

The Sensitive Person and Abuse

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The Strength of the Sensitive Person to Tolerate Less

This guide helps you "reframe" your tendency to tolerate too much.

You will begin to identify the underlying strengths you have in your capacity to tolerate. In reality you probably have greater and more lasting strengths than the one that abuses.

Your job is to not only understand that but have that thought emerge from your heart and dwell with confidence within you.

In this guide you will make finer distinctions in terms of what it is that you tolerate.

And then, move toward removing some of the tolerations in your life which will give you the confidence and rebuild your self-esteem to tolerate less.

If you are in significant pain, spend a great deal of time and energy on this exercise

Take a couple minutes to reflect on or write out your responses to these questions:

To what degree do you believe you are a sensitive person that tolerates a great deal?

Not at all				Very
What images or the tolerates a great de	~	nd when you think o	of being a sensitive	person who
What type of feelin puts up with stuff?	g do you get when	you think of being	a sensitive person v	vho tolerates and
What does it mean	for you that you ar	e a sensitive perso	on who tolerates a g	reat deal?

What is your level of comfort when you think of being a sensitive person who tolerates and puts up with stuff?:

Comfortable		Uncomfortable

Why do you put up with his/her abuse?

This is about helping you understand your proclivity to tolerate so you can put up with less. It's about tolerating less in your life.

Once you stop tolerating (the big stuff as well as the "smaller" things) as much as you now tolerate: once you stop putting up with the garbage in your life, that which decays your esteem, soul and spirit you will:

- move through the pain and agony of a marital crisis much more quickly and powerfully.
- have more energy to build your life. You will become thrilled about you...and where you can go.
- ✓ become much more attractive, and attract attractive people and circumstances. You will attract others and circumstance of life like a strong magnet. You might even attract your cheating spouse. Believe it or not!
- ✓ upgrade your community. You will associate with those who give life, hope and live with compassion, passion and purpose much like you will.
- ✓ be a wonderful model for your children or others around you. They will watch you carefully noticing what you do to generate well-being, health and dynamic relationships.

Sounds pretty good doesn't it?

We all tolerate to one degree or another.

You may seemingly let others run over you. You allow your spouse to degrade you. You don't stand up for yourself. You may tend to shrink from the challenges of life.

You may find yourself in a situation whereby your spouse continues the abuse and you feel helpless.

S/he may put you down in a variety of ways...and it continues.

You get the picture...

But, before you berate yourself too badly, let's take a very close look at your capacity to tolerate. If you find yourself tolerating an abusive spouse, you may be commended for your sensitivity. Here's why:

1. Yes, those who have a difficult time saying no or tolerate more than they truly want are typically those who feel deeply, are greatly in tune with others on a variety of levels and feel deeply.

As well, you may intuitively know the fragility of your abusive spouse. You may "feel" his/her emptiness, his/her inner pain and instinctively understand his/her flailing attempts to fill the void. You KNOW it's his/her problem.

This CAN be a tremendous asset. All of us want to live more deeply, profoundly and powerfully and you have the innate capacity to EASILY do that. A part of you wants to leap with exhilaration when you touch life or it touches you.

- 2. However.... your sensitivity also leads to a proclivity to avoid conflict and confrontation. You may fear the pain you physiologically feel as you feel cut off from.
 - This is not always rational but it is powerful and it GETS IN YOUR WAY. IT TEARS YOU DOWN!
- 3. You fear the loss you might experience. You have a need for safety, predictability and security. And so, you tolerate much, hoping to hang onto the thread of security that you believe is in your relationship with your abusive spouse.
- 4. Pain and feelings, as important and powerful for you as they are, beg you to tolerate and put up with circumstances in hope that the pain will end the relationship will return to what it once was.

Even though a part of you wants to tolerate and put up with his/her behaviors, you know the drain it extracts.

You will learn to put up with and tolerate less and feel much better in the process. More than you dreamed possible.

Now, there are also those who seemingly tolerate very little. These are the ones who put up with no crap.

