

# ENERGY VAMPIRE SURVIVAL GUIDE



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## TYPES OF ENERGY VAMPIRES:

- ANGER ADDICTS
- GUILT TRIPPERS
- CRITICIZERS
- PASSIVE AGGRESSIVES
- NARCISSISTS
- VICTIMS
- SPLITTERS
- FIXER UPPERS

BASED ON DR. JUDITH ORLOFF'S BESTSELLING BOOKS  
[\*The Ecstasy of Surrender\*](#) & [\*Emotional Freedom\*](#)

# Energy Vampire Survival Guide

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## Introduction

Relationships are always an energy exchange. To stay feeling our best, we must ask ourselves: Who gives us energy? Who saps it? It's important to be surrounded by supportive, heart-centered people who make us feel safe and secure. It's equally important to pinpoint the vampires, who, whether they intend to or not, leech our energy.

Vampires do more than drain our physical energy. The super-malignant ones can make you believe you're an unworthy, unlovable wretch who doesn't deserve better. The subtler species inflict damage that's more of a slow burn. Smaller digs here and there can make you feel bad about yourself such as, "Dear, I see you've put on a few pounds" or "It's not lady-like to interrupt." In a flash, they've zapped you by prodding areas of shaky self-worth.

Let me tell you the secret of how a vampire operates so you can outsmart one. *A vampire goes in for the kill by stirring up your emotions. Pushing your buttons throws you off center, which renders you easier to drain.* Of all the emotional types, empaths are often the most devastated. However, certain emotional states increase everyone's vulnerability. Here are some others:

- Low self-esteem
- Depression
- A victim mentality
- Fear of asserting yourself
- Addiction to people-pleasing

When encountering energy vampires, see what you can learn too. It's your choice. You can simply feel tortured, resentful, and impotent. Or, as I try to do, ask yourself, "How can this interchange help me grow?" Every nanosecond of life, good, bad, or indifferent, is a chance to become emotionally freer, enlarge the heart. If we're to have any hope of breaking war-mongering patterns, we must each play a part. Strive to view vampires as opportunities to enlist your highest self and not be a sucker for negativity. Then you'll leave smelling like a rose, even with Major-League Draculas.

## How to Know if You Have an Energy Vampire in Your Life

Anyone who has ever shared an office, car pool, or attended a family dinner with a vampire can attest to experiencing some common emotional side effects. Even after a brief contact, you feel worse; they feel better. To find out if you've been bled, watch for these signs.

- Your eyelids get heavy--you're ready for a nap
- You feel put down or like the rug was pulled out from under you
- Your mood takes a nose-dive
- You have a yen to binge on carbs or comfort food

- You feel sniped at, slimed, or agitated
- Pay attention to intuitive flashes, dreams or any imagery that conveys emotions.

## **Practice These Laws of Impeccable Communication with Energy Vampires**

Whenever possible, eliminate drainers from your life. However, with those you can't or you don't want to remove--for example, friends going through a rough patch or relatives who are fixtures—practice these general communication tips. I suggest that you post them where they can be a visual prompt to help you keep your ego in check and to know when to surrender the need to control.

### **The Laws of Impeccable Communication**

#### **Do**

1. Be calm, not emotionally reactive
2. Avoid defensiveness--it makes you look weak
3. Patiently hear someone out without interrupting or needing to have the last word
4. Empathize with where people are coming from, even if you disagree with them
5. Pick your battles, apologize when necessary

#### **Don't**

1. Be drawn into drama
2. React impulsively out of anxiety or anger so you say something you'll regret
3. Hold onto resentments or stay attached to being right
4. Attempt to manage other people's lives or become their therapist
5. Shame people, especially in front of others

Also consider what kind of energy vampires you're facing; we often attract what we haven't emotionally resolved in ourselves. If you're fearful, you may find yourself surrounded by legions of fearful people. However, once you've begun to heal an emotion, you're less likely to magnetize it towards you, nor does it possess the same ability to wear you out.

## ***TYPES OF ENERGY VAMPIRES***

### **Energy Vampire #1: The Anger Addict**

These types deal with conflict by accusing, attacking, humiliating, or criticizing. There's a spectrum to anger. It can range from a coworker's belittling tone to your fire breathing spouse yelling, cursing, throwing things, or resorting to physical violence. Some anger addicts withhold love or use the "silent treatment" to punish you. These personalities usually behave the worst with those closest to

them. Their wounding words can fracture one's self-esteem and poison the well of trust. They are nearly impossible to take back, even with an apology.

Unchecked anger addicts are dangerous and controlling. They inflict emotional damage by wearing down your self-esteem and aren't accountable for their actions. The common dynamic with anger addicts is that they use anger to cope with feeling inadequate, hurt, or threatened, whether the person acts out occasionally or not. Anger is one of the hardest emotions to control due to its evolutionary value of defending against danger. When you're confronted with anger, your body instinctively tightens, the opposite of a surrendered state. It goes into fight or flight mode. Adrenaline floods your system. Your heart pumps faster. Your jaw and muscles clench. Your blood vessels constrict. Your gut tenses. In this hyper-charged condition, you want to flee or attack.

### **Are You in a Relationship With An Anger Addict? Quiz**

It's important to know if you're dealing with an anger addict--then you can formulate what tacks to take with them to make your life easier. Mark Yes or No for each of the questions below and give yourself one point for every Yes response to discover if you have an anger addict in your life.

1. Do you know anyone who has sudden outbursts of anger for seemingly no reason? Yes/No
2. Do you feel like you have to walk on egg shells around anyone to keep peace in the relationship? Yes/No
3. Do you know anyone who tries to control you with jealous anger? Yes/No
4. Do you know anyone who has trouble controlling their anger or do you ever feel unsafe around someone? Yes/No
5. Do you know anyone who tries to punish you with a silent treatment after an argument? Yes/No

#### **Results of the Quiz:**

Give each Yes response one point and count up your score.

