# DIET CULTURE IS AN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP

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<th>Characteristics of an Abusive Relationship</th>
<th>What An Abusive Partner Does</th>
<th>How Diet Culture Abuses Us</th>
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<td><strong>1. Does a great job at promising a great future and then delivers you a nightmare</strong></td>
<td>Abusers in the beginning are often super charismatic, charming, sweep-you-off-your-feet type people! They promise you the world, declare their love (often very quickly), and shower you in attention. And then the abuse starts. It’s subtle at first, then it gets ridiculous.</td>
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<td><strong>2. Gaslighting: Does something, denies it, and then says you are crazy!</strong></td>
<td>Gaslighting is a form of psychological manipulation that seeks to sow seeds of doubt in a targeted individual or in members of a targeted group, hoping to make them question their own memory, perception, and sanity. Using persistent denial, mis-direction, contradiction, and lying, it attempts to destabilize the target and delegitimize the target’s belief.</td>
<td><strong>Diet Culture tells you sweetly – THIS ISN’T A DIET!</strong></td>
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<td><strong>3. Projection: Accuses you of doing things you aren’t doing and or things they are doing.</strong></td>
<td>Projection in narcissistic abuse is when a damaged person attributes the bad stuff they are doing to you. Narcissists typically accuse their partners of cheating on them, when really the narcissist is the one who is cheating! Narcissistic parents have a deep seated sense of being unworthy/not good enough, but they project this onto their kids, so that the child eventually internalises a deep sense of not being ‘good enough’. The damage is coming from the narcissistic projection, not from anything that the child is doing wrong!</td>
<td><strong>When diets don’t work, WE ARE BLAMED!</strong></td>
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4. Are pathological liars and highly manipulative.

Abusive partners specialise in lying ALL THE TIME, about practically everything. They never take responsibility for their lies and end up twisting the facts around to blame YOU or make YOU doubt yourself. Everything that’s wrong is YOUR fault, never theirs.

The Weight Loss Industry profits from selling us LIE AFTER LIE

- In Australia alone this industry is worth in excess of $650 million and growing each year! This is not including fitness businesses which also profit from the fear and guilt and promotion of their services for weight loss (IBIS Market Research)
- It is not selling health – it profits from our FEAR. They create our SELF-LOATHING then sell us products to fix it… which never work.
- Weight loss industry profits from making us ETERNALLY CONFUSED and from frequently changing the rules (e.g., Paleo becomes low carb/high fat/intermittent fasting). But the underlying game – MESMERISE & CONFUSE – never changes!

Examples of Weight Loss Industry LIES:

- Hypoxi: “Design Your Body!”
- Jenny Craig (“we give you everything you need to lose weight and keep it off!!”)
- Weight Watchers: “People who believe in themselves can achieve better weight loss results!” - really?
- All the endless detoxes, cleanses, powders, miracle pills, potions!

5. Uses guilt, charm, hope, love, obligation, fear or confusion to get what they want.

Abusive partners are utterly self-focused and will use any means possible to meet their needs. In an abusive relationship, your emotional needs are not important. The abuser will manipulate and play on admirable human qualities in you - for example, your sense of loyalty - in order to get what they are after.

Abusive partners love to play on your insecurities and subtly remind you of your inadequacy. Over time, your sense of self-doubt and insecurity is entrenched. This secures you as utterly dependent on the abuser.

Abusive toxic diet culture uses your internalised sense of self-doubt and insecurity and plays on it deliberately, to make sure that you continue to do what they say. You unwittingly get caught up in this world of promises, gaslighting, and illusions and lose sight of your own thoughts, feelings, needs and sense of self.

Diet Culture manipulates us using:

**GUILT, OBLIGATION, FEAR**
- Check out the awful “Grabbable fat” campaign, and the fear that doctors play on

**CHARM**
- Instagram lifestyle bloggers, TV hosts like Dr Phil and Dr Oz

**HOPE & LOVE**
- Oprah on Weight Watchers, Jean Fain and her self-compassion diet!

**CONFUSION**
- The alternative crowd such as Paleo Pete, Sarah Wilson, David Avocado Wolfe, everyone who sells stuff in a pharmacy, detoxes, cleanses, fasts, pills, potions, books, seminars etc….
- Weight focused dietitians/nutritionists (who love to say dieting is so confusing, but WAIT!! Look! I have THE ANSWER…).
- Weird behaviours/pseudoscientific approaches such as tapping, hypno-banding, ‘neuroslimming’.
- Blatant exploitation of anti-diet concepts such as mindful & intuitive eating or ‘self-compassion for weight loss’

Diet culture LOVES black and white thinking!

