A black and white silhouette of a werewolf's head, facing right, with its mouth open as if barking. The text "WHAT'S LOVE* GOT TO DO WITH" is positioned above the werewolf's head.

WHAT'S LOVE* GOT TO DO WITH

SURVIVING NARCISSISTIC ABUSE

KNOWING THE WERE WOLF



STRATEGIES TO WIN THE WEREWOLF
GAME BEING THE HONEST

AUGUST 2024



To my love,
who is the kindest, most forgiving, most
optimistic one, thus, most desired by
the werewolves.

STRATEGIES TO WIN THE WEREWOLF
GAME BEING THE HONEST

KNOWING THE WEREWOLF



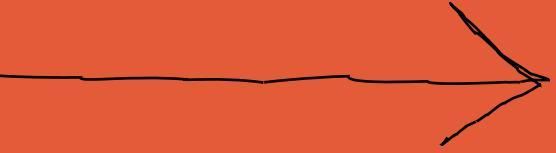
What's Love* Got To Do With _____

is a monthly series journal published on Project Theory Probe, discovering the many ways that love has been overlooked and undercooked in our daily lives, then proposing solutions to our intimacy-deprived, love-confused existence.

Written, designed, and illustrated
by Kitty Gia Ngân.

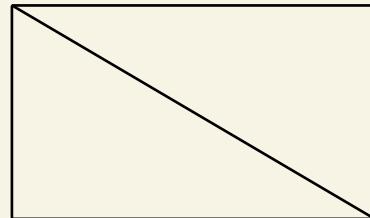
Annotated by you,

prepare
a pen!



menu

PLAYBOOK



Disclaimer: This booklet is a semi joke. Read with utmost disrespect and a continual half-laughter in your brain. Any seriousness is unintended; Thus, suing the writer is almost impossible. Any offense taken should be instead issued to your local friends and if more support is needed, the Department of Culture and Entertainment in your area.

GASLIGHTING SURVIVAL TACTICS HOW TO SPOT THE BIGGEST POINT RESOURCES

GAME RULE

Werewolf, or Mafia, is a social deduction role-playing game in which players are divided into 2 teams: the uninformed Villagers/Honest (majority) and the informed Werewolves/Liars (minority).

Each night, the Werewolves secretly kill a Villager while posing as Villagers during day time to manipulate the group into turning against each other. A Werewolf must conceal their guilt through accusations and gaslighting tactics until the other team is fully eliminated.

The Villagers must identify their fellow honest players and work together to eliminate the Werewolves by voting to hang the correct perpetrator as each day ends.

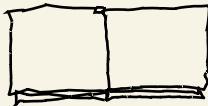
Which card were you dealt?



Werewolf was designed by Dimitry Davidoff in Moscow, 1986. The game was intended to simulate the psychological processes that occur in groups, particularly the ways people influence each other, make decisions, and identify threats. The following pages are how to play the Werewolf if you are the Villagers.



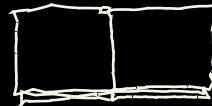
Dimitry Davidoff in the 1980s



PLAYBOOK

How to win the werewolf.

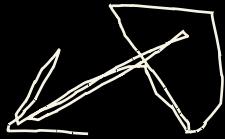
The first thing to work in the depth of your psychology is that the wolves just cannot help but being wolves. They existentially can't. Even if they are your mom, your best gay friend, your first boyfriend, or your charming community's organizer -- if it's the card that they are dealt, they just must act on it. They must take advantage of your kindness and stab you in the back the moment you raise an eyebrow towards them. They would make others abominate you if your existence makes an inconvenience to theirs. Don't you see, they need to prioritize their survival. This is not a game of forgiveness and making real friends. This is about gaining power and winning.



SURVIVAL DIARY

How to spot the narcissistic.

The first thing to work in the depth of your psychology is that the narcissist just cannot help but being narcissist. They existentially can't. Even if they are your mom, your best gay friend, your first boyfriend, or your charming community's organizer -- if it's the card that they are dealt, they just must act on it. They must take advantage of your kindness and stab you in the back the moment you raise an eyebrow towards them. They would make others abominate you if your existence makes an inconvenience to theirs. Don't you see, they need to prioritize their survival. This is not a competition of forgiveness and making real friends. This is about gaining power and winning.

