

## About Disproportionate Anger In Victims Of Narcissistic Abuse

I recently read an article about something called gunnysacking. Turns out, that is the term for having a disproportionate reaction to someone due to having held in anger for too long.

I've experienced this many times, & I believe it's a common abuse tactic of narcissists. They push your buttons & somehow let you know that you aren't allowed to confront them on their bad behavior. Eventually they say something that is far from the worst thing they've ever said yet you lose your temper. They enjoy this because it proves to them how irrational, crazy, etc. you are. It also leaves you wondering if the narcissist may just be right about you being irrational or crazy.

The best example I can give of gunnysacking in my life happened in 2016. At the time, I wanted to go no contact with my parents, but the timing felt wrong somehow. I maintained the relationship with low contact only because I trust my instincts. When my mother-in-law died that April, a few days later, I saw my parents' number on my caller ID. They just saw her obituary in the local paper & were angry I hadn't told them she died. They were worried what my in-laws would think of them for not being at the funeral. My parents knew I hadn't spoken to any of my in-laws since 2002. They also only spoke to them maybe 3 times in the 22 years my husband & I had been together at that time. I felt betrayed that my parents showed such loyalty to people who they knew mistreated me. They couldn't understand why I felt that way, & I was furious. That was the last time I spoke to my mother, & one of the last times I spoke to my father.

This was hardly the first time my parents showed they cared more for someone else than me. It also wasn't the worst thing they had done. Years of stifling my anger just reached a boiling point in that conversation. The anger just gushed out even though it wasn't proportionate to the situation.

I believe there is another variation on gunnysacking, too. When you have a relationship with a narcissist, yet rather than blow up at the narcissist, you blow up to your spouse, friend, sibling, etc. This is a bonus for a narcissist because it proves that they have control over you & also causes you problems in another relationship.

Unfortunately I have done this too. I would speak to my parents, then after the visit, when I'd see my husband, I'd snap at him when he had done nothing wrong. I was angry with my parents, & unable to hold it in any longer by the time I saw him. (Yes, I apologized when this happened since it wasn't fair to him.)

Gunnysacking may feel good at the moment since you're finally getting those emotions out, but it isn't healthy. When you are overwhelmed with emotions, you can't think clearly. Negative emotions that overwhelm can trigger survival instincts to kick in & that means rational thought is put aside. Stress levels are raised & that is certainly unhealthy for your body. Not to mention, attacking someone disproportionately can

damage your relationship. No one wants to be treated badly but in particular when they haven't done anything wrong. Also, in a relationship with a narcissist, as I mentioned earlier, they'll use gunnysacking to prove how awful you are to yourself & others. They love to say things like, "She just started yelling at me out of the blue." "I don't know what set him off. We were talking then suddenly he was screaming."

To avoid gunnysacking, it's best to deal with your anger as it comes up. Since confronting narcissists rarely helps, find other ways to process your anger. Write in a journal, talk to a friend, draw or even pray. God can handle your anger & help you get through it.

And lastly, never forget, there is nothing wrong with feeling anger, especially when you're abused by a narcissist. Everyone does sometimes, & even Jesus got angry. It's perfectly normal. It's when others are hurt by your anger that it becomes a problem.