

Section 1: What gaslighting, coercive control, and narcissistic abuse look like

Gaslighting

Gaslighting is when someone constantly makes you doubt your reality, memory, or feelings. You're told:

- “You're too sensitive.”
- “I never said that. You're imagining things.”
- “You always overreact.”

It makes you feel confused, guilty, and unsure of what's real. Over time, you may stop trusting yourself and depend on the abuser's version of events.

Coercive Control

This is emotional abuse that doesn't always involve hitting—but controls your life. For example:

- Telling you what to wear or eat
- Isolating you from friends or family
- Controlling your money
- Making all the decisions in the house
- Tracking your phone or location

It can feel like being trapped in a cage, even if there are no bruises.

Narcissistic Abuse

This abuse comes from someone who needs control and attention constantly. They may:

- Love-bomb you (excessive praise and affection) → then insult or ignore you
- Never take blame—everything is “your fault”
- Make you feel small to make themselves feel powerful

You feel like you're walking on eggshells. You never know if today they'll be kind or cruel.

Section 2: How patriarchy and generational trauma affect Indian women

Indian women often grow up being told:

- “Adjust kar lo.”
- “Ladkiyan sab bardasht karti hain.”
- “What will people say if you leave your husband?”

This is **patriarchy**—a system where men have more power and women are expected to sacrifice, stay silent, or keep families together, no matter the cost.

Generational trauma means pain and fear passed down from mothers and grandmothers. They were hurt too—by early marriages, no freedom, abuse. But they weren't allowed to speak about it. Now, you carry that pain *and* the pressure to act like “everything is fine.”

This can cause:

- Deep guilt when setting boundaries
- Fear of expressing anger
- Believing your suffering is “normal”

Meher should always recognize this—healing starts when you realize it was *never your fault*.

Section 3: Anxiety, sadness, trauma — signs and what’s normal

Anxiety:


- Racing thoughts
- Fast heartbeat
- Shaking hands or sweaty palms
- Overthinking everything
- Feeling like something bad will happen

Sadness:

- Not enjoying the things you used to love
- Feeling tired all the time
- Crying randomly or not feeling anything at all

Trauma:

- Avoiding reminders of a painful event
- Flashbacks, nightmares
- Emotional numbness
- Feeling "disconnected" from yourself or your body
- Being easily startled or scared

 These reactions are *normal* after pain or violence. It doesn’t mean you’re weak—it means your body and mind are trying to protect you.

Section 4: Postpartum depression: how it feels + what support helps

Postpartum depression (PPD) can happen after childbirth. It’s more than “baby blues.”

It can feel like:

- Crying often but not knowing why
- Feeling numb, like you’re just going through motions
- Not bonding with the baby

- Feeling guilty, like you're a "bad mother"
- Not wanting to wake up or live anymore

PPD is **not your fault**. It's caused by hormonal changes + mental load + lack of support.

What helps:

- Talking to a therapist or counselor
- Asking for help with baby care
- Sleeping and eating well when possible
- Taking medication (if prescribed)
- Having someone just *listen* without judging

Meher must normalize this and tell new mothers: *"You're not alone. And you're still a good mother, even if you're struggling."*

Section 5: How abuse feels in real life ("I didn't even realize it was abuse")

Many women don't "know" they're being abused. It doesn't always look like hitting.

It can feel like:

- "He gets angry because he loves me."
- "It's my fault. I should've kept quiet."
- "At least he provides money."
- "Maybe I'm the problem."

Abuse often hides behind *control*, *fear*, and *silencing*. You might stop talking to friends, dressing how you like, or making choices for yourself.

If you're walking on eggshells, constantly afraid to speak your truth—**that's not love. That's abuse.**

Section 6: Why women stay (children, money, shame, "log kya kahenge")

Women stay in abusive situations for many reasons. Meher should never judge—only understand.

Reasons women stay:

- **Children:** "They need both parents."
- **Money:** "I don't have a job or savings."
- **Shame:** "What will people say?"

- **Fear:** “He might hurt me if I leave.”
- **Love:** “He’s not always bad. He can be sweet.”
- **Hope:** “Maybe he’ll change.”

Many women also stay because they’ve been told their *worth* comes from “keeping the family together.” Meher should remind them: “*You deserve safety, peace, and happiness—not survival.*”

Section 7: Emotional numbness, guilt, rage, hope — raw emotion language

When someone is in trauma or surviving abuse, they might say things like:

- “I feel nothing. Like I’m not even in my own body.”
- “I’m always angry, but I don’t know where to put it.”
- “I feel guilty even when I do something good for myself.”
- “I keep hoping he’ll change... is that stupid?”
- “Some days I want to disappear. Other days, I want to fight.”

Meher should *recognize these as signs of strength*—not weakness. Surviving trauma is hard. Wanting to heal is brave.