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## **Episode #9 Worksheet**

**First REAL Steps to Recovery  
From Narcissistic Abuse**

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# NARCISSISTIC ABUSE...

... is one of the most confusing and painful experiences to navigate through and recover from. There is nothing “normal” about what you were up against... and dealing with this in the same way you’d deal with other life challenges will not only slow down your progress... but jeopardize your recovery.

One of the first things survivors are advised to do is to read as much as we can about narcissistic personality disorder and practice No Contact.

However... I learned early on in my own recovery that filling my brain with FACTS about NPD and going No Contact was only the START in my journey to healing. At this stage, I was just trying to survive the aftermath... learning to cope and tolerate the pain. What I desperately needed were SOLID solutions to BREAK FREE from "survival mode" to complete recovery.

Here are the 9 action steps I used to help move from survival mode - to real recovery:

## 1 Go NO CONTACT or Modified No Contact.

No Contact is absolutely required in order to create a PROTECTIVE SPACE around you from all of the narcissistic toxins and contamination - so you can begin to heal and claim your whole self.

You start by removing ALL possibilities of outgoing AND incoming contact. When you execute and defend No Contact, you are making a conscious & proactive decision to remove yourself from danger.

As a result of cognitive dissonance and trauma bonding with their abusers, many survivors struggle to defend their space from a narcissistic or ANY toxic ex-partner (such as family, friend, coworker, etc.) due to being conditioned to rely on the abuser’s validation during the abuse.

See... narcissistic personality disorder is a very REAL illness... but Their illness is just so ALIEN from what we are familiar with in our own everyday reality that it is insanely difficult to TRULY grasp what we are really up against... Because of



that, we can't help but expect the narc to possess the same ability to love and care for others like we can.

This is especial dangerous for someone who is in the beginning stages of healing where they're still vulnerable and susceptible to abuse. It's why executing and defending No Contact with No Excuses is your only option. Unless you remove ALL illusions projected by the narc from sight, it will hinder your recovery.

You must shut them out completely because narcissists don't care about loving or being loved... understanding or being understood. You can download my free guide to properly doing no contact for step-by step instructions...

So even if they drop on their knees and confess they've made a terrible mistake... even if they say they're ready to see a counselor... even if they tell you the skies parted, the angels blessed them with a shower of confetti, and they found religion... even if they tell you they now realize there is no one more perfect than you... no one they love more than they love you...

## **NO CONTACT. NO EXCUSES.**

They don't care about the relationship the same way you do. They LIVE moment by moment driven by their need for narcissistic supply. Choose yourself and stop falling for their lies!

Right now, you're dealing with an addiction to an emotional and psychological abuser, and like an addict needing their drug regardless of how harmful it is, it's normal to long for contact with the narcissist. The important thing is to stand firm in your TRUTH and enforce No Contact NO MATTER WHAT.

A frighteningly large number of motivated and intelligent people who have gone NC from the narc are finding themselves still painfully traumatized by the experience... YEARS after the disastrous discard. How is that even possible?

Because though they NEVER broke No Contact, they remained in EMOTIONAL contact with the abuser. This is a result of not properly processing and healing



All that they've been through. The narcissist was still their SOURCE of love, approval, and security. The abuser still had power over them.

Also, many survivors mistakenly believe they've gone No Contact, when in reality, they have gone No Response. If the narc is still able to reach you by their regular phone, email, social media, etc., you're NOT doing No Contact.

Simply "not responding" is NOT No Contact.

Going No Response is incredibly dangerous to YOU because it gives you the illusion of "personal strength & control" when what you've done is to trap YOURSELF in the abuse long after the relationship has "ended."

Please don't trick yourself into believing that you can keep the line of communication open – as long as you don't respond. Narcissists won't change for ANYONE... and they will continue living the cycle of abuse until they die. BLOCK all forms of outgoing AND incoming communication to save your sanity & protect yourself.

If you have children with the narc, a joint business, or NPD family member(s) with whom you must still have contact with at family events, you must do a modified version of no contact. Please download my Free guide to properly doing No Contact where I explain how to execute Modified Contact in detail...

## 2 Don't Get Caught Up in NPD Knowledge Hoarding.

You can collect all the knowledge by reading books about narcissistic abuse and posts on NPD survivor groups... but therein lies a dangerous trap. Many believe that by simply reading and talking about the experiences over and over again, they will be able to finally understand, break free and heal from NPD abuse.

