

# Who They Believe Us To Be

By Cheri DeMoss

***"She made me feel (and I of course believed her) that there was something just horribly wrong with me...until there really was."***

This is how it works - from childhood to our most intimate adult relationships. Being small children we believe what our parents and others tell us not only about the world, but also about ourselves. If we're told that we're clumsy, stupid, a loser, bossy, etc the majority of us will become those things in one way or another. If we are treated with contempt, judgment and as if we are unlikable - we will believe it. This is the most common form of emotional abuse. In fact, it's so common most of us think it is normal. We don't recognize it as abuse.

This is a real Catch-22 for parents because most parents have learned from their own parents that the way to "teach" a child is to act disapproving and judgmental when the child does something the parents believes is inappropriate. Most parents treat the child, if only for a short time, as if the child is unlikable because they have done something the parent disapproves of.



*From the age of 2, over 83% of a child's day, everyday, is filled with negative comments about what they say, think, feel or do. This makes the child believe they are bad and wrong. This is why children grow up and believe this is who they are.*

## Life Innovation Self-Esteem Classes

**A**s infants & toddlers we felt good about ourselves. We didn't worry if people liked us. In fact, we had every confidence that we were completely lovable and likeable. We didn't try to hide what we felt or who we were from others.

We easily shared our feelings, thoughts & accomplishments. As we grew up we were given the message that what we felt, did or thought was not okay.

Our self-esteem affect all

aspects of our lives and our relationships. By learning how our childhood self-esteem turned into adulthood self-doubt we can easily reverse the process.

### You'll learn to:

- Turn obstacles into options
- Expand your self-esteem
- Enhance your relationships
- Recognize your strengths
- Change fear patterns
- Feel consistently confident
- Experience the innovation

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This teaches us (as children) that in order to be likeable and acceptable we need to please those who mean the most to us.

Unfortunately this plays out in our intimate, romantic relationships. When our partner does something we don't like (something that threatens us on some level) we disapprove of

***Most parents treat children as unlikable if they have done something the parent disapproves of.***

them or treat them as if they are unlikable. We act like they are bad. We believe that if they loved us then they would change.

This is one of the most common abusive things couples do to one another and they do to each other because it was done to them as children.

Think about it. Most of us, as adults, don't usually even own our behaviors or admit what we feel, but instead blame our partners. We don't say our feelings about their behaviors. Instead we make a list of what they could have and should have done.

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# Who They Believe Us To Be

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We tell them what their intentions were, what they felt, what they meant...and all of that is based on our own reactions.

**We will use emotional abuse in all it's forms to get them to be who we believe they should be.**

Because we have learned, as children and then believe as adults, that when we feel hurt, scared, uncared for or emotionally uncomfortable we need to make those who love us change by whatever means possible.

We will use emotional abuse in all it's forms. We will pout, withdraw, give them the cold shoulder, say threatening and scary things, berate, belittle, demean, threaten to leave the relationship, shame and blame them to get them to be who we believe they should be.

We get so caught up in the moment (as our parents did with us) that we aren't able to see the self-esteem damage we are causing. Most of us get so caught up in the activity of making our partners feel "wrong" and "bad" we don't realize that by doing this we are making our partners afraid of us, destroying the safety

in our relationship and acting abusive in order to make ourselves feel better. Just like our parents did to us when we were children.

Because these behaviors usually echo the same messages our partners got from their families – eventually our partners start to believe who we tell them they are. Slowly some of the most precious parts of our intimacy disintegrate. Our partners become less open with us, try to appease us, feel a strong need to hide and protect themselves – which only cause us to be more abusive.

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# When They Deny What They Said or Did

By Cheri DeMoss  
When we're learning to listen, be other observant & to understand another person by using healthy, non-shaming & non-blaming techniques we need to remember the process we've all gone through in our younger years. From early childhood on up, we learned

**We are not taught the power, pride and esteem of accountability.**

that it's not emotionally, & often, not physically safe to let others know what we feel, do or say. From parents to teachers, we learn from experience that to be known is to be criticized, misunderstood, blamed & shamed. This

is made glaringly obvious the more we take the time to clearly & objectively let the other person know we are hearing them. When we reflect what they have just said, done or felt we let others know we understand them – we see them for who they are & for what they are doing & saying.

