

# BluesNews

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## HISTORY OF NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS...

Welcome to 2019!

I make New Year Resolutions. I work very hard to keep them; I almost always fail. My resolutions tend to be about self improvement. Throughout the year, I find I drift from where I started and from whom I wanted to be or to become. I allow myself to be moved along by the current of the times. Not often in a huge way, but small, incremental demands often lead to small, incremental compromises until I am not where, or who, I wanted to be. Resolutions are my way to get back on track. I think of the start of a new year as a renewed opportunity to be the kind of person I wish to be.

"The unexamined life is not worth living" is a famous dictum apparently uttered by Socrates at his trial for impiety and corrupting youth, for which he was subsequently sentenced to death. I reference this not so much for the history as for the radicalism of the idea. Socrates was engaged in the pursuit of truth. He believed truth and knowledge were within each individual; self-examination was the means to uncover that truth and knowledge. Truth and knowledge were the path to wisdom. Although truth and knowledge meant something different in Socrates' day than our understanding today, the pursuit of wisdom is still located in self-examination.

I pretend no wisdom. I make resolutions at the new year, because it is the NEW year. The Thanksgiving challenge is, in part, to identify that for which you are thankful. Although it can be common (I am thankful for my friends and family; I

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am thankful for my job; I am thankful for good health), Thanksgiving gives me pause to reflect on matters that make a difference in my life, that make me truly thankful. The tragedy of some events is not the occurrence itself but the lost opportunities afforded by the experience that are ignored or unexamined. I am a little slow, but by Christmas and the New Year and the time spent reflecting, I am usually in a position where I can say there are things about myself that I want to be different. To those who object that this can happen at any time in the year, that they don't need a special time of year to embark on such a quest, I take off my hat. It reflects a self discipline I do not possess. Standing in the river of time, I am easily caught up in the flow. The New Year is an anchor point. Anchored, I can, at the very least, start in the direction I want to go before being swept up in the flow and drifting from my goals.

Finally, I have been working hard at developing a model of specialized foster care practice that captures the transformative power of 'mindfulness' in a way that is experienced as less artificial and 'put on,' more naturalistic and ordinary. A component of this program is 'setting an intention' and working that intention toward its' goal. Setting the intention helps identify the goal. Knowing the goal I can identify the tools I need to accomplish that goal. Knowing the tools I will need, I can identify the strength I will need so the tools work for me. Knowing the strength I will need, I can identify the resolve I will require. Setting an intention and New Years Resolutions spring from the same roots. New Years Resolutions bring a measure of mindfulness to the start each new year.

The following is from the History.com website. The title of their webpage, "The History of New Years Resolutions."

The ancient Babylonians are said to have been the first people to make New Year's resolutions, some 4,000 years ago. They were also the first to hold recorded celebrations in honor of the new year—though for them the year began not in January but in mid-March, when the crops were planted. During a massive 12-day religious festival known as Akitu, the Babylonians crowned a new king or reaffirmed their loyalty to the reigning king. They also made promises to the gods to pay their debts and return any objects they had borrowed. These promises could be considered the forerunners of our New Year's resolutions. If the Babylonians kept to their word, their (pagan) gods would bestow favor on them for the coming year. If not, they would fall out of the gods' favor—a place no one wanted to be.

A similar practice occurred in ancient Rome, after the reform-minded emperor Julius Caesar tinkered with the calendar and established January 1 as the beginning of the new year circa 46 B.C. Named for Janus, the two-faced god whose spirit inhabited doorways and arches, January had special significance for the Romans. Believing that Janus symbolically looked backwards into the previous year and ahead into the future, the Romans offered sacrifices to the deity and made promises of good conduct for the coming year.