See when we're searching for answers, it's natural to get excited over those "ah-ha!" moments... where we think... "now it makes sense!"... but without a solid plan of action that you intentionally practice every single day until it becomes effortless, you won't truly recover.



Look at it this way... You can read all day - every day, about how to make your first million dollars in just one year... but without actually taking action, you still won't have a million dollars at the end of the year.

This is why you will encounter many survivors in support groups who have more information about narcissistic abuse than any therapist or counselor... yet remain in the group for years because they continue to cycle through the same abuse! My heart breaks for them, but there's only so much members can do for each other in those communities...

Knowledge is NOT power... it's A WEAPON. KNOWING HOW TO USE THAT KNOWLEDGE... now, that's REAL POWER.

### 3 Don't Disregard or Push Past the Pain

I've been told by so many well-meaning people to "just get over it and move on"... because this is how many of us deal with the majority of the challenges we face in our lives. However, those who have not personally experienced narcissistic abuse are unable to understand how almost impossible it is to "move on" from this horrible experience.

Victims with invisible wounds resulting from emotional and mental abuse... especially by a predator who is able to skillfully manage their appearance to the outside world - experience being dismissed and invalidated by even the closest people around them. It's difficult for the not-involved to understand that serious damage and excruciating pain is being experienced by someone who doesn't appear injured. So it's important that you do NOT dismiss and invalidate what you're personally going through.

Know that I believe you and completely empathize with you.

If you have been ignoring the pain because you've been lead to believe that it'll eventually go away on its own... you are likely feeling exhausted... depleted... and just barely hanging right now...

The reason why? Ignoring the pain of narcissistic abuse is like having consumed disease contaminated water and simply waiting for it to pass through your system. The poison will travel through your body and affect your organs! You



can't just let it do its thing... the damage will only get worse! You need to wipe out the disease, flush out your body, and then maintain it - with clean, delicious water!

The one path out of this is to go all in and face the pain. Acknowledge that you are mourning a loss of someone who was important to you. Then acknowledge that this person has a disorder that left them without a functioning personality and unable to see past their own needs... Then acknowledge that it's not your fault for not being able to identify their disorder earlier in the relationship. Heck, many narcissists are unaware they even suffer from a disorder.

Important thing here is to Be kind to yourself. Feel your emotions... and then decide that you want to move beyond this misery and hopelessness... and feel happy and free again.

## 4 Understand That You Were Dealing With A Narcissistic Personality Disorder

After dealing with this like an “ordinary” breakup, I found myself asking the same questions: Why did this happen? How could this happen? What the heck happened? My head could not process this and I had no idea where and how I was even supposed to begin my healing.

This is a breakup with a narcissist... someone without emotional empathy or a functioning personality... and they depend on external sources to constantly tell them how important and special they are in this world. They cannot sustain their own self-esteem and self-worth... which is why they are unable to see past their own needs.

Like family and friends of narcissistic abuse victims who are unable to grasp the damage caused to the victim by the abuser, simply by outward appearances... it's insanely difficult to completely grasp that the person we were so enmeshed with has a very serious and virtually incurable personality disorder... especially because there is no physical defining feature that separates people with narcissistic personality behavior from those who don't.

But let me put this into perspective... Fantasizing a reconciliation with the narc... or wondering why they didn't following through with promises they made in the name of love, is like fantasizing someone who lost their arms to grow them in the name of love.

Narcissistic Personality Disorder is a very real illness... and just as they're focused on filling their own needs, you must shift your focus to recovering from this damage and moving beyond this experience.

## 5 Make A List Of The Narc's Questionable Behaviors

After a breakup, it's natural for people to suddenly remember only the "good" stuff about the relationship... it's part of the detox/withdrawal process.

Similar to a drug addict... when they need a fix, they crave for the good feelings. They don't think about how the drug is completely killing their body, how it hurts the people around them or that it's absolutely ruining their life.

Did you know that the harder you work on saving a toxic relationship, the more invested your heart and mind becomes? It's because your brain is trying to make sense of what the hell you're fighting so hard for... so it tricks you into believing that the reward (in this case - the narcissist) is ridiculously valuable - even though the truth is they're empty people with nothing of value to contribute into a relationship.

So anyway... You need to make a list of all the things the narcissist had said or done to make you feel invisible, unlovable, insignificant, invalidated, ugly, unwanted, stupid, angry, confused, and lonely... write down all those times you thought you were going absolutely crazy because the narc could not grasp the simplest concept of love and respect that even a young child could understand.

