



SHANE LYNCH PSYCHOLOGY

May Long Weather

Rain, hail, snow. Another May long weekend in Calgary.

Remember...

Gaslighting is not something anyone is immune to. That said, not every "bad" relationship involves gaslighting. If you find yourself consistently questioning your own reality, while feeling more and more isolated from friendships that existed before your current relationship, you might be experiencing gaslighting.

About Shane

My sons and I were successful in testing for our yellow belts at Hapkido back at the beginning of the month.

There were a lot of kids and a handful of adults showcasing their skills which included a lot of kicking, sparring, and board-breaking.

Priceless look on my kiddos' faces when they punched through a wooden board!



Gaslighting: What it is and what it isn't.

Gaslighting has been around for a long time. It's only recently become an often thrown around word in social circles, the dating scene, and when conducting a post-mortem on a past relationship which failed miserably.

Because of its popularity, I think it best to understand what gaslighting isn't before we get into what it is. Many folks, especially on social media, have lots to say about it but many don't really understand it or do a great job of describing it.. Shocking, I know... Ha ha!

Gaslighting isn't someone just in a bad mood. It's not solely poor communication (e.g., difficulty expressing needs and listening to each other). It's not temporary, (e.g., "they don't usually behave this way", or, "this was a one-off"). And, often is not something that is immediately apparent which may make it difficult to first detect.



Tips for Dads & Moms

Gaslighting can occur as a result of family-of-origin issues.

Gaslighting parents will have a “scapegoat” child and a “golden child.” However, parents switch these titles between children depending on which child appears more loyal to the gaslighting parent.

Children may become “parentified” - that is, they begin to act as if they are adults in a parental role in the home instead of their chronological and developmental ages.

Sometimes gaslighting parents put their kids in a double-bind. They'll ask them to do something but then make it nearly impossible to do (e.g., give conflicting messages).



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To start, gaslighting is the motivation to control another person or get away with something. In most cases, gaslighting involves some kind of ulterior motive. Because of this ulterior motive, I'm going to refer to the gaslighted person as the “target” for the remainder of this section.

Some ulterior motives include a concerted effort to make the person being targeted question their reality. Gaslighters tell targeted people they didn't see or hear what they thought they did. If the target begins to distrust themselves, they rely more on the gaslighter to make choices for them. The target adopts the gaslighter's version of reality which increases dependence on the gaslighter. This shifts power and control to the gaslighter who may then attempt to isolate the targeted person.

Here are a few things to watch out for:

Love Bombing: this occurs at the beginning of the relationship. It usually includes promises of monogamous commitment very early on, moving in quickly, or even talk of marriage.

Triangulating: gaslighters pit people against each other. They will talk about how other relationships the target has are toxic.

Splitting: gaslighters appear to split between moments of idealizing their targets, to then devaluing them, and then discarding them, sometimes suddenly.

Hoovering: occurs when gaslighters try to suck the target back into the relationship through false promises and more love-bombing.

What do we see happening on a first date with a gaslighter? Lots of love-bombing. They will speak poorly of exes or family. They put a great deal of importance on their accomplishments. They may be rude to waitstaff. Appearance and attributes don't match their online dating profile as they can create a new persona with online dating. They may appear to “look good on paper” and seem “pulled together.” They practice “cognitive empathy” (e.g., they'll ask you how your day was, but don't really care what the answer is. Empathy without feeling). They're very good at appearing non-pathological. Gaslighters may even bring their partner (target) in for couples therapy and ask the therapist to fix their partner.

If you think you have been (or are) experiencing gaslighting, please reach out to me. I will send you some specific questions to reflect on and help you assess your relationship functioning.