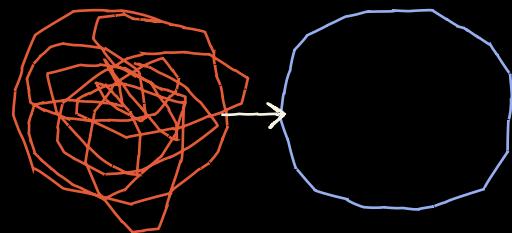


THE JOURNEY OF BUILDING IMMUNITY AGAINST ABUSE

Unlike how big media portrays every Social Movement, where leaders loudly protest and fiercely demand, in my experience being with those who have been under prolonged mistreatment, the first step of self-activism is not going down a list of Rights to restore Justice. We, the people who have been chronically gaslit and mistreated, don't know that such a list is legal. We don't know that love and kindness are our basic rights. Instead, we internalize the guilt trip, the belittlement, the blame, game, neglect and so on as if our happiness should be a coincidence dictated by the mercy of the other's mood.

We suffer from an epidemic where we don't know what healthy relationships look like. Without a good model in media and life, we mistake jealousy with being wanted, control with being cared for, we keep getting gaslighted while thinking it is help.

Thus, the most powerful step in navigating abuse is the ability to think, "Wait... This (behavior) isn't right nor is it normal. I should not be treated this way."



"I deserve this."

"WTF?"

SURVIVOR'S CRITICAL STEP

Realize that there's something seriously wrong with this relationship / person.

In this booklet, we will do some courageous things together. We are going to...

STOP:

- blaming ourself for a moment
- forgiving the other person
- justifying for their misdeeds

START:

- admitting that we were hurt
- validating our own reality
- placing accountability where it's due

DR. Ramani Durvasula, a leading expert on narcissistic abuse, wrote in *It's Not You*:

I was so gaslighted, I thought up was down, that I was to blame, that my expectations for people were not realistic, and that I was not worthy of being seen, heard, or noticed.

Unfortunately, I kept hearing that many times the partners, family members, friends, colleagues, and even therapists were blaming the person experiencing the abusive behavior for being too sensitive, not trying harder, being too anxious, not being more forgiving, staying, leaving, being judged as harsh for using the term narcissist, and not communicating more clearly.

You are not too sensitive, nor too harsh, needy, anxious, or ungrateful. You have tried hard and communicated clearly enough. You don't need to be more forgiving and understanding.

To navigate abuse is not about correctly diagnosing someone of a psychological pathology. In fact, trying to do so only exasperates self-doubt and distracts us from acknowledging our hurt. Simply, pointing out abuse is about advocating for our safety. And we can't feel safe without receiving trust, respect, and kindness.

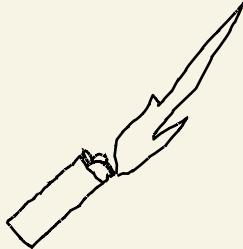


To reach that step of discernment is a winding, chaotic, and courageous journey. This booklet (series) is born to boost our immunity for such a journey.

Sure, we will get sick and fall for the wolves again, mistaking love-bombing with intimacy and strategic niceness with real kindness. But we will see that the process of building immunity against werewolves is in itself worthwhile. This work demands us to be in touch with our body and intuition, to be truly free, awake, and most of all, to love well.

Use a pen, red if possible, to mark what makes you pause and think “shit...” :

were my boundaries respected? did they even ever ask what my boundaries were? did i feel like i always need to walk on eggshells or else i would be punished? was there any lie? and if i were to have the courage to bring up a contradiction, was i gaslit and told that i had a bad memory? was my perspective dismissed as crazy? did i feel manipulated? invalidated? was there any name calling? (“lazy, stupid, slut”) was my time, energy, and attention being reciprocated? was there a tantrum any time i gave a constructive feedback no matter how kind and respectful i tried to be? were they able to take accountability for anything or did they always play the victim? and worse, instead blaming me for their behaviors? did i commonly hear things like: • “you’re too sensitive” • “you’re acting like a _____” • “no one else would put up with you” • “your feelings aren’t my problem” • “it’s your fault i did that” • “are you going to make a big deal out of nothing?” did they always act like you owe them? was there any equality in this relationship? or it’s just double standards? what if you treated them the exact way that they treat you? are you allowed to be angry? to be resentful? to screw up?