#### **Your Score: 0**

Congratulations you are probably not in a relationship with an anger addict.

#### **Your Score: 1**

You may have an anger addict in your life. Now is the time to address any potential issues to preserve your emotional state.

#### **Your Score: 2**

This score indicates a definite sign that you are involved with an anger addict. Check to ensure that your confidence isn't being shaken.

#### **Your Score: 3**

Someone in your life has moderate anger tendencies. This can result in a depletion of your energy and self-esteem.

#### **Your Score: 4**

You are in a relationship with someone who has strong anger tendencies. Be careful that an anger addict isn't violating your emotional and physical well being.

### **Your Score: 5**

You are in a relationship with an anger addict. Now is the time to develop strategies to help you deal with this person(s) to protect yourself and to set healthy boundaries.

At the appropriate time it is important to address any anger you feel and not let it build up. It's necessary to admit your honest reactions. There's no way of surrendering anger, let alone forgive someone, without acknowledging where you're at. *However, this isn't the place you want to communicate from if you want to be heard by an anger addict.* It's counterproductive to just blurt out everything you feel. Sometimes the surrender that's called for is to refrain from responding until you're clearer. When you're exposed to anger, here are some steps to calm your system and have a clear head. Without this you're trapped in reactive behavior which gets you nowhere at all.

### ***Action Steps to Deal with Anger Addicts***

#### *Step 1. Surrender Your Reactivity. Pause when agitated*

Take a few slow breaths to relax your body. Count to ten. Don't react impulsively or engage the anger even though your buttons are pushed. Reacting just makes you weak. Though you may be tempted to lash out try not to give in to the impulse. No matter how vile someone is, wait before you speak. Focus on your breath, not the angry person. You may still feel upset but you'll be calm and in charge at the same time!

#### *Step 2. Practice Restraint of Tongue, Phone, and E-mail*

Do not retaliate or respond at all until you are in a centered place. Otherwise you might communicate something you regret or can never take back.

#### *Step 3. Blend, Relax, and Let Go*

Resistance to pain or strong emotions intensifies them. In martial arts, you first take a breath to find your balance. Then you can transform the opponent's energy. Try staying as neutral and relaxed as possible with someone's anger instead of resisting it. At this stage, don't argue or defend yourself. Rather, try to let their anger flow right through you. Visualize yourself as transparent so nothing clings to you. Keep breathing the person's anger out. When you hold your breath, it lodges in your body. This approach to anger doesn't make you a victim or a doormat. Nor does it mean you won't stick up for yourself. It's a Zen tactic to neutralize anger so it can't attach to you. Martial artists flow with their opponent's aggressive movements. Then they act from that attuned, surrendered stance.

#### *Step 4. Acknowledge their position*

To disarm angry people, you must weaken their defensiveness. Otherwise, they'll dig in their heels and won't budge. Defensiveness stifles flow. Therefore, it's useful to acknowledge an anger addict's position, even if it offends you. From a centered place say, "I can see why you feel that way. We both have similar concerns. But I have a different way to approach the problem. Please hear me out." This keeps the flow of communication open and creates a tone for compromise.

### Step 5. *Set Limits*

Now, state your case. Request a small, do-able change that can meet your need. Then clarify how it will benefit the relationship. Tone is crucial. For instance, calmly but firmly say to an in-law who's yelling at you, "I love you but I shut down when you raise your voice. Let's work this out when we can hear each other better." Then you can discuss a solution. This doesn't mean you stay in abusive relationships. If people persist in dumping toxic anger, you must limit contact, define clear consequences such as "I can't see you if you keep criticizing me," or let the relationship go. When you can't leave, say with an angry boss, practice harmonizing and letting the emotion pass through you. Also you might try a reasonable approach like "I did my best but let's discuss constructive ways to find a solution." You can also use "selective listening" and not take in all the details of an outburst. Focus on something uplifting instead.

### Step 6. *Empathize.*

Ask yourself, "What pain or inadequacy is making this person so angry? Then take some quiet moments to intuit where the person's heart is hurting or closed. This doesn't excuse bad behavior but it will allow you to find compassion for the suffering behind it, even if you choose not to be around the person. Then it's easier to surrender resentments so they don't eat at you.

## Energy Vampire #2: The Narcissist

Their motto is "Me first!" Everything's all about them. They have a grandiose sense of self-importance and entitlement, hog attention, and crave admiration. A legend in their own mind, the world is reflected in their image. They'll corner you at a party, interminably recount their life saga. Some narcissists are unlikable, flagrant egotists. Others can be charming, intelligent, caring--that is, until their guru-status is threatened. When you stop stroking their ego or beg to disagree, these vampires turn on you, become punishing. Once you catch onto this pattern, a narcissist seems about as charming as a banana peel. *These vampires are so dangerous because they lack empathy, have a limited capacity for unconditional love.* Sadly, their hearts either haven't developed or have been shut down due to early psychic trauma, such as being raised by narcissistic parents, a crippling handicap both emotionally and spiritually. (The damage of narcissistic parenting is outstandingly detailed in Alice Miller's *Drama of the Gifted Child*). Hard as it may be to comprehend, these vampires have little insight into their actions, nor do they regret them. Though often highly intuitive, they mainly use intuition for self-interest and manipulation. Spiritually speaking, the narcissist is cruisin' for a bruise.' As the Hassidic proverb cautions, "There is no room for God in him that is full of himself." Egotism inevitably curdles the soul, liberating nothing.

Don't fall in love with a narcissist or entertain illusions they're capable of the give and take necessary for intimacy. In such relationships you'll always be emotionally alone to some degree. If you have a withholding narcissist spouse, beware of trying to win the nurturing you never got from your parents; it's not going to happen. Also, forget about having your sensitivity honored. Such vampires eat empaths for dinner, sour love with all the hoops you must jump through to please them. Ultimately, they'll break your heart, and steal your freedom.