You have an affair or lay one finger on me or curse me once... you are gone. Period. You are out the door. Done deal!

You may secretly want to be such a person. Someone tough-minded. Someone pragmatic and practical.

You want to see the world in terms of black and while. No gray. Good and evil. No relativity. This is the way!

On the surface these individuals seem to have no problems with tolerating and putting up with.

Yet, let's take a closer look.

Such people are typically are goal oriented, rather than people-oriented - typically being intolerant of those who don't fit their criteria. They have opinions they hold fast and may be very willing to share them.

They seemingly tolerate very little.

However, their inability to tolerate may leave them isolated and constricted.

Their lack of capacity to embrace others, to see beyond the surface behavior, to accept unacceptable behavior as coming from a broken soul leaves them disconnected with the fragility of life that we all face, experience and are called to overcome as we journey on this planet.

And, so they may tolerate a chasm of emptiness and isolation in their life. Unfortunately they may not be aware of this pain.

They also may tolerate a routine life, since their black and white world keeps them from the edges of exploration, wonder and awe.

They may also tolerate psychosomatic illnesses, since they have little release for the internal tension they feel from holding on so tightly. Their body absorbs the fear and tension.

I hope you begin to see the limitations of this "tough" approach as well.

And so, we all tolerate, don't we?

And, I suppose we will continue to tolerate and put up with - since life offers a never ending smorgasbord of challenges and intrusions into our well-being.

But, let's work on our awareness of what we tolerate, what we put up with, those factors in our life that we tolerate that rob us of vitality and the capacity to form deeply satisfying relationships.

Identifying what you Tolerate and Put Up With

Here is a long list of tolerations that many of my readers created. Give thought to your situation.

Addictive behaviors, gambling, drinking, sex addiction

- ✓ he gets drunk on Friday evenings and stays that way until Sunday night,
- calling sex/porn lines
- coming home late or not at all, heavy drinking
- ✓ Not working as much as he can. drinking and driving spending money
- My spouse is much more into porn than before. He's got hundreds of dvd's and watches them daily. His sexual habits have changed somewhat. He has brought up a local "swingers club," and has insulted me physically on a sexual level, i.e., he'd buy me some double d's.

Atmosphere of not knowing, deception, lying, betrayal

- cell phone in car
- ✓ He lies constantly and continually, but never fesses up, rather goes to great embarrassing lengths to prove he hasn't lied.
- Leading a secret life
- ✓ going out almost every night for 2-3 hrs at a time just for a drive
- ✓ second personal credit card with him as a secondary cardholder,
- Got a post office box..
- Talking on phone and texting in private,
- always checking his phone,
- hiding his cell phone, having the cell phone bill sent to his office, paying it in cash

- ✓ Hiding phone calls/text between husband and the other woman.
- Denial of any wrong doing even when confronted with proof.
- secret texting/hiding of mobile phone
- He is still keeping secrets even when they are no big deal.
- ✓ mail going to a P.O. box, e-mail address has been
- a 2nd cell phone that is not his so he says (it belongs to someone else but her # has appeared on it), text messages sent to her #, etc.
- ✓ Husband telling everyone he is single.
- secret cell phone calls emails to account that can't be accessed late home from work mysterious errands
- ✓ is still able to look me in the eye, and lie to me
- ✓ Knowing he is out with her during work and in the middle of the night [after we go to bed, he will go out for 2 hrs and I catch him coming in]

Become the Target of Blame and Criticism

- complaining,
- ✔ Blaming me for the affair, and saying that the whole problem is that I am a cold fish. Blaming-projection
- ✔ Blaming me for my behavior (not infidelity) before her one night stand...
- Extreme moodiness--says this is because I and others hurt him in various ways Refuses to show me affection
- The constant blaming of me.
- being blamed for pushing my husband away"causing the affair"
- ✓ Being to blame for the financial shape we are in.
- Blaming me for anything and everything
- ✓ hostility

Isolation

- ✓ his priority of work before family
- Temper tantrums if I want to talk about our relationship
- Avoiding initiating sex and intimacy

