

8 Reasons We May Need to Cut Ties With Family Members to Be Healthy

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Cutting ties with family members is one of the hardest decisions we may face in life because we are conditioned to believe that to terminate relationships with "family" is morally and inherently wrong. The facts are that "family members" are just people and not always healthy people, and if these people weren't family we would never choose them to be a part of our lives due to their poor treatment of us. Therefore, under the ideal of family we spend years sacrificing our mental and emotional health in abusive relationships under the notion that we "have to" because these people are our family. We are conditioned to believe that if we end relationships with them that we are "bad" and no one wants to be or feel like they are an inherently bad person.

It took me 42 years to finally terminate relationships with two close family members. That decision only came after the most irreprehensible emotional abuse launched towards a success of mine. These family members timed their emotional assault to be on my 42nd birthday. This very low blow was what I needed to be pushed over the edge of the cliff I had been standing on for so many years of wanting to jump but being too afraid of how I would be judged by them and others for making this decision. Today, I am free. I do not feel anger or resentment towards them because I took away their power to continually create chaos in my life. I do not wish them harm and in many ways I am thankful for the experience, and I do not want them in my life.

Valid Reasons to Terminate Relationships with Family

- 1.** When the relationship is based in any type of abuse mentally, physically, sexually, verbally or emotionally. When the relationship is based in manipulation, overt or covert, you can be sure you are being used and abused. When you are living in constant anxiety never knowing or being able to predict how any engagement is going to turn out, it is time to love yourself enough to let go.
- 2.** It is time to terminate a relationship when the only contact you have with them is negative. The contact you have with them serves to bring you down, put you down and/or make you feel you are not good enough, or you haven't done enough for them.
- 3.** When the relationship creates so much stress that it impacts the important areas of your life at work and/or at home. When your emotions are totally caught up in defending yourself and wanting to explain yourself and the chaos of your relationships with these people is all you talk about, it is time to let go.

- 4.** If you find yourself obsessed with the gossip about you and trying to right wrong information, and you are constantly being ostracized to the point you are losing sleep over it you are becoming poisoned with their toxicity. Gossip only serves one family member to get others to gang up on you and you are left defenseless against the false beliefs about you being thrown your way. There is usually a ring leader gathering the troops for the assault and because they are joined together you begin to wonder if it is, in fact, you, that is the problem.
- 5.** When the relationship is completely all about the other person and there is no real reason why the other person cannot make any effort towards the health and maintenance of the relationship with you. One sided relationships are set up for your failure. When you realize there never going to be an "enough" place for you to reach in the relationship, you need to let go and start to focus on your own healing.
- 6.** When and if the relationship is only about borrowing or needing money.
- 7.** When crazy-making, no-win games dominate the relationship such as the silent treatment, blame-games, no-win arguments that spin around on you, there is no point in continuing in this battle. Verbal warfare is never the place you will convince them of anything and these types of verbal interactions are set up to be their way or the highway. If these are the negative consequences you receive each time this person or people don't get their way it is time to let go.
- 8.** Most people know intuitively when it's time to cut ties. Sadly, we may have carried this knowing for a long time before we were ever ready to make the jump. Although it took me 42 years, I do believe had I done it any sooner I may not have had the same confidence and assuredness in my decision. Not everyone will have a horrible moment like mine to push them off that cliff however, so, at some point you will just need to follow your gut and take the leap.

Not everything is clear cut when it comes to severing long-standing relationships with people because often we have children involved which I will write a follow up article about, but as we heal and we find our value in the eyes of others and in our own achievements and self-love we start to realize that these family members accepting or us not, is no longer the defining feature of who we are. As we grow, we can see more clearly the abuse from the past and what is current. We can see that we do not stand a chance in changing these people and that by letting them continue to abuse us also teaches them nothing. It makes them devoid of the natural consequences this kind of treatment should have. So, when you choose to sever ties you not only stand tall in your own health and self-love but you gift them the natural consequences their treatment of you merits.

When I cut my ties I felt the freedom I had always desired to feel and I also felt a certain aloneness, but I finally accepted they were never going to be able to love and support me in the ways I deserved and I was tired of exhausting myself to be "lovable" in their eyes. Not needing their approval set me strongly into my own sense of self, purpose and into much healthier relationships. The decision took 42 years but when I made it, I was certain I had

made the right decision and I still feel that way today. I am finally rid of the all the anxiety, neediness and pleasing I did to fit. I do not hate them, and I do not need them. I happy without them. As I have grown and experienced adult life I have learned the hard truth about things -- about people. People can be inherently self-seeking; not all people have good intentions, even if you are related to them. Not all people want what's best for me. It's was my job to make my world the best it can be.

Sherapy Advice: LOVE YOURSELF

Dr. Sherrie Campbell is a psychologist, nationally recognized expert and the author of *Loving Yourself: The Mastery of Being Your Own Person*.

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