



The Emotionally Destructive Relationship

Leslie Vernick

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Leslie Vernick, counselor and social worker, has witnessed the devastating effects of emotional abuse. Many, including many in the church, have not addressed this form of destruction in families and relationships because it is difficult to talk about. With godly guidance and practical experience, Vernick offers an empathetic approach to recognizing an emotionally destructive relationship and addresses the symptoms and the damage with biblical tools. Readers will understand how to:

Reveal behaviors that are meant to control, punish, and hurt
Confront and speak truth when the timing is right
Determine when to keep trying, when to get out
Get safe and stay safe
Build an identity in Christ

This practical and thorough resource will help countless individuals, families, and churches view abuse from God's perspective and understand how vital it is for victims to embrace His freedom from the physical, emotional, spiritual, and generational effects of emotionally destructive relationships.

The Emotionally Destructive Relationship Details

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From Reader Review The Emotionally Destructive Relationship for online ebook

Heather says

Excellent book to help in counseling those entangled in abusive relationships at any level. Presents a good blend of pragmatic steps to be taken and theological/relational truth . I am considering using it for a support group.

AJ says

The need this book fills is HUGE. How to identify if you are in an emotionally destructive relationship is essential for millions who are struggling in all sorts of relationships with others who know the language of denial, twisting truth, scapegoating, gaslighting, shaming and blaming, and the way to dismantle your personhood. This book gives a clear pathway for understanding it, ways to stop it going on in your life, and how to survive it. It isn't a one size fits all, but the principles and practical steps for your healing will certainly lead to a healthier life.

CJ Bowen says

Clear, helpful, and straightforward. Definitions, questionnaires, and role-playing dialogues make this especially practically useful. I may not have applied every Scripture she used the same way she did, but I was very happy overall. I have some quibbles with some of the devotional practices she recommends in her chapter on healing, but a less mystical/subjective approach can easily be substituted.

Elizabeth Turner says

Everyone should read this book. It is simple, practical, and easy to read. The author speaks gently, yet clearly. The only thing I wish is that she had more clearly defined the difference between an unhealthy relationship and an abusive relationship. But the book is a good, thought-provoking exploration of relationships and offers helpful advice throughout.

Becca says

A clear and realistic guide to coping with difficult people. I appreciate Leslie's biblical approach and her focus on becoming the person God desires you to be.

Karen says

There was one person in my life who seemed set on destroying me, at least emotionally. I've never met anyone like this person. I thought the problem was all me. While I am part of the problem, having someone bent on stirring up and causing trouble in my life is not something I was ready for. I've also gotten a lot of flack for not doing whatever to keep this from happening, to keep the peace, etc. I don't think they saw what I saw, there was no way to stop it without totally disengaging, and now I feel stronger and built up in the Lord, and I know that I can and will survive!

This book was a big help in realizing that I was right in stopping it by stepping back. There was no other way unless I wanted to be totally torn down and torn apart. It's one of the first steps I had to take in order to survive and also to stay close to the Lord. I wish nothing but blessings on the other person.

Blake says

Back some time ago I was asked during an interview what I consider the hardest counseling issues to counsel. Without hesitation, I responded, "Abuse cases." Abuse cases are hard to counsel because, one, they are heartbreaking. Yet, the other side of counseling abuse situations that makes it so hard is that in most situations, the counselor only gets one side of the story. This puts the counselor in an awkward situation because Proverbs indicates that it is wise to hear both sides of a situation. Getting the other side of the story is often impossible. Add to this, there is difficulty in handling these cases because we want to take people at their word, trust that what they report is accurate, etc., but we also know that all of us, when sinned against by another, are often inclined to shade the truth or present the data in our favor. This puts the counselor in a very tough position. We rarely get both sides of the situation. Oh how helpful it would be to be a "fly on the wall" in a home where abuse is a possibility. But in most cases, or one could say, that the norm in abuse cases is that it is only the abused person who is sitting in the office seeking counseling. It is rare that a person who is the abuser walks into the office seeking help.

All of this to say that I wanted so badly to like this book by Leslie Vernick. She is addressing an issue that desperately needs to be addressed. And in many respects she offers some very good input on the whole abuse subject. Her experience in counseling abuse cases gives her a platform from which to speak about the many different aspects of counseling the abused person, and for that, I think it is only right to give her an audience. Yet, the book had interwoven throughout, psychology and a man-centered element that I believe weakens the message of the book. It also seems that some of what Vernick shares can be taken as license to pursue divorce when no Scripture can endorse such an action. I've personally interacted with people who have used Vernick's book as a license to justify not only separating from an abusive spouse (which I agree, sometimes is a viable option), but have taken the content of what Leslie writes to give a green light to an unbiblical divorce. This is perhaps the caution in reading this material. Having said that, I also realize that what people do with what Leslie writes may not be her intended purpose. There is no doubt that Leslie has a heart to help the abused, which all of us as believers should. There is no doubt that she has experienced some hard situations of abuse in her own life and thus, she is using her own life experience to identify with others who experience abuse. There is no doubt that she has much good to say to try to provide the abused hope and practical advice for how to handle situations where abuse is taking place, and for that, I am grateful. Overall, I thought the book was okay. I'd like to see more written from the Biblical Counseling world on this subject.