For early Christians, the first day of the new year became the traditional occasion for thinking about one's past mistakes and resolving to do and be better in the future. In 1740, the English clergyman John Wesley, founder of Methodism, created the Covenant Renewal Service, most commonly held on New Year's Eve or New Year's Day. Also known as watch night services, they included readings from Scriptures and hymn singing, and served as a spiritual alternative to the raucous celebrations normally held to celebrate the coming of the new year. Now popular within evangelical Protestant churches, especially African-American denominations and congregations, watch night services held on New Year's Eve are often spent praying and making resolutions for the coming year.

Despite the tradition's religious roots, New Year's resolutions today are a mostly secular practice. Instead of making promises to the gods, most people make resolutions only to themselves, and focus purely on self-improvement (which may explain why such resolutions seem so hard to follow through on). According to recent research, while as many as 45 percent of Americans say they usually make New Year's resolutions, only 8 percent are successful in achieving their goals. But that dismal record probably won't stop people from making resolutions anytime soon—after all, we've had about 4,000 years of practice.

Charity can be defined as kindness and tolerance in judging others; significant among my New Years Resolutions, to be more charitable.

# SEXUAL ASSAULT IS CONNECTED TO SERIOUS HEALTH PROBLEMS

## RESEARCHERS ARE EXPLORING THE CONNECTION BETWEEN TRAUMA AND MIGRAINES, INSOMNIA, AND HYPERTENSION

STEPHANIE WATSON

Lea began experiencing severe physical problems shortly after she was raped. Years later, she suffers from intense and untreatable nerve pain that has worsened throughout her adult life and from regular migraines thought to be related to PTSD.

“I have survived sexual assault and harassment and experienced them together,” Lea said. “I suffer from idiopathic dysautonomia, neurological damage that causes my neurons to misfire or misreceive information. This means I interpret many sensations as pain... Everything from itches to simply having a body puts strains on my neurological pathways.”

Research into Lea’s condition has found a connection between physical and mental trauma. Sexual violence is also one of the most common causes of PTSD, along with combat stress and traffic accidents.

Awareness of sexual assault and harassment has been steadily increasing since the #MeToo campaign entered the public eye in late 2017. But despite a greater awareness of assault, there is still a huge stigma surrounding those who experience it. Survivors say they often feel accused of lying or blamed for causing attacks by being drunk or wearing revealing clothing. This kind of shaming harms not only reputations but also the health of survivors.

Survivors such as Christine Blasey Ford have been sent death threats for “ruining the lives” of those they have accused. Ford has had to move homes four times due to death threats and continued harassment, while her alleged attacker, Brett Kavanaugh, is back teaching youth basketball and settling into his new job as associate justice at the Supreme Court.

According to RAINN, the national sexual assault nonprofit, there are an estimated 321,500 survivors of sexual assault each year in the United States, and 50 to 90 percent of them go on to develop post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

“Sometimes sexual harassment registers as a trauma, and it’s difficult for the patient to deal with it, so what literally happens is the body starts to become overwhelmed.”

On top of the trauma from harassment and assault itself, researchers have found that survivors are at greater risk of developing serious health issues, including depression, PTSD, high blood pressure, anxiety, kidney disease, aneurysms, diabetes, and many other serious illnesses. The connection was little understood until a study published in the October 2018 Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA). Of 304 women surveyed, 19 percent had experienced workplace sexual harassment, and 22 percent had a history of sexual assault.

Compared to participants who did not have a history of sexual harassment, those with a history of harassment had higher systolic and diastolic blood pressure and a higher likelihood of Stage 1 or 2 hypertension. Some 60 percent of survivors reported problems sleeping, compared to 20 percent among women who had not been attacked, and

*How long a minute is, depends on what side of the bathroom door you're on.*



*Echinocereus pectinatus*

95 percent showed symptoms of depression and clinical anxiety.