- Fat = unhealthy  Thin = healthy
- Fat = bad  Thin = good

Diet culture LOVES THE DRAMA

- Check out this headline which literally says that Obesity is a Bigger Threat Than Terrorism I mean PLEASE!
- Diet culture is UTTERLY CONTRADICTORY – check out this book “I Quit Sugar”, sold RIGHT NEXT TO this book “Don’t Quit Sugar”
- Diet culture WILL NOT be questioned, often people promote loyalty by denouncing all other ideas - especially experts and organisations (Paleo Pete & his hatred of dietitians!)

6. Often likes to agitate, provoke, argue, or ‘crazy make’ and then pretends to not know why you are so upset. Has a “Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde” type personality

Abusers are often extreme in their thinking, viewing the world in black and white, dichotomous, good or bad categories.

Abusers are also deeply unstable, dramatic, reactionary and given to explosive reactions.

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### 7. Has a staggering lack of empathy and (sincere) remorse for their behaviour

Abusers are utterly incapable of feeling true empathy towards other human beings. Other people are there to service their needs, they cannot truly understand empathy. This is particularly true of psychopaths and narcissists. They might try at times to speak the language of remorse, but they just don’t really get it and they end up coming off as insincere.

- Even when it’s caught red handed in its lies and cruelty, the weight loss industry has no empathy or remorse.
- **Belle Gibson** and her utter lack of responsibility for her exploitation and lies about a) having brain tumours and b) being cured through her ‘clean eating’ diet.
- **Pete Evans** and his lack of remorse or responsibility for his dangerous advice about baby formula.
- Dr Oz and his *remorseless response* to being interrogated by a Senate committee for unscrupulous promotion of three “miracle weight loss products.”
- Let’s not forget, diet culture straight up hates fat people. Check out this headline: “**Shouting abuse at fat people is not just fun. It’s socially useful**.”
- Michelle Bridges on *60 minutes* defending her awful comments about “obese people”. Instead of apologising, she called herself a ‘trailblazer’.

### 8. Yells, name calls, belittles, gives the silent treatment...

Abusers punish you when you displease them. Long after the honeymoon phase, this is the true abusive character of the relationship. You are punished for speaking up. You are called names, belittled, and quite literally abused.

- Diet culture uses verbal abuse and then defend it by pretending that this is being done ‘for their own good’. Those words HURT. But name calling is so ‘normal,’ and most larger people are too scared and embarrassed to talk about it publically.
- The Biggest Loser is successful TV because it creates this arena for humiliation and abuse for public entertainment.
- The fitness industry is particularly renowned for insulting people in the name of ‘tough love’. “Fitspo” is particularly heinous and relentless in its fat and body shaming - apparently in the name of ‘health’ (e.g. [1](#), [2](#)).
- Interviews and blog posts that are deliberately antagonising both for ratings and attention (e.g. [1](#), [2](#), [3](#), [4](#)).
- Friends, family, employers, teachers, health care professionals, strangers yelling comments from car windows, online trolls and even Santa Claus!

**THIS BEHAVIOUR IS UNACCEPTABLE. YET IN DIET CULTURE IT’S SEEN AS NORMAL**

### 9. Escaping an abusive relationship is hard.

By the time you realise that the abuse will not stop and that you need to leave, you’re demoralised psychologically. You are filled with self-doubt and often feel like a shadow of your former self. At your weakest point, you somehow have to find the strength to leave. Abusers do everything in their power to stop you leaving, escalating the abuse and the love bombing, getting friends and family involved, and making it SUPER hard to get away.

- Even though most diets fail in the long run, leaving you with the weight back on and feeling very demoralised, WE’RE NOT ALLOWED TO LEAVE.
  - Weight Watchers have LIFELONG memberships
  - Michelle Bridges has admitted that many of her 12WBT people have done the course MULTIPLE TIMES
  - We’re pummelled and bombarded by please to come back to sign up for gym memberships, body transformation programs, cleanses, detoxes, etc, etc!
  - The same seduction techniques are used...come back and you can HAVE THE DREAM!
- **The diet industry tells us that there is NO ALTERNATIVE**
  - *if you’re not trying to lose weight, you are GIVING UP on yourself!*
- The fact is there IS AN ALTERNATIVE! Saying NO to the abuse of diet culture and walking away is HARD but YOU CAN DO IT!

**YOU HAVE ALWAYS BEEN OK. ALWAYS BEEN ENOUGH. GET OUT OF THIS ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP AND COME HOME TO YOURSELF!**