The relationship was your drug... and it's important that you consciously, intentionally work on breaking your addiction... having something to refer back to and remind yourself of the crappy, painful things they put you through will help you keep it real.



## 6 Avoid Online Support Group Dependence

This experience is without a doubt, the most exhausting, confusing, and depressing roller coaster ride I've ever been on. I admit, I felt somewhat ashamed for even feeling this way... after all, there are people born with life-altering birth defects, suffering from life-threatening disease, or trying to overcome serious financial challenges; and here I am, whining about a breakup? (Also a big reason why those who are not familiar with narcissistic abuse are confused at why you are unable to just "move on.")

What I didn't realize at the time was this wasn't just an ordinary breakup. I wasn't aware that I was even being emotionally and psychologically abused... let alone know that the ex who absolutely destroyed me suffers from a personality disorder

So imagine my relief when I found countless online support groups on Facebook for survivors of narcissistic abuse! it was INSANE to see how similar our experiences were... and we were from all different backgrounds, spread across the globe! So as isolated and lonely you might be feeling right now... you are so not alone in this.

But the trick is to not get caught up in the online support group limbo...

As I said earlier, I joined a handful of them soon after the ex-narc discarded me in October 2017, and let me tell you... receiving validation from and sharing information about NPD with other survivors who truly understood what I was going through was a GODSEND!

My family and friends were quickly growing frustrated with me because I couldn't "see my worth" and just "move on". But members of these groups knew EXACTLY what I was struggling with!

However, beyond gaining some understanding of the Narcissistic Personality Disorder and their HORRIBLE cycle of abuse... beyond receiving validation from other victims about the living nightmare we've been thrown into; I started to see that there were no REAL SOLUTIONS laid out to actually help recover from NPD abuse.



Due to the nature of the groups and the many new members joining on a daily basis, the discussions were “stuck” at:

- “How could they move on with someone new like I never mattered?”
- “S/he was my soulmate. I can’t believe it was all an illusion!”
- “I can't believe he/she did this to me after all I've done for them!”
- “What’s your ex-narc’s zodiac sign?”
- “Did your ex-narc have good hygiene habits?”

Many of us started asking, “Now what? How do we move beyond this?”

Because while these support groups for survivors are absolute lifelines, initially; the reality is that they do not offer the “next steps” to recovery.

When you continue to focus on the abuser by participating in repetitive discussions, focusing on your horrendous story, and asking narc-centered questions like, “Here’s a photo of my narc, can you see it in their eyes?” and “What month was your narc born?” you are NOT getting any closer to recovering from the abuse... just marinating in the SAME PAIN.

So... Now What? Take a Step FORWARD!

Throughout the relationship, the narc was placed at the top of your priority... leaving you walking on eggshells, trying to do whatever possible so you don’t anger the narc, push them away even more, and hopefully get back that wonderful human you thought you were getting into a relationship with.

That was a disordered person with no clue how to behave and think like a normal, healthy human being... you were tricked into their crazy making and it's time to bust you out of there!

So now it's your turn to be #1 priority like you’ve always deserved. This means you must shift your focus back to yourself. It will be difficult at first, because you’ve been conditioned to revolve your entire existence around the narc...

But remember... You fought and lived through what could possibly be the most painful relationship breakup... and survived! Shift your focus away from trying



to understand the narcissist... to trying to understand your own needs so you can heal and break free!

## 7 Find Support To “Fill In The Spaces” My Ex-Soulmate Suddenly Left Empty.

I had friends cover everything from “good morning” texts to photos of their little children playing throughout the day... building me up and lifting my spirit. Checking in to see how I’m doing... how my day is going... planning trips and visits... asking what I’m having for dinner... begging for food photos!

The narc just upped and left... there were two years worth of habits, routines, and “addictions” I had to break free from. Having a circle of support to help “wean” me off from them was a HUGE BLESSING.

Lean on your family and friends to help you transition from your previous daily routines to new ones! While they may not even understand the devastation you're being dragged through, many will support your effort to break your addiction to the narcissist in order to move on.

## 8 Choose Self-Affirmation Over Positive Affirmations

Many swear by doing positive affirmations to strengthen their self-esteem, confidence, and worth... and there are benefits of practice positive affirmations on a daily basis...

However... when working on healing from the aftermath of narcissistic abuse, positive affirmations can do more harm than good. The reason why is... Repeating things that you’re not feeling, will only make you feel worse...

For example, saying “I’m wonderful and lovable”... when you don't believe you're very wonderful or lovable will leave you feelings lousy and like a phony.