GASLIGHTING

One of the most brilliant technologies that has come out of the Domestic Abuse and Marketing Department is to make people eternally confused.

The muddiness of confusion prompts the community to behave in wildly manners: irrational purchases, generalized anxieties, internalized muted screams, perpetual self-doubts, fogginess, idealized childhood and toxic yet positive automatons. In short, all sorts of things possible that distract us from actually working on our goal, which is to listen to our goddamn insight and identify the werewolf.

WOLF'S BEST TACTIC

If you can't persuade,
make them confused.

Gaslighting [verb] is a form of psychological manipulation in which a person or group causes someone to doubt their own reality, memory, or perceptions. Gaslighting involves undermining someone's confidence in their own thoughts and feelings, often leading them to feel confused, anxious, or dependent on the manipulator.

Gaslighting is the Bestseller for all wolves and is one of the most dangerous tactics of all. It's worse than lying because it's harder to be spotted, and is easily mistaken with a "simple difference in opinion". It is designed to confuse and undermine someone's autonomy and own sense of reality.

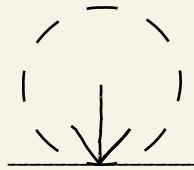
Gaslighting phrases for beginner wolf:

- You can't be cold. This room is hot.
- You ate a lot. You're not hungry.
- He's not handsome. You're blind.
- Are you kidding? This dress is ugly.
- I never said that. It's in your mind.

People who are brought up in a gaslighting environment are the most susceptible to believing in another wolf's gaslight. Wolves love these dependent, insecure minds.

For Villagers, the solutions to resist gaslighting come down to three things:

- Ground ourself in our own perceptions.
- Have a healthy community to validate our own reality.
- Disengage from gaslighting producers.



But for those of us who are new to addressing gaslight, we might be at a painful dilemma:

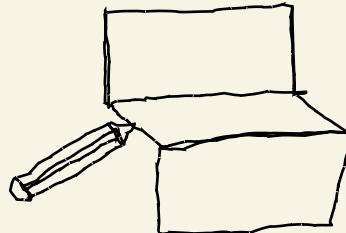
1. it is almost impossible to validate our reality on our own because we have been severely disempowered and made detached from our self that we no longer know for sure what is right and left anymore, but...
2. we don't know whom in our circle can we trust to help us reflect reality either.

The following pages are strategies to help us be in touch with ourselves again: Knowing what we like, dislike, feel, sense, think, believe, is the best activism against manipulators.



survival tactic

EXTERNALIZE



If all players have a pencil and a paper, the villagers will win.

The way that the werewolves win is that one, they know what's going on so they have more information, and two, they are able to convince the townspeople who don't have info to basically forget about everything they've heard. When you vote with your gut, you're extremely swayed by the person sitting next to you. Each werewolf is trying to convince the villager to their right or left that the two of them are in it against everybody else.

-- Max Ventilla, an avid Werewolf player

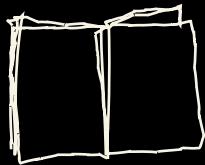
DOCUMENT

Record. Write. Text. Share.

Externalize our (inner) experiences.



KEEP AN ANTI-GASLIGHT JOURNAL



Write down what you hear, see, your inner and outer experiences. Especially when you feel uneasy or doubtful, write, scribble, scream in ink and paper.

Write down gaslighting instances, big or small, helps us feel less crazy. Write when we feel invalidated, guilty, or confused.

Examples:

- She told me I was selfish for not fixing my schedule to accommodate her plans.
- They made me responsible for making them upset when I tried to bring up how their past action had hurt me.

Dr. Ramani also suggests making a note of the kinds of conversations or topics that are more likely to result in gaslighting in the narcissistic relationships in our life.



RECORD CONVERSATIONS



Sometimes I need to physically remove myself from the conversation, wind down, and sleep to realize that I have been gaslighted.

Records allow us to revisit the past when we are in a safer space to think and feel. This is when we can review how things were reframed and the tactics that the wolf used.

Werewolves prefer a game where everyone is spinning, apologizing, and laughing in confusion. When confronted, they'd say:

- Mmm... I don't remember.
- I never said that.
- You are making up things.

