

*Remedy
In The
Silence*

A FAITH-TESTING
ENCOUNTER WITH
A PSYCHOPATH

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ENCOUNTER WITH A
PSYCHOPATH



(Ecclesiastes 8:12) Though a sinner do evil a hundred times, and prolong his [days], yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, that fear before him:

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For obvious reasons, the author chooses not to be named, and all specifically identifying information and names have been changed to protect all involved.

All observations and conclusions are that of the author's and no clinical expertise is claimed or implied.

Mobius Strip



*... a metaphor for
possibilities outside
our perceptions*

To all those who believe they have been screaming in vain. God hears even in the silence.

*Men are losing their grip on life,
Mockers abound—
Provocation on all sides.
Wise men can't be found.
When beds are made in darkness
Corruption has become their father.
It is time for the innocent
To be astonished by this and
Stir up himself against the hypocrite.
O that one might plead for a man with God,
So the righteous may hold onto their way
And the light of the wicked put out—
The spark of his fire die.
The way of the wicked is slippery
And sin is a reproach, devouring strength;
But he that hath clean hands
Shall be stronger
And stronger.*

– David Wilkerson 1931-2011

Key Symptoms of Psychopathy

by Dr. Robert Hare, P.hD

Interpersonal
Emotional

Glib and superficial
Egocentric and grandiose
Lack of remorse or guilt
Lack of empathy
Deceitful and manipulative
Shallow emotions

Social Deviance

Impulsive
Poor behavior controls
Need for excitement
Lack of responsibility
Early behavior problems
Adult antisocial behavior



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There is a class of individuals who have been around forever and who are found in every race, culture, society and walk of life. Everybody has met these people, been deceived and manipulated by them, and forced to live with or repair the damage they have wrought. These often charming-but always deadly-individuals have a clinical name: psychopaths. Their hallmark is a stunning lack of conscience; their game is self-gratification at the other person's expense. Many spend time in prison, but many do not. All take far more than they give.

The most obvious expressions of psychopathy-but not the only ones-involve the flagrant violation of society's rules. Not surprisingly, many psychopaths are criminals, but many others manage to remain out of prison, using their charm and chameleon-like coloration to cut a wide swathe through society, leaving a wake of ruined lives behind them.

Dr. Robert Hare, Ph.D



Chapter One *Like Screaming In Space*

This book simmered in my head for several years. I contemplated, mulled over, and formulated a dozen different formats. Nothing seemed right. I started, then stopped, and abandoned the whole idea for long periods. Then someone else's dilemma would come to my attention and I'd get fired up again. But regardless of how incensed I was, every complaint, every incident recounted in the writing, no matter how egregious in the action, seemed like nothing more than the piercing noise of a screech owl.

There are numerous books out now, written by people who have been victimized by individuals with a mental disorder identified as Antisocial Personality Disorder. Despite the many variations in encounters of all those who have been impacted by another's psychopathic behaviors, one thing in common stands out: everyone reports that, especially in the beginning, it is next to impossible to get others to hear and/or understand what he or she is suffering through. I found this to be my greatest frustration and yet I get it—completely. I know what it is like to be screaming your head off but no one can hear—like screaming in outer space, where sound cannot be heard.

However, I also understand why outsiders are perplexed by something that clearly on the surface seems blown out of proportion. Even other family members and close friends, those who otherwise would be supportive and sympathetic, find it difficult to empathize when they only see what is happening on the surface. It's easier to judge, to assume someone is mostly overreacting or being dramatic than to consider that something sinister really is happening. Conclusions are quickly drawn that one can't possibly make a diagnosis of mental disorder in someone else based on reading a few books. This kind of response revealed to me the underbelly of the beast beneath this disorder. Believe what you will, pure, self-centered evil does easily find a home here on earth with good reason. And the hallmarks of evil are lack of conscience and creative, adroit lying, which, coincidentally, also happen to be the first indicators of APD.

General lying is separate from creative lying which requires a fine-tuned instinct about when and how to lie. Only someone who is skilled in the art of lying knows the real collective power of small, seemingly inconsequential lies. Lies that only cause angst or minor annoyance work best because they are often too petty to challenge; each, on its own, is hardly worth mentioning, like a single grain of sand. But one on top of another, gathered together over time, eventually becomes a powerful abrasive with great potential to cause real destruction. The subtle, often overlooked energy of the skilled liar is, of course, the hidden malicious intent. Small lies seem so innocuous, pointing them out simply makes the pointer look like a bleating goat.

This paradox, coupled with our modern culture's growing willingness to compromise and accept untruth as the new norm, the small lies, lies of omission, and the lies that saturate our daily lives, designed to keep us focused on minutia and consumerism, from advertising to politics, have desensitized us so that we can no longer discern the difference between what is true and what is a lie. And worse, even if we do know it, we don't care. Unfortunately, this leaves us wide open targets for the manipulations of career liars.

Liars are abundant in this world but not all liars are APD, just as not all narcissists are APD. Liars lie for all manner of reasons, from the benign "fish tale" to embellish and enlarge otherwise boring stories, to the self-serving CYA lie to protect and/or build up. However, more often than not, practiced, artful liars lie specifically to hurt or inconvenience others and more importantly to further advance darkly personal agendas. Skilled liars count on this particular condition being ignored because the lies are either too outrageous or too insignificant but it is the dismissing of them that is the fuel that enables liars with mental disorders, as well as other con-artists, granting them the latitude to continue on with amazingly little opposition.

During my emersion in the study of APD I learned as much about normal human behaviors as I did about the abnormal. I was stunned to witness how easy it is to fool and manipulate otherwise intelligent, educated, reasonable people. This opened my eyes to better understand the dynamics of human interactions on all levels, in all areas of society, not just personal relationships, but on the larger scale including politics and religion.

Conclusion: for all our sophistication, on any given day, we are ripe for the picking. The bigger picture then reveals an even scarier vulnerability. But that's another book.

The final impetus that launched me into writing this book was that I just had to get to the place where I was willing to speak out, to tell this story, in spite of the abundant risks. Certainly no one who is still dealing with a psychopath would be willing to speak out under his/her own name for obvious reasons. But given the stories and all the variations on the theme, it was the common complaint, the unheard cries for help, that convinced me I needed to speak in a way that someone might be able to hear.

Call me a shrew or a screech owl, call me a whiner, one thing I will not be is a victim. I own my mistakes and I hold others accountable for theirs. Frustrations aside, I know that there is a God orchestrated purpose for life-altering encounters; people, both good and bad, come into our lives for a reason. The natural reaction of those who are recovering from a life-altering encounter is anguish to the point of breaking, guilt for having been so gullible, for allowing that sick person into the lives of their families. As difficult as it is, this can be the beginning of healing because the humiliation can evolve into acceptance of responsibility that then properly channeled can emerge as a stronger faith and resolve to stand, which then should be a testimony and encouragement to others.

I am not saying these kinds of experiences ought to happen, quite the contrary, I'd wish that no one would ever have to find themselves desperately need-

ing remedy from an encounter with a psychopath. But I will say, it is true that that which doesn't kill you does make you stronger. The trick is, as you are wising up, to refuse to allow it to make you bitter, or sink into the bottomless pit of self-recrimination out of which no healing can ever occur. Neither can there ever be healing by dwelling on revenge. Christians are mandated to forgive and forget. Sometimes this is misinterpreted to mean taking the miscreant back over and over again. I refer the rigid religious legalists who argue this point to Mark 6:11 where Jesus instructed His disciples to leave and shake the dust off their feet when they encountered those who would not believe. In other words, have no ill-will but on the other hand, feel no obligation to stay either.

Another common denominator among victims of psychopaths is a complete lack of faith in the system to protect them; they typically have no expectations of remedy or vindication in, by, or from this world. A woman pleads with a judge not to let her homicidal husband out of jail and asks to go on record that she believes he will kill her. The judge tells her she should call 911 if she feels threatened. Two weeks later she is dead in her garage. Justice may be blind but she is often deaf and dumb as well. In some ways, it appears there is no escape from being victimized by psychopaths.

Christians, however, have a hope that comes from believing there can be a refuge even in trials and tribulation and that there will be a day of reckoning for the evil done. But it isn't in the outcome where we find our peace, but rather in the frightening moments where peace finds us. Sometimes God shields us and some-

times He allows us to be in the middle of the storm. Regardless we know we can do anything He asks of us because He is there with us which affords us a confidence and freedom from fear that can come from no other source.

(Philippians 4:13) I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

I have no degree in human behavioral science. But I don't have to, nor do I have to apologize for making uneducated observations. Should I therefore be dismissed because I dare to draw conclusions based on my personal experience and observations? Titles and labels are largely useless anyway, at least in regard to the diversities in the human condition that are so difficult to quantify. Further, even when an official diagnosis is declared by a licensed professional, as does happen occasionally, the legal system is not equipped to make decisions based on such unless a law has been clearly broken because there is no law against having a mental disorder. More people than you can imagine have varying degrees of warped, egocentric, thought processing. It's more or less irrelevant what the cause is. Is it environmental? Is it a result of complex multiples of factors? Theories do abound. I see a rapidly growing soul-sickness spreading like a virus in our society.

However you choose to view it, one thing paramount to know is that Antisocial Personality Disorder is a real, present threat, an illness that negatively impacts thousands, perhaps millions, of people every day. There is no cure, no amount of therapy or medication

can rehabilitate a brain that is thusly disordered. The only defense is to be on the offense by educating yourself and to be ever vigilant of the signs and to accept the real possibility that the odds are good that everyone will cross paths with a psychopath at least once in his/her lifetime. If you are reading this, it is likely that you have already crossed paths with an APD and are looking for answers or solace or just someone, anyone, to hear your silent screams—finally.

While this learning experience has aged me, the trade-off is heightened discretionary senses; I ask questions first and believe what I hear only when the doing matches up with the saying. This is across the board, both in personal interactions and on the larger scale, i.e., news reports I watch/read, politicians I vote for and representatives of God whom I listen to.

Whether or not others pay attention to what I am now willing to share is up to them. I am a Christian so my point of view is distinctly through my spiritual perspective, written as a fictional representation, like a parable. Jesus taught in parables and I understand why better now.

(Luke 8:9-10) And his disciples asked him, saying, What might this parable be? And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand.

Ultimately, take heart, there is indeed a remedy that resides inside the silence where no one else can hear.



Glib and Superficial

Psychopaths are often voluble and verbally facile. They can be amusing and entertaining conversationalists, ready with a clever comeback, and are able to tell unlikely but convincing stories that cast themselves in a good light. They can be very effective in presenting themselves well and are often very likable and charming.

Dr. Robert Hare, Ph.D



Chapter Two Talk Is Easy

She hired a private detective/body guard. This was not the true beginning of the story but it was the day she began her quest to face, then define, seeking to ultimately understand, the difficult and what threatened to be a dangerous road that lay just ahead.

She found the agency online and made the phone call. Within an hour a man, sitting in a black SUV, was guarding the entrance to their property. *How could this be happening to us, she wondered, us, ordinary, law-abiding, middle class people who work, pay our bills, play and live our quiet lives without incident or conflict?*

Feeling trapped inside her daughter's house, anxiously awaiting assault or some kind of violence, she didn't have a clue what, she had time to reflect on the circumstances at hand and began to ponder and ask herself painfully pointed questions, the first being, *what was wrong with this man? How could we have been so fooled by him? Why was it so easy to believe the lies that now were coming to light?*

Kari sat, tense, motionless, at the dining room table, staring at without seeing the dusty morning sunbeams sliced by the wood blinds. *What was it that made*

this man, she asked herself, *whom we believed to be so nice, suddenly seem so dangerous?* She thought about his temper. Yes, he had exposed a nasty temper on occasion but his big booming laugh seemed so genuine and demonstrated an easy-going nature. Did he not tell great funny stories? Was he not well-rounded and experienced, at least according to his stories? Did he not seem like a devoted father to his older sons? Yes, he'd had some rough luck, some failed businesses, some problems with his credit. That \$200,000 profit from the sale of his house that he had said was in the bank turned out to be a lie but he glibly explained that he was ashamed to admit he had to use it to pay off business debt. It was no wonder that his credit was bad. He easily talked about how God had guided him to sell his house. He sat and read his Bible daily.

Kari suddenly felt much older than her sixty years. It was painful digging back in retrospect finding red flags that had clearly been ignored. One little thing, and then another worked itself up into her consciousness.

His credit—wait a minute. He said his credit was bad because he had been a victim of identity theft. She tried to recall if he had made any effort to fight it or repair his credit. Nothing came to mind. Another lie? Wow. And what else? She opened her laptop with no plan for finding the answers to her growing list of questions. She simply stared in swelling desperation at the screen saver. In a minute, photos of the kids and happy times filled up the screen and then dissolved into each other. Thanksgiving of 2007, everyone together outside in the leaves, big smiles, the boys clowning

around. Easter, Christmas, Birthdays, Cookouts. From where she was sitting she could look out the front window and see the spot where the family had all stood for the Thanksgiving photo. It seemed so long ago. She just kept thinking that they had no idea how gullible they were.

“And how could we have been so gullible?” She said aloud to no one. She concluded that undoubtedly, it was their gullibility that had made them so vulnerable. Predators know instinctively how to hone in on and take advantage of naiveté. Flourishing internet and email scams prove this. People believe what they choose to believe, shushing instinct and abandoning all critical thinking when they are being mesmerized by something they wish to embrace; minor inconsistencies are easily excused and brushed aside.

In her reflections she began to own up to and count the warning signs she had so willingly, stupidly ignored. She realized, in hindsight, that it’s embarrassingly easy to see a truth, but in the moment, what is true is not the focus nor even on the radar; what looks true is all that is needed.

Hindsight wisdom tumbled around inside her head. *Subconsciously we determine there are degrees of truth that can be ranked according to significance, value and risk. There is always a pure nugget underneath the layers of what looks like truth. However, we have been conditioned to cherry pick the layers that suit a given moment. Or perhaps it is more accurate to say we are gullible because we simply do not wish to live or be defined as skeptics. Who wants to be labeled a cynic? We want to interact with others positively*

not negatively, accepting and trusting, without doubt and suspicion spoiling our potential relationships. Relationships are hard enough to foster as it is, that's for sure. Thus, in our earnest desire to be trusting, we are easy marks for those who know how to use our desire to accept what we are told at face value. We would rather risk being fooled than be socially separated and isolated by untrusting natures, or worse, being branded as being suspicious-minded.