Keep in mind the majority of us feel in emotional danger of being shamed or blamed if we're seen for what we are actually doing or saying. **We were not taught the power, pride & esteem of accountability.**

When you are observing you need to be clear & clean (keep it about them, what they have said, done). Once you are sure you are accurate then you need to *pay attention to how they respond*.

# They Deny What They Just Said

Objectively noticing what someone is saying or doing will tell you a lot about whether the other person is being abusive. Unintentional abuse has the same impact on us as intentional abuse when we don't recognize it for what it is. When people do denying behavior it shows you:

- **Their level of self esteem, self awareness, self insight & maturity. The more they defend & deny the less mature, aware or insightful they are.**
- **Hearing you say their actual words & actions back to them causes them to deny what they said or did because they are having a shame attack.**
- **That if their actions / words are different from their intentions they will deny their behaviors & explain their intentions.**
- **How safe a person they are by how easily they can be accountable.**
- **They do denying behaviors because they feel exposed & shame.**
- **The more they do denying behaviors the more accurate your objective observations were.**

# Accountability: To Own It Or Not?

When we hurt others, intentionally or not, we often play the mental game of, "Nobody noticed I can get away with it." In reality, they may not be consciously aware but the *impact is always felt, always recorded.*

There is a slight change in their behavior towards you. Children are the best example of this. Ever seen a small child shamed or shame one yourself? The impact is initially obvious with tears, fear or pouting. But within a few minutes the child is playing, or laughing.

Adults are seldom accountable to the child – seldom goes to the child & says, "What I did to you just then, I was wrong to convince you were bad just because I was emotionally uncomfortable. I'm sorry."

Adults believe the child suffered no long lasting impact from being shamed & abused. But if you're observant you'll notice how the child shares slightly less than they did before or maybe they take it out on a child or pet that is smaller than they are.

As this happens more & more times the slight changes occur until the child's behavior becomes problematic. At this point the adult the acts as if they've had nothing to do with how the child is acting. In fact the majority allow themselves to believe there is something wrong with the child. The adults, like most of us, might have played the mental game of, "Oh,

it's not my fault; I did the best I could. Therefore there must be something wrong with the child."

The impact you have on others when you're caught up in your defensiveness, your reactions, your fear of someone being different than you, your own shame or your own re-enacting of family patterns is always felt & always recorded on some level. It's always remem-

bered because, no matter what your intentions, you are abusing the other person.

Try being accountable. It creates healing and connection. By owning what you did/said you will raise your own self-esteem, be less fearful & make stronger connections. Owning what you do, how you behave, what you feel, how you act out stops you from

inadvertently acting in an abusive manner. By owning what you do, you stop yourself from doing crazy-making behaviors.

The growth, maturity & emotional benefits are countless. Accountability creates connection, pride and esteem as well as self acceptance and a sense of personal power. It puts us on the road to acting different than those who raised us.

## About Empowering Options - Life Innovation

**E**mpowering Options Counseling & Life Innovation is exceptionally effective because our philosophy is to be on the side of the client. We concentrate on helping you learn, explore & create your options; your life adventure. The adventure is in the perspective – the beliefs that you view yourself & the world through.

Empowering Options uses a unique combination of information, perspective & insight to help you view yourself & your life differently. Get new information, understand your options & you change your experience. That's what our Individual, couple's & group sessions, workshops & trainings are all about – being on the side of the client & giving you more information, insights & effective, innovative options. There is no assumption that what you are doing or feeling is wrong. We don't presume that you need to be fixed. Our goal is for you to feel empowered, esteemed & effective in your own life.

We strive to keep you interested & interactive; energized & supported. The goal is that you leave each session with a new, more powerful way of looking at things & have creative ideas as to what your options can be. Our approach is a collaboration of your concerns, feelings, behaviors & thoughts combined with new information, perspectives & options. We fit people's lives by providing innovative options that make it possible for you to create the changes you want at the pace you're most comfortable with.

Empowering Options brings an original, distinctive life empowering approach to the counseling experience. The focus is always on empowering the client & teaching clients how to empower themselves. Using a unique combination of insight, perspective, & objective observation clients are given the information, tools & self-belief to permanently change their lives.