The best defense to gaslighting is to go no-contact. But if we can't, keep on recording for our sanity.



"CAN YOU TEXT ME THAT?"



If conversations contain important information, say:

- Text me the details so we don't have any mix-ups.
- To avoid any miscommunication, please email me your response.
- Please write to me so I can take time going through your concerns thoughtfully.

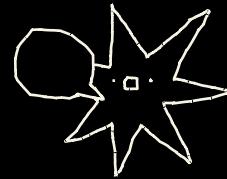
Practice writing brief responses with clear boundaries:

- I will reply if we just talk about the kids' school reports.
- Please text me after work.
- I am available at the agreed time.

Know that it is kind to set boundaries to keep ourselves regulated and sane. Others can then benefit from us setting a healthy environment, too.



VERBALIZE OUR EXPERIENCE



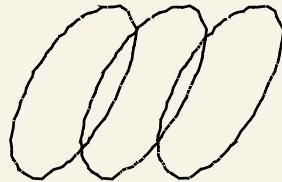
Checking in with ourselves throughout the day reinforces our trust in our reality. Ask ourselves aloud:

- How am I feeling?
- How does my body feel today?
- How is my energy level? How has it changed in their presence?
- Did I feel heard, seen, accepted?
- Is there something about them that I feel easy or uneasy about?

Reiterate our experience to ourselves help us trust in our perceptions and memories. Surviving gaslight is unlearning others' influences on us while relearning what it is like to be in our own body and mind.



survival tactic
BONDING



The Werewolves' best chance of winning occurs when they bond with their innocent neighbors and convince those neighbors to value that bond over analysis and insights. In reverse, bonding with other villagers is our best immunity boosting tactic.

Werewolves prefer we "keep everything confidential" because they love "privacy". They think we should not waste time "gossiping". No support group, no talking a



CONSCIOUS
"GOSSIPING"



Gossiping, or disclosing our concerns to another person, feels like a betrayal, so we keep things to ourselves. But this code of honor is extremely dangerous when we may be under manipulation. Those who get trapped the longest in gaslighting relationships are usually there because they aren't given another perspective.

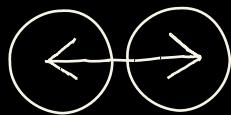
Practice disclosing to a trusted web of people. This can be a narcissist-informed therapist or support circle, a friend, family member. Especially look for those who can grasp the subtlety of psychological abuse, who hold complexities (not black-or-white thinking), and have a history of truth-speaking.

Just one conversation with a respectful, reality-reflecting person can be tremendously illuminating and restorative.



survival lexicon

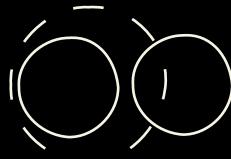
UNDERSTAND EMPATHY



Social perceptiveness:
"I see what you want."

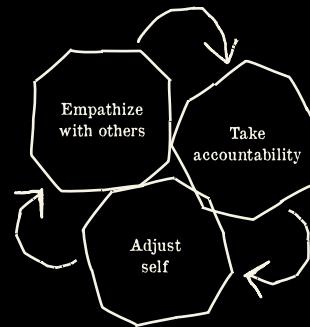
Social perceptiveness is the ability to accurately perceive and interpret subtle social cues, such as body language, tone of voice, and facial expressions, to gauge others' emotions, intentions, and social dynamics. Its intent is to navigate social situations effectively and achieve a goal.

Empathy, on the other hand, goes beyond merely understanding another's emotions; it is about emotionally connecting with others and understanding their feelings on a deeper level, which enables compassionate responses to arise naturally.



Empathy:
"I feel you deeply"

A psychologically healthy person can naturally empathize, feel the hurt they have done onto others, thus, desire to take accountability and readjust themselves accordingly in order to prevent redoing the hurt. This continual process of observation and re-direction make those who are in healthy, validating relationships grow with love and compassion over time.



Mutually self-actualizing relationships.

Narcissistic relationships are marked by a lack of empathy. But it is hella confusing because the narcissist can be prince(ss) charming, highly socially perceptive and attentive. They can love-bomb, sweet talk, and simply enjoy an occasionally good day connecting with us. So how can we differentiate strategic social navigation with empathy?