She considered doing a background check but she didn't know how to do a deep search and had already spent \$39.95 for an online service that netted nothing but a charge on her credit card. The private detective said he would do it for her but she wasn't sure what good it could possibly do at that point. The damage had been done. Her daughter, Amy, had married him, embraced his three older sons, as did everyone. She also had a child with him, a baby, Lyle, who was but a year and a half old.

She marveled at how in less than three years this strange man, this enigma, who seemed so good, had married and moved in with Amy and somehow was able to destroy her good credit, force her into bankruptcy and foreclosure on her house that she had worked so hard for, as well as to lose her car. Kari thanked God daily that they had someplace for Amy and her children to go.

No doubt it was, in fact, the move to the house in the family-developed property that opened Pandora's Box and kicked off the events that led up to the day; the turning point day Kari felt compelled to hire a private detective/body guard.

Kari went to the kitchen to pour herself a cup of coffee. Amy came out of the bedroom. They didn't speak for a few minutes but the topic of the day was like a menacing third person in the room. Lyle had followed his mother into the kitchen. She scooped him up and put him in his high-chair.

"How about some juice?" Amy set a juice box and some animal crackers on his tray. Lyle clapped his pudgy hands.

Kari said, "I just keep thinking about all the things we ignored. Really, the first red flag, that should also have set off flashing lights and warning bells, came in within six months after you married him."

"I know," Amy said quietly biting her lip.



In late October, three years earlier, Dan claimed he had found some bookkeeping improprieties in the business in which he was one-third partner. He shared the information with the silent partner who lived out of state, and then confronted the other partner who had managed the books. The confronted partner resigned his position within a month and left the business to be managed by Dan and so Dan took over the daily operations. The business, being largely seasonal, was then in the typical winter slowdown. No money was available, at least according to Dan, who had already found many excuses for not giving Amy money for bills even when he was drawing \$5000 a month salary. When he took over the business, he simply stopped giving her any money, not even for groceries, using the business being in transition as his excuse.

Before the marriage Amy had a good job but she had no extra. She had her own bills to pay, not counting the mortgage. After the marriage, which added more hungry mouths to feed, and the inevitable increase in utilities use, Amy, juggling the increased overhead on her salary alone, found herself already falling behind in the first six months. She kept pressing Dan to tap into the \$200,000 he claimed to have. He kept finding excuses, first he said he had put it in a CD under his father's name and on and on the reasons why he couldn't use it piled up.

Finally, one Sunday morning in early December, Amy, at her wits end, left him a note on the kitchen table and went to her parents house to spend the day, hoping to send a message that he needed to get a grip. They had several phone conversations. Later in the day, when she returned home, she found a long letter on the table. He confessed that he didn't have the money, that it had been used to pay off the failed business debt and the IRS. He said he was going to a motel to think about what he was going to do about the current business problem.

Kari thought to herself, here's the quandary then, when a red flag is waving and warning bells are clanking, we still don't want to think the worst. We don't want to admit, half a year into a marriage, that perhaps there was something we should have known or asked.

Instead of asking the pointed questions raised by reasonable doubt, Amy contacted Dan's sister and through her coaxed him back, the money issue put aside. Kari, in her desire for things to improve, stepped

up to help him redo the company website, and he worked, or so they thought, night and day, seven days a week, pouring himself into the business. He was often out of the house and in the office by 4:30 am. Rarely home even on Sunday.

Pulling it all together, Kari could surmise that being forced to admit his lie about the 200k was an early turning point. He treated everyone differently after that and she guessed in hindsight it was because he got caught in the big lie, thus taking some shiny off his facade. Dan's sister told Amy, off-handedly, that he was a scrapper and if he ever got pushed into a corner he'd come out swinging.



Kari needed fresh air. She pulled on a sweater and quietly slipped outside to the porch. Spring was in full bloom but it was still chilly. She folded her arms in, more for comfort than warmth, and sunk into the porch swing. She kept sorting through memories, trying to find and isolate those damnable red flags hoping to make some sense of what appeared to be hopelessly senseless.



Impulsive

Psychopaths are unlikely to spend much time weighing the pros and cons of a course of action or considering the possible consequences. "I did it because I felt like it," is a common response. These impulsive acts often result from an aim that plays a central role in most of the psychopath's behavior: to achieve immediate satisfaction, pleasure, or relief.

Dr. Robert Hare, PhD



Chapter Three *Not My Fault*

Kari drew in a ragged breath and took in the view of the pond and rolling meadow beyond. It was so peacefully bucolic. She marveled at the incredible process that had led them to this unique rural oasis surrounded by urban civilization. From beginning to end God's hand in it was abundantly clear and acknowledging the blessing yet again lifted her spirit.

Kari's daughter Caroline, and son-in-law, John, partners with Kari and her husband Keith in the development, moved into one of the existing houses on the property and the other, older house, was used as a family event gathering place. It had a long list of improvements to be done before it could be a home again. But it was a family project and everyone dived into the job with enthusiasm.

The short term plan included Amy, Dan and their blended brood moving into the refurbished house primarily because it was considerably larger than Amy's house that they lived in, where there was no room for the baby who was on the way. The long term plan included building two more houses and thus basically creating a family-owned neighborhood. A

place where grand-children could safely run and play. A place where everyone knew their neighbors.

Kari thought, *...a place where everyone was accountable to everyone else.*

This stirred up a realization that Dan seemed alternately resistant and on board with the idea of moving into the house. She remembered his half-hearted effort to remodel the upstairs bath. They paid for the materials and he spent a few weekends tearing it all out but abandoned the project half-done and they finally hired someone to finish. But by fall of 2007, as the baby's birth drew near, things had begun to unravel with Dan's business and he was around even less than before, so what should have raised doubts was easily excused as Dan being too busy.

As things became more tenuous he made more hair-brained, impulsive choices and decisions and, amazingly, Kari noted that, in every case, the inevitable bad results were always someone else's fault. She added another ignored red flag to the growing pile.

Eventually his charming facade cracked as his temper was unleashed and his business relationships began to alienate him, one by one, from others within his business community. In his mind, and by his account, each falling out was never, ever his fault.

Kari made a mental note: *this must be the biggest, reddest red flag of all when you are evaluating a person's character—can he or she take responsibility for the consequences of bad behavior and choices? If he or she is always the victim, pay attention, something is clearly wrong. Determining the degree of wrongness depends on how willing one is to dig into*

the layers of truth. A warning is useless if it does not cause at least some kind of reaction or at the very least launch reasonable questions.

In her deep reverie, Kari singled out and reexamined with a new perspective the one decidedly damaging decision Dan had made to spend tens of thousands of dollars to pursue a lawsuit against the resigned partner, believing he would win hundreds of thousands. It was a fool's quest at best. She saw this as yet another example of believing what you choose to believe instead of what the signs are saying. But what would become of the business was less important to Kari than her daughter's and grandchildren's unknown future in that hour.

Suddenly disturbed and restless, she stepped off the porch and began walking. Bits and pieces, disconnected, unrelated scraps of information began coming together, forming a more complete picture. It reminded her of one of those composite photos of tiny shots you don't notice individually but all arranged together they create another, larger representation.

She finally understood that everything Dan had done to that point was building up and then systematically destroying the business even as Amy was falling farther behind in her mortgage payment and facing inevitable foreclosure on her house. Kari could see, even then, that this was not a concern for Dan. After all, his name was not on the mortgage or the utilities. It was as though he was in complete disconnect, successfully masking his lack of concern behind a fictitious work load. Past the point of no return, once it was clear that foreclosure was inevitable, the move to the house on

the property became a necessity even though it wasn't completely refurbished. It took another year, however, for this to happen. During that year, 2008, Dan's business peaked in the spring and then began to slowly decline. One thread after another frayed and became unraveled. At that time, all the little snap shots were not completely assembled and so the big picture was not yet visible.

During the spring of 2007, when it appeared the business, by Dan's false accounts, was growing, Amy made arrangements to go on half-time hours at her job after the birth in the fall so that she could be with her baby. She regretted that she had had to work full time with her first two children and wanted to do differently for this new one. Dan, with his practiced confidence, assured her that the business was growing and she could even quit working eventually. What was he thinking? Did he really believe his own lies?

Full or part time, it wouldn't have mattered anyway. They weren't making it on her full time salary, even though he was paying himself a decent monthly salary. He always had excuses for why he couldn't give her any money and only did so when she pressed the point or she needed to prevent the electricity or phone from being shut off. His most common excuse was that he had to pay child support. This almost always turned out to be a lie that was exposed when his ex, Jane, would send an email requesting that he pay her the back child support. And yet it didn't faze him in the least to be caught in the lie and he never had to answer for it or do differently.

Kari thought: *Red Flag! Red Flag!* The expired warning signals just kept coming and Amy, who had

been on the front lines, kept ignoring them along with everyone else. Along with other obligations he also wasn't filing or paying income tax either. Kari thanked God that Amy filed her taxes separately. Further she gave thanks that Amy had nothing to do with Dan's failing business either. She had more than enough fires of her own to stamp out.

Kari watched a flock of geese fly overhead and wondered absently what it would feel like to be able to fly away. But the concept of escaping trouble at hand wasn't in her nature. What she wanted was resolution. Kari was a problem solver. She was resolute that this problem might get worse before it got better but she had faith that God was in the details and He would see them through.

This sudden swelling of affirmation came out of nowhere, like an unexpected refreshing spring breeze. She realized that she had been so preoccupied with the evil at hand, she had forgotten to pray other than the standard, "help us, Lord" plea of desperation.

"I'm sorry, Father, You should have been my first stop, instead I have been leaning on my own ability to figure this out and solve this. Forgive me. Guide us through this, Lord, that in every way, You will be glorified."

Kari, feeling suddenly revived, turned around and walked back to the house.



Kari sat staring at the blinking cursor on the empty page on her laptop, willing her fingers to form words. She began slowly, mostly typing in incomplete

sentences, recording disconnected memories, hoping to find some explanation, form a plan of action or just, at the least, understand what had happened and how it had come to this. Finally she realized that most of what she had written was pedantic, snarky and sounded more like the complaining ramblings of a shrew. She paused and then wrote:

I have only just begun this journal and already I am weary of the telling of the sorted details of this hot mess. I find it tedious and depressing to dig back and raise up the stressful memories of the past three years that have brought us to this crisis. Nevertheless, I am determined to press on, compelled to document this story as a cautionary tale perhaps eye-opening for someone else and inspire at least cursory investigation into too-good-to-be-true stories coming from exceptionally charming people. It is my reluctance and weariness to write this that pushes me forward because I know that silence is the great enabler of those who would take advantage of others.

Amy walked up to her mother and said, “I found an attorney who can see me tomorrow. She advised me to keep Lyle here with me until we can get a temporary custody hearing.”

Kari smiled, nodded, acknowledging the answered prayer, *thank You, Lord*. She continued typing, inspired by a sense of progress at last:

By the time Amy and Dan had finally moved into the new house in mid-February 2009, Dan had become an afterthought. He was never home anymore. For many months, when Dan's ten year old son, Jake, was supposed to be with Dan, he was with Amy instead because Dan was always absent. In fact, Amy called Jake's mother and told her that there was no reason he had to stay with her if he preferred being with his mom when Dan was gone, an offer Jake's mother much appreciated.

The previous summer, Dan missed all but one family gathering/pool party. He would have been hard pressed to use work to get out of Thanksgiving and Christmas but Amy's birthday, their anniversary, days that apparently meant nothing to him were irrelevant. He was busy. Working, working, working. Busy man. Amy worked too, and took care of the home front and the kids, clinging to the belief that Dan was working hard and succeeding at building the business. That's what he claimed, anyway.

However, Dan's business was collapsing by the end of February 2009 and Amy made the mistake of asking him if he was going to make his truck payment, which was in her name. Apparently this was one of those backed-into-the-corner moments and he snapped and came out swinging. He ranted, raved, yelled, cursed and called Amy things she had never heard before. At one point she was afraid he would get

physical. He told her she was evil and he didn't know why the Bible didn't go up in flames in her hands.

That was a Saturday night. The next morning he left early as usual and Amy confided to Caroline and me about the incident. Later that evening Jim and Bob drove in and sat in their car for nearly an hour in front of the house. Then Dan pulled in. I will always believe he sent his boys in first to run interference, testing the atmosphere. He probably assumed we would all confront him for his bad behavior as we had done once nearly a year before when he lost his temper. But we did not this time. We decided to wait and see what would happen next. I cannot deny that even then I believed it was over, that he did not love Amy and he didn't want to be here. I think I knew by then that he had secrets that he preferred to keep and it's hard to live in the dark when people keep turning on the light.

Life is so not like the movies where decisions and actions are scripted, the good guys know what to do instantly. Sometimes doing nothing is the right thing, and then sometimes stepping up and doing something is the better thing. But when you don't know which to do, you pray and believe that out of evil good will come.

On Monday, while Amy was at work, Dan, Jim and Bob, were all in the house watching TV all day, something they would not have done if Amy had been there. On Tuesday, Caroline went over to confront Bob about driving too

fast into the property and terrifying her three year old son by threatening to throw him in the pond. He left but returned later to participate in what became a family confrontation. Keith and I were not there but by all accounts, it was an unpleasant culmination of all the frustrations and complaints that had piled up over the course of two years. Many ugly things were said in anger.

Thursday morning Amy asked Dan if he had meant everything he had said in the past few days and he responded absolutely yes without a twinge of remorse. She told him that he would have to leave then, it was over. He packed a few things and left in a fury.

Over the course of the next few days Dan and the boys came and emptied the house of his belongings, his furniture and clothing. Amy had already incorporated their shared kitchen items so she sorted and boxed them up and told him he could come get them when she was there. Her fear was that unsupervised he would help himself to anything he wanted. The only item they acquired together during the marriage was a washing machine so there was no conflict of what was hers and his. Though he agreed to wait until she was there, he and the boys came and went through a window. He took the boxes and only one other thing—the X-box I had given all the kids for Christmas. It just didn't matter.

Caroline called to tell me Dan was taking things out of the house. I drove over just as they

were pulling out. I called Keith, who immediately called Dan's cell phone. Dan didn't answer, of course, so Keith left a message telling Dan that if he or his sons ever set foot on the property again, we would call the sheriff's department and have him arrested for trespassing.