Teresa says

Difficult to read, to think and pray on, and to come face to face with. Having said that, I think there is much to be gained from Vernick's approach, advice, insight and instruction.

What I particularly like (and loathe) is the focus on MY contribution(s) to these difficult relationships and how I can improve my inner life as well as with other people.

Hard as heck to put into action sometimes, but well worth the effort! Now that I'm done and have spent a couple of weeks consciously applying Vernick's concepts and strategies, I can say some of the work pretty well and some I need to do more work on.

I feel much more empowered and much more mindful of the big picture, with more tools in my belt to improve my actions and responses, and -- maybe most importantly to me right now -- I don't think it's "all my fault". Stay tuned, that could change! lol.

Lainy says

I came to a particular part in this book a few days ago and stopped. I haven't picked it up since. I am in a place I must face and it is very difficult for me, but this is something I must do. I know this. So, I am picking the book back up tonight and moving forward. This book is a must for anyone and everyone looking to get into, having problems in, or trying to understand different types, of relationships.

Relationships in:

Family (Parents / Kids)

Marriage

Friends

Self

Jeanne Lambrianou says

This led me to use the Bible in New ways...

and to see, in myself, an abuser, as well as the victim of abuse. Now I am hoping it will help my son to recover from ME, as well as helping me to recover from my own parents. I have always loved the Psalms, but now I see myself in them. I have always hoped that God valued me and saw more in me than I was seeing. Now I believe He does and always has - so, thank you Leslie Vernick, and thanks to my therapist, Kurt, for recommending your book to me.

Chuck says

One of the most tragic recommendations I make as a Biblical counselor is for someone to read this book. That recommendation means that after discussing their situation, I believe that two Christians aren't living as disciples of Christ; that they have failed to show the world how we are to love another (John 13:34-35). So

for this reason, it is one of the most important resources for pastors and counselors to be familiar with and to recommend in their counseling and discipleship of others.

Debbie says

I just finished reading Leslie's book and all I can say is that she has such insight and wisdom. I have a family member who abused me. I cut off the relationship over a decade ago; however, the person continues to cause me grief because she uses other people to get to me. It has been a rough road, but I have grown tremendously because of it. This book shows you what an emotionally destructive relationship looks like and how to deal with it. The advice is Biblical and practical. What I found interesting is that Leslie's just affirmed most of my decisions to get out and to get healthy. If you are struggling with any type of relationship (from abuse all the way down to the person that seems to suck you dry) then this book will help tremendously!

Beth says

I read this book because of a difficult relationship someone I know is in, but I found some helpful advice for my own relationships as well. It gives biblical and practical advice to help you recognize destructive habits of communication in your relationships and what you can do about them. The most helpful advice, in my opinion, was the fact that while you have no control over the behavior of others, you DO have control over your own behavior and reactions. Vernick helps you learn to set boundaries for yourself, to recognize when others are attempting to manipulate or intimidate you with destructive behavior, and to make sure that your own responses and attitudes are biblical and healthy.

I'd recommend this to anyone who is in a difficult relationship or simply wishes to avoid falling into unhealthy habits in communication with the people in their lives.

Brandon H. says

This is a great book if you're not clear on the definition of emotional abuse, or if you are in a toxic relationship and feel stuck and don't know what to do. It's also informative on how you can work on your "issues" as well as working on your relationship with an abusive person. Leslie Vernick has a lot of Biblically based, practical advice on the subject. It really opened my eyes to somethings and encouraged me to continue to take responsibility for my soul and life. One quote I particularly enjoyed was, "It is impossible to be spiritually mature when we are emotionally unhealthy." This is definitely an issue in the lives and hearts of many Christian believers. Not all, but a significant number believers seem to have a mindset that they can ignore their soul and toxic thinking and still grow in Christ.

Renee says

This books explains the many faces of abuse, how to recognize it, how to face it, make a stop to it and grow from it.

I like that she helps the victim/survivors to see their role or part in the process of being in a emotionally destructive relationship. she doesn't guilt but help the readers to be self aware and understanding more about themselves.

Part of the abuse makes you think that you are crazy or loosing touch with reality. this book help you focus on what it true while acknowledging your feeling (who are often undermine)

She gives practical example of different form of abuse and how to deal with them. overall I am very please with the way the content was put together and would recommend this read to anyone in need .
