or causes the person to respond inappropriately to emotions. Optimistically, if this dysfunction is not caused by physical damage, it can be corrected, but only if the person is willing to go to counseling and therapy. This is the crux of the problem for an AP. They refuse to believe they have a problem. AP's are so narcissistic and self-centered, that they refuse to admit they may have a physical problem, mental problem or an uncontrollable rage problem. They vehemently refuse to attend counseling or if they do go, they cause such havoc that no progress can be attained. In addition, they interfere with their children's counseling even when it is court ordered. Unfortunately, the courts refuse to sanction the offending parent for fear of monetarily hurting or otherwise jeopardizing the children, and thus the AP continues to get rewarded for their poor behavior, dysfunction and manipulation.

In the next section, I will go into more detail about various aspects of the Alienator's personality and in particular, their fear of abandonment.

### **ABANDONMENT ISSUES IN RELATION TO PARENTAL ALIENATION SYNDROME**

What causes abandonment issues? How do they develop? How does this fear affect people? And how do you handle it when it arises during a divorce and/or Parental Alienation.

Abandonment issues involve the fear that you will be left alone with no one there for you, to hear you, to be friends with you, to even care about you. This is a learned behavior from past experiences such as having someone leave and never return, having someone lie to the person and now they trust no one. Abandonment issues reach to the depth and core of the person's heart and soul and could be part of a grieving process. It triggers every imaginable emotion they have and creates a devastating fear that causes the person to do just about anything to prevent that abandonment from happening. In addition, any action deemed as abandonment such as a separation or divorce or even a simple disagreement, will send this person into hyper vigilance mode to protect himself or herself from any further abandonment

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by anyone else. This person's self-esteem is based entirely on being loved, wanted, needed and cared about. Anything that contradicts this is considered a black mark on them personally and a preliminary to abandonment by anyone connected to the person or event that is causing them to believe they are being abandoned. This is a large part of what we see in Parental Alienation and Hostile Aggressive Parenting.

In fact, their own biological reactions to this fear become heightened including increases in hormone levels, pulse, heart and more. At the website, [www.abandonment.net](http://www.abandonment.net), they state the following, there is an "acute neuro-biological crisis...a rush of stress hormones...such as adrenaline and norepinephrine...glucocorticoids. Their brain chemistry shifts in response to imminent danger... causing hyper-vigilant, obsessively focused, and on edge, as if prepared to sustain a life and death battle." ([www.abandonment.net](http://www.abandonment.net)) This is similar to the flight or fright response where they are in an emergency situation. In this heightened state of awareness and fear of being left behind, these people fight back to prevent any further losses and disappointments. In a sense, their natural instincts to protect at any cost are misdirected by the fear of being abandoned. They are afraid that this loss will be like the black plague and everyone else will follow because if the one person they loved and counted on has left them, then they themselves must not be any good and so therefore everyone else is going to leave them unless they can prove that it was not them but the other persons fault. They work tirelessly to prove that they are the perfect ones and that the other person is the weak and terrible one. They work endlessly to maintain the control they feel they have lost. In reality, they are grieving a loss of a relationship and cannot process it completely and appropriately, leaving them in angry denial.

They are not able to truly grieve this loss because they are too afraid that it is contagious or an indication of them not being perfect. If instead, these people could properly grieve this loss of the relationship and understand that it does not mean that life cannot move forward and continue in a positive way, we might be able to help them to get past this fear of abandonment. As part of a grieving process, one needs to go through several stages, i.e. denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance. What

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seems to happen with alienators and people with abandonment fears is they get stuck in the denial and anger stage, making it impossible to move forward. They refuse to bargain or work things out with the other person. Consequently, they never get to the depression step and then acceptance. If proper grief counseling were initiated at the start of a separation or divorce, it is quite possible that this type of person could move forward from the loss and not hang onto the anger. If the anger could dissipate, they would not use it against the other parent and chances are they would not destroy the relationship between the other parent and the children.

Interestingly, the psychological trauma they perpetuate between the children and the other parent causes a grief related to loss. The children are stuck grieving for a parent they cannot have a relationship with because it goes against the Alienating Parent (AP). For the Targeted Parent (TP), they are stuck grieving the loss of their relationship with their children. However, the TP cannot completely grieve because the children are still alive but physically dead to them. It is like a living death for both the children and the Targeted Parent.

As mentioned previously, for the person with abandonment issues, it feels like they are losing control and that is something they cannot have happen. If they lose control, how are they going to keep from losing the people they love? How are they going to maintain the status quo? How are they going to continue on in life, if they have no control over the lives around them? They believe that in order to be a whole person, they have to have control of all the parts of their lives including others and how they feel or think about them. They are so self-absorbed and afraid of being exposed as imperfect, that they must protect their self-image at all costs. Hence, there is the heightened biological stress related changes of the fight or flight response.