## **Are You in a Relationship With A Narcissist? Quiz**

It's important to know if you're dealing with a narcissist--then you can formulate what tactics to take with them to make your life easier. Mark Yes or No for each of the questions below and give yourself one point for every Yes response to discover if you have a narcissist in your life.

6. Do you know anyone who acts as if life revolves around them? Yes/No
7. Do you know anyone who you have to compliment to get their attention or approval? Yes/No
8. Do you know anyone who constantly steers the conversation back to themselves? Yes/No
9. Do you know anyone who downplays your feelings or interests? Yes/No
10. Do you know anyone who if you disagree with they become cold or withholding? Yes/No

### **Results of the Quiz:**

Give each Yes response one point and count up your score.

#### **Your Score: 0**

It's unlikely that you know a narcissist if you answered "no" to every question.

#### **Your Score: 1**

Even answering "yes" to one question is a red flag indicating a potential narcissist. It is healthy to address the issue with the person--for instance not feeling listened to--in order to resolve it. In a relationship it's important that you feel heard and respected.

#### **Your Score: 2**

This person has some narcissistic tendencies. Your emotional freedom is somewhat compromised by his or her self-centeredness.

#### **Your Score: 3**

You are in a relationship with someone who has moderate narcissistic tendencies. This starts to take a toll on your relationship. Beware of trying to win their love and attention or making your self-worth dependent on them.

#### **Your Score: 4**

You do know someone with definite narcissistic traits. Everything is "all about them." Keep your expectations realistic. Enjoy their good qualities, but look for your nurturing from people who can reciprocate.

#### **Your Score: 5**

You do have a narcissist in your life. Do not get involved with this person! He or she has a limited capacity for empathy and unconditional love. If the relationship is unavoidable, lower your expectations. To successfully communicate, you must show how something will be to their benefit, as tedious as that ego stroking is.

### ***Action Steps to Deal with a Narcissist***

If a narcissist is draining you emotionally, below are action steps to help you get your power back and mindfully deal with his or her self-centeredness.

### **Lower Your Expectations and Strategize Your Needs**

Use these methods to deter narcissists:

*Keep your expectations realistic.*

Don't be guru-ed into anything. Enjoy their good qualities, but understand they're emotionally limited, even if they're sophisticated in other ways. Accepting this, you won't continue asking something of friends, family, or coworkers they can't give. Consider this definition of insanity: when you repeat the same actions but expect a different response.

*Never make your self-worth dependent on them.*

Don't get caught in the trap of always trying to please a narcissist. Also protect your sensitivity. Refrain from confiding your deepest feelings to someone who won't cherish them.

*Show how something will be to their benefit.*

To successfully communicate with narcissists, the hard truth is that you must frame things this way. Stating your needs clearly rarely works, nor does getting whiny, angry, or demanding. Alternatively, speak to what floats their boat. Instead of saying to your spouse, "I'd really enjoy going to a family dinner," reframe it as, "Everyone really likes you. They'd be delighted to have you there." Or instead of saying to your employer, "I'd prefer to work fewer nights," say, "I can bring in more revenue for your company during these hours." Naturally, it's better not to have to contend with the tedious ego-stroking of a narcissist. But if the relationship is unavoidable, use this technique to achieve your desired outcome.

## **Energy Vampire #3: The Guilt Tripper**

These types are world class blamers, martyrs, and drama queens. They know how to make you feel badly about something by pressing your insecurity buttons. They use guilt to manipulate so you do what they desire. They like to see you squirm and throw you off your game. This gives them a sense of power and control.

Guilt can be conveyed with words, tone, or even a glance. Guilt-provoking needling ranges from, "How can you splurge on such a state-of-the-art stereo system when people are starving?" to "I sacrificed everything for this marriage" to "When I'm dead and buried you won't have to worry about me anymore."

Guilt trippers like to play dirty. To get their way, they exploit your desire to please them or be a good person. They often start sentences with, "If it wasn't for you..." or "Why don't you ever..?" They'll talk about life being unfair and compare your efforts with others who're doing it better. "Why can't you be more like Buster-- he's so good to his wife and is such a hard worker." They also remind you of how much they always do for you. After you've been guilt tripped, you may feel two inches tall if you believe these people's crafty ploys.



Be aware that there's a difference between healthy remorse and guilt. Remorse is regretting how a situation turned out or how you behaved. Then you can acknowledge the mistake and make amends. You'll feel genuinely sorry, but you don't stay stuck there. Guilt, however, is when you become attached to remorse and self-blame, a reverse form of ego where you keep focusing on a "lacking" or a mistake. As a psychiatrist, I've seen how guilt can turn into an obsession, the antithesis of surrender. Of course, you want to be accountable for wrong-doings, but you don't want to use them as an excuse to punish yourself. Try the following tactics to keep guilt in perspective.

### **Are You in a Relationship With a Guilt Tripper? Quiz**

To determine if you have a guilt tripper in your life answer Yes or No to the following questions. Then you can use the strategy in this section to protect yourself from being energetically drained by them.

1. Do you know someone who tries to get their way or control you by making you feel guilty? Yes/No
2. Do you know someone who makes you feel "less than" by constantly comparing you to others? Yes/No
3. Do you know someone who acts like an angry victim? Yes/No
4. Do you feel emotionally and/or physically drained after being with someone who is complaining or berating you? Yes/No
5. Do you know someone who you are always trying to please but never seem to do things correctly? Yes/No

#### **Results of the Quiz:**

Give each Yes response one point and count up your score.

#### **Your Score: 0**

Good news! If you answered "no" to every question then it is unlikely that you are in relationship with a guilt tripper.

#### **Your Score: 1**

If you answered "yes" to one question then there is the possibility that you know a guilt tripper. Be watchful with this person(s) for any other indications and ensure that you address them early in the relationship.