In the weeks that followed his leaving, Dan began to email Amy and ask if he could see the baby. Though he had spent less than five minutes a day with Lyle, when he was here, suddenly it seemed the child was all that was on his mind. Amy, believing that she had no choice, agreed. Lyle was not particularly bonded to Dan so Amy did not allow overnight visits at first. Lyle was always quite stressed and cried when she had to drop him off. But Dan's emails became more intimidating and accusing to the point of wild lies.

She felt increasing fear and pressure.

This went on for several weeks but came to a climax on Easter Sunday. Amy agreed to let Lyle go to Dan at three o'clock but not for overnight. That evening, when she met him at their agreed exchange place, Dan said something particularly menacing to her. It was ugly enough that she was afraid for herself and for the baby. She drove home and called me sobbing. I told her I'd be there first thing in the morning.

That brings us to today, the day I hired a private eye—the day after Easter, 2009.





Egocentric and Grandiose

Psychopaths have a narcissistic and grossly inflated view of their own self-worth and importance, a truly astounding egocentricity and sense of entitlement, and see themselves as the center of the universe, justified in living according to their own rules.

Dr. Robert Hare, PhD



Chapter Four Can't Catch Me

The process for getting a court order begins with copious amounts of legal paperwork. First, divorce papers had to be drafted, filed and served. Prompted by urgency, filling out and filing the paperwork was expedited within two days. Serving a person who knows how to dodge being served is not quite as simple.

A preliminary discussion with her attorney reassured Amy that it was okay to avoid all contact with Dan, allowing them to breath again. Kari told the private detective that they probably would not need him for body guarding anymore. She would have preferred to say that she was shored up by faith but, while she was a small measure relieved, she knew she wouldn't be able to afford his services for an undetermined length of time and so she had no choice but to believe Dan would not try anything violent, and prayed without ceasing that God would not allow him to do something stupid.

Kari did stay in contact with the PI for a few weeks as the ongoing drama of getting Dan served unfolded. He occasionally investigated the progress as

days then weeks passed as they continued to wonder if the papers were served or not. The PI told Kari that a deputy friend of his had tried several times to serve Dan at his house and then finally left his card. Dan called the deputy and told him to leave the papers at the court house and he'd pick them up but, of course, he didn't; just another stall tactic.

In the meantime, Dan used this period of time to send cleverly composed emails. Sometimes rambling and full of accusations and other times just pitiful. Amy quickly learned that the best defense was to ignore them because any, however small, response opened the door for him to fill a response email with accusations. Providing no response seemed to leave him without a forum. Occasionally he would call and leave a message on her cell phone. He offered to baby-sit, he wanted to take the baby to a family birthday party. Amazingly, this workaholic, who never had a moment to spare, suddenly had all manner of time on his hands to be with his child, and apparently it was suddenly the single most important thing on his mind.

Some of his emails were over the top creative but scary as well. One day Amy received an epistle wherein he claimed that he had filed assault charges against John and Caroline. Further, he recounted, in detail, how he had gone to court and told the judge that he was in the middle of a divorce and how much he loved his wife and just wanted to work things out and, lo and behold, the judge talked him into dropping the charges so he could work on his marriage.

Regardless of the complete improbability of this having occurred, according to his account, he claimed

in a single week time period to have filed assault charges and then appeared before a judge. Kari knew he was capable of lying but until then she didn't know just how delusional or brazen he could be stepping out of his personally manufactured world. At that point it settled in on her that, not only did he lie, he lied boldly and telling what he wished to be true, he counted on people being confused enough by the boldness that there would be no follow-up or even questions.

Journal Entry:

When we hear a big bold lie, one that can be easily refuted, we are taken off-guard. We doubt our own common sense quotient. Instead of saying, that can't be true, we say, that must be true because who would say something that can so easily be disproven? I'll tell you who, someone with a mental disorder who lives by his own rules.

Just to confirm her suspicions, Kari asked her private detective to follow up and sure enough there was a record of Dan chatting with a sheriff's deputy about a "domestic" problem he had had with his in-laws. It was a statement not a charge, proven by the fact that no one was arrested. The judge was complete fiction.

This alerted Kari that while he was a bold liar he always built his lies on a seed of truth confirming for her that his was not the skill level of a new liar or someone merely seeking CYA. This was fine-tuned arrogant

lying, refined and polished over a life-time of experience. That's when it occurred to Kari that she ought to dig further into Dan's history.

As time passed, with Dan still dodging being served, he came up with several other inventive, but predictable offensive moves. One bright Saturday in late April, two sheriff deputies showed up at Amy's door. Caroline and Kari were there. Lyle was in his highchair having lunch. Kari was not surprised to see them and welcomed them in. They explained that Dan was "very concerned" about the welfare of his baby son and sent them to check on things. Amy is a nester and excellent homemaker. Anyone entering her clean, cozy, well-ordered home would know instantly that there was no danger. The baby was happy, being fed and the womenfolk were gathered chatting over coffee. They told the deputies the basic story. One deputy said, "Oh, I see, he is using us to get at her."

"Yes, exactly," Kari confirmed calmly.

Later that day Kari received a call from her PI telling her there had been quite a lot of chatter on the police scanner about Dan. Apparently police don't like being used, when they know that's what is happening. It never happened again, but then Dan probably knew it was a one shot effort to intimidate Amy. Plus, he might have also believed he could use the effort to prove what a "concerned dad" he was.

When Kari added the incident to her journal she concluded:

What is sad to note is that Dan never realizes what others think of his behaviors. He

can't afford to entertain the concept that he appears as a fool and a liar. The narcissist in him requires that he must maintain his ego at all times, at least in his own mind. If it appears that someone else deems him to be contemptible then doubtless it is the other person's fault/flaw/problem.

When it seemed as though Dan would be able to avoid being served forever, Amy got permission from her attorney to send him a simple email. She said that if he truly wanted to see the baby he would have to allow himself to be served so they could proceed to the temporary custody hearing. He sent back a ranting email claiming it wasn't his job to get himself served. But he did finally accept the papers. What choice did he have? This confirmed for Kari that, though he mostly resided inside his own alternate reality, he was able to function in the real world when he had no other option. She thought *...crazy...like a fox.*

He hired an attorney and then immediately began official legal offensive measures. Though the poor man did not know it at the time, Dan's legal counsel had become his newest victim.

When the counter measures began, suddenly Amy was unfit. There were all manner of accusations being filed and emailed, references to strange bruises and scratches, possible sexual abuse. While completely predictable, the days and weeks leading up to the temporary custody hearing were full of angst and stressful moments. Fear is the biggest challenge to faith. Even when one can truly claim belief that God has everything

under control, fear of the unknown strength of the foe works its way into the subconscious, undermining all attempts to maintain. And it is in these struggles and trials where faith is tested and either strengthened or overcome. As Kari was determined to be an overcomer, to fight giving in to fear, Amy was learning her own lessons about faith in the trial by fire.

Once the divorce process was moving forward, the temporary custody hearing was set for the end of May. Kari added to her journal:

How do you explain to a judge in a handful of sentences the life and times of a man who is so obsessed with all things manly that even his sons are nothing more than an extension of his bloated ego? How do you impress on an overworked officer of the court that the bluff and huff of a man who is a champion at facade building is really only the smoke screen over an obsession with saving face and even more than that—winning. Life is a game that must be won. If it cannot be won fairly, with skill pitted against skill, it can, and should be won by any means possible. This is his motivation—the only way to maintain his ego is by winning and/or by doing whatever it takes to maintain a facade of winning.

The hearing was a simple process, a visitation schedule was established, a guardian ad litem assigned and psychological exam ordered for Dan by Amy's attorney. This also meant Amy would be required to have the same evaluation.

In the meantime, Dan's business was taking its last gasps. He had sponsored a big spring event and word had come back to Amy that it was a huge fiasco and, in fact, that Dan had attacked at least two attendees. His reputation within his industry was rapidly becoming a huge liability to him. The rumors were flying fast and furious. Even so, he continued to devise grand schemes and was able to find people who were unaware of his nefarious business practices to scam.

During the months of going deep into his recent history and personal dealings Kari was truly shocked to find out what a abysmally bad business man Dan was. She also came across some really grand lies that others shared with her. One person told her that when he first met Dan, Dan bragged that he had sold his business for two million dollars and he was living off the interest trying to decide what he wanted to do next. The truth was that it was a business he had with his brother. Within two years Dan had completely mismanaged it to the point that the business was dissolved and his brother stopped talking to him. In fact, this piece of the puzzle then fit nicely into place explaining why he and his brother were not on speaking terms when Dan and Amy met. Dan's reason for the rift was much different and...predictably, not his fault.

By June, Kari was in full research mode. She moved her home office to Amy's house so that she could be there during the day and available to watch Lyle when necessary. Amy completely rearranged her working hours to fit the temporary custody arrangement so that she would be able to be with Lyle when he

was with her. She did whatever she had to do to be the responsible parent.

Dan, on the other hand, lived as he pleased and how he afforded it became a narrow focus for Kari. During the time from July of 2006 to March of 2009, Dan, ostensibly, was unable to help pay the household expenses but somehow he found a way to pay his rent and other expenses when Amy kicked him out. One clue led to another and Kari finally found a connection to a woman whom Dan had been dating when he met Amy. Apparently Amy's situation was better for him at the time, and he dumped the other woman, or so Amy thought. Later, as they were pouring over subpoenaed cell phone records they found numerous, hours long phone calls to this woman, beginning within weeks of Dan moving out.

The deeper she dug in, the more stones she turned over, the depth of the deception seemed to be. One day as Kari was typing into her journal she suddenly felt sick to her stomach when she realized that it had not been just a succession of unfortunate events that had brought them into this war. Amy had been duped. He had used Amy and her family. Even so, Kari found it hard to imagine that he had been smart enough to devise a long-term plan up front. It seemed to be more of an opportunity being seized and then falling apart in the same way everything else he had ever done, and for the same reason; ineptitude hidden by lies and bravado.

The one thing he had not counted into the equation was another child. But it was the child, Lyle, that

made it impossible for him to move on. Kari understood that Lyle was not just Dan's youngest son, he was the trophy to be won in a competition, which meant that Dan's ego was at stake and clearly that was something he had to protect at all costs, no matter who got hurt, even if that meant Lyle.

But getting others to see and understand that was not likely to happen. Dan knew what to say, when to say it and to whom to keep up the "good guy" mask glued in place even as he was proving by his actions that he lived by his own rules.

The great conundrum of modern society is that the more we learn, the more high-tech our communication devises are, the dumber we seem to be. The psychopath's ability to convince anyone of anything on the short term by simply seeming to be what he/she claims to be points this out. How many psychopaths, both those who are ordained and those who are just masquerading, have done immeasurable harm because they are able to hide behind a black suit and priest's collar?



Poor Behavior Controls

Besides being impulsive, psychopaths are highly reactive to perceived insults or slights. Most of us have powerful inhibitory controls over our behavior; even if we would like to respond aggressively we are usually able to "keep the lid on." In psychopaths, these inhibitory controls are weak, and the slightest provocation is sufficient to overcome them. As a result, psychopaths are short-tempered or hotheaded and tend to respond to frustration, failure, discipline, and criticism with sudden violence, threats or verbal abuse. But their outbursts, extreme as they may be, are often short-lived, and they quickly act as if nothing out of the ordinary has happened.

Early behavior problems

Most psychopaths begin to exhibit serious behavioral problems at an early age. These might include persistent lying, cheating, theft, arson, truancy, substance abuse, vandalism, and/or precocious sexuality. Because many children exhibit some of these behaviors at one time or another—especially children raised in violent neighborhoods or in disrupted or abusive families—it is important to emphasize that the psychopath's history of such behaviors is more extensive and serious than most, even when compared with that of siblings and friends raised in similar settings.

Dr. Robert Hare, PhD



Chapter Five
Do As I Say, Not As I Do

By the spring of 2008, Dan, mostly absent, supposedly working, 24/7, Amy was tending to everything at home, juggling the bills and rearranging her schedule to accommodate the new baby. In April of 2008 an incident occurred that Kari later identified to have been likely the beginning of the end, like the small event that, in historical context, eventually gets pin-pointed as the beginning of a world war.

Late in the day Kari received a call from Amy's oldest son, Zach. He was sobbing, which was far from normal so she instantly assumed something horrible had happened, an accident or something even worse. She calmed him down and he was finally able to tell her that he was walking out to his car and Dan, who had been in a foul mood barked a comment to him about a pair of jeans. Dan was loading his truck preparing to go out of town on a job. No one knew then that he was mad because he didn't want to go. He didn't want to go because he knew he was not prepared and it would not end up as a "success" for him.

Journal Entry:

He began a rant that soon involved Zach, Jim and Bob, Amy and the baby, that culminated on the driveway. The baby was in a child carrier next to Amy. Dan began yelling and tossing things violently out of his truck over his shoulder, including a case of bottled water that landed inches away from the baby. That was it, Amy grabbed the baby and yelled at Dan, "Enough!" and went inside. Jim and Bob took Zach aside and told him that he just needed to leave and the best way to handle their dad was to give him his space when he got like that. Zach left and called me.

When I called Amy she was sobbing so she could hardly speak but confirmed Zach's account of the incident. I stewed over this for a day or two and then I just had to have my say. Let me be clear, I'm not inclined to interfere with my grown children's personal business, but I have a vested interest in the physical and mental welfare of my daughter and grandchildren. I didn't care whether Dan had had a bad day or was under stress; there was no excuse for his actions. The fact that a real tragedy had been narrowly missed made it even worse.

Furthermore, I don't put up with abuse, whether physical, mental or verbal. I have known too many women and children who had no one to stand up for them against sheer meanness and my fight back response answers the call.

Rather than confront him in person, though it might be considered the coward's way out, I wrote him an email. But in my defense I wanted to have my say calmly, firmly, and without hysterics. Since I emailed him almost daily because I was his webmaster, I'm sure it was not what he was expecting when he opened it. He did ignore it though, until later when I got a rambling, self-excusing reply.

Later, Dan tried to use this email, and one that Keith sent, prompted by another issue, to make his case that we "threatened him" because Keith told him that if he ever physically harmed Amy and/or the kids, Dan would have to answer to him. Dan also accused Keith of "assaulting" him via the phone message informing him we'd have him arrested if he came on the property again. Keith's response to the accusation was that he had a right to step up and defend his daughter against violence. What real man wouldn't?

