



# Break Free From Emotional Blackmail!

Guilt is that emotion that can turn your stomach into massive knots, cause severe headaches, undermine your self-esteem and keep you feeling victimized and powerless.

Guilt brings with it the message that you did something wrong ~ whether in reality or a belief that you carry... “you should have done better, had more control, understood more, and in general, been a better person”. Guilt is not only “self” generated. It’s often induced by others, and this is a form of emotional blackmail.

Emotional blackmail is when others threaten to abandon you, withhold their love, or tell you that if you don’t do things the “right way” (i.e., their way), you’ll be punished.

If you give in to these tactics by others, you feel bad about yourself, angry and resentful. If you stand up to them and feel their disappointment, anger, pain, etc. it can trigger in you a belief that you’re “wrong” or bad and send you down the road of guilt and even shame.

In many situations you’ll have feelings that will be difficult, uncomfortable, painful or disturbing, regardless of the decision you make. Are you willing and able to live with your integrity and self-respect even if it means someone else may feel betrayed, hurt, disappointed or angry?

YOU have to choose between dealing with the feelings of disappointing someone else or yourself.

**Reminder: Breathe through your urge to act on your guilt feelings... slowly and deeply... allow yourself the possibility of responding, rather than reacting... and we breathe...**

Take a moment to write down your answers the questions provided.

1. What are the messages you get that signal the start of your GUILT reaction?  
Who do they come from?

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2. What is your biggest fear if the person you are caring for feels disappointed or upset and says it's because of what you do or don't do?

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3. Are you willing to take as good care of yourself as you do of those you love, even if it means someone other than you will feel disappointed or frustrated? Write down your feelings that arise at this idea.

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4. Who can you reach out to for support, guidance and encouragement to change from acting out of guilt to acting from a place of empowerment? List your key support people here... with phone numbers if needed for that emergency call...

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