#### **Your Score: 2**

There is an indication here that you know someone who is a guilt tripper. Make sure you understand all the ramifications and look for any vampire tendencies.

#### **Your Score: 3**

You are in a relationship with someone who has moderate guilt tripping tendencies. Be very careful of your interactions with them and ensure that you have established good boundaries.

#### **Your Score: 4**

This person(s) definitely has guilt tripping traits. Be very conscious of their manipulations and their ability to drain your energy. Keep your protection up.

## **Your Score: 5**

You have a guilt tripper in your life and chances are this person(s) is also verbally abusive. Can you opt out of the relationship? If not, again set good boundaries and learn the action plan below to protect your energetic well being.

### ***Action Steps to Deal with Guilt Trippers***

#### *1. Surrender the notion that you have to be perfect*

The guilt tripper tends to lose interest if you don't go for their misguided manipulations. Everyone makes mistakes. It's human. You don't have to be perfect or squeaky clean. If you hurt someone or made a mistake, accept that you can't change the past. But you can make amends when appropriate. Apologize for offending a relative, pay back money owed, or simply convey, "I wish I had been there for you more." If your guilt is self-inflicted, say you're forced to file bankruptcy, take a small constructive step such as paying your gas bill instead of feeding guilt. Or cut yourself a break for binging on chocolate, but then try to eat more healthily. Focusing on solutions instead of wallowing in guilt is a way to surrender to positive forces, rather than succumbing to the pull of negativity.

#### *2. Surrender guilt with tears*

One physical way to release guilt if you're fixated on a mistake you made or not meeting someone's expectations is to cry. Do this when you're alone or with a supportive person. Tears release stress hormones and help you heal. As you cry, your body expels guilt and tension. This helps you let it all go. Don't fight the surrender of crying. Let tears cleanse stress from your body.

#### *3. Know your guilt buttons*

No one can make you feel guilty if don't believe you've done something wrong. However, if you doubt yourself, guilt can creep in. My patient, nick-named "Tiny," a huge tough-guy bouncer from Brooklyn, was guilt ridden every time his ninety year old mother said, "If you were a better son, you'd spend more time with me." In fact, Tiny called and visited frequently. He said, "Ma, nothing is ever enough." So Tiny's surrender was to accept that he was a good son, and that he'd probably never please his mother completely. Accepting his powerlessness to completely please her, quelled his guilt and brought him comfort.

#### *4. Set limits*

Start a conversation positively. In a matter-of-fact tone say, "I can see your point of view. But when you say (fill in the blank) my feelings are hurt. I'd be grateful if you didn't keep repeating it." You might make some topics taboo such as money, sex, or personal appearance. If guilt trippers respect your limits, great. If not, you might want to limit contact. With those you can't avoid, such as family, keep the conversation light, don't go for their bait, and try to gradually heal your insecurities so you don't buy into their guilt trips.

## **Emotional Vampire #4: The Victim**

These vampires grate on you with a poor-me attitude, and are allergic to taking responsibility for their actions. People are always against them, the reason for their unhappiness. They portray themselves as unfortunates who demand

rescuing, and they will make you into their therapist. As a friend, you want to help, but you become overwhelmed by their endless tales of woe: A boyfriend stormed out...again; a mother doesn't understand; a diva-boss was ungrateful. When you suggest how to put an end to the pity party, they'll say, "Yes...but," then launch into more unsolvable gripes. These vampires may be so clingy they stick to you like flypaper.

Conventional psychiatry says dependent personalities have an excessive need to be taken care of, resulting in submissive, victimized behavior. Their approach may stem from childhood feelings of helplessness or emulating victim-parents. In Energy Psychiatry I've also seen that victims haven't learned to access intuition for inner guidance, lack a durable spiritual connection from which to garner strength or self-sufficiency. Instead of growing from adversity, the golden rule of emotional freedom, they feel at the mercy of it. These vampires are constantly jonesing for a validation fix, and are ever in search of a consoling daddy or mommy. With a nursing infant's blind zeal, they lunge for any nipple they can find (a man's or woman's) and suck as long as you permit.

### **Are You in a Relationship with a Victim? Quiz**

If you typically get drawn into fixing other people's problems, chances are, you've attracted numerous victims into your life. To identify if you are in relationship with a victim mark Yes or No to the following characteristics:

1. Is there anyone in your life who often appears inconsolably oppressed or depressed? Yes/No
2. Are you burned out by their neediness? Yes/No
3. Do these people always blame "bad luck" or the unfairness of others for their problems? Yes/No
4. Do you screen your calls or say you're busy in order to dodge their litany of complaints? Yes/No
5. Does their unrelenting negativity compromise your positive attitude? Yes/No

### **Results of the Quiz:**

Give each Yes response one point and count up your score.

#### **Your Score: 0**

Either you aren't in a relationship with a "victim" or you are coping with this personality in a successful, healthy way.

#### **Your Score: 1**

The beginning signs of being involved with a "victim" are there. To clear the air, it could be a great time to address the main issue related to his or her victimhood. Then your emotional freedom can be preserved and your relationship can remain healthy.

#### **Your Score: 2**

You are in a relationship with someone who has some definite victim tendencies. Your emotional freedom is becoming increasingly compromised by his or her "poor me" attitude.

**Your Score: 3**

You are in a relationship with someone who has moderate victim tendencies. This can make you want to avoid interacting with them.

**Your Score: 4**

You are in a relationship with someone who has strong victim tendencies. It's likely that a "victim" is violating your emotional freedom but you may be reluctant to speak up to improve the situation.

**Your Score: 5**

You are in a relationship with a "victim." Interacting with this person can cause you to be irritated or drained. You are in a great position now to learn how to set kind but firm boundaries to create a healthier interaction.