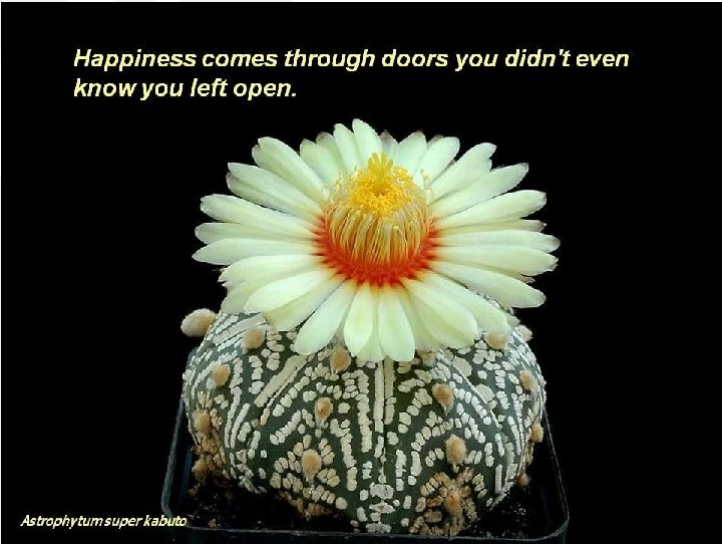
The results highlighting high blood pressure are particularly troubling, because the condition is a major risk factor for cardiovascular disease — suggesting that sexual harassment and assault could actually be contributing to the leading cause of death for women in the United States.

“What is clear is that this association is strong, that sexual abuse is also associated with these other cardiovascular risk factors,” Donna Arnett, PhD, an epidemiologist of the University of Alabama, told MedPageToday. “We need to do a better job of screening and identifying childhood sexual abuse at an early age.”

On top of blood pressure issues, the researchers in the JAMA study found some surprising differences in age and class. They discovered that women who were more highly educated yet under more financial pressure were more likely to be sexually assaulted. Younger women were more likely to be harassed. This may be due to the fact that women with higher financial demands (who often also happen to be millennials) are more likely to stay in abusive work situations for financial security. Similarly, highly educated women may become employed in more male-dominated fields — often white-collar jobs such as medicine and law.

Knowing what causes certain illnesses and symptoms is imperative to treating them. Painkillers and antihistamines can’t change deep-seated emotional trauma, which can continue to put physical stress on the body if not addressed.

“Sometimes sexual harassment registers as a trauma, and it’s difficult for the patient to deal with it, so what literally happens is the body starts to become overwhelmed,” Nekeshia Hammond, a psychologist and founder of Hammond Psychology & Associates, told NBC News. The body reacts to trauma in a physical way as a form of denial. “We call it somatizing: The mental health becomes so overwhelming, one can’t process it to the point of saying ‘I have been traumatized’ or ‘I am depressed.’”



On top of self injury and mental illness, the trauma can also cause symptoms like migraines, insomnia, and disordered eating. “I have personally suffered from severe insomnia and found myself incapable of working, impacting my life in just about every way. I also suffer from migraines, which could be related to PTSD,” Lea says. “I began experiencing these symptoms shortly after my first rape, and they have continued and worsened through my adult life.”

Acknowledging how sexual assault and harassment affects the body in physical ways is imperative to saving lives. But decreasing the ignorance and stigma around the issue is also vital to helping many survivors get the help they need.



This appeared in a published newspaper. A misplaced hyphen lets you decide where to put the emphasis in the headline ...

# 5 HIDDEN BEHAVIORS OF AN EMOTIONAL MANIPULATOR

An emotional manipulator is an incredibly difficult person to deal with. They drain your energy, they're exhausting to be around, and they can bring your self-esteem down quickly. The worst part is that you may not even notice what they are doing.

Emotional manipulation is toxic. As such, it's important that you recognize when someone in your life has a pattern of manipulating you and those around them. This will prevent you from getting hurt or being dragged into unwanted situations.

In order to avoid the negative effects of being around people like this, you need to be aware of the warning signs and red flags. Here are some hidden behaviors of an emotional manipulator to keep an eye out for.

