

## The Double Bind No Win Situation

Double bind situations are commonly used by narcissists. This means they create a situation where nothing you do will be right.

The best example I can think of from my own life happened when I was 17 years old. I'd recently started my first job at the local library, which is where I met my now ex husband. We struck up a fast friendship, much to my narcissistic mother's dismay. She absolutely hated him upon first sight.

We often worked the same shift, closing the library. One night after work, we left the building together. My mother picked me up since she wouldn't allow me to have a license or car, & screamed at me never to leave work with him again because she hated him. The next time we worked together, he volunteered to hang back so I could leave first. Upon getting in the car, my mother screamed again & said, "So the coward is hiding! He can't even face me!" The next time, he left first and I hung back. Her response that time was to scream at me yet again because as she said, he was so "cocky", leaving work ahead of me.

It was a completely, damned if I do, damned if I don't situation. And, when trying to talk to her about it, all she did was scream at me. I should have known what to do, according to her. What was wrong with me for not being able to figure it out?

My mother created the perfect double bind situation. And it was miserable!

Double binds are all about control. Because you did something wrong (at least according to the narcissist), you will try harder to please her. When that is wrong, you will try something else. These situations may not seem controlling at first, because you are not being obviously controlled, but they are. My mother never told me what she wanted from me- she simply expected me to know what she wanted, then screamed at me for not giving it to her, which made me try other things to please her. Other times when she has created these situations, she refused to speak to me in order to "punish" me for disobeying her orders that she never gave.

There is no way to deal with these sort of situations completely successfully. With the situation with my ex husband at our work? Nothing would please my mother, so why bother trying? Any time we worked together, my mother would either scream at me for spending time with him or tell me what a horrible person he was. I figured since I was going to be screamed at anyway, I might as well do what I was comfortable with.

It also helps to remember that it is a double bind situation. There is nothing wrong with you- there is, however, something very wrong with a person who puts another person in such a situation!

Protect yourself with firm boundaries that you enforce however you need to. Tell the person you refuse to discuss the matter with them while they are obviously so upset then leave the room, for example.

Refuse to engage this person. When you are told what you are doing or have done is wrong in spite of there being no other solution, you can respond with, "I'm sorry you feel that way." Admittedly, that is a passive/aggressive sounding response, but it is suitable in this situation. You also can change the subject. Do not apologize for your actions if you believe you were right.

Never show emotion, no matter how angry or frustrated you are about this situation. Emotions, good or bad, feed narcissists their supply. Do not give them supply!!! The more supply you provide, the more they will take from you however they can get it.