

Anticipation Stress

Today's podcast is about something called anticipation stress.

During a conversation in my Facebook group, I mentioned how for years, my father would call me later in the evenings, up to 10 sometimes, usually just to complain about my mother. Emotional incest isn't the best way to end your day! Plus, being an introvert & talking to people a lot during the day, nights are when I want to avoid people. I want to relax with hubby, maybe some music, tv, or a craft project. I also get up early & don't want to be awake at all hours. I explained this to my father & although he said he understood, he clearly didn't. Not only because he lacked empathy but also because he was very extroverted. He continued his calls until I was at my wit's end with it.

As a result, one evening, he called at 9:58. I decided to ignore the call. He called back several times during the next twenty minutes. About half an hour later, one of my cousins who lives 450 miles away called. I almost ignored it because I had a feeling my father put him up to this. Since he never calls so late, I thought what if this was the one time something is actually wrong? I answered the call & found out it was my father's doing. He called my cousin asking him to call me & have me call my father. We got into an argument because I refused to call him that night. The next morning, my father called before 7. He shamed me for not taking his call & blamed me for making him worry so much that he had to call my cousin & my in-laws. I was livid yet in spite of that & knowing he was being manipulative & controlling, I felt guilty. This was on top of already feeling anxious because he clearly thought he had the right to "barge into" my home anytime he wanted via the phone.

This happened in late 2014. The conversation in my group about this incident made me think of something... I wonder if me having such trouble falling asleep is connected to my father's upsetting late evening calls. It could be that my brain still expects my phone to ring at any & all hours to deal with a very stressful conversation. Logically I know it's impossible. My father passed away in October, 2017. I have no other narcissists in my life, so there isn't anyone left who would do this to me. Yet, it happened for a long time & I naturally became "programmed" to expecting late & upsetting calls.

The dear lady I was discussing this with came up with the term anticipation stress to describe my situation. Thinking about it, I believe this anticipation stress is pretty common with victims of narcissistic abuse.

Narcissists can be quite unpredictable & they use that to keep their victims on a state of constant high alert. The more a person is in that state, the more willing they can be to do anything to end this misery. This means they are more susceptible to being controlled & doing the narcissist's will.

Even if the narcissist is no longer in the victim's life, when something miserable happens repeatedly like in my situation, the brain may get stuck in a place of expecting some sort of stress. It seems to me it's somewhat like hyper-vigilance. With hyper-vigilance, you're constantly looking for signs of any potential danger. Anticipation stress is somewhat like that, except instead of danger, it's a stressful & unpleasant situation.

Unfortunately at this time, I don't know how to release this anticipation stress, but I absolutely will share anything I figure out! In the meantime, I hope it helps you to understand what is happening if you are going through something similar.

Sister Renee of Luke 17:3 Ministries is the lady who coined the term "anticipation stress", so I'd like to encourage you to check out her website. She is an amazing lady who shares a lot of true, Godly wisdom on the topic of narcissists & surviving their abuse.

Thank you for listening to my podcast!