## Here Are 5 Hidden Behaviors Of An Emotional Manipulator

### 1. Everything is about them

An emotional manipulator constantly needs to make everything that is happening relevant to them. It's like they're always demanding for all eyes to be on them. They want sympathy, attention, and open, willing ears all at once.

Since no one is always naturally in the spotlight, an emotional manipulator is willing to perform a variety of toxic behaviors in order to keep themselves there. Here are some ways a person like this would make everything about them.

#### a) One-upping

If you tell an emotional manipulator about something negative happening in your life, they'll be sure to inform you of how much worse they have it. They'll imply that your problems are nothing compared to theirs in an effort to gain your sympathy.

Basically, these people turn misery and suffering into a contest instead of recognizing that everyone's problems are just as valid as their own. They'll inform you that you have no right to complain because they want the attention you're receiving.

#### b) Craving Attention

An emotional manipulator will make up all sorts of stories in order to gain attention. They'll exaggerate their stories, interrupting other people's stories to tell their own, made-up "better" ones.

You may notice that, when you're around an emotional manipulator, you find yourself always listening and never getting a chance to speak.

#### c) Playing The Martyr

When an emotional manipulator seems to agree to do something positive, things might seem good at first. Whether it's volunteering, helping someone out, or taking on an extra task, they'll seem eager to assist.

But then, things go bad – fast. The person begins to complain about all the work they have to do. They act like they're taking on a huge burden and constantly demand praise from everyone around them. Needless to say, they pretend they're not reluctant at all and really want to help. Because they're good actors, you might think they're just a good person with positive thinking ... until the complaining begins.

### 2. Twisting words, facts, and situations

Facts are the enemy of an emotional manipulator because they prove that their actions are wrong. This is why many individuals who seek to psychologically manipulate others try to twist facts, statements, and even incidents in their favor. Here are some ways they do so.

#### a) Gaslighting

Gaslighting is an act whereby someone attempts to trick those around them into questioning their perception of reali-

ty. If you confront an emotional manipulator about something, they will lie and twist everything to make it look like you're wrong and they're right. This means that an emotional manipulator may:

Lie about a sequence of events

Make you believe you said something you didn't

Convince you that you misheard, misspoke, or misremembered something

Insist that your problems aren't real

This is very dangerous and toxic behavior to be around. It can make you question your sanity. A manipulator will do this to take advantage of you and make you believe you're crazy. It's a very dangerous tactic

### **b) Playing the victim**

Emotional manipulators want you to know that they are never, ever in the wrong. They are quick to blame others and insist that nothing is ever their fault. No matter what they've done, they'll be sure to point fingers at everyone except themselves.

If an emotional manipulator fails to complete a task, they will blame your high expectations of them. When their partner breaks up with them, they will call them afraid of commitment. If they make you angry, they will say you are too sensitive. If they get fired, their boss was a jerk.

Basically, emotional manipulators never take responsibility for their mistakes. They refuse to be held accountable and will be the first to throw others under the bus to protect themselves.

### **c) Outright lying**

Emotional manipulators will lie to your face with no remorse. Many of them have symptoms of pathological lying and may fib compulsively. They might:

Twist your words to make you sound bad

Exaggerate situations and spin them in their favor

Claim to forget information that they should know

Make excuses that aren't valid

Justify their negative behavior

Be careful when listening to an emotional manipulator. If you're remembering what happened completely differently from how they claim things went down, they could be lying to you.

### **d) Playing dumb**

Pretending not to know something can make someone look innocent. This is probably why emotional manipulators do this so often. They play "dumb" in order to be released from obligations or hide truths. Seeing as they know nothing, how can they be in the wrong?

### **3. They fight unfairly**

We know that disagreements are a part of life. But there are healthy, effective, and efficient ways to have a fair and reasonable argument.

According to Preston Ni, who works at Foothill College in their Communication Studies Department, an emotional manipulator does not abide by these methods. Instead, they go out of their way to use any unfair tactics they can to gain higher ground over those they argue with. Here's how they might do so.