***Action Steps to Deal with a Victim:*****Set Limits with an Iron Hand and a Velvet Glove**

I love what Mahatma Gandhi says: "A 'No' uttered from deepest conviction is better and greater than a 'Yes' merely uttered to please, or, what is worse, to avoid trouble." Kind but firm limit setting is healthy. People must take responsibility for their own lives. You're not in the business of fixing anyone. Enabling always backfires. Without limits, a relationship isn't on equal ground; and no one wins. You might well feel, "I'm sick and tired of your complaints." But instead, using a more measured tone, here's how to address some common situations.

**Use these methods to deter victims***With a friend or relative*

Smile and say kindly, "Our relationship is important to me, but it's not helpful to keep feeling sorry for yourself. I can only listen for five minutes unless you're ready to discuss solutions." Get ready to be guilt-tripped. If the victim, irate, comes back with, "What kind of friend are you?" don't succumb to that ploy. Just reply, "I'm a great friend and I love you, but this is all I can offer."

*With a coworker*

Sincerely respond, "I'm really sorry that's happening to you." Then, after listening briefly, smile and say, "I'll keep good thoughts for things to work out. I hope you understand, I'm on deadline and I must return to work." Simultaneously employ this-isn't-a-good-time body language--crossing your arms, breaking eye contact, or even turning your back. The less you engage this victim, the better. (Studies reveal that most workers can barely focus for eleven minutes without being disturbed by an office mate!)

*With yourself*

The way I snap out of victim mentality is by remembering how blessed my life is compared with much of our global family. I'm not fighting to survive genocide, poverty, or daily street violence from an insurgency militia. I have the luxury to feel lonely when I'm without a romantic partner or to get irked by some emotional vampire. I have the gift of time to surmount negative emotions. Seeing things this way stops me from wallowing, an imprisoning indulgence. So, when you think you're having a bad day, try to keep this kind of perspective.

## Emotional Vampire #5: The Criticizer

These vampires feel qualified to judge your alleged merits or demerits. They can spot flaws across a crowded room, then shamelessly suggest how to improve them “for your own good,” a phrase I’d hear from my opinionated Jewish mother as she’d eye me from head to toe. She’d say, “If only you’d dress fashionably, you’d be so beautiful.” Her justification was, “I tell you because I love you.” *Oy vey*: Mother did love me, but she loathed my holey jeans, which I lived in, as much as I canonized them. Criticizers believe it’s their God-given right to offer what they deem “constructive criticism,” even it makes you feel horrible. This vampire’s comments range from minor critiques to tar and feathering you. Fascinatingly, *Science* magazine reports that when someone is belittling you, your brain responds as it does to physical pain. Criticism can hurt, whether it comes from another or from within. It impairs emotional freedom by bludgeoning your confidence and making it unsafe to express emotions. Indictments like “You’re such a cry baby,” or “You’re a bad parent because you work part-time,” undermine your emotions. If you even half-believe such criticisms, well intended or not, they’ll linger like a foul odor.

Why do people criticize? Conventional psychiatry says it’s a tendency inherent in many personality disorders, especially obsessive-compulsive, borderline, and narcissistic. These vampires typically mimic critical parents, and are ruthlessly judgmental of their own “lackings.” The self-hatred that goes on in the head of these finger-pointers teeters on masochism. Still, they don’t recognize the simple truth that they’re hard on you because *they* feel deficient. Also, to these self-designated arbiters of right and wrong, criticizing seems reasonable. “Hey, I’m just being honest,” they say, even if the “truth” is a major insult. Yes, sometimes they do intend to be helpful. However, compensating for their insecurities, they may use criticism as one-upmanship to bolster their own egos and make you feel inferior. Energetically this can feel like you’ve absorbed a round of machine gun fire. These vampires get a charge out of emotionally dissecting you. They either don’t know about or don’t value the spiritual precept of striving for “non-judgment,” nor do they give you the option of declining their input. Critical people are like chickens scratching in the coop. You don’t want to be at the bottom of their pecking order or throw them any feed.

### Are You in a Relationship with a Criticizer? Quiz

The problem with dealing with criticizers is that many people acclimate to them, feel chronically beaten, or end up emotionally shutting down. To prevent this from happening, answer Yes or No to the following questions to identify these vampires in your life so they don’t deplete you. Then you can use the strategies in this section to interact more effectively with them and protect your sensitivity.

1. Is there someone in your life who always makes you feel inadequate?  
Yes/No
2. Are you the frequent target of someone’s judgmental zingers? Yes/No
3. Do you know someone who can spot a flaw in you from across the room, then tells you about it? Yes/No

4. Is there someone in your life who is always putting others down?  
Yes/No
5. Is there someone who is harshly self-critical towards you? Yes/No

### **Results of the Quiz:**

Give each Yes response one point and count up your score.

#### **Your Score: 0**

Either you aren't in a relationship with a criticizer or you set healthy boundaries with one.

#### **Your Score: 1**

You may have a criticizer in your life. Now is the time to address any potential issues to preserve your emotional freedom.

#### **Your Score: 2**

This score indicates a definite sign that you are involved with a criticizer. Check to ensure that your confidence isn't being shaken.

#### **Your Score: 3**

Someone in your life has moderate criticizer tendencies. This can result in a depletion of your energy and self-esteem.

#### **Your Score: 4**

You are in a relationship with someone who has strong criticizer tendencies. Be careful that a criticizer isn't violating your emotional freedom.

#### **Your Score: 5**

You are in a relationship with a "criticizer." Now is the time to develop strategies to help you deal with this person(s) to protect your self-confidence.

### ***Action Steps to Cope With a Criticizer Without Getting Demolished***

Try the following tactics I suggest to keep criticism in perspective. Being free requires knowing what's true about yourself or not. Criticism can only deflate your mood if you buy into it. As you work through self-doubts, you'll be more able to detach from this vampire's off-the-wall assessments.

#### **Use these methods to deter criticizers:**

*Always consider the source.*

Criticism is rampant in our world. People have all kinds of opinions about how you "should" feel or be. If someone you respect makes a suggestion, you may want to consider it. Otherwise, don't dwell on a criticism. A good general rule is to try not to take what's meant personally! People say untrue things all the time. Your challenge is not to believe them.

