

# Chart of Coercion

Information  
has been  
Interpreted  
from  
Biderman's  
Original  
'Chart of  
Coercion'

## Isolation ...

*Deprives victim of all social support (for the) ability to resist*  
*Develops an intense concern with self*  
*Makes victim depend on interrogator*

Abusers use many ways of keeping their partners cut off from family, friends and other possible sources of help. This reduces her chances of "breaking the silence", telling others the truth about what's really happening and of escaping. It also means that she is not "influenced" by other's opinions or evaluations of her situation and that she only hears his view of everything (and with an abusive person, this is always a very distorted view). It also makes her totally dependent on him. (Most women in Domestic Violence see that their actual survival – whether they ultimately live or die – is dependent on their partners).

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## Monopolisation of Perception ...

*Fixes attention upon immediate predicament; fosters introspection*  
*Eliminates stimuli competing with those controlled by captor*  
*Frustrates all actions not consistent with compliance*

The women's attention is always focused on the partner's anger – what will set him off? – what will calm him down? Many women describe it as "always walking on eggshells". They are so concerned with day to day survival; protecting themselves and their children from his wrath; that they cannot focus on how they might achieve a different sort of life. It keeps them captive and "obedient".

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## Induced Debility and Exhaustion ...

*Weakens mental and physical ability to resist*

Many women will report that they are never allowed to rest, even when they are ill. Their partners expect them to be busy at all times. Even when the man is at work he will often ring home many times during the day to check on what she is doing. Many women are woken at all hours of the night to provide sex or get cups of tea/coffee, snacks or even full blown meals or just because he can't sleep and doesn't see why she should either. The resulting state of physical and emotional weakness makes it difficult to argue or plan to escape.



## Threats ...

*Cultivates anxiety and despair*

Keeps the women in a constant state of terror. The threats are usually about what he'll do to her (or the children, or her family) if ever she tells anyone or tries to leave him.

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## Occasional Indulgences ...

*Provides positive motivation for compliance*

Builds up hope in the women and makes her want to persevere with the relationship. Maybe he's not so bad after all. Maybe there is hope he will change. He can be so nice when he wants to.

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## Demonstrating "Omnipotence" ...

*Suggests futility of resistance*

The abuser's continual demonstration of complete power and control over the victim is a constant reminder of the futility of resistance.

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## Enforcing Trivial Demands ...

*Develops habit of compliance*

Ensures that she will automatically and unquestionable obey him in every small detail.