Part of this above scenario, also includes the fact that these people are terrified that if they are not perfect, they will be abandoned. Somewhere in their pasts, they experienced a loss and equated it to their own inadequacies. They mistakenly believed that it was their own imperfections that caused the loss. They have no faith in who they are. They do not understand that it is the imperfections in each of us that make each of us who we

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are and why we are all so different. These imperfections are what make life worth living because we grow and learn from them and that's what life is about. It's about growing and learning from the world and our experiences. If we can help them to understand that "being perfect" is not what life is about and isn't the norm, then maybe we can help them to accept the beautiful person they can be. They can be someone who gets to move forward in their life and someone who has lots of new experiences that will help them grow.

This fear of being left behind is traumatizing for these people. Can it be resolved? Well, that depends on the situation. In an intact family, it can be resolved with loving and caring relationships if the person with the abandonment issue is willing to work on accepting that this is their personal fear and does not mean that the whole rest of their world is untrustworthy. But if there is an impending divorce, the person is already feeling on the outside. This person needs to learn how to trust and understand that a relationship that falls apart does not mean the end of the world and that everyone else will abandon them too. By teaching them unconditional love and trust in themselves and their own abilities to move forward with their lives and gain more friends and wonderful life experiences, these individuals can get past this issue of abandonment related to divorce and separation. It can take years, but with proper counseling and support, it can be accomplished.

Part of the treatment for this person would need to include helping them with their insecurities and inability to trust others. In his or her mind, no one can be trusted. They are living with past experiences that they are still angry about and never properly grieved about. Helping them to come to terms with trust issues (who to trust and who not to trust) will give them the confidence to properly read people and situations. With this confidence, they will be able to bolster their self-esteem and discover their own personal abilities. They will learn how to protect themselves and finally have a chance to grieve about their past losses.

The big question here is how do we get these people to even go to counseling to help them work through this, when they believe that counseling means they are no good and not loveable. First, we can teach them that no one is perfect and everyone

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needs someone on the outside to talk to. Next, we can teach them how to be aware of the biological changes that occur when they are overreacting. We can show them when to step back and take a breath. We can also teach them when it's necessary to call someone and talk about their feelings before they overstep their boundaries.

From here we can help them to see that though a relationship has ended, it does not mean that the memories and experiences from that relationship are gone and forgotten. In fact, maybe being able to recall those memories with the person from the failed relationship can help them to see the wonderful things that are worth remembering. And maybe it will help them to understand that they are not being left behind because all of those wonderful memories will always be with both partners.

From there, various conversations can be had about how scared each of them is by this relationship falling apart and that it feels like their life is falling apart and that moving forward seems out of reach. This is where talks about their future visions and dreams could be useful. Helping them to state what their original dreams had been and where they can move forward to from here might help give perspective. Helping each other to see the positive adventures and experiences that could be in their future if they have this chance to separate and move forward separately may also be rewarding in this type situation. If one partner cannot think of their future without this person, then maybe it would help to ask them about things they have always wanted to do but never thought they could do because of the marriage. Try to help them explore their own personal attributes and skills that they have never fostered. With just these exercises alone, we are building confidence and positive thinking into the future and about who they are or could be.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **TYPES OF ABUSERS**

#### **PIT BULL VS. COBRA TWO TYPES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ABUSERS IS THERE HOPE FOR THEM TO REGAIN CONTROL OF THEIR AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR?**

**T**here are two main types of abusers, the Pit Bull and the Cobra that were discovered by researchers, J. Gottman and N. Jacobson. They discovered that both abusers are aggressive physically and psychologically. Both abusers will stop at nothing to keep their victim under their control. Both abusers can, and may feel remorse. But there are differences.

The Pit Bull is like a magnet. They cement themselves to you out of fear of abandonment and loss of control. They are the stalker. They typically will only aggress toward family members and usually have no criminal record. But they are harder to get rid of because they are desperate to keep the victim in their lives. They never accept that the relationship is over. They keep going and going. If they cannot have the victim, then no one can and they are the most likely to commit suicide/murder. As Gottman and Jacobson say, “they cannot and won’t let go.”

The Cobra, by contrast, is anti-social in their behavior, usually having a criminal record and they do not care. The world revolves around them. As Jacobson and Gottman say, “they strike without warning”. But, if they cannot control their victim, they will move on to their next prey. If a victim can get away from a cobra abuser, there is a good chance, they will survive and the cobra will just go away.

