



Manipulating / Maneuvering Techniques

Many years ago, two sisters from a dysfunctional family (who were in a Twelve-Step program) tried to identify the manipulation methods used on them by their mother. The list below started from that early attempt to understand why they got “hooked” by controlling people. The list helped them not only identify manipulation methods used on them, but to also stop their own attempts to control others. Since that time, many people in recovery have added their own methods to this sheet. This list has helped many people become aware of how individuals try to control others, as well as helped them stop doing the same. Feel free to add methods you have seen used, and possibly send your additions through the Hickory area website (www.hickoryarea-recovery.org) to be added to this ever growing list.

According to Webster's Dictionary, these types of methods are shrewd and often unfair or fraudulent ways to influence and/or control others for one's own purpose, something we try not to do in 12-Step recovery programs.

Exercise often used with this list:

First highlight the methods (1) others have used to manipulate you, then methods (2) you have acquired to manipulate others. Now that you see how you've also learned shrewd ways to influence others, (3) stop your own use of these controlling techniques.

1. nagging
2. guilt trips
3. ignoring someone
4. temper tantrums
5. creating a crisis
6. making deals, bargaining, bribes
7. withholding nice behaviors
8. being uncooperative
9. pouting/sulking
10. sarcasm
11. anger
12. complaining
13. destroying another's material possessions
14. cuts/put-downs/stabs
15. sharp tongue
16. ordering/demanding
17. sweetness (controlling with kindness)
18. controlling the environment (acting a certain way to get a desired result, as "walking on egg shells")
19. martyrdom to get pity
20. violence (physical or verbal)
21. blame
22. refusing to talk - the "silent treatment"
23. telling half truths
24. lying
27. avoiding or talking around the real issue
28. mind reading (mind raping)
29. expecting another to read our minds
30. criticism
31. hints/suggestions
32. crying
33. flattery
34. whining
35. sickness
36. clinging
37. sex
38. confrontation
39. holding one's breath
40. gift giving to pacify, avoid confrontation, to get something in return
41. forcing help or aid upon others
42. minimizing or nullifying importance or value of another's material possessions
43. eye gestures
44. threats
45. seduction
46. acting superior or using intimidation
47. helplessness
48. picking unnecessary fights
49. false accusations
50. group guilt (your father & I...)
51. red herring fallacy (diverting attention off main subject)
52. diverting attention to him/herself, - "shiny object"
53. food bribes (restaurants or home cooked meals)
54. acting like a victim or a rescuer
55. recasting (rephrasing, re-interrupt) the facts
56. intellectualizing
57. exaggerate harms done to you
58. gossip
59. acting incompetent, confused, or lost
60. constantly joking or being the practical joker
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- 62.
- 63.
- 64.
- 65.
- 66.
- 67.
- 68.