It is not enough to excuse someone's bad behavior by saying, "he's just a hot-head", but the advice that Dan's sons gave Zach indicated they had dealt with his temper many times before so no doubt Dan had been excused many times before, probably all of his life. The next day Amy had a brief conversation with Dan's ex, Jane, who confirmed that he had a terrible temper, especially when things were not going his way. He never apologized to anyone for his actions, certainly not Amy or Zach. Amy

claimed that when he lost his temper it was like a brief but violent thunder storm. It came and went and when it was over, the sun came out and he acted as though it had never happened. His attitude was, how dare anyone take him to task over something so trivial that meant nothing and that he couldn't even remember?

The physical assault incidents at a company sponsored event in May of 2009 bear recounting not because they happened but how nothing ever came of it and Dan, yet again, was never held accountable. I had three reports from different people, two who were eye-witnesses and another who simply heard about what happened. Jim and Bob were working at the function. It was outside at a county park. Bob was having a heated discussion with an attendee when Dan, who was quite a distance away, noticed the exchange. Suddenly, Dan went running across the grounds and jumped into the middle of the man with no warning, hitting him with his fists. It took several men to pull Dan off of the man, who immediately took off running. Dan reportedly called out to the man, "I know your name and where you live!"

A similar incident, though more verbal than physical, happened later in the day to another attendee. Apparently Dan's easy going mask had fallen off and his temper was set on a hair-trigger.

After some inquiries, I did eventually find the man who was attacked, but he, predictably,

refused to make a statement. This was a recurring theme during the time I was really digging into the real Dan, the one we didn't know about; the volatile, larcenous Dan. Over and over I would gain information, only to be told, "I don't want to be involved."

Hearing the same responses over and over, I slowly came to understand that it wasn't that his victims didn't want to be involved as much as they were likely afraid of him. I don't blame them for being afraid and I'd do the same thing unless I felt that someone else's life might be in danger.

I wonder, even as I write this, how much danger I am flirting with just delving into his past? I did only cursory investigation into his school years other than to speak with someone who attended high school with him. It was no surprise to find out that Dan was a scrapper even then. Reportedly he was in the middle of a fight almost every day.

Amy admitted that during their courtship Dan spoke freely of his misspent youth and how he dealt drugs and worked with some very shady characters to the point where he made it a habit, when he went to a bar or restaurant, to sit with his back to a wall so that he could see the room. Amy added that he commented once that he felt that for the first time in his life he was living an upright life. I think that was a brief clarion moment and that he meant it, then. When he met Amy he found what he

thought was a chance for normalcy. I think he tried to overcome and settle into a “normal” life but his lifelong habits, patterns and peculiarities overcame him instead.

Dan could be the poster child representing poor behavior controls, except he has plenty of restraint when he is formulating a scheme, schmoozing and charming those who have something he wants or something he has determined could benefit him. He only lets his ugly side out when he has nothing to lose. I realize now that by spring of 2008 he already wanted out of the marriage but he had no place to go so his restraint depended solely on the strength of his need.

As I compose this I am forced to leave out so much for different reasons, not the least of which is to keep from overstating the facts. Many incidents are repetitive examples of the same conscienceless behaviors.

I am trying to simply touch on the most outrageous events, hoping that even just the highlights should be enough to make my case without droning on. There is as much left unsaid as said.

Again, in a normal person, any of the acts and deeds that I have recorded could easily be dismissed as those of someone under stress, someone who is emotionally immature, someone who is struggling to maintain. It is the larger picture, composed of all the little individual shots that reveals the true story.



“

*Pay attention to
what someone
says to you
in anger, because
that is when the
truth comes out.*

”

Lack of Remorse or Guilt

An ASPD's lack of remorse or guilt is associated with a remarkable ability to rationalize their behavior, to shrug off personal responsibility for actions that cause family, friends, and others to reel with shock and disappointment. They usually have handy excuses for their behavior, and in some cases deny that it happened at all.

Lack of empathy

Many of the characteristics displayed by psychopaths are closely associated with a profound lack of empathy and inability to construct a mental and emotional "facsimile" of another person. They seem completely unable to "get into the skin" of others, except in a purely intellectual sense. They are completely indifferent to the rights and suffering of family and strangers alike. If they do maintain ties, it is only because they see family members as possessions.

Shallow emotions

Psychopaths seem to suffer a kind of emotional poverty that limits the range and depth of their feelings. At times they appear to be cold and unemotional while nevertheless being prone to dramatic, shallow, and short-lived displays of feeling. Careful observers are left with the impression they are playacting and little is going on below the surface.

DR. Robert Hare, PhD



Chapter Six Ask Me IF I Care

Once the temporary custody hearing was done and things began to progress, the court appointed guardian ad litem began her interviews. She started by visiting Dan's house during a time when he had the baby. She spent several hours with him. On the day she came to Amy's house, Kari was there. The first questions the guardian asked made it clear to Kari that Dan had done his usual dog and pony show, the act he was so practiced at. As things unfolded they learned that he had accused them of being a "religious cult", that they "believed in the Mayan calendar", that the family property was "dangerous" and that they had "assaulted" him, among other things.

Kari noted later in her journal:

His lies exceeded even my expectations. I admit I was a little nervous during the interview but that is because I have limited trust in the judicial system believing it to be more a "legal" system than geared to absolute justice. I knew so well how easy it was for people to fall for Dan's polished good-guy personae because

we sure did. Mostly I knew how much was at stake. This man, who had a very dark agenda, i.e, convincing the court to give him custody, was highly capable of doing just that.

But what Amy and I knew was that this hidden agenda was not about what was in the baby's best interest, it was about "winning" and getting even, and if he could, getting custody, which meant he could even petition for child support from Amy. What a coup that would be! A double win!

But who would see that but us?

The guardian asked me, toward the end of the interview, what I thought about Dan. I responded instantly, even though at the time I didn't fully know what it meant, that I thought he had Antisocial Personality Disorder. I added that I didn't have a psychology degree but I did have Google. She laughed.

In fact, I had only just come to that conclusion days earlier. I kept asking myself over and over, what was wrong with this man? I drudged up everything, every incident, every lie, everything he did up to that point, that I was aware of, and how things just did not seem to impact him and finally the light bulb clicked on and I said out loud, "He has no conscience!"

From that epiphany on, all of Kari's recollective energy was focused on remembering his responses and behaviors using the litmus test of what he had done instead of what he had said. She recalled how she had

to give Amy money for Christmas for 2006, 2007 and 2008 and he never once acknowledged it. Neither did he ask Amy, and she didn't tell him, how she was able to buy Christmas gifts when she couldn't pay the mortgage because she feared he would see it as an insult to his ego. Kari remembered Amy telling her about the sleepless nights she had overwhelmed with stress about how she would pay the bills and yet he simply wasn't concerned at all. He never lost sleep. Kari hated realizing how they had welcomed him and his sons into their fold, how they all stepped up and helped him in innumerable ways and she could not recall a single time he ever acknowledged any of it. In fact, she could not recall him being the least bit grateful for any help he had received from anyone.

Journal Entry:

Early in 2008, Dan consulted with a graphic artist to redesign his website, without asking for my input. He wanted it to be more masculine or something, I never could figure out the real reason, though I could make a reasonably accurate guess now.

The graphic artist had no web design experience so I had to take his graphics and make them fit the new site. I spent about 56 hours total labor doing it, though it had only been a year since I had spent a long weekend getting the first version up and running. His business depended on the website so I didn't complain because I was still trying to help him build the business up.

Once the redesigned site was up and running I sent him an email to announce it. I got no response, no thank you, no “good job”, no nothing. Weeks later, Amy mentioned to him how rude it was not to acknowledge the work I had done, for free. I received an email from him in which he said, “Amy said that I didn’t thank you. Sorry. Regards, Dan.” What an incredibly clever string of words acknowledging only that he had not thanked me. Now this is skill.

Unless he is in the throes of manipulating someone, or there’s something in it for him, there isn’t going to be an apology or a thank you from him. That is because he doesn’t feel it is necessary except in the context of using the appearance of gratitude as a tool. When Amy had to file bankruptcy, and walk away from her house and car, he was utterly unfazed. It wasn’t his fault so why should he be stressed over it? Why should he bother to offer words of encouragement or comfort? How did we manage to overlook such callous disregard for what Amy was going through?

I have to conclude that he had no intentions of remaining in the marriage because the purpose of the union was no longer an issue. By 2009, though in actuality his company was crumbling, he still believed he had plenty of room to realize his grandiose plans which meant he didn’t need Amy anymore. She was a drag by then anyway, she and her interfering family. She kept nagging him to help with the

bills, to fix broken things around the house, to mow the yard. No doubt he was already mentally plotting his exit. He had complete control over the income of the business so, though it was teetering, he still had great big plans.

Unfortunately, his pie-in-the-sky schemes existed mostly in his delusional alternate reality, just as all of his grand plans have been born in the world according to Dan only to die once launched into the real world. Over and over again, he has tried and failed, often sucking others into his fantasy of success, and then, when it crumbles, leaving them to deal with the rubble. If this is not a classic example of lack of conscience then I am hard-pressed for a better definition. He uses people, then discards and/or dismisses them. Further, if they complain, he turns venomous and verbally denigrates them.

At the end of his failed event in May of 2009 he conveniently forgot to bring deposit checks that were to be returned to the attendees. I found out about this through someone who attended the event. I remarked then that I could predict that he would eventually try to cash the checks, which two months later he did. Instantly an uproar welled up from those who discovered their checks had cleared their banks. Dan was unreachable. He simply did not answer his cell phone until someone was mad enough to search Dan's other contacts and found and complained to Dan's father, who, by the way, had nothing to do with Dan's larcenous ac-

tivities. But Dan showed his true ugly side and called the man and threatened him. The word got out to put stop payments on all deposit checks—and to never do business with Dan or his company again.

Kari's continuing research into Dan's history as well as his then current interactions with others provided a long list of names for the guardian ad litem to interview. Not just relatives, but people that worked closely with Dan in his business. If they ended up on the list, they probably had been cheated or alienated in some way.

The lists are always shared with both parties so Dan could see the names of those who would likely have negative things to say about him. By comparison his list was a handful of names, a couple of relatives and a young friend of Bob. Dan simply dismissed the names on Amy's list, telling the guardian that he could explain everything anyone said. He vaguely cited sour grapes and competition. He claimed he had plenty of other names to give the guardian, but he never gave her more names.

Kari typed in her journal:

When someone who lives in self-made delusion hits a reality that cannot be explained away, the reality then must be deemed insignificant and neutered, at least in his mind.

By the end of 2009, Dan had cheated even more people in blatant, patently premeditated acts of larceny.

ny. His reputation in his industry had taken not a few hits from spring to end of summer, so he planned a fall event under another man's name. Kari didn't know about this until she interviewed a key person months later.

Dan had hired several people to function within the event which lasted over the course of several weeks. Dan paid them with checks at the end of each week. On the last week, he "forgot" to bring his checkbook. Time passed and Dan suddenly was not reachable—again—a recurring technique of his. There were several very angry men who either had not been paid or whose checks had bounced. Kari got an earful when she interviewed one of these men.

She also got an earful when she spoke with a man whom Dan had cheated out of \$5000 for an indoor winter event. As the fall event was ending, Dan had approached him about doing a winter event in the man's facility. Dan promised he'd handle everything, and he did. He sent out the emails, collected the fees and then two days before the event was to begin, Dan sent out an email canceling the event—to everyone except the facility owner. When the attendees came to collect refunds, Dan was once again unreachable. The owner of the indoor facility was forced to provide the event to his customers for free or risk alienating his customer base.

This was without question a full-fledged pre-meditated scam perpetrated on this man and he knew it. He could easily have filed a complaint with the authorities. At the very least, he could have sued Dan and taken him to court.

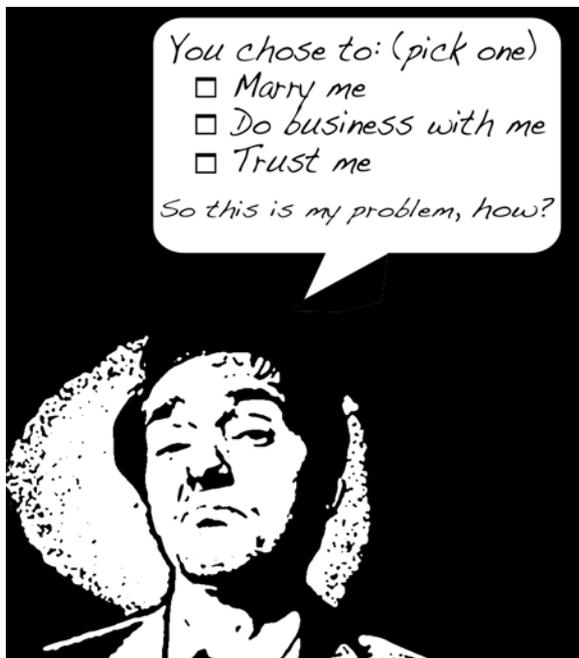
Kari was drowning in frustration by the time she heard his story because it was about the fifth or sixth one she had heard in the span of a week and yet she could not get anyone to agree to speak out. She didn't want to understand, but she did. She knew how complex the system is. The man weighed his options, the cost of an attorney, his time and the real possibility that he would end up with nothing but an empty, uncollectible judgment. Kari thought of the old adage about not being able to get blood out of a turnip which she knew aptly applied. He considered his options and chose to move on, wiser for the experience.

Silence is the greatest enabler...

So, once again, Dan moved on, without the slightest remorse that he had damaged another because he has no conscience, no empathy for the plight of others and definitely no guilt. He is highly capable of feigning sympathy and demonstrating emotions when the moment calls for it but he is a chameleon who does not actually feel the emotion.

Dr. Robert Hare describes this as “knowing the lyrics but not the music” in his book, *Without Conscience - The Disturbing World of the Psychopaths Among Us*.





Need For Excitement

Psychopaths have an ongoing and excessive need for excitement—they long to live in the fast lane or “on the edge,” where the action is. In many cases the action involves the breaking of rules. The flip side of this yen for excitement is an inability to tolerate routine or monotony. Psychopaths are easily bored and are not likely to engage in activities that are dull, repetitive, or require intense concentration over long periods.