So instead, practice self-affirmation: Identify the great things about you... what you bring to the table. Then expand on it. Like...



1. **I'm hilarious...** I can make strangers spit milk with just a one-liner and I laugh at myself all the time. Laughter is the best medicine and no one delivers chuckles like I can!
2. **I'm an action taker.** I create big goals and knock each of them down one by one. I don't just wish for things to happen... I make them happen. This has helped motivate the people around me to get off their butts and get things done!
3. **I'm honest.** I respect myself as much as I respect others... and by practicing honesty I consistently strengthen my self-confidence and worth. People can rely on me... and I know I can always count on myself.
4. **I'm a great cook!** My family and friends always RAVE about how delicious my meals are. Tummies will never be hungry with me around!
5. **I live for adventure!** I love discovering something new on my own... and those who are with me are always in for a fun surprise!
6. ... and so on and so forth...

By doing this, acknowledge and appreciate your wonderful qualities!

## 9 Identify What The Narc Was Saving You From

There are various reasons why a victim remains in an abusive relationship... including fear, trauma bond, financial difficulties, children and family, and more...

And one of the biggest reasons why victims keep fighting for this unhealthy, self-damaging relationship is because they've made the narcissist responsible for filling a long-time need.

**People with unhealed traumas from early on in their life... such as emotionally absent parents, sibling who bullied you and always got away with it, a teacher who constantly embarrassed you in front of your peers... are left feeling unlovable, unheard, ugly, insignificant, stupid, invisible, and untrustworthy.**

**And like we talked about in episode 7 – “Help I Think I’m a Narc Magnet”... victims of childhood traumas bury their pain in their unconscious in order to**



cope and function... but the narcs are able to pick up on these needs and appear as the one who can finally heal these injuries...

Does this sound familiar?

But see... when the narc does this, the pain you've carefully packed away in your unconscious is brought right back to the surface in full force... reminding you of all the things you've been struggling through and longing for... they're brought right out in the open so the narc can easily use them against you.

What I did was go deep within and ask questions like,

- "What were my heart, mind and body really addicted to?"
- "What was I getting from him that I was lacking before he came along?"
- "What was he saving me from?"

Your heart, mind, body, and spirit have been contaminated so it's important that you identify the trauma and wipe it out altogether... otherwise they'll just sit there, festering and growing.

I highly suggest you work with a therapist or counselor when dealing with childhood traumas. It can get pretty intense and you'll need their professional experience and support to filter through the clutter ... and guide you out the other side feeling clear and empowered.

Keep your eyes fixed on you... your significance and needs have been brushed off long enough... it's time to put YOU back on that pedestal so you can love yourself back to whole!!! By raising your vibration, you will soon find that you are drawing in more people who will love and appreciate you as much as you love and appreciate yourself!

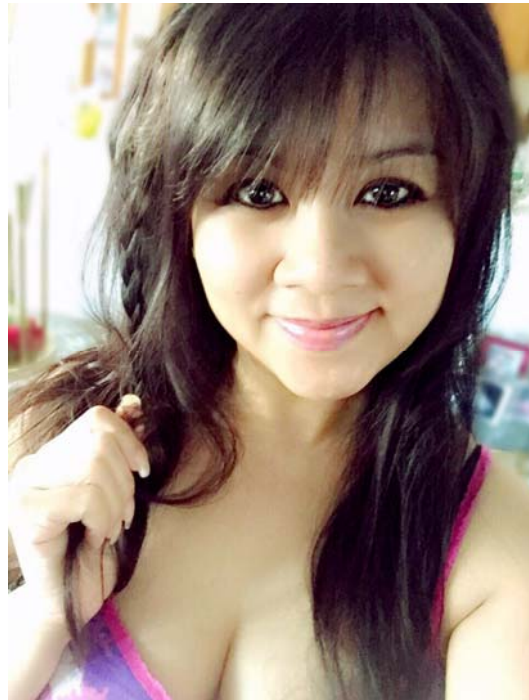
**YOU are the prize... CHOOSE YOU.**

With Love,

*Carmen*

*carmen sakurai*

## About Carmen Sakurai and the Choose You Podcast



Hi! I'm Carmen Sakurai... Certified Life Strategist, Teacher, 2x Best Selling Author, and Advocate for Victims of Narcissistic Abuse.

I'd like to welcome you to the **Choose You** podcast. A weekly audio coaching program to provide survivors of narcissistic abuse with validation, solid answers, and real-life solutions to help heal and break free from this dangerous cycle.

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