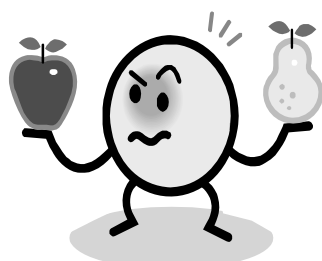
We provide distinctive feedback, concrete options, clarity & increased self esteem. Sessions are filled with interactive conversations not empty stares, silence or rhetorical questions. You don't have to assume we understand your feelings or concerns because we consistently demonstrate our understanding. If you ask a question you can expect a direct & straightforward answer. We don't believe you should spend your valuable time & money with a therapist that responds "What do YOU think?" or "How does that make YOU feel?" when you ask for their input. We teach you how to create options that will empower you throughout your life. Our innovative style, along with a fun & thought-provoking manner is distinctively client positive & client empowering. We present new ways to look at old beliefs & behaviors that will enhance your life & give you extremely effective tools to help you with the changes you want to make.

We help you create an adventure of life innovation, insights, esteem & options. You can get more information about our approach, services & download our newsletters at [www.EmpoweringOptions.com](http://www.EmpoweringOptions.com).

# Tone: Abusive Weapon

By Cheri DeMoss

**F**eelings are like breathing. You cannot inhale & never exhale. You cannot exhale & never inhale. Your feelings will find a way to be expressed. *In a healthy, functional way or in an unhealthy, abusive dysfunctional way.* Directly or indirectly. They will come out as reactions (judgments, blaming, denying, disliking, anger) or they will come out clearly as statements about your internal reality and the external behaviors that triggered them.



**The choice is yours.**

When someone has a "TONE" what you're hearing is an indirect verbal expression of their reactions, judgment, blaming, disliking or anger. We are taught by role modeling to indirectly express our feelings with "TONE" and then deny it.

Having a "TONE" is like being a sniper – there's no pride or self-esteem in it. It's an abusive weapon used when we are not being brave,

healthy and direct. It's leading someone to believe something other than the emotional reality of a situation. The other person doesn't stand a chance because they can't see it coming. They can't physically "prove it". It's abusive because it's "crazy-making" - **especially to children.**

*The more directly you express your feelings the easier it is to see the emotional maturity of others.*

The more directly you express your feelings the easier it is for you to see the emotional maturity of others. You want this clarity, not to judge them, but to be able to make conscious choices about who you can be open & safe with and who you cannot.

This makes your life easier. Directly expressing your feelings means you are being non-attacking, non-blaming & non-abusive.. You are behaving as a mature person who is responsible for their feelings and what they do with them.

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*Embracing acceptance is what you see with children at a playground. The 1st time they climb up the slide they are usually slow, careful. But once they slide down, feel the fun and realize its safe they quickly run to climb back up and slide down again.*

## Resisting Acceptance

By Cheri DeMoss

For most of us it's easier to judge than accept. Without exception, we judge the things that threaten us without even being aware of the underlying feeling of fear. Adults tend to be afraid of things, people, or actions that are unlike us. Things that are new & different tend to make human beings cautious until we learn it's safe. This caution is normal in both children & adults.

The difference is, unless judgmental behavior is role modeled, children will not act judgmentally. They will act cautious & curious. Once they realize, what is different than they are, won't hurt them – they become accepting. Usually intrigued that there is another way to do something; they will try the new way to see how it works.

Adults have a harder time doing this. Adults resist accepting each other's differences. Adults think in terms of,

"Yes, but...." Suggest to an adult something that's different than what they would do & listen for the "Yes, buts" on why it should be done their way or why your way won't work. Your mind might even be doing it now, as you read this. You might be thinking of extreme examples that don't apply to what I'm describing. You might be lining up your objections while being completely unaware of feeling threatened by this new idea.

What if you let someone you know, a child or an adult, help you do something & let them do it their way. What if you did this just for the experience, to see what would happen & how you would feel. You could find out if the world, as you know it, really does come to an end. You'd most probably find that you can relax your tight grip on things. You might find that when you "accept acceptance" & resist judging, even for a few seconds, you find an immediate way out of the stress & dilemmas created by your "shoulds."

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