DR. Robert Hare, PhD



Chapter Seven

Need For Speed & Manly Things

Journal Entry:

I have often described Dan as a “hunter/gatherer” type. Though that term implies one who hunts and gathers to provide for his family. That part did not apply. Dan was all about hunting, tracking, sports, manly-man type activities. Things like book work, accounting, the tedious but necessary functions of doing business, were not his thing. He didn’t know how, or didn’t care to do something as basic as balance his checkbook. Additionally, he didn’t understand why he couldn’t call the bank and get his balance and then write a check based on that balance. He simply could not grasp the concept of checks that had not yet cleared would bounce if he took the money out.

Therefore, he stayed constantly in trouble with his bank(s) until eventually he was no longer able to have a checking account. Amy received calls from banks, and other creditors, who were looking for him for over a year. She would always confirm his address which they already had but she could not give his cell phone number because she knew he would

dump it and get a new one and then she would have no emergency number to reach him if something happened to the baby. She knew this because it had happened once. Amy had to get the guardian ad litem to contact Dan's attorney and insist on him supplying his new cell phone number.

Dan loved sports but he also loved his motorcycle and one sunny day in April 2009 he went off on a road trip and had an accident. He veered off the road and went flying down a steep embankment. Dan used Amy's insurance flex card to be treated. That came to about \$1200 that she would have to reimburse. This was during that period after Dan had left and he was spinning out of control, attacking his customer base, getting speeding tickets and drinking. He spent a lot of time in a local sports bar, drowning his sorrows and telling tall tales to whomever would listen. It seems there are plenty of sympathetic ears in bars. APDs don't have to scream, people just believe them.

Things might have been different if Amy had been a rich motorcycle mama, interested only in sports, beer, sex and who would never question Dan's behaviors. This would be Dan's perfect woman. Amy, conversely, just wanted the man she thought she married. The man who said he had no debt, was stable, had \$200,000 in the bank and was a "family" man, a "renaissance" man who could build and repair things, had a history of construction, hunting, camp-

ing, and a college degree, which turned out to be a lie as well. Turns out he quit college because it bored him. All that bookwork.

I understand there are people who can be described as adrenalin junkies which does not mean they have mental disorders, per se. Nowadays, extreme sports and near obsession with pushing physical limits is a cultural phenomenon. Dan was beat up from years of scrapping, broken bones, damaged cartilage. He, by default, was not able to do all the exciting physical things he wanted to do. Instead, he hoped to live those things through Jim and Bob. He was their mentor. He had high expectations that at least his sons would fulfill the dreams Dan had had of championship, the final big win, accolades and triumph. Unfortunately, the oldest, Jim, had his own emotional problems and dropped out of high school in the last half of his senior year. Then Bob dropped out of his senior year as well two years later.

To their credit both finally earned their GEDs but neither was destined to be the ultimate fulfillment of Dan's plans. But Dan does not recognize failure, neither in himself nor that of his sons. To maintain and protect his ego, he must always find the perfect excuse for what others label failure but he calls minor set-back because of someone else's fault. To encourage and lift up is one thing, but Dan takes it to a whole new level. Within the framework of his operating system, Dan is raising co-de-

pendent sons. They are not APD but they desire to believe him, to trust him and to recede into his protective arms when they fail. They are learning to be like him even without the physical brain mis-wiring. Which begs the question: Is APD entirely organic or can it be taught?

This is the danger that cannot be addressed by the legal system. A child can be protected against abuse and neglect. A child can be removed from a home for nothing more than inept parenting. But a child cannot be withheld from a parent who cannot stop him/herself from destroying everything he or she touches so long as certain criteria are met as defined by the law.

And this then, is the crux of the dilemma for a guardian ad litem who is appointed ostensibly as the child's attorney/advocate. In many cases the letter and scope of the law, which does not address mental illness unless it is blatantly debilitating, deems that both parents are on equal grounds unless and until a specific egregious factor is introduced and proven. That would include drugs, excessive alcohol and/or abuse. High functioning APDs who know how to circumvent systems, to lie and to stay just under the legal radar no doubt negatively influence many children. Some are parents, some are teachers/mentors/coaches. Most do their damage in small increments but very rarely are held accountable.





Deceitful and Manipulative

With their powers of imagination in gear and beamed on themselves, psychopaths appear amazingly unfazed by the possibility-or even by the certainty-of being found out. When caught in a lie or challenged with the truth, they seldom appear perplexed or embarrassed-they simply change their stories or attempt to rework the facts so they appear to be consistent with the lie. The result is a series of contradictory statements and a thoroughly confused listener.

DR. Robert Hare, PhD



Chapter Eight *Dodging & Weaving*

Based on Amy's explanation of what had happened up to the point of her asking Dan to leave, Amy's attorney called for a psychological evaluation. This meant Amy was required to have one also. It took \$3000 to prove what a really good schmooze artist Dan was. It took weeks to get the report which found nothing wrong with Dan other than a bit of narcissistic tendencies. Amy was labeled controlling, contentious and confrontational. However, they both were deemed fit to be co-parents of the baby so the psychologist's report was nothing more than an expensive exercise in futility.

Dan was ordered to take parenting classes, though, which Kari equated to the fox telling Brer Rabbit he was going to throw him in the briar patch. Dan, a master at impressing small groups in short term situations, probably smacked his lips at the challenge. He later reportedly told the guardian that he enjoyed the classes so much that he went back even when he didn't have to.

Kari wrote in her journal:

Until all this transpired I admit I had never heard of Antisocial Personality Disorder. At first glance it seems convoluted because you think of someone being antisocial as someone who does not interact well with others. But psychopaths, regardless of the degree of their affliction, whether it be the harmless liar who simply cannot tell the truth to the serial killer at the other end of the spectrum, generally are easy to like and know how to manipulate others so that they can operate for as long as possible within their window of opportunity.

I estimated that, generally speaking, it took roughly a window of two years for Dan to blow his image and reveal himself enough that people wanted to get as far away as possible from him. The very short amount of time that the psychologist spent with him was certainly not enough for Dan to expose himself. It was definitely not enough for the psychologist to feel it necessary to follow up with interviews of others. And therein lies the problem.

There was no in depth evaluation. But unquestionably, and without the psychologist realizing it, Dan was able to plant concepts about Amy that showed up in the report. Of all the things Amy is, she is completely non-confrontational and that has been problematic for her most of her life. But Dan, in his best form, was able to plant strong seeds the psychologist did not recognize. Scary thought, huh.

The psychologist's failure was not so much that he couldn't see through Dan but that he based his evaluation on nothing more than Dan's convincing word. One could argue that Amy was interviewed too but I can counter that by the time Amy was interviewed the psychologist was already swayed so nothing she said would or could have changed his mind. He simply looked for things to confirm what he had already concluded. No doubt he would be insulted to be accused of this. But just because someone is educated and supposedly intuitive, does not mean he/she cannot be duped like anyone else.

During the final court negotiations it came out that Jim and Bob just happened to stop by the office and met the psychologist at the end of Dan's session. Amy was stunned and asked why he thought it was okay to meet Dan's sons but never offered to speak with hers. He waved it off saying it was no big deal and it didn't impact his report. Perhaps not, but I believe otherwise. What would be the point in Jim and Bob to just happen to drop by the office to meet the psychologist if not to impress upon him how really upstanding all three were? To reinforce the Good Dad image Dan presented? If Amy had fit the profile would she not have thought to arrange for her older children to happen to drop by at the end of her session? And the psychologist never connected the dots?

Understandably no psychologist would want to admit to being manipulated but it

certainly happens because psychologists are humans too, regardless of education. Even a trained psychologist cannot escape the subconscious human reaction to visual input. Everyone has some kind of bias that can be influenced, especially by APDs who are experienced at presenting well in the short term.

You know the old adage that you never notice how many blue cars there are on the road until you buy a blue car? During this time period, Amy ran across several others who also had had close encounters with APDs. One friend said that her sister had been difficult all of her life, in and out of trouble from her early years to the point of her being committed and evaluated several times. But she always came out undiagnosed because she knew exactly what to say and how to act in front of the professionals.

After years of destructive behaviors, ultimately she died of an overdose. And the conclusion was that when psychopaths who are not caught and put in prison or diagnosed and medicated, the ones who fall in the cracks, usually self-medicate with alcohol or drugs. The fact that they can be interviewed and tested and escape diagnosis is not necessarily a disparaging commentary on psychologists as much as it is a testimony to the adroit skill of the APD to avoid detection as well as a lagging behind of many psychologists to study and educate themselves about psychopathy.

Another acquaintance confided that her ex-husband had been officially diagnosed but she

had never found a way to tell her children. By the time they were in their teens, their father had planted in their heads destructive negative lies about their mother and it had become a nightmare situation for her. The longer she remained silent, the harder it became to tell them the truth. But I understand her dilemma; how does one pose that announcement? "I should have told you but I didn't know how and I didn't want to look like I was trying to put your dad in a bad light even though he does that to you about me. But here goes, your dad is a diagnosed psychopath."

In the end, the psychologist's report only accomplished two things, further enabling Dan and providing him a new avenue of potential support through the "friends" he made in the parenting classes. Not to mention another \$3000 out of our pocket. It came out that Dan's father paid his \$3000. After that, Dan got all of his legal bills paid by his attorney. Classic.

Who is able to talk a high paid attorney into working Pro Bono other than an experienced con-artist? Our total outlay for Amy's attorney, the guardian ad litem fees, the psychologist and court costs tallied in around \$30,000. I record this to make a point, which isn't about the high cost of legal action. While pouring over Dan's financial records, we found no receipts for payments to his attorney.

Experience affords me a highly developed sixth sense about predicting Dan's behaviors. I

think it's because I put so much time into tracking his behaviors that predictable patterns just naturally emerge. I imagined it highly probable that Dan, in May of 2009, would mention that he was just about to collect hundreds of thousands of dollars in a lawsuit against his ex-partner and that he'd surely be able to catch up with all legal fees. He did, after all, tell the guardian ad litem that he had already won the suit and was expecting a check for \$300,000 within the week. So, it wasn't a stretch to assume he had done a similar thing to his attorney.

This is just speculation but, in fact, the suit did finally come to an end in February 2010. The other partners chose to foot the mounting bill for the attorneys to dissolve the business that was bleeding everyone but Dan dry. Dan, as usual, walked away unscathed. The remaining unpaid bills to vendors were never paid; the tax liability did not come to light until the IRS filed liens in November 2010, which are still on file.

During the final trial prep session with Amy's attorney when I mentioned that we couldn't find receipts for Dan's legal bills, she acted stunned. Later, after the final trial, she told Amy that she confronted Dan's attorney about working the case Pro Bono and he didn't deny it. He said, "Well, you know, sometimes you get in the middle of something and you can't get out of it...."

Yes, indeed, I know very well, sometimes you get in the middle of something and you find you are at the critical point of no return and have no choice but to move forward. For me the question I would love to ask Dan's attorney is, "Do you know now that you were duped?" Plainly he was quite willing to compromise on the day of the trial and kept Dan at bay during the proceedings so perhaps even he had had enough.

The two year window of revelation was closing.

Over the course of months of legal maneuverings by both attorneys Dan played his part to the hilt to impress the guardian. He began accusing Amy of all sorts of things. She felt threatened and so Kari started going with her to the baby exchanges. His annoyance was palpable, it oozed out of his truck when he opened the door. Sometimes he would have passengers too, usually one of his older sons.

One chilly morning on the first of February 2010, Kari had come but separately in her car. Amy parked and went to the backseat to get the baby out of his car seat. He was happy and feeling frisky and laughing at Kari so she, in all innocence, took his picture with her cellphone. This was one of those many little occurrences that she attributed to God's hand. Dan came several minutes later, Jake, was in the front passenger seat. The exchange itself went with no incident. Amy went to work, Kari went home.

Kari recounted in her journal:

About two hours later, Amy called me nearly hysterical. She had received a scathing email from Dan accusing her of being unobservant and irresponsible. He claimed that when he picked up the baby, he had a large refrigerator magnet in his mouth. Dan also claimed that Jake saw it too. He included a fuzzy cellphone photo of the object in the palm of his hand.

This was absurd, of course, and I told Amy that it couldn't possibly be true because she would have noticed something that big in the baby's mouth. And then I remembered the photo I had taken. The baby's mouth was wide open in a laugh. Nothing in his mouth but teeth and tongue. Dan had arrived within seconds of the photo being taken. I told Amy I would download and send the photo to the guardian and Amy's attorney.

This was only one of many attempts that Dan made to discredit Amy and to try to manipulate the guardian into his camp. What this did for me, however, was kick up my offensive response several notches. I began an in depth video journal. I filmed the baby in the mornings before he was to be taken to Dan, I filmed him when Dan brought him back. I added commentary, I did not skip a single exchange, from February 1, 2010 until months after the divorce was final and Dan no longer had anyone to act indignant, worried, concerned, and outraged to anymore.

You know how when you know something isn't right but you can't put your finger on what it is, a sequential video library often can provide the answer.

For example: typically, when Dan brought the baby back to Amy on Tuesdays at three o'clock, he was almost always asleep in his car seat although the ride to the exchange site was less than five minutes away. But one Tuesday the baby was so sleepy he fought Dan waking him up while getting him out of the car seat and he cried and hugged Dan and acted as though he didn't want to go to Amy. This was a first.

And I filmed it. I also filmed the long minutes Amy held him in the front seat, calming him down. Clearly, he was exhausted. But this happenstance, which I believe was not planned, seemed to then become a new strategy for Dan. The baby was not allowed to take his nap until time for the exchange which made him fall asleep on the short ride then become combative when awakened so soon. I continued to film it and record it.

Not surprisingly, weeks later, Bob, with great concern, sent a letter to the guardian purportedly to confide in her that his baby brother didn't want to go to Amy at the exchanges and he recounted the first incident that I had recorded. He said that "Amy's mother was recording it but turned off the video when the baby began to fight Amy." Unfortunately that was a bad assumption on his part because not

only did I not turn off the recorder I continued recording for many months. The pattern that emerged was clear. On specific days, with rare exception, the baby came to Amy completely exhausted. And it wasn't the kind of exhaustion from simply missing a nap. I don't even want to speculate what that implies.