#### a) Taking you out of your element

When someone wants to manipulate you and win a debate, they'll want to be on their home turf. Someone who only ever wants to pick a fight with you in their home, office, or personal "territory" is trying to gain a psychological upper hand.

#### b) Listening first

At first, it seems like someone's decision to listen to what you have to say first is a positive thing. But they're not just trying to hear you out – they're mentally memorizing your points in your argument and finding ways to refute them.

Emotional manipulators also use this opportunity to catch a glimpse into your personal ideals and perspectives, so they can evaluate your weaknesses and strengths.

This tactic is used by those in sales and marketing, too. It's definitely not pleasant coming from someone who isn't trying to sell you anything more than a manipulative argument.

#### c) Aggression

Sometimes, manipulators try to intimidate you or make you feel uncomfortable by being overly aggressive. They might use strong, harsh language, gesture in wild or fierce ways, or speak very loudly in order to derail any chance at a fair discussion.

#### d) Information overload

There's nothing wrong with using facts to support an argument. In fact, it's recommended and a great way to have a good discussion. But manipulators will use only "alleged" factual information with no proof in their arguments.

This means an emotional manipulator might throw out random statistics and present inaccurate data repeatedly to overwhelm you and pressure you into believing them. They don't seek to educate you – only to win with falsehood.

#### e) Pressure

It's reasonable to expect a person to need some time to think about making a decision or coming up with a response. An emotional manipulator will relentlessly pressure you to make a choice before you're comfortable.

This is because this pressure creates a sense of urgency that is entirely false, prompting tension that might just make you give in to their argument or desires.

#### 4. Guilt tripping

The ever-famous guilt trip is a tactic utilized by most emotional manipulators. It involves trying to make you feel guilty for something that happens in order to gain an upper hand and make you fold to them.

If you feel bothered by something they do, they will try to make you feel guilty and unreasonable for feeling that way. When you have plans that don't involve them, they will act upset and claim that you care about others more than them. If they make a mistake, they'll tell you how hard they tried and how awful it feels to fail.

An emotional manipulator is always ready to turn something positive into something negative. They are experts at using your conscience against you, prompting you to feel guilty even when you have done nothing wrong.

If you find that the person you're around always makes you feel like you're in the wrong, you are likely dealing with an emotional manipulator. The same goes for someone who makes you feel bad just because you're having fun or enjoying yourself.



You should also watch out for an emotional manipulator who makes sure they always sound sweet and genuine, no matter what. They might pretend to be concerned about you but then they'll say something that subtly provides a guilt trip and makes you feel bad.

This type of behavior is often overlooked because an emotional manipulator will look and sound sincerely kind and thoughtful when they do this; however, their end goal is still to guilt trip you into doing what they want.

## 5. Judging and criticizing constantly

Everything you do can be wrong in the eyes of an emotional manipulator. Many people who behave this way are seeking to control you. They can do so by making you feel insecure and constantly criticizing your actions.

The worst part is that this behavior likely ties in with the other four behaviors we've discussed. This means an emotional manipulator might tell you that you take things too seriously when you get upset. They might encourage you to lighten up and learn to take a joke. They may tell you that you need to work on your positive thinking.

However it plays out, being the subject of judgment from an emotional manipulator is toxic and isn't easy to avoid. You will have to actively work to cut that person off or allow their criticisms to go unacknowledged.

### Final Thoughts On Hidden Behaviors Of An Emotional Manipulator

Emotional manipulation is a kind of abuse often overlooked. Many people make the mistake of believing that, because it is a non-physical form of negative behavior, it isn't that serious. This is far from the truth.

An emotional manipulator can ruin your self-esteem, make you feel inadequate, and cause crippling self-doubt. As such, keeping an eye out for these 5 hidden behaviors of an emotional manipulator will help you protect yourself against this serious form of toxicity.

