

No Contact vs The Silent Treatment

Many people don't seem to realize that the silent treatment & no contact are very different things. As a result, many people shame victims who implement no contact. They call victims immature, spoiled, unreasonable & more, saying victims are pouting or trying to punish their abuser when the truth is, abusers are the ones who are being immature, unreasonable & trying to punish their victims by using the silent treatment.

No contact isn't done to punish or hurt anyone. It is done because a victim has tried & tried to make the relationship better yet nothing has improved. It's a desperate, last ditch effort to protect a person's mental & physical health by escaping an abusive person. Any person can take only so much before it affects their health.

No contact is also permanent. There is no going back for the victim who has settled on no contact as their best option. That is partly why so much serious consideration goes into it. Contrary to what many folks believe (primarily abusers & their flying monkeys), almost every single person who has implemented no contact in their life did so only after months or even years of a lot of thought & prayer. It's not a spur of the moment decision done in the heat of anger.

This also means that victims don't want their abusers trying to contact them in any way. They don't want calls, texts, emails, etc. in some pathetic attempt to lure or scare the victim into returning to the relationship. Many abusers seem to think their victims want this type of harassment & it will win their victims back, but nothing could be further from the truth. When a person goes no contact, it's because they want NO CONTACT, period. It isn't some attempt to get the abuser's attention. Abusers often think this is the case, because that is what they want to accomplish by not speaking to someone.

The silent treatment is done on the spur of the moment. Abusers are spontaneous people, & not in a good way. Anything a victim says or does can make an abuser decide in an instant to use the silent treatment. Or, a victim doesn't have to say or do anything. Abusers don't exactly have the most integrity in the world. If they want silent treatment drama, they certainly aren't above creating it by inventing some imaginary slight from their victim.

The silent treatment is done to manipulate & control. The goal is to make the victim feel so insecure & badly that he or she comes crawling to the abuser, apologizing profusely & being willing to do anything to make it up to the abuser. The abuser rarely tells the victim what awful sin he or she committed, but instead makes the victim guess. This makes the victim easier to control & more willing to try harder. I remember my mother using the line, "If you don't know what you did, I'm not going to tell you." Not exactly a healthy or useful way to cope with conflict.

The silent treatment is also done to punish victims. When you aren't aware of what the silent treatment is all about, it can be devastating! I remember my mother giving me the silent treatment countless times my entire life. It was a horrible feeling when my own mother wouldn't speak to me or even tell me why. In fact, my mother once stopped speaking to me for 18 months several years ago. Why she did that, she never would say.

The silent treatment is also temporary. It ends when an abuser gets their way or becomes bored with it. A victim knows when it's over too, because the abuser contacts them acting like nothing happened that was out of the ordinary.

There is one last big difference between the silent treatment & no contact. Victims grow accustomed to the silent treatment. After enduring it so many times, it stops upsetting them. I for one looked forward to my mother's silent treatments because it meant a break from her drama. Abusers, however, are always shocked by no contact, no matter how horribly they treated their victims. And ironically, the ones who seem the most shocked by no contact are the ones who repeatedly used the silent treatment.