I can recount many more incidents, deceitful moves and manipulations, but this is the point that I hope I have made: Dan has an agenda but it is never founded in the welfare of his children. I know men who are divorced and who take good care of their kids, who step up and pay for their support and do not try to plant negative things in their children like, "mommy is mean", "mommy is bad", "mommy is a monster" and worse. Who could believe that kind of behavior is acceptable? Who can write this off as just a man trying to make his case or hold his position?

Only someone who lives by his own rules and outside of the acceptable normal boundaries of human civil conduct; someone who has no idea or cares how his behaviors hurt others, including his own children.





Lack of responsibility

Obligations and commitments mean nothing to psychopaths. Their good intentions—"I'll never cheat on you again"—are promises written on the wind. Horrendous credit histories, for example, reveal the lightly taken debt, the loan shrugged off, the empty pledge to contribute to a child's support. Their performance on the job is erratic, with frequent absences, misuse of company resources, violations of company policy, and general untrustworthiness. They do not honor formal or implied commitments to people, organizations, or principles. Psychopaths are not deterred by the possibility that their actions mean hardship or risk for others.

DR. Robert Hare, PhD



Chapter Nine

Let Me Tell You A Story

Journal Entry:

Second only to lack of conscience, irresponsibility is the single most provable unabashedly, arrogant characteristic of Dan that, in my eyes, delineates him as APD. We all believed him when he was courting Amy; we had no compelling reason not to. He sat in our living room and glibly shrugged off the concept of having debt. He said he paid cash for everything. If I had had any doubt and had decided to do a background check, I would have found a couple of judgments against him for several medical bills from 2003 and some closed accounts. But in 2005, the IRS had not caught up with him as yet. At that time, I concede that I might have ignored those small red flags. Things can be explained you know. There was the whole identity theft story to cover that.

It wasn't until he had usurped the reins of the business and mismanaged it into the ground for a couple of years that piled on bad debt and black marks and slowly revealed Dan's unflappable disregard for paying bills, any bills, personal or business related. Even when he had

money to pay bills with, he didn't. I spoke with several vendors, whose names I had been given, that had nothing good to say about Dan simply because they couldn't get him to pay their invoices. The conversations always ended the same, what recourse did they have? Sue him for \$350? Later, by 2010, among other things, both federal and state tax liens of near \$75,000 appeared on his record. That I probably would have taken notice of, at least I'd like to think so. But even as I recall this and the way he could and still does deftly maneuver through murky waters, I know he'd have a reasonably believable explanation for this too, probably having to do with those evil partners of his. And I cringe to imagine that we would likely have consoled him, and might have looked for ways to assist him.

I struggle to understand how people like Dan can continue to operate as though nothing is extraordinarily out of order in his life. He owns nothing except an old car. He has no bank account because no bank would grant him one. He has no credit card because his credit is beyond repair. His reputation, tarnished by his own behaviors, has him black-listed from most of the people he used to do business with. He owes thousands of dollars to the IRS. However, he continues to work angles and find unsuspecting prey to give him temporary operating funds until he does something to reveal himself and burns another bridge. Meanwhile, some-

one pays his rent and utilities, someone buys groceries and gas. Who? Perhaps he has figured out a way to get free rent and he wings it on the other stuff? I swear I can't figure it out, I don't have the resources to find out and, more to the point, what good would it do to know? If the IRS chooses to give him a free pass along with everyone else he owes, then everything else is somewhat moot.

The fact that he doesn't pay his court ordered child support came as no shock to Amy. Dan rarely paid support to Jane either. Dan prefers to let others foot the bill. When Amy and I were going over the subpoenaed records later we could find no receipts for any support paid to Jane for several years. Irresponsible underneath a facade of GOOD FATHER—win/win for Dan. He doesn't have to meet obligations but still reaps all the rights and benefits.

Dan owes Amy thousands of dollars in back child support. We help Amy with her expenses when she needs it. The irony here is that this would seem to be counterintuitive to the concept that Dan must protect his ego, not allowing someone else to help support his child, but it is completely in line with an APD who has no problem with others paying the bills, so long as he gets to smile big and wear the "WORLD'S GREATEST DAD" tee shirt.



Adult antisocial behavior

Psychopaths see the rules and expectations of society as inconvenient and unreasonable impediments to their own behavioral expression. They make their own rules, both as children and as adults. Many of the antisocial acts of psychopaths lead to criminal charges and convictions. Even within the criminal population, psychopaths stand out, largely because the antisocial and illegal activities of psychopaths are more varied and frequent than are those of other criminals. Psychopaths tend to have no particular affinity, or "specialty," for one particular type of crime but tend to try everything. But not all psychopaths end up in jail. Many of the things they do escape detection or prosecution, or are on "the shady side of the law." For them, antisocial behavior may consist of phony stock promotions, questionable business practices, spouse or child abuse, and so forth. Many others do things that, though not necessarily illegal, are nevertheless unethical, immoral, or harmful to others: philandering or cheating on a spouse to name a few.

DR. Robert Hare, PhD



Chapter Ten

Anonymous Is My Other Name

Journal Entry:

Of all the underhanded despicable things Dan has done, not including trying to plant ugly things in the baby's head about Amy, the worst and scariest, at least for a short time, was an anonymous letter he sent to Zach's high school. Fortunately, Zach was a good student, well-liked by the staff and his many friends whom he had grown up with, or this episode could have turned out quite differently.

In December of 2009, Zach's senior year, just prior to the winter holidays, a letter was received by the principal and several other staff members, including Zach's coach, and several Board of Education members. It was a detailed letter, complete with photographs, complaining that Zach was allowed to attend the school even though he had moved out of the district.

First Zach, and then Amy was called into the principal's office to refute the claim. Amy explained that she had to file bankruptcy and move into a house her parents owned. There were a few tense days while meetings were held and decisions were made. The fact that Zach was a top-notch student who had already been

accepted into a college went a long way toward helping the officials make a determination. But the fact that Amy's house, while in the process of foreclosure, was still in her name, gave them the legal hook they needed to grant that Zach could indeed finish his senior year and graduate with his friends.

Everyone knew who had sent the letter. Amy said seeing the contempt that all felt for this sleazy, childish action by someone who claimed to be a good man and father was small consolation for the angst and heartburn caused. All's well that ends well. Zach graduated and went off to college in the fall. Dan is still who he is and how he is and will never move on beyond that. I fear his older sons will follow his lead. We have no influence over them. But we are determined to counter all attempts to ruin Lyle.

I wonder about what happens to people like Dan who are able to navigate through life by hook or crook but eventually must face aging like the rest of us. He has nothing and probably will never have anything. He is not predisposed to just find whatever is available or take a job that he'd see as humiliating or beneath him. There's always the image/ego thing that must be maintained. Will his sons take care of him when he is incapacitated by age?

There are two sides to every story. Naturally, I have been purposefully heavy-handed to address only Dan's negative sides. Amy has acknowledged and repented for her contribution to this soap opera. Arguments can be offered but, in the end, Amy is the parent who does not

have enemies, agencies and credit companies looking for her. She is the parent who pays for Lyle's health care, clothing, hair cuts and gives Lyle one on one attention. She is rebuilding her life, reestablishing her credit and rising from the ashes to be the strong stable parent Lyle needs. Amy's life is fruit-bearing; Dan's life teeters on the brink of implosion at any moment. It's not difficult to draw conclusions.

I state again that I have no expectations of vindication. Life does not work like that in the real world. There is much more that I could tell and drone on about but what I would really prefer is to move on past the complaining. And that is part of the problem. As I mentioned, pointing out all the lies, manipulations and devious behaviors do nothing to put the focus on the doer but rather only serve to label me as a whiner.

An APD, unless he or she finally gets caught over the legal line, usually moves unrestricted through society, from one unsuspecting mark to another, for just this reason—the screaming about each and every little offense sounds so petty. The only thing worse than being duped is having to admit we have been so it's just easier to take it on the chin. It's also easier to criticize the complainer and pick apart each complaint until it all seems like one big snarky cry-baby-fest.

I believe the APD instinctively knows this, includes it in his/her arsenal and counts on it often.



Can Anything Be Done?

In their desperate search for solutions people trapped in a destructive and seemingly hopeless relationship with a psychopath frequently are told: Quit indulging him and send him for therapy. A basic assumption of psychotherapy is that the patient needs and wants help for distressing or painful psychological and emotional problems. But here is the crux: Psychopaths don't feel they have psychological or emotional problems, and they see no reason to change their behavior to conform with societal standards they do not agree with. Thus, in spite of more than a century of clinical study and decades of research, the mystery of the psychopath still remains. Recent developments have provided us with new insights into the nature of this disturbing disorder, and its borders are becoming more defined. But compared with other major clinical disorders, little research has been devoted to psychopathy, even though it is responsible for more social distress and disruption than all other psychiatric disorders combined.

DR. Robert Hare, PhD



Chapter Eleven *No Remedy?*

It was abundantly clear, to Kari at least, that the psychologist leaned heavily toward Dan and his story. In his report he posited that if a time for compromise on visitation came up, he believed that Dan would be the most likely to be accommodating. It was a conclusion based purely on Dan's stellar performance because during the entire time covered by the temporary custody order, Dan asked Amy seven times for a change of day. She never refused even when he wanted to take Lyle to Dan's sister's wedding even though Lyle was sick with a stomach virus, a fact that did not sway Dan in his request. Ultimately, knowing that everything she did or did not do was under scrutiny, Amy did not have the courage to say no.

Conversely, Amy asked a total of three times for a change of day and Dan either ignored her request or responded with a scathing ranting refusal. All of these ugly exchanges were copied to the guardian ad litem and both attorneys but not the psychologist so he would never find out how very wrong he had been.

At one point in the final divorce proceedings, all parties gathered around the negotiating table, Amy

mentioned Dan's girlfriend in the context that she did not approve of Lyle being left in her care. Dan quickly refuted the comment by saying that the woman was not his girlfriend. But later, when it was all over, out in the hall, the psychologist walked purposefully over to Dan and his posse, which included Dan's father, his father's girlfriend, Jim, Bob, Jane, and Dan's "not" girlfriend. Kari watched them nodding and smiling and engaging in civilized small talk. But more importantly she noticed that he did not walk the handful of steps over to speak to those who were standing with Amy.

Journal Entry:

It was a great conundrum to me to have seen Dan's family rallied around him at the court, given that each of them have had many negative experiences caused by him and his bad behaviors. I guess it is true that blood is thicker than water and those closest to the one who is twisted can ignore, make excuses for, and thus continue to enable him. And he, having no real conscience, will do as he pleases, relieve them of their savings, break all promises, lie to them, and yet, they will still choose to believe him again and again. I can only imagine what they choose to believe about Amy, regardless of their personal experience with her in the three years she was Dan's enabler. Perhaps it is the nature of familial commitment. We certainly have rallied around Amy but then, she hasn't lied or cheated or disappointed us ei-

ther. I wondered how I would feel if it were the other way around, if Amy were the one causing the problems. I'd like to think I'd rally on behalf of the child, be Lyle's advocate. If Dan were truly the better parent, and Amy had been the trouble-maker, as painful as it might have been, I would do what was in Lyle's best interest. Adults make their choices and reap their consequences; the pity is that it is the children who suffer for the adult's bad decisions and behaviors.

Once the divorce proceedings were history, Dan immediately began doing what Amy warned the guardian he would do the minute scrutiny was taken off of him, and that was pretty much whatever he wanted to do. After the first month he all but stopped paying child support until by September of 2012 he was over \$10,000 in arrears. He was also in contempt of the divorce decree because he refused to take Lyle to his pre-school on the days Dan had him. Lyle said that "daddy doesn't like me to go to school." But Kari knew this wasn't the reason. It was about control and believing that he could do whatever he wanted regardless that the decree gave Amy the authority to pick the pre-school. Like all APDs he lives by his own rules. He did it with Jane and there is no reason for him to do any differently with Amy.

Journal Entry:

We waited until he was far enough behind in his child support to hire another attorney to file

a contempt order. It was a difficult call. First, Amy had no hope of getting any money from him and it meant finding another \$2500 for the attorney. However, Dan has already seen that we don't back down like others have in his long sorted history so we do have to continue to stand up and hold him accountable. But the truth is, like all the others Dan has cheated, who weighed their options and chose to move on, it's not likely we'd spend thousands of dollars in attorney fees and court costs just to make his life miserable. His life is already miserable, though he'd never admit it. But the greater issue was Lyle not missing his school experience. The back child support was absolute leverage that the system could get behind.

As a strong offensive play, Amy's attorney invited Dan to mediation first. Dan, of course, assumed it would be a grand opportunity for him to tell his very sad tale about being out of work and how he struggled to be a good dad. Amy said he came in with his usual confident air. What he did not know, however, was that I had done more research and found several businesses he had formed, including one with his "not" girlfriend. I made screen shots of his websites and Amy had a complete accounting of all the unpaid child support. Every excuse he had come prepared with fell flat as each paper was pulled out of the file to disprove it.

Possibly for the first time in his life he had no wiggle room, no excuse, lie or gimmick to cover

him; he had no choice but to sign an agreement that he would pay a good faith portion of the back support immediately and increase the monthly amount to help bring down the balance. He also had to agree to take Lyle to his school on his days with Lyle. He was warned that if he defaulted on any point of the agreement he would have to explain why to the judge and pay all court and attorney costs.

We know that God won this skirmish for us and we cannot give Him enough praise for this respite, but the war is far from over. He paid the initial downpayment but when the first support check was due the next day, he ignored that until Amy brought it to his attention. He pretended to misunderstand and waited until the last day of the month to pay it. Certainly he does understand that he will be forced to abide by the agreement or end up in front of the judge but he also knows that no one is going to take action just because he is a month late, even at the outset. Again, he knows how to work the system. It is not difficult to predict that he will work the angles as much as possible, staying just inside the gray area to stay out of the courtroom.

While this was a decision based in primal self-preservation, no doubt he believes he still has options. Psychological manipulation on Lyle is his most recent tactic. Lyle is afraid to go to his dad's if he has a bump or scratch or bruise because Lyle reports that Dan inter-

rogates him about it. Lyle is smart enough to sense this is sinister, but not old enough to understand why.

Though we are not afraid of this latest strategy, it does cause Lyle stress. It's hard to explain to him that he doesn't have to worry about it. It is obvious, though, that Dan is only interested in his agenda and that agenda is not likely to go away. One day Lyle will be his own man and if Amy has done her job correctly, he will know right from wrong and be able to discern for himself the way he should go.

