

Just imagine this for a moment....

You are enjoying getting together with your family. You're in the car, driving to a show. Your sister's husband and sister are in the back seat. Your sister says something to her husband, but you can't quite hear what she said, when all of a sudden, out of the blue, you hear him loudly say *"You are always nagging me! Why? Why? Why can't you just leave me alone? She's always doing this to me! I get no peace."* ...

- What are the thoughts running through your mind all of a sudden?
- You're shocked first of all. And you're also now sitting there, unintentionally, making assumptions about your sister and how she treats her husband. You look at her and she's just staring right back at you, shocked.
- The moment passes but you're all feeling awkward with each other the rest of the evening. From this moment on, you're more alert and looking for times when you can spot her doing the same thing to her husband again.
- In truth, your sister was set up by her abusive husband. Next time he sits down with you, it'll be so much easier for him to start "opening up" about how difficult your sister is. He's already started turning you against your own sister.
- Notice too how simply the husband has started cutting off ties between the victim and her sister and is slowly gaining control of the victim's life.

What about a domestic violence situation involving Emotional Elder Abuse?

Imagine you're out in your front yard and next door you notice that your elderly neighbor is tending her garden. She goes in and comes back out with her adult daughter. As it seems they are both now soon at work in the garden, you lose interest and go about doing your own thing. All of a sudden you hear yelling. You look up and see the elder's daughter speaking loudly, very loudly, at her mother: *"You're always telling me what to do? I come here to help you and all I get is your criticism. I can't take it anymore."* The daughter goes inside and the elder is left outside, numb from embarrassment.

- What are you now thinking about the elder?
- She may or may not have been doing what she was accused of, but you're not really sure what just happened, are you? However, you do seem to be leaning more to the daughter's side at the moment, is that not so? You would be wrong. The daughter actually staged it all for your benefit. She actually set up her own mother. You now actually suspect the daughter of being an overburdened caregiver when, really, the mother is the victim of elder abuse..

- Again, notice here too how the daughter has quite easily taken steps in breaking ties off between the neighbour and her mother. If the mother should ever ask her for help, the neighbour will think twice about lending any.

The Reason for These Staged Moments

The perpetrators of Emotional Abuse and Emotional Elder Abuse enjoy shaping an impression in people's minds that will be difficult to erase and they're counting on it to help them, not the elder.

Also, unfortunately, at these given moments of public staged displays, most of what goes through someone's mind when you think you've witnessed some sort of abuse, are questions of doubt that come to mind immediately: *What if I'm wrong? What did I see really? Why can't someone else in their family report it? Why do I have to report it?*

If you feel that you've witnessed a situation between an abusive person and someone they are abusing, for example, verbally, and you're not certain, it is very likely you were meant to see what you saw and feel what you felt. It's also very likely that you are the only one who saw something very important and that there are several reasons why it took place:

- Primarily it is to discredit the victim which leads to isolating them and gaining control over them.
- The situation the Emotional Abuser puts you in, the witness, is meant to make you feel uncomfortable, frightened and very uncertain as to what to do. They are counting on all of this.
- They like to create uncomfortable moments where they see people cringe out of embarrassment. And the fact that he's getting away with this overt display of "domestic violence" is also probably giving their ego a boost.
- These situations are meant to make them look good or meant to create the impression they are the victim and destroy the victim's credibility and any chances that anyone will bother to listen to their pleas for help.
- With regards to your feelings as a witness, the perpetrator is counting on the situation to give you an impression about the victim. No matter whom you are, whether you are a close relative, friend or complete stranger, in one split moment of time, they have prepared for this moment very carefully and has prepared the "script" very carefully to mislead you about what you believe about the victim and what you are now going to believe about the victim.

30 seconds to make an impression

In Joe Rickard's article "*30 Seconds to a Great First Impression*", he states that it only takes 30 seconds to make an impression and once initial contact is made, the image that is left in someone's mind within those 30 seconds lasts and is very difficult to change.

- Those 30 seconds will dictate how people will react to what happened in those 30 seconds.
- He further states that it is the objective in these 30 seconds to build a "Trusted Advisor" role. Body language is important as it makes up for more than 55% of the communication. A sincere smile, open and friendly gestures put the person trying to make an impression in a good position.
- Lastly, he states that it is "*dangerous to talk about anything that can be perceived as awkward or could be misconstrued as inappropriate*". Any personal knowledge of the person is helpful to be able to logically script your talk.

Excerpt from "The Detrimental Effects of Emotional Abuse: How Emotional Abuse and Emotional Elder Abuse Destroy Us All" by Gunta Krumins

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