There are more differences. Pit Bulls have actual physical changes to their bodily functions when they are about to get aggressive. These changes include and are not limited to, increased heart rate, increased blood pressure, sweating, increased breathing, and so on. Their attack is not without

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forewarning. They have signs and symptoms when they are about to lose control. And it is these signs and symptoms that could help reform a Pit bull.

This is in stark contrast to the Cobra, who has no physical bodily changes. They literally stay calm, cool and collected before they aggressively attack their victims and even during it. Prior and even during the attack, they never miss a heartbeat. Their pulse never races. Their breathing never increases. They do not even sweat. They just attack, like a cobra, striking without warning. They have no conscience. They have an agenda. And that is Control.

So, what does this mean? It means that the Cobra, though more deadly at first, is easier to get rid of once the victim leaves them. The problem is “the leaving”. The Cobra is so controlling, that it is “the leaving” that is hard to do. The Pit Bull is easier to leave because they feel more remorse but they never truly let go and continue to be fixated on the victim and their family. They fasten themselves to the victim and will not release their grip even after the victim has physically left them. They are more dangerous after the fact.

On the brighter side, since the Pit Bull has physical indicators that they are about to lose control i.e. increased heart rate, breathing and pulse, they can be taught to step back and walk away. With proper counseling, using behavior modification and other techniques, a Pit Bull can be taught to recognize these warning signs. Since the Pit Bull’s aggressive behavior is related to their fear of abandonment, a counselor can work through this with them and delve deeply into their past to understand why they feel this way. Then, they can move forward and away from the fear of abandonment. In other words, Pit Bulls can be reprogrammed.

Cobra’s, on the other hand, are socio-paths, with no conscience, no understanding and no care for others. They are narcissistic in their attitude. And since they don’t feel any physical changes (increased heart rate, etc.) there is no way to help them see or feel the warning signs that they are about to lose control. Cobras don’t care about being out of control. They only want to control everyone and everything. They cannot be

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rehabilitated in the normal traditional setting of a counselor's office.

So, which is better? This will depend on the situation the victim is in. If the Pit Bull is willing to work things through and go to counseling, then there is a chance for them and the victim to make things work in their lives, whether together or separately. But if they are not willing, then this is a deadly combination. If it is the Cobra, and the victim can wrestle free from their hold and control, they have a better chance of survival. But if they cannot get free of the Cobra, they are destined to a life of torture, pain and suffering at the hands of a sociopath.

For more information and to figure out which you are the victim of, please check the following resources.

*Gottman, J. & Jacobson, N. 1998. When Men Batter Women: New Insights into Ending Abusive Relationships. Simon and Schuster. P. 28-33.*

*Kemp, A. (1998) Abuse in the Family. An Introduction. NY: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company, Albany.*

### **THE ALIENATOR AS TERRORIST IS THERE A TERRORIST IN THE HOME WHO IS ESTABLISHING FEAR, ANGUISH, AND APPREHENSION IN THE CHILDREN?**

What do you call it when a parent or person instills such fear and hatred in a child that he/she is afraid to love their other parent? What do you call it when a parent uses condescending words and actions to describe the other parent to the point of creating fear of that Targeted Parent? What do you call it when a parent threatens to not love a child if the child shows any love, compassion or feelings for the other parent? I call it Parental Alienation or Hostile Aggressive Parenting, but someone else might call this Terrorism.

Terrorism: the word strikes fear in most people's hearts. But what is the actual definition of Terrorism? According to Encarta World English Dictionary, it is:

ter·ror·ism n

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violence or the threat of violence, especially bombing, kidnapping, and assassination, carried out for political purposes.

The synonyms for Terrorism are not better: Violence, intimidation, terror campaign and bombing. Wow, some pretty strong words. And what about the word Terrorist? What does it mean?

ter·ror·ist n  
somebody who uses violence or the threat of violence, especially bombing, kidnapping, and assassination, to intimidate, often for political purposes.

And what about the word Terror? This is a strong one, too.

ter·ror n  
1. intense or overwhelming fear  
2. violence or the threat of violence carried out for political purposes  
3. something such as an event or situation that causes intense fear  
4. an annoying, difficult, or unpleasant person, particularly a naughty child (informal)

*Encarta® World English Dictionary © 1999 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved. Developed for Microsoft by Bloomsbury Publishing Plc.*

Parental Alienation utilizes all of these tactics and more. There are threats of violence if a child does not follow the parent's orders. There is fear that the Alienating Parent will no longer love them if he/she does not follow the parent's orders and there is fear of being treated just like the Targeted Parent by the alienator. A child's mind is kidnapped and held hostage under the guise of love, honor and just reward. Parental Alienation is the assassination of one parent's good name and character for the

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sole, selfish purposes of depriving a child of a relationship with the other parent. It's "the bombing" of all the child's positive feelings and memories of their other parent.