SPOTTING STRATEGIC SOCIAL NAVIGATION



Ask our self:

1. Do I feel that their presence helps me feel safe to be honest and vulnerable?

Answering yes to this question is a non-negotiable. A clear YES is a green flag. A “umm... I’m sure they do...? maybe. yes? no?” is a NO. When we feel that the other person truly cares about our wellbeing without hidden personal agendas, our nervous system naturally calms and we open up with more ease no matter how timid our usual temperament is. In this department, our nervous system is more attuned than our rational mind, it can pick up the subtlest cues. So trust in our instinctive answer. Validate our experience.

2. Who benefits from this interaction?

When I came in with a question or concern, was it acknowledged and addressed? Or was it deflected and distracted into another topic (problem)?

3. Is there a pattern of reciprocity?

It is natural to be the center of attention in some conversations. But if one person consistently takes the spotlight and all conversations revolve around them, their needs, thoughts, stories, humor, etc. then that is a clear sign of the lack of empathy, concern, and interest in others. Also, don't mistake initial interest with true empathy. True care is revealed with time and consistency.

Look for:

1. Goal-oriented behaviors.
2. What they do; not what they say.
3. Pattern of Actions; instead of singular examples.

Have antennas to know whether someone is a safe space. Safe people care about our needs, wants, and desires.



KNOW WHAT HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS SOUND LIKE



Many of us are stuck in unhealthy relationships because we don't even know it is toxic. We don't know how differently it could all be. Thus, taking the time to educate ourselves about relationships is one of the best acts of compassion we can give to ourselves. This newfound knowledge will then be reflected in our changing reality.



"You are not 'too needy', because that somehow then makes me the judge. I am not the judge of what's 'needy' or not. I am someone who loves you."

-- Jimmy on Relationships Youtube

Safe people:

- Care about our boundaries.
- Ask questions about our preferences.
- During fights, remind us that we are a team regardless of the shape of the conflict.
- Take accountability when they mess up.
- Able to say: I am sorry. That was wrong. Tell me about how that made you feel.
- Consistent with their integrity: their words match their actions.
- They prioritize our wellbeing.
- They want us to be honest even if that hurts them a little bit.
- We can share how we are messed up and they will be as equally open to share theirs.
- Being with them feels empowering and liberating.

In learning about narcissistic relationships specifically, and psychological abuse in general, we are also discovering the parts within us that are violent and narcissistic. Thus, the more we can practice creating a safe space for others, the more we know what relationships are capable of, and have that for ourselves.



THE BIGGEST POINT

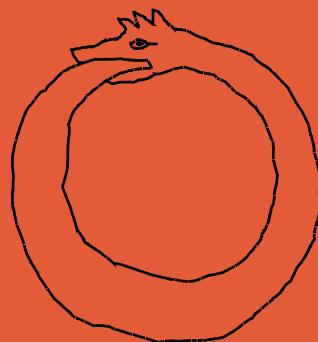
If there is ever a complete checklist to help us spot a narcissistic (which there isn't because everyone is different and narcissism is a spectrum -- but just imagine if there is), I will still urge you that **THAT IS NOT THE POINT.**

Don't you see, the biggest point is, we have been too busy looking at others that we become severely detached from ourselves. When we are asked why we like someone, for example, we point out that this person is smart, funny, kind, etc. instead of how we feel when we are with the person. Instead of tuning into our experiences, we are trained to look for specific things from others that match an imaginary checklist, and this is a disastrous recipe.

Our generation needs to practice believing in our own experiences and see what's doing harm to us. Why so determined to diagnose correctly if the person in concern is pathological or not? What we shall be doing instead is ask; Ask ourselves important questions: "How am I feeling about this situation, really?" "What would I do if my wellbeing and feelings matter?"

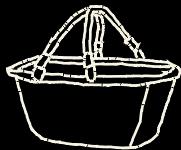
Some questions to ask instead:

- How did my body feel being in their presence? Stiff, relaxed, tensed, calm?
- Do I feel more or less energized than I did before meeting them?
- Did I feel heard, seen?
- Did I feel safe?
- What side of me did they bring out?





healing practice
**PRACTICE
CHOOSING**

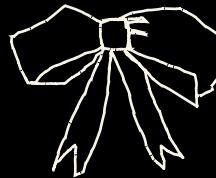


People come out of a gaslighting relationship have difficulty making decisions. We may not even know what we really like for drinks, clothes, or sex positions: Being severely disengaged from ourselves in order to justify for the lack of mutual care in the narcissistic relationship.