In the end, and after all the angst, we have finally learned to live by our faith rather than hope for real remedy from the system. As each new tactic, devised by Dan, comes to our attention, we pray first and then if we feel something must be done, we will not hesitate. Every time Lyle comes back stressed and combative, Amy gently loves him out of it. Every time Amy has to take him to Dan, we pray for protection for Lyle. We pray and believe that all things come together for good for those who love the Lord. We pray that Lyle will grow up strong in faith and as an overcomer of adversity.

I know that's not typically what people want to hear. They want to be able to reach out for human help and get justice or closure. What does that mean anyway?

If the proof is in the pudding, and if only true righteousness bears good fruit, then surely all we must do is to live uprightly, and trust

that we can leave everything else to God. I admit this takes enormous faith. The temptation to “do something” is ever present. It is a tight-rope walk sometimes. All one can do is listen, obey, and trust. The greatest faith is expressed in moving forward, trusting that God will stop us if we are being willful or taking matters into our own hands.

It took a huge leap of faith to make the move to hire another attorney but, based on the outcome, it was exactly what God wanted us to do, in that moment. God works in mysterious ways and it is not up to us to decide how He should or should not do a thing. We are called to pray and make sure that what we do is His will, not our self-will. And in all ways, in everything we do, we make sure that what is best for Lyle is the first consideration.

Lyle, like all children, unless they are being physically abused and are genuinely afraid of a parent, loves unconditionally. He loves his dad and his mom. There are as many times that he comes back from his dad’s happy and content as when he comes back ill-tempered and distressed. The process is never glaring but rather slow and subtle.

But Lyle receives abundant love and as a result is an affectionate child, always ready to hug and kiss. He has a great sense of humor and an infectious laugh. There is no reason, at this time, to challenge the status quo. Unless or until Dan chooses to initiate another plan to un-

dermine Amy or actively seek to discredit her, it is not in Lyle's best interest to try to lessen the time he spends with his father, nor for his father to be in jail.

As things chug along day to day, and nothing earth shattering happens, we relax a little, lowering our guard, and then Lyle will say something that Dan has said to him that jerks Amy back to reality and makes her pull the armor back on, expecting anything as possible. As time passes, though, and Lyle is more discerning and able to speak up for himself, I can predict, that Dan will "confide" in Lyle, telling him the lies he has told others, hoping to turn Lyle away from his mother. This is the experience that Amy's friend has had. Regardless why I started this journal, I now believe this is the real reason—an encouragement for some in the short term, a testimony in waiting for the long term.

But several things are irrefutably true, one, Lyle's own experience with his mother can stand up against all manner of lies. He has told her over and over again that "daddy says you are mean, but I don't think you are mean." A psychopath really only thinks in one dimension, believing his own lies, he believes everyone else acts and thinks as he does. In this state of paranoia, he is constantly "playing" several shots ahead, like a game of pool. In some ways, this can actually be his weak/blind spot. Dan hates Amy and believes he can easily convince Lyle to do the same because Dan cannot see or

ever acknowledge Lyle's relationship with his mother.

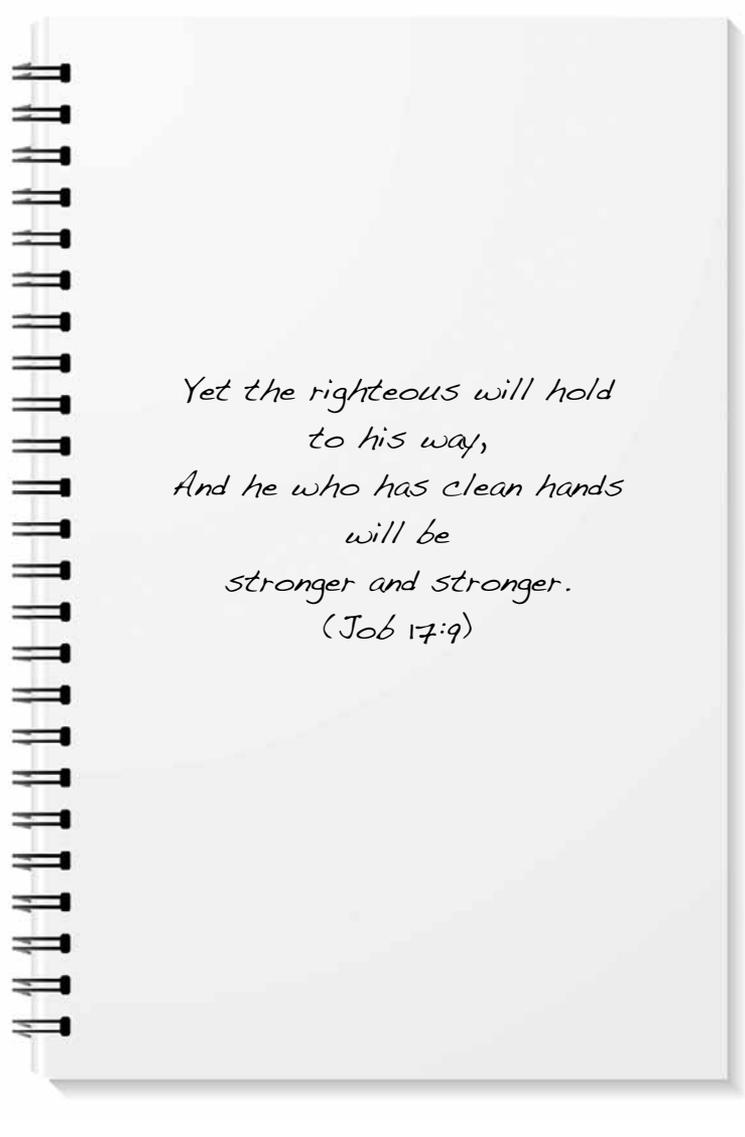
Whatever diabolical plan Dan has, we trust that God has this, that, indeed, He always had it, even when we were hiding in her house with a private eye guarding the front. If faith is believing what you cannot see, how can we not have even greater faith now that we have seen with our own eyes all the interventions and mercies we have been given, though we often didn't see them until later?

Is Dan APD or just a lying loser? Again, what difference does a label make? If he were officially diagnosed, we would still be obliged to deal with him in the same ways we have and continue to just as others do. His behaviors can in no way be considered normal or acceptable so, diagnosis or not, he is not going to change and as long as he is able to impact us, and Lyle in particular, the solutions unfold daily in the journey, through one prayer at a time.

We acknowledge and give thanks for the remedy that we found patiently waiting in the silence. And we are grateful for the test that has brought us this far, grown us up, and strengthened our faith so that we can, at least, fear no evil.

(Joshua 1:9) Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of good courage; be not affrighted, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.





*Yet the righteous will hold
to his way,
And he who has clean hands
will be
stronger and stronger.
(Job 17:9)*



Chapter Twelve The Loose Ends

During any Christian-based discussion and calling out of evil, the argument inevitably arises that Christians are admonished to love, forgive and pray for their enemies. *“Judge not that ye be not judged”* is the standard first shot across the bow that causes Christians to cower and go silent in the face of evil. But I submit that while it is true that Christians should not take up the weapons of revenge and hatred, we are issued the rather handy tool of discernment. People often confuse discernment with being judgmental. There is a distinct difference though; being judgmental declares someone can not/will not be redeemed—discernment allows for determining the risk of remaining at the mercy of someone who is clearly not (yet) redeemed.

There are as many, if not more, Scriptures that grant Christians the right to discern evil and the activities of evil and that provide the wisdom to pray for deliverance, avoid and come out and/or walk away from evil, as there are Scriptures calling Christians to be meek, un-discerning and submissive to evil. *“Come ye out”* *“For what part do we have with Belial?”* *“Dust*

off your sandals” “*Deliver us from evil*” “*Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil*” to cite a few. The subtle difference is deeply embedded in the definition of “enemy” and therefore who ought to be prayed for and forgiven and who and what needs to be avoided. And, then, of course, there are always exceptions. For example, all but one of the original Apostles were martyred at the hands of evil and, each, to a man, submitted without a fight to being tortured and killed. This, however, is not a prosaic formula, rather it is a standard. Clearly Christians are called to suffer sometimes and for different reasons, but not every time, and especially not for no good reason.

At the other extreme there are those few lunatics on the fringes who are deluded to believe that we ought to pray even for Satan, which, on the face of it, sounds so noble and righteous, but underneath reveals an abysmal, if not sinister, lack of understanding of the devious way Satan plays a dirty game while all dressed up in goodness. A.W. Tozer put it like this:

Love is of God, little children, so love everybody and all will be well. Thus speaks the devil, using Holy Scripture falsely for his evil purpose; and it is nothing short of tragic how many of God's people are taken in by his sweet talk. The shepherd becomes afraid to use his club and the wolf gets the sheep. The watchman is charmed into believing that there is no danger, and the city falls to the enemy without a shot. So Satan destroys us by appealing to our virtues.

So, in an effort to deflect the inevitable question, “Where is your Christian compassion for the poor fellow whose mind is warped and therefore cannot be held accountable for his actions? You should pray for him”, I counter with this: I can forgive, meaning I wish no ill-will toward, and pray for someone, that he/she see the light and stop the bad behavior, and, at the same time, stay far away from him/her and out of reach and therefore away from the inevitable consequence of the bad behavior.

At the very core of discernment is prudence.

But more harshly stated, evil does not need help from me, in any regard, neither my compassion, nor my prayers. Evil is destined for a very bad ending and that destiny was decided long before I was born. We now live in a society that prefers evil over righteousness so false-righteousness and self-righteousness is the new standard ideology. It is within this stream-of-consciousness mind-meld masquerading as good-for-goodness-sake doctrine that creates the perfect atmosphere for psychopaths of all kinds and in all areas of humanity to flourish.

And flourish they do. Solomon said, “...there is nothing new under the sun” and while that is true, in this late hour we deal with many old things but vastly multiplied to a nearly overwhelming reality.

(Isaiah 5:18) Woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords of falsehood, and sin as it were with a cart rope; (5:19) that say, Let him make speed, let him hasten his work, that we may see it; and let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel

draw nigh and come, that we may know it! (5:20) Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! (5:21) Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight! (5:22) Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink; (5:23) that justify the wicked for a bribe, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him! (5:24) Therefore as the tongue of fire devoureth the stubble, and as the dry grass sinketh down in the flame, so their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust; because they have rejected the law of The Lord of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.

How did we get here, where it seems the inmates are now in charge of the asylum? In his book *Spoilt Rotten, The Toxic Cult of Sentimentality*, Theodore Dalrymple identifies the phenomenon of the modern representation of Isaiah 5:18-24 as the “sentimental” society that is doomed to implode because, having been nearly completely converted to sentimentalism, society is now at the mercy of the vagaries of feeling instead of the absolutes of fact-based thinking. He concludes:

“Sentimentality has been the forerunner and accomplice of brutality wherever the poli-

cies suggested by it have been put into place. The cult of feeling destroys the ability to think, or even the awareness that it is necessary to think.”

All this is to say, while there are many extenuating circumstances that hinder or prevent someone from being able to escape the clutches of a psychopath, there is no good reason or excuse to continue to be victimized if escape is an option. Nevertheless many continue to choose to remain victims because victimization is a vicious cycle fueled by fear.

There is an old saying - the difference between a terrifying ordeal and an adventure is purely attitude. Too often stress and threat of the moment blocks our ability to see God’s plan. Our fear pushes away His hand because we are so manipulated we believe there is no hope for us other than what we are enslaved to. Our situation becomes burdensome and life becomes a bleak and desperate spiral downward to complete submission to fatalism.

Relief in the middle of adversity is within the silent comfort of faith. Faith does not change our circumstances but rather our attitude and how we operate within those circumstances. Are we paralyzed by fear or mobilized by bravery? Are we solution-oriented or defeatist? Are we victims without recourse? Or do we stand up for something higher and determine that it is better striving for right than living tyrannized by evil?

Faith is the antidote to fear.



End Notes

Good advice to anyone who feels that he/she is dealing with a psychopath is to keep some kind of journal, if possible, and good records of incidents, no matter how small or insignificant they might seem to be, and pay attention to what works and what doesn't in dealing with behaviors.

While the criteria for defining a psychopath is a useful tool in questioning strange conduct, it cannot cover every individual's behaviors. Some are decidedly more dangerous than others and honest discernment is called for in this case. Denial is not a good strategy; bad people do not improve just because they get away with being bad.

Keep looking for someone who can/will hear you. Much progress has been made in the last few years for recognizing that APD and other psychopathic mental disorders are more common than previously understood. Dr. Hare's books (listed in the resources) are highly recommended reading.

You will find a wealth of information, comfort and others who understand in this website:

<http://aftermath-surviving-psychopathy.org>

There is no question that finding others who know exactly what you are going through is comforting and empowering.

And for those who can understand this, there is no substitute for, no better remedy than through a relationship with Christ. Standing up for what is right takes more than courage—it takes great faith.

Ten Rules For How To Spot and Deal With A F.U.L.L. (Freeloader/User/Liar/Loser)

1. If he talks about doing things more than he does them, pay attention. If his skills and accomplishments are all framed in the past tense you can easily test the truth of his claims. If, for example, he touts himself as a handy man, experienced in all manner of building and repair, ask him to install a garbage disposal for you, or replace and/or reseal a toilet. If he finds ways to avoid doing it, don't press him, just get it done. He may get offended that you didn't "wait" on him, or he might accuse you of being a nag. Mark that, it reveals unnecessarily high testosterone levels.
2. If he is vague about his finances, or if he claims to have money in the bank but can never fund dinner out or a movie, pay attention. Some people are just tightwads but you can test this as well. Does he find ways to buy things for himself, new tools, clothes, nights out with the boys, but can't help with your grocery bill, though you feed him more often than not, note this. Remember, a tightwad is no prize either.
3. If he is not particularly accountable for his time, and responds to queries of his whereabouts with vague replies, pay attention.
4. If you press him for a specific answer to a specific question and he quickly turns the topic around as though the problem is not him but you, pay close attention.