## PUNS

1. The fattest knight at King Arthur's round table was Sir Cumference. He acquired his size from too much pi.
2. I thought I saw an eye doctor on an Alaskan island, but it turned out to be an optical Aleutian.
3. She was only a whiskey maker, but he loved her still.
4. A rubber band pistol was confiscated from algebra class, because it was a weapon of math disruption.
5. No matter how much you push the envelope, it'll still be stationery.
6. A dog gave birth to puppies near the road and was cited for littering.
7. A grenade thrown into a kitchen in France would result in Linoleum Blownapart
8. Two silk worms had a race. They ended up in a tie.
9. A hole has been found in the nudist camp wall. The police are looking into it.
10. Time flies like an arrow. Fruit flies like a banana.
11. Atheism is a non-prophet organization.
12. Two hats were hanging on a hat rack in the hallway. One hat said to the other: 'You stay here; I'll go on a head.'
13. I wondered why the baseball kept getting bigger. Then it hit me.
14. A sign on the lawn at a drug rehab center said: 'Keep off the Grass.'
15. The midget fortune-teller who escaped from prison was a small medium at large.
16. The soldier who survived mustard gas and pepper spray is now a seasoned veteran.
17. A backward poet writes inverse.
18. In a democracy it's your vote that counts. In feudalism it's your count that votes.
19. When cannibals ate a missionary, they got a taste of religion.
20. If you jumped off a bridge in Paris, you'd be in Seine.
21. A vulture boards an airplane, carrying two dead raccoons. The stewardess looks at him and says, 'I'm sorry, sir, only one carrion allowed per passenger.'
22. Two fish swim into a concrete wall. One turns to the other and says 'Dam!'



# A GREAT LESSON ON STRESS

A young lady confidently walked around the room with a raised glass of water while leading a seminar and explaining stress management to her audience. Everyone knew she was going to ask the ultimate question, 'Half empty or half full?' She fooled them all. "How heavy is this glass of water?" she inquired with a smile. Answers called out ranged from 8 oz. To 20 oz.

She replied, "The absolute weight doesn't matter. It depends on how long I hold it. If I hold it for a minute, that's not a problem. If I hold it for an hour, I'll have an ache in my right arm.

If I hold it for a day, you'll have to call an ambulance. In each case it's the same weight, but the longer I hold it, the heavier it becomes."

She continued, "and that's the way it is with stress. If we carry our burdens all the time, sooner or later, as the burden becomes increasingly heavy, we won't be able to carry on."

"As with the glass of water, you have to put it down for a while and rest before holding it again. When we're refreshed, we can carry on with the burden - holding stress longer and better each time practiced.

So, as early in the evening as you can, put all your burdens down. Don't carry them through the evening and into the night. Pick them up again tomorrow if you must.

## OCCASSIONAL THOUGHTS

1. Accept the fact that some days you're the pigeon, and some days you're the statue!
2. Always keep your words soft and sweet, just in case you have to eat them.
3. Always read stuff that will make you look good if you die in the middle of it.
4. Drive carefully... It's not only cars that can be recalled by their Maker.
5. If you can't be kind, at least have the decency to be vague.
6. If you lend someone \$20 and never see that person again, it was probably worth it.
7. It may be that your sole purpose in life is simply to serve as a warning to others.
8. Never buy a car you can't push.
9. Never put both feet in your mouth at the same time, because then you won't have a leg to stand on.
10. Nobody cares if you can't dance well. Just get up and dance.
11. Since it's the early worm that gets eaten by the bird, sleep late.
12. The second mouse gets the cheese.
13. When everything's coming your way, you're in the wrong lane.
14. Birthdays are good for you. The more you have, the longer you live.
16. Some mistakes are too much fun to make only once.
17. We could learn a lot from crayons. Some are sharp, some are pretty and some are dull. Some have weird names and all are different colors, but they all have to live in the same box.
18. A truly happy person is one who can enjoy the scenery on a detour.
19. Have an awesome day and know that someone has thought about you today.