Thus, spending time to get to know our likes and dislikes is crucial in healing, but it takes conscious work. Allow ourselves to spend more time than what we think people usually need in order to make decisions: start with the smallest of things from groceries to food and movies. Practice choosing. Tune into our bodily responses. Play around. Test. Walk away then come back if we need to. Ask friends to help with encouragement. But always, choose. Practice tuning in, practice knowing ourselves.



**STOP OVER-
APOLOGIZING**



Stop saying sorry for

- Not being perfect always
- Liking something different
- Blocking out time for relaxation
- Setting boundaries to protect ourself
- Crying and showing emotions

Apologies are for when we do something wrong. Having a feeling, an experience, a request, or not agreeing with someone's reframe of our reality is not wrong.

Ask, "If someone else felt like me, would I feel that they were doing something wrong? How would I have reacted if we were in reverse positions?"

Over-apologizing and unwarranted guilt are usually the result of suffering from perpetual gaslighting. Help others when they over-apologize by reminding them that there is no need, too. Werewolves hate it when the world suddenly stops apologizing.



RESOURCES



Books:



- "It's Not You: Identifying and Healing from Narcissistic People" by Ramani Durvasula
- "Will I Ever Be Good Enough? Healing the Daughters of Narcissistic Mothers" by Dr. Karyl McBride
- Disarming the Narcissist: Surviving and Thriving with the Self-Absorbed" by Wendy T. Behary
- "Why Does He Do That? Inside the Minds of Angry and Controlling Men" by Lundy Bancroft
- "The Narcissist's Playbook: Dealing with a Narcissist" by Dana Morningstar
- "The Narcissist You Know" by Dr. Joseph Burgo

Youtube Channels:

- "DoctorRamani"
- "Jimmy on Relationships"

Podcasts:

- "Navigating Narcissism with Dr. Ramani"
- "The Covert Narcissism Podcast"
- "The Narcissist in Your Life Podcast" by Linda Martinez-Lewi, PhD

Support Groups & Online Communities:

- Taking Yourself Back: Healing from Narcissistic & Antagonistic
- Out of the Fog
- Reddit: r/raisedbynarcissists

Start curating our own pool of resources. Then share them. Join a support circle. Create gaslighting-free zones for friends. Help each other reflect reality. It takes more than one person to form a relationship, so we need each other to be informed, sharing a common language to build a loving world together.

TO BE CONTINUED

Due to time limits (aka deadline), I need to stop the booklet here so that my team can continue on with their work without being hijacked. But I am not even half way across what I needed to share. I hope that we can continue staying in touch and continue this dialogue. The truth is, this topic is heartbreakingly personal. Learning about gaslighting and narcissism forever saved, changed, and empowered me. I was so gaslighted and without a faith in my lived experiences that even when I was sexually assaulted, I still justified for the assaulter(s), thinking that I were to be blamed for every possible mistake in the world. Learning about the effects that psychological abuse leaves on its victims and survivors has everything to do with love. If we don't know what love looks like and the effects of being unloved, then we cannot truly love. Period.

In the game of Werewolf, usually 2 out of every 10 players will play as wolves. In our current society, 1 out of 6 people who live in the urban area is narcissistic. The similarity is shocking and our only path forward, like the Werewolf Game, is to identify our true allies. And what's the surest way to identify correctly? Tuning into ourselves, hence, enhancing our sensitivity over time.

I am new to this realm and had been an ex-pert at deluding myself. Creating this booklet is my way to take myself back and spark a conversation with those who resonate.

If you want to be in touch, reach us at wedocare@tutu.house.

With love and luck.



If a friend ever confesses that they have a “negative hunch” about someone, ask them to share. But never, EVER, make them prove to us that the other person is “bad” as if they are being judged for collecting good evidences. We are not being fair when we are playing the neutral judge, because it has been much easier for the victims to doubt their own experiences and continue to endure.

Other booklets in
What's Love* Got To Do With series:

Making A Fuss
Daring To Archive