Parental Alienation has been compared to cults while the actions of Cult Leaders are compared to the Alienator. Just like a Cult Leader, a Parental Alienator indoctrinates their followers to believe in only them and that no one else matters or is safe. But isn't that what a Terrorist leader is? A Cult Leader for a fanatical group believes their way is the only way. In some cases, this narcissism is so extreme that the alienator/terrorist will kill to get what they want.

A Parent who alienates their children from the other loving parent, barring no true and proven abuse has occurred, is doing the same thing. The alienator is bribing and brainwashing their children and even brainwashing friends and family, to believe that the other parent is a worthless, terrible person who could never be trusted. The alienator sets up extreme scenarios to push their campaign to destroy the other person, in much the way a terrorist incites their disciples to become suicide bombers and blow up others who do not believe their way. The alienator kills their child's soul and heart, making sure that any feelings between the children and their other parent are destroyed. Cult Leaders and Terrorists are really no different in their actions and thoughts. It is all for them.

We need to stop these family terrorists from destroying any more children and their relationships with the other parent. Terrorism, whether it is an assault on a nation or on a family, is a crime and should be penalized appropriately. Until the courts and therapists appreciate the gravity of the Parental Alienator's terrorist tactics, children and their Targeted Parents will continue to be decimated by narcissistic control freaks, i.e., the alienating abusive parents.

## CHAPTER 6

### WHY DO ALIENATORS ALIENATE? AND WHEN WILL IT STOP?

Why is this happening?

Why do they want to hurt us so badly?

Why do they want to hurt innocent children?

Why can't they see what they are doing is wrong?

I've heard the same questions asked over and over again. How can a parent do this to a child? Why do they do this? How can they be so mean and evil? I wish there were simple answers. Instead, I am going to give some plausible explanations. These are not going to make the Alienator stop, but they might put some perspective on the situation and help to direct you in a better way to deal with the Alienator. The scenarios I list below are not necessarily all the possibilities. They can be the main issue or could be combined together to make these Alienators who they are and why they do what they do.

1. The Alienator is so filled with anger, rage and hatred that they cannot see any further past that and their whole entire world is wrapped around making sure the other person hurts as much as they do. It is like they are blinded by their anger and hatred.
2. It is a warped sense of pleasure. They are narcissistic and probably several other things. So, for them, they cannot derive pleasure from truly happy and meaningful things, as they do not know how. They are so mentally warped that the only pleasure they derive is from hurting others around them to boost their own self-esteem and ratings.

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3. They were raised in a home where one of their parents was an Alienator and the only thing they know about relationships, is that one person controls everyone. If you do not have control, then you are nothing. Consequently, they do not know how to have any other kind of relationship nor would they know how to handle it. They fear losing control over everyone, because not to be in total control means you are a loser.
4. The Alienator could have such low self-esteem that anyone putting them down or any inference with anything they were involved in, such as their failed marriage, would set them off. They will fight to defend their honor and reputation. They are so protective of their image that they will do anything to make sure that they stay looking like the perfect person and will destroy everyone else around them to maintain that image.
5. The Alienator's own parents put them down constantly and told them they would never amount to much. When their own marriage fails, they are desperate to prove their parents were wrong and will do anything to make it appear that it was not their fault.
6. Alienators have warped views of themselves from low self-esteem issues. It puts them in such a fragile state of fear that they are no good unless they are seen as all good.
7. Alienators cannot accept responsibility for their actions and blame their faults on everyone else. How could they possibly be wrong? Everyone else is wrong. Alienators are so narcissistic in their belief that they are never wrong, that they will do anything to protect their image. They must make

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sure they are always on top and that it is everyone else who is at fault.

8. Alienators were never taught to take responsibility for their own actions and to be humble when they have made a mistake. They were raised believing they could do no wrong, just like their own parents could do no wrong. Thus, it is everyone else who is wrong. So instead, they were raised to blame everyone but themselves for their own mistakes.
9. The Alienator is so terrified of losing their children and being abandoned that they need to paint this perfect picture of themselves. At the same time, they make the other person look extremely bad or guilty in order to ensure they do not lose their children or control.
10. The Alienator is so terrified that they are not lovable that they try to force others to love them.
11. The Alienator is not a really good sharer. In other words, they do not know how to share love and happiness. Maybe because they had to share their parents and never understood that sharing is not only a nice thing, but it also feels really good.
12. Insane, Unrealistic, Irrational Jealousy of the other parent's relationship with the children. In other words, the targeted parents close and attentive relationship with the children causes extreme jealousy in the alienating parent, who wishes the same attention was being paid to them by the targeted parent. In turn, this spurs on the alienating parents fear of abandonment by the children for the other parent. In the case of grandparents who alienate children, it is a jealousy of the relationship that their child has with their grandchildren but that they, the grandparent, never

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had with the alienated parent. This jealousy could clearly explain the alienator's actions and absolute fear of abandonment.