Also try these specific options.

***First Option.*** *Graciously let the spiky comment pass.*

The Dalai Lama suggests, "Sometimes silence is the best answer." If critics are peripheral, it may not be worth pursuing. Instead, realize they're off base; and keep on moving.

**Second Option.** *Address a misplaced criticism directly.*

Start the conversation out positively. In a matter-of-fact, firm tone say, "I can see that you're trying to help. But when you're critical, it's harder for me to hear you. It doesn't feel good when you \_\_\_\_\_. I'd appreciate it if you'd back off." You might want to make certain topics taboo, such as personal appearance. Also, it's useful to balance such limit-setting by giving affirming feedback about other areas of your relationship so these vampires don't feel attacked--for example, acknowledging what a giving friend he or she has been and how much you appreciate being able to communicate openly.

**Third Option.** *Strike a compromise--don't get defensive.*

For instance, if your mate criticizes you for leaving the dishes in the sink, you might want to divide this task up between you. Or if a coworker criticizes you for talking loudly, keep talking, but keep your voice down. Compromise is a sign of respect that goes a long way.

**Fourth Option.** *Set off a love bomb.*

At times, the best deterrent to these vampires is to be serenely neutral about their criticism, and diffuse negativity with a massive dose of loving-kindness. No matter what they say, make light of it, and be sweet. Take that, all you critics out there! For instance, an old-school surgeon once told me, "We're too sophisticated to teach intuition to medical students in our hospital!" Instead of becoming defensive or angry (which would've gotten me nowhere) I authentically applauded him for his dedicated years of teaching surgical residents and let the comment go. Interestingly, in subsequent conversations, he started asking me about the role of intuition with patients. The love bomb approach softened him up in a way that confrontation could never have done.

**Fifth Option.** *Express appreciation for what's useful.*

You may want to heed a beneficial criticism, whether it's solicited or not. For instance, my patient's introverted wife would always end up sitting in a corner at a party with a pained expression on her face, then wonder why no one ever talked to her. With all the tact he could muster he said, "Honey, it's not an inviting look. You might want to stick closer to me. I'll introduce you to people you'd enjoy." My patient's offer was made with such grace, without blame, that his wife was able to take him up on it. Then parties became more fun for her. Of course, criticism is harder to digest if delivered in a cutting tone. Then it's your call to assess its worth.

## Energy Vampire #6: The Splitter

Splitters see people as either good or bad, and they are aficionados of love-hate relationships. They'll seduce you by placing you on a pedestal, but you're just being set up for a fall. One minute they idealize their "new best friend;" the next you're evil incarnate if they feel the slightest bit wronged or abandoned. Then it gets ugly. Once you're on a splitter's hit list, this vampire is a merciless avenger who'll lacerate you with anger, particularly toxic to empaths. Splitters are very

skilled at being vicious. One of them told his ex-wife, my patient, "You're a pitiful excuse for a woman." This was in response to her being vexed about his "accidentally" erasing the only copy of their son's high school graduation video. At fifty, my newly divorced patient felt shaky about her femininity. He knew that, went in for the kill. In addition, he waged an ongoing campaign of character assassination to turn their son against this good-hearted woman. *A splitter doesn't play fair and retaliates by impulsively acting out.* These vampires won't hesitate to sleep with your best friend if they're mad at you. Or, during an argument they may threaten suicide, slash a wrist, or self-mutilate. As a medical intern, I stitched up many a splitter's wrist in emergency rooms. Attempting to dodge these vampires' operatic batterings, you may start walking on eggshells, loath to incite their ire, imprisoned in your own home. Spouses of splitters often lead lives of quiet desperation, emotionally blackmailed into submission.

These vampires' wrath doesn't stop with you. It's infectious. They have a sixth sense for knowing how to pit people against each other, a trick I was trained to detect working on inpatient psychiatric wards. Splitters can destroy morale unless the staff is united. Trouble is, they're often so intelligently convincing, they can turn your own mother (or divorce lawyer) against you. Unless you know the games splitters play, they'll poison your interactions and emotional freedom.

### **Are You in a Relationship with a Splitter? Quiz**

To determine if you're dealing with a splitter, answer Yes or No to the following questions. Then you can use the strategies in this section to develop a plan for communicating with them more successfully.

1. Do you censor your true feelings because you fear someone's anger?  
Yes/No
2. Do you go to great pains to keep the peace? Yes/No
3. Does someone in your life keep you on an emotional rollercoaster?  
Yes/No
4. Does someone in your life adore you when you meet their needs, a rageaholic when you don't? Yes/No
5. Do you frequently feel wrongly accused? Yes/No

#### **Results of the Quiz:**

Give each Yes response one point and count up your score.

#### **Your Score: 0**

If you answered "no" to every question then it is unlikely that you have a "splitter" in your life.

#### **Your Score: 1**

Even answering "yes" to one question is a red flag indicating a potential splitter. It is healthy to address your relationship with this person and identify areas where you can protect yourself.

#### **Your Score: 2**

Someone in your life has some splitter tendencies. Make sure you understand all the ramifications and address any vampire tendencies early in the relationship.



**Your Score: 3**

You are in a relationship with someone who has moderate splitter tendencies. Be very careful of your interactions with them and ensure that you have established good boundaries.

**Your Score: 4**

This person(s) definitely has splitter traits. They can be very toxic and poison your interactions with them. Be very conscious of their tricks and their ability to sap your energy. Keep your protection up.

**Your Score: 5**

Take note that you have a splitter in your life. Ask yourself if this relationship is worth the potential damage to your self-esteem and emotional freedom. If the answer is yes, then it is important to develop and stick to an action plan to protect yourself.

***Action Steps to Stop Emotional Blackmail***

If you have one or more splitters in your life, the following techniques offer a dependable plan for protecting your sensitivity. When you don't go for their bait you can take command of the interaction.