- Lack of communication about anything that involves feelings, emotions, or our relationship.
- ✓ Not sleeping together since 2/08 :(
- ✓ No answer when asked why(If I knew I could try and help it not happen again)
- ✓ very little communication
- She is very cold
- ✓ Long periods apart from each other, especially during vacation.
- ✓ The past is always being brought back up
- ✓ lack of affection
- the cold and distant feeling coming from him
- Avoiding physical contact with me

Abuse

- his verbal abuse
- ✓ he gets very ugly with me over very small things,
- he calls me a pig and the mouth of the south.
- He says that he rather be dead.
- ✓ She lets me know of my deficiencies
- ✓ Some physical abuse that was never present in our relationship for 21 years.
- New physical abuse started
- degrading remarks/insults

Demeaning arrogant attitude

- passively aggressively lets me know he thinks he is smarter and knows better about everything
- ✓ He gets everything he wants, but I pay half
- ✓ He expects me to do things with him which I do not want to do, but has no qualms in saying "No" when I ask him to do something he doesn't want to do.
- ✓ Him making me feel like I am inferior to him
- He wants me to be affectionate with him and doesn't seem to get that I'm the one needing affection.
- attitude of entitlement

Lack of attention, validation

- cell phone calls in his car
- visit her cards and gifts
- Cold shoulder treatment Silence
- ✓ Spending time with sister dancing, drinking, and staying out until 5am!
- ✓ Wants to go places and have "fun" without me
- ✓ I am not low man on the totem pole. I'm the part of the pole that's in the ground.
- ✓ He shows no humility and says I make a big deal out of everything.
- pushing me away physically & mentally, he needs "space" and "a break" from working on our marriage
- ✓ not being supported by the goals that I choose
- Husband is inattentive, on smartphone all the time
- ✓ under active sex drive Not wanting to explore sexualy
- ✓ I feel my guy is not giving priority to me like the way he used to give me,
- ✓ not bother to inform me much that where he is when he is out
- Does not acknowledge special occasions
- ✓ The rejection that I continue to get from her even though the affair is over

Children/family suffers

- ✓ indifference to our children
- ✓ little involvement of husband with day to day issues and routine care of children--our 4 children do not have regular visitation time with him.
- ✓ He is focused on money, business success and not his family
- ✓ The kids(young adults) are hurt, they don't know how to deal with it

Lifestyle of Chaos and Drama

- inconsistency
- lying, staying out all night, ,
- I cannot say a word without him taking offense when I don't mean anything by what I say.
- ✓ He says that he is miserable and hates our home, but he will not or would not leave to be with the other woman.

- Jealousy from husband I
- ✓ denial, rationalizing, financial loss, lack of responsibility
- ✓ She (op) says she wants to be my friend.
- ✓ His continuing to see her everyday @ work
- ✓ Her still being allowed to work @ their office.
- ✓ The girlfriend calling to tell me about him and her
- ✓ The O/P laughing and thinking the situation of him now being with my wife, and breaking up my family is somehow amusing to him.
- ✓ The O/P spreading rumors about me to old friends to justify their cheating.
- ✓ Wife tells O/P personal things about me, and he in turn uses that against me
- ✓ Whenever I see them together, the O/P immediately grabs hold of my wife and begins to kiss and caress her in front of me then smiles just to get me mad

Lack of commitment to agreements

- not sure if he has ended affair,
- doesn't call everyday
- Most days not wearing wedding rings.
- ✓ still speaking to other woman on the phone
- ✓ Husband SAYS he wants reconciliation and to move back in with our family but seems annoyed by noise kids make (with 4 of them it is sometimes alot)---seems unwilling to give up personal space his has grown accustomed to with the separation
- complains and/or wants things to be done his way
- ✓ He is comfortable having two women and won't decide.
- ✓ His indecisiveness & "confusion",

Lack of teamwork, pulling together

- ✓ lack of effort
- Will not face responsibility for his actions
- Incessant demands of his job, what seems to be him burying his head in the sand.
- ✓ I have asked him repeatedly to leave; he won't.
- ✓ Irresponsible financial behavior, i.e., bought a very expensive sports car that we cannot afford.
- Control issues