What this boils down to is possible DSM (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual) Diagnoses such as functional Borderline Personality (BPD), Bi-Polar Personality (BPP), Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome (PTSS), Narcissistic Personality Disorder and other mental conditions. But, the more I hear, the more I see, and the more I read, the more the Alienators behavior fits a co-morbid diagnosis of BPD in combination with at least one other DSM diagnosis. In particular, I see BPD and being stuck in the grieving process as the main diagnosis because of their extreme fears.

1. They are afraid of being abandoned.
2. They fear people finding out they are not perfect and become desperate to point the finger at anyone but themselves. They must deflect their imperfections. (In other words, they project their imperfections on you and everyone else.)
3. They fear that if everyone who is important in their life does not love them, they are worthless.
4. They are ashamed of how they act, but do not understand why.
5. Their world is either black or white. There is no gray area in between and therefore no compromise.
6. They must deny that anything is wrong with them, because otherwise they are admitting they are NOT perfect and thus worthless.
7. To avoid the pain and suffering inside their heads, they project all of their insecurities and pains onto the other people in their lives, hoping it will stop their own pain.

When is this going to stop? When will you feel normal? When will the Alienator figure out how wrong all of this is? This is a good question but there's no simple, single answer. In the

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meantime, you can make a difference for yourself and those around you by knowing:

1. You have the power to make it stop by not engaging or allowing the Alienator to cross over your boundaries. You need to protect your personal boundaries and determine what is acceptable and not acceptable behavior. Only you have this control. When you put your foot down, the Alienator/BPD is being taught where you draw the line and what you will or will not tolerate. You are helping them to actually understand and create their own boundaries so they do not cross them with others. They can only learn by watching, seeing, hearing and getting stopped in their tracks. And this includes the children's behavior. You have the control to not allow their projection to get to you and you can say to the Alienator, "This is your problem and I will not accept you pushing your problems and issues on me. I am sorry if you feel abandoned, but just because our relationship is over, it does not mean that I will not be there to help raise the children. No one is perfect and parents are no exception. It is okay to make a mistake so long as you own it and learn how to correct it. I will not be held accountable for your imperfections, only mine"
2. It will feel normal when you finally take back control of your life and when you stop letting others cross over your personal boundaries. This is your space and you decide what you will and will not tolerate. If you continue to allow them to beat you up emotionally and mentally, you are allowing them into your space. When you tell them NO, I am not going to be your whipping post. NO, I am not going to tolerate your fears and problems being projected onto me, and then you will start to feel normal, because you will be back

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in control of your own life and destiny. If you have to tell them to “Piss-Off” then do it. But get the point across loud and clear. If it means hanging up on them when they are abusive, then do it. If it means closing the door in their face, then just do it.

3. The Alienator cannot get it, if they are not learning the right lessons. If we continue to allow them to control us and continue to cross our boundaries and borders, they will not get it. When we act by example, the Alienator will have to start learning to work with us, not against us, or they will never get their pain resolved. They will always feel abandoned, imperfect and out of control.
4. You cannot change them, but you can change how you react to them and block the hurt. And the best way to do that is to become more successful in your life with each passing day. I would suspect that the more you succeed or make any headway with your children, the more it upsets their warped and wobbling apple cart. And the more you upset this apple cart, the more they try to straighten it up. But because it is warped and wobbling, it will never sit straight and so eventually, one day, it will come crumbling down and when it does, you need to be there for your children.
5. What this means is that you need to stop worrying about why they do it, because in reality, they can't help it. They know no other way but to take from others and make them hurt. This makes them feel better inside. Instead you need to concentrate on your success and remain healthy and happy so that you can be there for your kids. HHS or Happy, Healthy and Successful in life.

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We could go on and on and come up with excuses for the Alienator's behavior. But what it boils down to is the very first one on this list. They are so filled with hatred, rage and anger that they just cannot move on with their lives. It consumes them to the point that they will do anything to win or get revenge. Added together, or even in small combinations, this amounts to DSM diagnoses that explain so much of what goes on in an Alienators mind. But is this natural? Is this learned or is it a combination of both?