**Use these methods to deter splitters*****Establish boundaries and be solution-oriented.***

Splitters respond best to structure and goal setting. For instance, if one launches into an accusatory rant, remove yourself and your kids from the situation. In this state, don't expect a splitter to be reasonable. Tell the person, "I'm leaving until you get calmer. Then we can talk." Or, say a splitter-relative disparages you to other family members, lobbying for their support. You can do two things. First, from a centered, unemotional place, definitively tell the vampire, "Please don't talk about me to others. It's inappropriate and disrespectful." Then refuse to argue about it, even if egged on. Second, speak with your family privately, not in front of a splitter, to correct their perceptions. Overall, your aim is to modify a splitter's behavior (i.e. talking behind your back), not to convince someone to change his or her feelings (i.e. rage). Treat a splitter much the same way you'd treat a tantruming five-year-old--calmly, assertively, with clear rules.

***Avoid skirmishes.***

Don't lash out when provoked, tempting as it may be. Splitters are itching for a fight; that's what feeds them. The more you react, the more their bad behavior escalates. For example, here's how my patient, an actor, dealt with a combative playwright, a classic splitter. Going for the carotid, the playwright told my patient, "I'm thinking of killing off your character in the first act." Thus, my patient's on-stage time would be cut in half, his worst fear. To his credit, he enthused, "What a great acting opportunity. Maybe I'll win a Tony!" Without missing a beat, he stopped the vampire with humor and equanimity. When he got his final pages he saw that his character made it to the final curtain after all.

***Refuse to take sides.***

Be cautious about accepting a splitter's negative assessment of others or let his or her venomous opinions destroy your relationships. You might check them out with more reliable sources if there's any truth here to consider.

*Quickly release negativity.*

Break eye contact to stop the transfer of toxic energy. Also, keep breathing out the splitter's anger so it doesn't lodge in your body. Following the interaction, take a bath, shower, or immerse yourself in a hot spring or pool. In addition, drink plenty of water to flush out your system.

*Visualize a protective shield around you.*

If you can't escape, imagine yourself enveloped in a cocoon of white light from head to toe. Picture it as a luminous veil a few inches above your skin, surrounding your body. This buffer zone minimizes exposure to negative emotions. You hear the person's vitriol, but it slides off you and won't cut so deep.

## Energy Vampire #7. The Passive Aggressive Person

This is a close relative of the anger addict. These types express anger with a smile or exaggerated concern but always maintain their cool. As the name states, they exhibit a passive form of aggression. They are experts at sugar coating hostility. They often use procrastination, bumbling inefficiency, and the exasperating excuse of "I forgot" to avoid commitments or let you down. These people are infuriating because of their seductive or innocent veneers. They appear eager to please, but know exactly how to make you mad.

Passive aggressive behavior ranges from simply irritating to manipulative and punishing. This is different from occasionally being absent-minded, lazy, or busy. Passive aggression is repetitive and has a covert angry edge to it. Passive aggressive people promise anything, then do exactly as they please. They hide anger beneath a compliant exterior. They don't give straight answers and have vague responses such as "I'll get back to you." Then they don't follow through so you must keep reminding them. Sometimes their remarks can be hurtful, especially so because they come at you sideways--you don't know what hit you.

Why do people become passive aggressive? They're typically raised in families where it's not safe to express anger--they're never taught to communicate it in a healthy manner. They adapt by channeling these feelings into other less obvious behaviors; this gives them a sense of power and control. They're masters at shirking responsibility by hurting you in ways that appear unintentional or unavoidable. Passive aggressive people operate by stuffing anger, being accommodating, and then indirectly sticking it to you. When confronted, they'll drive you crazy with a variety of "the dog ate my homework" excuses, blaming others, or yessing you to death without changing. Since many are unaware of their anger, they feel misunderstood or that you're holding them to unfair standards.

**Are You in a Relationship With a Passive Aggressive? Quiz**

To determine if you have a passive aggressive in your life answer Yes or No to the following questions. Then you can use the strategy in this section to protect yourself from being energetically drained by them.

1. Do you know someone who keeps forgetting special occasions when they know they are important to you? Yes/No
2. Do you know someone who always gives you a “non-response” response by dodging your calls or emails? Yes/No
3. Do you know someone who promises you anything but then does exactly what they want? Yes/No
4. Do you know someone who never gives you a straight answer but instead is always giving you vague responses? Yes/No
5. Do you know someone who is always hurting your feelings in supposedly unintentional or unavoidable ways? Yes/No

### **Results of the Quiz:**

Give each Yes response one point and count up your score.

#### **Your Score: 0**

Good news! If you answered “no” to every question then it is unlikely that you are in a relationship with a passive aggressive.

#### **Your Score: 1**

If you answered “yes” to one question then there is the possibility that you know a passive aggressive. Be watchful with this person(s) for any other indications and ensure that you address them early in the relationship.

#### **Your Score: 2**

There is an indication here that you know someone who is passive aggressive. Make sure you understand all the ramifications if you continue the relationship.

#### **Your Score: 3**

You are in a relationship with someone who has moderate passive aggressive tendencies. Be very careful of your interactions with them and ensure that you have established good boundaries.

#### **Your Score: 4**

This person(s) definitely has passive aggressive traits. Be very conscious of their manipulations and their ability to drain your energy. Keep your protection up.

#### **Your Score: 5**

You have a passive aggressive in your life and chances are this person(s) also has unresolved anger issues. Can you opt out of the relationship? If not, again set good boundaries and learn the action plan below to protect your energetic well being.