- husband doesnt want to share complete financial picture with me
- Refuses any type of counseling or assistance to get us back on track
- My ex moved out a little over a year ago, continues in the new relationship, but works for me. I cannot fire him.
- ✓ not being totally honest about the \$ he's spending
- Not motivated enough to help our situation

Lack of Respect

- Giving all emotional energy to someone else
- My husband loves the other woman, he talks about the things they did together, things she bought him and the things he bought her
- Putdown from him.
- ✓ I tolerate that she needs to break out of the routine, but was not expecting it to go this way necessarily in such an open and somewhat cruel way.
- ✓ The affair is over but he can not bring himself to say anything critical of her despite the carnage left behind
- Rage at me.
- Reluctance to answer questions about the affair
- Defense of the other person
- Husband feels he has freedom of being single but expects me to do the things for him I did when he considered himself married.
- Chatting online with other women.
- ✓ Him still talking to "her" Him still texting her and others his not admiting to the affair him returning home yet still calling all the shots and placing the blame on me
- ✓ Not asking how I feel emotionally
- flirts with other women in front of me
- My husband is continuing the affair right in front of me.
- long phone calls
- sex with pictures
- Watching the way my husband talks to other women and the eye contact with them, I know what he is doing but he says I have to catch him with his pants down or I have no proof
- Text messages and the giggles that follow

Uncertainty about my wants, desires

- Is he the one or not.
- hopeless feelings,
- ✓ what seems to be his inability to make a decision on our future,
- ✓ not being able to be my authentic self;
- ✓ Tolerating our keeping the separation (he moved out to continue his virtual-affair with someone 4000 miles away) quiet from a lot of the community.
- ✓ feeling inadequate sexually

Victim of my feelings and sensitivity

- ✔ Being sensitive to his feelings when mine are crushed.
- Depression
- ✓ I let my feeling stay inside, unprocessed.
- Spouse has moved out, but I tolerate these (intolerable) behaviors rather than fight w/ spouse for financial support and a calm life.
- ✓ that I cannot show my emotions as I move through this
- Feeling rejection not love
- Feeling like I'm at fault not him
- Visual images of my wife with him.
- Between work and home I feel very, very trapped.

Victim of mixed messages and uncertainty

- ✓ She says she wants a divorce, but doesn't because of the children
- ✓ Being pulled into her confusion and turbulent emotions related to guilt or not understanding why exactly this is happening.
- ✓ Veiled threats, i.e., "When I leave you are all going to miss me!"
- Moodiness
- He says the affair is over but also says she and he have not had an 'ending it' discussion.
- He acts as the victim instead of the cheater.
- OW's belongings are still in his house---he claims he has asked her to remove them and cannot get her to do it
- Makes promises he cannot keep.

- ✓ he sees sex with me as a reward for me you don't give candy to a bad child but yet wants to be able to ask me if he wants to make love.
- Her inability to take complete responsibility.
- ✓ him saying he wants to work on the relationship but doesn't take any pro
- ✓ Sometimes he seems to be trying too hard and it comes across a phony
- ✓ He treats me wonderful. If I didn't know the truth, I wouldn't suspect a thing

Exceedingly poor communication

- ✓ I can ask a simple question like, "Are you going to visit your friend George?", and he gets very defensive.
- ✓ He makes me feel as if I am competing with her so I feel I can't ever say no to sex.
- MY husband admitted the affair but won't talk about it.
- ✓ husband doen not want to be an open book---will do it somewhat but is resentful
- He thinks everything is okay if we do not have any type of confrontation after just one day
- ✓ refusal to admit he is lying even though I have a long list of unexplained happenings
- Husband refuses to talk.
- Her statement that she was ready to leave me when this happened, stated over and over.
- ✓ that we cannot talk about our issues w/o him pulling back further away
- ✓ Shuts me out. Does not communicate about the problems
- ✓ Not talking about the affair
- Refusal to discuss any aspects of affair.
- minimizing the destruction of his lying cheating
- ✓ He does not want to talk but will tolerate some discussion, offering little to nothing except how sad it is that his life will consist of loving two people (but is IN love with other woman).