5. If any problem in his life, whether big or small is always someone else's fault, and, more often than not it seems to be you, pay attention.
6. If you can step back to who and how you were before this person came into your life and honestly say you were better off, even if lonely, it's time to find a way out. Ann Landers, the advise columnist, used to have a litmus test question to pose when in doubt about entering or staying in a relationship: If you know you would be better off without him than with him, then do what is in your best interest.
7. If he asks for a loan, or needs a big ticket item like a new vehicle and he suggests it would be better in your name because of some reason, like he is a victim of identity theft and his credit is screwed up, boldly ask to see his credit report. If he balks, acts hurt or indignant, pay attention.
8. If he expects everything from you, including working, cooking, cleaning, laundry, moral support, intimacy and gives nothing back in return except whatever charm he brought with him, pay attention.
9. When your suspicions cause you to shine a hard light on the gaps in his credibility and you confront him with his inconsistencies, he is likely to feel cornered and come out swinging or attempt to intimidate you to make you back off. You should know at this point he could be dangerous, and you need to be prepared for that, but more than likely he is just a bag of hot air and

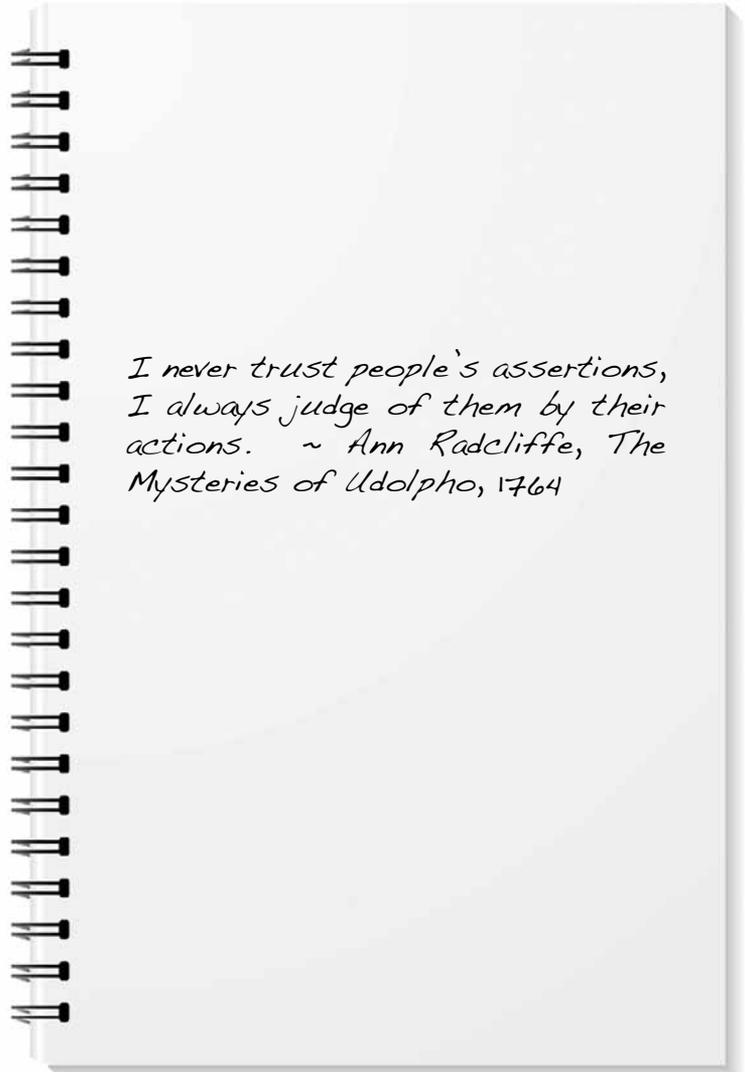
a coward who prefers to use clever words to slip in and out of tight places, so call his bluff. Be advised that this might cause him to panic and employ a sudden shift in tactics and he is likely to soften and try to pour on the charm that got him results the first time.

10. If you find yourself making as many excuses for him and his behavior as he does, do yourself a favor and do more than pay attention, realize you are entangled with a slow-ticking bomb that will one day implode and destroy everything near by, and that means you.

Building a real relationship is more than hard work and requires, at bare minimum, a foundation of truth. If you value and expect stability in a relationship know that there is no substitution for integrity and character. A F.U.L.L will claim to have these qualities with clever speaking but his actions will always prove otherwise and cannot withstand the test of time or deep scrutiny.

PAY ATTENTION!





*I never trust people's assertions,
I always judge of them by their
actions. ~ Ann Radcliffe, The
Mysteries of Udolpho, 1764*



Editor's Epilogue

During the years I have been involved in editing and publishing books, I've had several brushes with what I now can see, in hindsight, as possible if not probable psychopaths. No doubt, getting published is a siren call for narcissists and memoirs are the typical format and most natural vehicle for those who deem their every word and action to be consummately interesting. Sometimes those who are famous enough to get their memoirs published often decide one book cannot cover their wonderful life story and put out yet another. Mainstream publishing houses only care about numbers and bottom line so as long as the author has a following his/her mental stability is irrelevant and tributes to the Grand Self will continue to be printed and distributed by the thousands.

The question left dangling is why are narcissists able to garner a contingency of loyal followers who willingly buy their books? Perhaps the answer lies in an old axiom: *You know you live in a narcissistic society when those around you become obsessed with those who are obsessed with themselves.*

Of course, not all narcissists/psychopaths make it to the big time—many more end up behind bars. I once received a lengthy rambling, hand-written letter from a man in prison. He launched into his diatribe transparently contrived so as to gently flatter me into publishing his memoir. He didn't mention the publishing part at first, he mused about "us" as a perfect team. He spent a few words praising my abilities in ways that suggested he knew me or my credentials intimately, but the lion share of his accolades referred to his accomplishments and how I was the perfect fit for him. It wasn't until page two that he casually mentioned that perhaps I might be interested in helping him get his book into print, but certainly and only after he and I had developed a closer and more personal relationship.

Naturally, this creeped me out from the salutation to the signature especially since he sent the letter to my home address indicating that he had access to the internet. I was disturbed enough to do a background check which revealed he was in prison for life for a vicious murder. I sighed with relief and prayed that he was never going to be paroled.

But those in prison are not the only crazies who believe the acceptance and kudos they so richly deserve can come through the publishing process. I have received more than one query from religious zealots who have proclaimed to me that "God said that you were going to publish my book". One woman was so sure that God had told her I was going to publish her book, she congratulated me for having been "chosen".

My normal procedure is to simply ignore these nutcase queries but in that instance I could not help

but respond that unfortunately I had not yet heard from God about publishing her book and that as soon as I did I'd get back with her.

I once had a persistent individual, who sent several emails after I had said no, trying to convince me that his idea for a book and accompanying product was going to be the next big thing. He simply could not understand why I would refuse to get on board with such a fabulous idea! In his last email I was duly warned that it was my loss.

There is no way for me to know who is a certifiable psychopath and who is simply a quirky, ill-bred, self-centered dolt, but my position has had to be from an unwavering distrust of any approach that has the slightest hint of manipulation, verifiable lie, thinly veiled intimidation or playing the "higher authority card". And while this is my standard for defending and protecting myself from being victimized by wannabe authors, it is, on a grander scale, my adopted coping skill for discerning whom I might trust, who needs a bit more proving, and who needs to be avoided at all costs.

In this larcenous age, blind trust is the single most usable tool any con-man, psychotic or not, can and will successfully use over and over again to achieve his/her goals. The following is a story from personal experience that represents how trust and lack of discernment plays an integral part in individuals being duped by those who have no conscience. I include it here as additional warning for those who still think they can trust anything anyone says rather than do the harder work of paying attention to what they do.

The Graphic Artist & The Con Artist

In Spring of 2009 I met a woman, Susan C., who was a graphic artist. She claimed she had just accepted a new position as an executive assistant and her “boss” Richard B had promised to buy her a new house. She appeared to be genuinely euphoric about her good fortune and full of information about Mr. B’s generosity. But her overall demeanor and glib chatter, plus the total unbelievability of the circumstances instantly raised red flags for me and so I did a cursory Internet search on Mr. B.

The first thing I found was a question posted by someone in the “ask a lawyer” website who was seeking advice about his rights and claims against a man with the same name, Richard B. The scenario as presented by the poster seemed so similar to Susan’s story, I passed on the information to someone who then emailed the link to her to warn her. Less than two weeks later, Susan had suddenly moved to another state which was without a doubt incriminating.

The whole truth of this matter in regards to Susan’s involvement I will never know. But when Susan still appeared to believe she was beginning a fabulous new career, she talked freely about Mr. B with glowing praise, about how she had met him at a dog show and he practically hired her on the spot even though her expertise was in graphic art not executive assisting. The shakiest part of the story was about his buying her a nice house to live in. She seemed genuinely impressed with his wealth and influence and the social

circles he traveled in and she spoke in awe in particular about having attended a dinner at his upscale home in a gated country club community hosted by Mr. B and his wife Sue. Apparently many high profile guests attended this event.

Later I discovered in my search that the house was mortgaged to a Martin and Sue K, not Richard B. This disparity really is what propelled me to dig deeper because it seemed to me, at the time, that this questionable pair were using aliases which meant they were likely con-artists. Since Susan C. also mentioned a millionaire's luncheon held at the Country Club, I made the leap that is when and where Mr. B began his quest for funding for what was to be his hotel/restaurant scam.

After Susan moved, there was no more contact with her and the topic of Mr & Mrs. B, or whoever they were, was no longer on my radar. But two years later there was an interesting article in the local newspaper about a man, Richard B, who was under indictment for fraud. I followed the story until it concluded with him being convicted and sent to jail.

There are major sign posts that one should make note of in this story. First, you cannot assume someone is rich and successful by looks. A simple, anyone-could-do-it background check opened up a plethora of information about this man including a half dozen aliases, six major cities of residence, dozens of liens and legal actions taken against him. One has to wonder how a total stranger can suddenly move in and circulate freely in high society, rubbing elbows with ostensi-

bly highly educated people. Apparently all it takes is a minimal amount of effort and a large helping of swagger to create such a facade demonstrating how easy it is to put on a razzle-dazzle show and convince people to invest large sums of money in completely bogus projects, when all it would take is one simple doubting Thomas and an hour's worth of research to bring the whole thing crumbling down. Reminds me of the story of the Emperor's New Clothes.

Razzle-dazzle is the best tool to exploit blind trust. If I were to give her the benefit of the doubt, I can assume the graphic artist fell for it, even though the smallest reservation could have saved her a lot of trouble, and perhaps a move. But, I have to conclude, because of what the glittering promise offered her, she preferred to believe, setting aside all reason and without questioning the improbabilities.

But there was another issue under all of this that I have never been able to ignore. It seemed, based mostly on the description of him by Susan, the newspaper articles announcing the hotel/restaurant project, the multiple business names he operated under and the inevitable failure that loomed large, this man operated openly as though he might really believe in his ability to make this all happen. In spite of his criminal methods, he seemed to believe the end would eventually more than justify the means. All the previously failed businesses attributed to his name and/or aliases did not seem to deter him or his belief that this was going to be the one that made all the bad luck of his past go away.

And, of course, this is complete speculation on my part but if true, for me that describes an especially dangerous kind of con-man because someone who believes his own lies can more than easily convince others especially by brazenly operating in the light rather than the shadows where we normally expect evil to lurk. It is in the artificial made-up light where we are most often able to be duped.

Is this man a diagnosable psychopath? In as much as all con-men operate on the premise that there is a sucker born every minute, which indicates a high degree of missing conscience, I have no problem classifying anyone as a psychopath, whether a high-roller who knows how to make people part with their money, or small time con-men who prey on gullible individuals, convincing them that their luck has finally turned and their ship has at last come in.

Or politicians, or false prophets, or cult leaders of any kind, who smile brightly and speak all the right words, who know the lyrics, but not the music and who know exactly how to blind us with the light we want to see.

~Editor



Clinical Resources

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The Psychopath: Emotion and the Brain by James Blair Ph.D., Derek Mitchell, Ph.D., and Karina Blair, Ph.D., Blackwell Publishing, Malden (MA), Oxford, Carlton (AUS), 2005

Unmasking the Psychopath: Antisocial Personality and Related Syndromes (1986) Edited by William H. Reid, Ph.D., Darwin Dorr, Ph.D., John I. Walker, Ph.D., and Jack W. Bonner III, Ph.D., W. W. Norton & Company, New York, London, 1986

The Clinical and Forensic Assessment of Psychopathy: A Practitioner's Guide (Personality and Clinical Psychology Series) Edited by Carl B. Gacono, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Mahwah (NJ), London, 2000

Psychopathy: Antisocial, Criminal, and Violent Behavior Edited by: Theodore Millon, Erik Simonsen, Morten Birket-Smith, Roger D. Davis, The Guilford Press, New York, 1998

The Antisocial Personalities by David T. Lykken, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Inc., New Jersey, 1995, 259 pp. (ISBN 0-8058-1974-6)

The Psychopath: Theory, Research, and Practice Edited by Hugues Herve, Ph.D., and John C. Yuille, Ph.D., R. Psych., Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., Mahwah, NJ, 2007, 578 pp.

Spoilt Rotten! The Toxic Cult of Sentimentality by Theodore Dalrymple, Gibson Square Books, London, 2011, 256 pp. (ISBN 978-1906142254)

Christian Online Resources

Michael Boldea

<http://mikeboldea.blogspot.com>

Oswald Chambers My Utmost for His Highest

<http://utmost.org>

Vance Havner

<http://vancehavner.com>

David Wilkerson

<http://www.worldchallenge.org/en/view/devotions>

A.W. Tozer

<http://www.cmalliance.org/devotions/tozer>

Chip Brogden

<http://theschoolofchrist.org>

T. Autin-Sparks - Joy Out of Travail

<http://www.austin-sparks.net/english/002816.html>

Short List of Suggested Reading

The Holy Bible

Reflections On The Gospels by Vance Havner, compiled by Michael Catt, CLC Publications, Fort Washington, PA, 19034, 2004, 227 pp. (ISBN 0-87508-783-3)

My Utmost For His Highest by Oswald Chambers, Discovery House Publishers, 1992, 400 pp. (ISBN 978-0929239576)

When Ye Pray, The Anatomy of Prayer Book One by Micheal Boldea, Boldman Publishing, 2013, 328 pp. (ISBN 978-0615763170)

The Light That Was Dark by Warren Smith, Mountain Stream Press; 2nd Edition, 2006, 167 pp. (ISBN 978-0976349211)

The Influence by Matthew Slick, Stonehouse Ink, 2011, 380 pp. (ISBN 978-0615525730)

