

About Being The Bigger Person

Have you ever been discussing the abuse from the narcissist in your life with someone who has told you that you need to be the bigger person & let this go? I have. Lots of times. So have many other victims of all kinds of abuse.

Recently, this came to mind for some reason. I thought about it & realized that this never felt right to me. It seemed somehow patronizing, invalidating, manipulative & shaming but I was unsure why I felt that way. After thinking about it, I think I figured the reasons.

If a victim is told they need to be the bigger person, it's shaming. It basically says, "Something is wrong with you for being upset about this! Get over it already!" Shaming can be utterly devastating to victims of narcissistic abuse. Nothing can shut down a victim faster than shame, in my opinion. Saying, "You need to be the bigger person!" is an easy way for someone to stop a victim from discussing their abusive situation & pain.

Some people who have survived abusive relationships absolutely refuse to face their pain. They ignore it, or even pretend the abuse didn't happen or that it wasn't really abusive. When someone discusses their abusive history, these people are determined to shut them down immediately, because they don't want any reminders of their own pain. They may not be acting out of malice as some people do. They simply don't have the strength or courage to face their pain. Telling a victim to be the bigger person is an effective way for them to shut the victim down without sounding harsh.

If the person who says this is also a narcissist, that person probably sees no problem with the abuse, since they act in a similar way. When the victim points out it's wrong, that could be offending this narcissist's sensibilities. He or she wants to shut down the victim so he or she can go on acting terribly without any remorse. Not to mention, it's not about the narcissist, so the narcissist couldn't care less. Narcissists lack empathy, so no narcissist wants to be bothered with what he or she sees as your petty problems.

There is also the possibility that the person could be a flying monkey of the original narcissist, & simply trying to shut the victim down & force the victim to continue to tolerate the awful & abusive behavior from their narcissist.

"You need to be the bigger person!" also shows that the person saying it thinks that the victim has the ability to be mature. They aren't saying it to the abuser, after all. That can be flattering, & as victims, most of us aren't used to someone believing anything good about us. It can be a good way for someone to shut down a victim while assuring the victim won't get angry with the person saying this stupid phrase since it can sound flattering.

I truly believe that someone saying, "You need to be the bigger person!" basically boils down to a way that people try to silence victims by using shaming while simultaneously making victims feel they should not be angry at the person who is attempting to shut them down with this phrase. And in many cases, the person saying it also is trying to convince the victim to tolerate the abuse. It's a lot packed into one phrase, isn't it?

If someone says this to you, please take it as the big red flag that it is! This person isn't safe for you to open up to about the abuse that you've endured! Of course you should talk about it not only to help yourself heal but also to help raise awareness of the horrors of narcissistic abuse. However, not everyone is safe to talk with about your experiences. Use wisdom in choosing who to open up to. Anyone who tells you to be the bigger person is NOT someone you need to open up to!