Allow this list to sink into your mind. Pay close attention to what triggers your greatest fear, pain and angst.

Awareness of Tolerations Exercise

Now it may be apparent to some, but my experience in working with thousands of individuals is that most of us don't have a clue how much we tolerate. We put up with and tolerate so much in

our lives that we become numb to those tolerations and don't give them second thought. In reality we don't know what it is that we tolerate or put up with.

So we begin by honing our awareness of what it is that we tolerate.

But first, a word of caution.

You may not be ready or will be able to benefit fully from this exercise.

If you have recently entered a marital crisis and are in the state of shock, denial, numbness, rage, victimization, depression or utter sense of helplessness, this probably is not for you.

You must move beyond those feelings (and you will) before you begin clearing your life of tolerations.

If you are emerging from the shock and demoralization and are considering what you need to do to resolve the infidelity, listen up. This is a good place to begin.

I'm asking you to think about what you tolerate or put up with in your home and at your work - or another part of your life. Simple things, i.e. the mail piles up, kids leave shoes on the floor, etc.

Baby steps... baby steps... baby steps...

Now this may seem very simple or silly. But, there is a reason for beginning to focus on your tolerations at this level. Here's why:

- 1. This begins the process of shifting the focus away from him/her/them to yourself and your self care. This is NECESSARY if you want to make progress dealing with the infidelity.
- 2. This shift will give you greater power to "charge neutral" a basic skill I teach to help change the flow of your relationship with your spouse.
- 3. This first step will increase your sense of control and empowerment. Yes, you need that!
- 4. You will play less and less with him/her the "game" that locks him/her into the affair and you in your misery and agony.
- 5. This is a vital beginning point if you hope to eventually strategize, depending on the kind of affair facing you, to resolve the infidelity and your relationship.

Do you see where this simple exercise might lead? I hope you do.

So, begin here: (Do NOT make references to your marital crisis or the behavior of your spouse. That will come later. You probably lack the skills to face that effectively at this point).

Make a list of the top 5 things that you tolerate or put up with at home.

1		
2		
3		
4.		

5	
Here	are items that others said they tolerate at home:
~	people don't pick up after themselves, I have to do it
~	I am expected to do most everything
~	members of the family assuming that I automatically do the housework, washing, cooking, shopping and
~	general organizing of the home.
~	Putting everyone else first before me.
~	dirty house, clothes/shoes on the floor
~	unwanted company
~	bad attitudes
~	Overspending
~	no time for myself
~	juggling work, business, kids, spouse, friends
~	clutter and dust
~	uncomfortable home office furniture
~	home projects not completed
~	lack of extra money or time
~	noisy neighbors
V	many home repairs
And, r	make a list of the top 5 things you tolerate outside the home.
1	
2	
3	
4	
5.	

Here's a list of what others tolerate at work or outside the home:

- ✓ Co-worker who talks non-stop
- ✓ hiding all my feelings to others
- trying to hold it all together,
- ✓ rude or indifferent attitudes
- ✓ lazy employees
- ✓ a management that doesn't care
- ✓ not enough work space
- Not being able to say no to others
- ✓ Traffic
- ✓ Not getting enough help @ work
- ✓ Not be able to go to lunch on time.
- expectations to do things not practically possible
- ✓ long commute to work by bus
- having cubical not private office
- ✓ Inconvenient Schedule
- unnecessary meetings
- ✓ Bureaucracy
- Friend expectations
- no friendship or outside activities

Choose one of the items at home and one of the items outside the home and begin to strategize for its elimination.

Here's an example:

Toleration at home: people do not pick up, I have to...

Strategy #1: Make a direct request for help (no demands, no yelling, no anger, no threats)

Strategy #2: Negotiate - you do this... I do that...

Strategy #3: Make a series of requests, each one with different emphasis. Note response and adjust future request

Strategy #4: Place scattered items in bag and lock in closet. Closet locked until.....