### ***Action Steps to Deal with Passive Aggressive People***

#### ***1. Surrender Doubt--Trust Your Gut Reactions***

With these types you may question yourself since their anger is so masked. It's important to recognize the pattern. Their mixed messages will test your

patience. So when you doubt yourself, take a breath and try to let the doubt go. Tell yourself, "I deserve to be treated more lovingly. I will trust my gut reaction when I feel jabbed." This affirmation helps you release doubt so you'd don't convince yourself you're imagining things. Then move forward to improve communication. You must surrender the idea that these people will change without you speaking up. They aren't motivated to change unless someone calls them on their behavior. When it's not appropriate to be direct, such as with a boss who might retaliate or fire you, keep letting the zingers go by accepting your powerlessness to change him.

## *2. Address the behavior*

Focus on one issue at a time so people don't feel attacked or overwhelmed. Let's say a friend is always late. In a calm, firm tone say to her, "I would greatly appreciate it if you can be on time when we go out to dinner. I feel uncomfortable waiting in a restaurant alone." Then notice her reaction. She might say, "You're right. I'm always running behind. I'll try to be more organized." Then see if the lateness improves. If she is evasive or makes excuses, request clarification about how to solve the problem. If you can't get a straight answer, confront that too. Being specific pins down passive aggressive people. If nothing changes, keep setting limits or stop making dinner plans. With a close friend who continues to be late, it's always an option to accept and acclimate to his or her shortcoming when the pros of the relationship outweigh the cons.

## **Emotional Vampire #8: The Fixer Upper**

This vampire is like a fixer-upper house that requires endless repairs. There are two types to watch out for. The first makes you into her therapist. At all hours she calls desperate to have you fix her problems, unlike the victim who simply complains. As a friend you want to comply, but her conundrums are endless: "How can I get my boyfriend back? Why am I so fat?"...yada, yada. Her tyrannical neediness lures you in, and takes you for all the energy you're worth. There is no way around it; you become the sucker who gets dumped on. You participate with the intention of "caring," hoping to lessen her pain, and not wanting to abandon a friend. But this is a compassionate impulse gone overboard into codependent giving. As children, these drainers lacked the parental support to develop self-worth that leads to independent problem solving. Then on cue, you make your entry. Ta. Ta. Ta. Da! The valiant rescuer has arrived who knows what's best for her, an exhausting role. Eager to hand over her power, she becomes dependent, infantilized. In this relationship, no one wins.

A second type of fixer-upper is someone who you perceive needs an overhaul and you take him on as a project. This vampire is so seductive because he doesn't put up enough of a fight to dissuade you from trying to fix him, yet he's not interested in change. Over the years, I've watched bright, sensitive patients get enticed by a fixer-upper's "potential." I know they're on shaky ground when they excitedly emote, "He has so much going for him. I just have to bring it out!" One woman, sure she'd met her soulmate, a perennial playboy, declared, "If I love him enough, he won't be afraid of commitment." Another man had high hopes for his alcoholic sister: "If only I can only get her to stop drinking, she'll be part of our

family again.” Inevitably, both reformers slunk into my office bedraggled and disappointed after their extensive campaigns failed.

### **Are You in a Fixer-Upper Relationship? Quiz**

Answer Yes or No to the following questions to determine if you are in a fixer-upper relationship and if you are a fixer. Then in the next section learn how to break the co-dependence habit to be emotionally free.

1. Do you know someone who is constantly asking you for advice? Yes/No
2. Are you in a caretaker role with friends or family members? Yes/No
3. Are you always trying to improve or fix others? Yes/No
4. Have you put your life on hold in hopes of a certain relationship working out? Yes/No
5. Do you have difficulty saying “no” to someone who always needs something from you? Yes/No

#### **Results of the Quiz:**

Give each Yes response one point and count up your score.

#### **Your Score: 0**

Either you aren't in a fixer-upper relationship or you set healthy boundaries with a fixee.

#### **Your Score: 1**

You may be in a fixer-upper relationship. Look to see if you are opening yourself to someone who is too needy.

#### **Your Score: 2**

This score indicates a sign that you are in a fixer-upper relationship. Take a close look to see if this is a pattern in your life and if so, determine what you can do to alter it.

#### **Your Score: 3**

This is a moderate indication that you are in a fixer-upper relationship. Now is the time to correct this pattern before your energy is depleted.

#### **Your Score: 4**

There is a strong indication that you are in a codependent or fixer-upper relationship with someone. Be careful that a fixee isn't violating your emotional freedom.

#### **Your Score: 5**

You are in a fixer-upper relationship. It is important to develop strategies to help break this codependency and stop the draining of your energy.

### **Action Steps to Protect Your Energy & Identify Your Codependency Issues So You Can Distance Yourself With Compassion**

It takes two to play the fixer-fixee game. To disengage from such codependency, realize these immutable truths.

- Others must take responsibility for their own lives
- It's none of your business to try to fix anyone
- As a fixer, you'll ALWAYS end up with your energy drained
- A mutually loving relationship can't grow unless both people are working on it.

If you're susceptible to fixer-uppers, try to mercifully understand what ropes you in so you don't repeat this going-nowhere pattern. Ask yourself: Am I motivated by the desire to be liked? To feel wanted? To control? Guilt? An inability to say "no"? Perhaps as a child you had needy parents and got kudos for playing the caretaker role. But, to sustain your day-to-day energy level, these patterns must evolve. When a fixer-upper appears, start by setting the ground rules of how you interact with them by offering emotional support without compulsively spewing solutions. If you're consistent, many will be dissuaded from calling; others will be spurred to rely more on their inner wisdom and/or an appropriate health care professional. Along with this, here's an exercise to practice.

### **Surrender Affirmation for Compassionate Communication**

Here is an affirmation from my book, [The Ecstasy of Surrender](#) to start you on your way to compassionate communication and attracting energetically healthy people in your lives. Post it so you can read and say it every day.

*I'm ready to surrender all obstacles that prevent mutual understanding and compassion with people in my life. I'm ready to stop trying to control or pressure others. I'm ready to compromise and release my attachment to needing to be right. I am ready to enjoy harmonious and loving relationships.*