Remember, the goal is to empower you... to move you from the sense of helplessness and victimization.

Reflection:	
How do you think effective completion of this exercise will empower you?	
What has the completion of this exercise been like for you?	

Shifts to Implement

In the next step begin to make the mental shifts that you will place you on a more productive and effective path to marriage and love construction or reconstruction.

The constructive belief may not make full sense to you at this point. However as you proceed through the rebuilding steps you will see and experience the validity and power of each constructive belief.

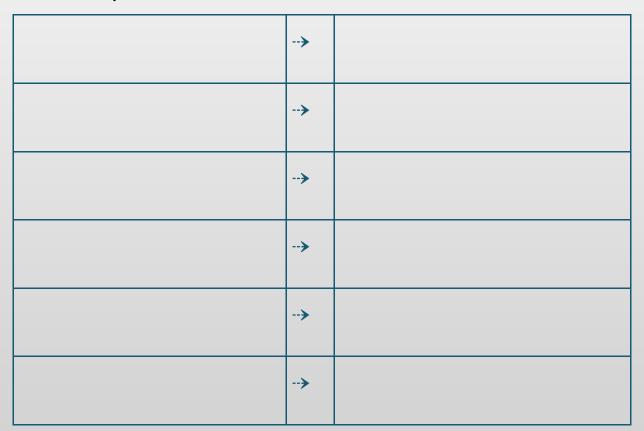
Take a couple moments to place a checkmark in the box that most closely fit where you are now relative to the two opposing beliefs.

Destructive Belief		Check what you believe now	Constructive Belief	
I must put up with a great deal			I can learn to tolerate and put up with less	
It seems like a huge burden to tolerate less			Tolerating	less will free me.
I lack the energy to just get started.			One small	step will get me started
If I tolerate less, all hell will break loose.			I can take	this step by step.

Tolerating less will end my marriage.		Tolerating less may marital healing proce	
I don't have the energy to follow through on tolerating less		I will find the energy start tolerating less.	I need, once I

If you want to take this a little further:

List other shifts you would like to make:



I do not want you at this point to share your findings and thoughts with your spouse or partner.

You engage you. You don't engage the other.

Engage yourself means spending some time in the next day or two consciously and intentionally thinking about the above exercise; specifically the distinctions and shifts you desire.

Shift your focal point away from him/her to a degree. This, in itself, may be a significant shift. (Be aware that s/he will probably notice and may react. If able, plan your response if s/he reacts.)

Choose one shift and give that shift your full attention. What would that shift feel like? What would you be doing as you make that shift? What would that shift bring to you?

Reflect on and Answer these questions:

I will be most aware of and implement these exercises at this time and place during the next day.
I will use this trigger (mantra: I will do this, word: power, feel good, etc., rubber band around wrist, etc.) to keep me on track.
Reflect on and Answer these Questions:
Evaluate what it was like to spend a day or two tolerating less and focusing on your desired shift and the distinctions you are beginning to make.
Notice any changes you experience in terms of your personal power, feelings and thoughts about yourself.
Remember, you are just beginning. Don't be upset or alarmed if you find it difficult to pinpoint change and shifts.
These questions will help you evaluate your experience:
On a scale of 1-10 (10 being as bad as it can get) I now rate my bad feelings as
I notice this new thought coming to mind after the engagement.

notice th	nis new image coming to mind after the engagement.
notice th	is feeling located in this part of my body emerging after the engagement.
now thin	k this of myself after the engagement.
Review	checklist:
	Review
	I know better why I tolerate abuse.
	I have more energy after this exercise.
	I think more about the type of influence of people around me.
	I see the value of my sensitive side.
	I am excited about learning how to better confront another in a helpful way.
	I understand my tendency to tolerate as a learned way to cope with bad situations: and I can change that.
	I am aware of specific tolerations and am in the process of removing them from my life.

I am able to take small steps to remove tolerations, and small steps feel good.

I am aware that my body feels different as I tolerate less.

I feel more courageous.