WEB EVADER

"It takes a lot more energy to be devious than it does to be oblivious"

Making a who's who list of Spiders only gets a non-Spider so far. It's more their nature to trust others and not want to be on guard all the time. They don't think that way. This makes it all-the-more essential to know how to react in real-time when a Spider reveals themselves and to see the web they're weaving before you become ensnared.

It's also important to put into context what we just covered about manipulators having different motives. People who take pleasure in toying with other's emotions will use any sort of tactics, such as confusion, blame, and interrogation, in order to really get under your skin.

These emotional manipulators thrive off of getting a rise out of you. The key here is to make sure you don't give them what they want. After several failed attempts, they may begin to leave you alone. You may have to deal with these people often, such as in your workplace. These are wolves in sheep's clothing. One option is to just ignore them. Another is to surprise them by saying something nice instead of meeting them with a combative attitude. It might be the last thing you want to do, but you're the one who comes out on top.

These individuals can also try to make you look like the bad guy and twist words to fit any agenda. In wanting to give them the benefit of the doubt, you might actually start to believe that you have done something wrong, when in reality, you have fallen victim to their scheme. If this persists, it may help to jot down notes that will later prove correct when called into question.

Becoming someone else's emotional toy is unbecoming. Certain Spiders thrive on seeing your mood go down the drain. So, when they see you unaffected by their brash remarks, they won't have a reason to torment you any longer.

As for Spiders that are overbearing, it's best to call them out on their behavior. These people have probably bossed others around for so long and have never been confronted for it. Stand up for yourself and let them know they make you feel uncomfortable and taken advantage of. Their behavior may be more habitual than conscious.

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It's possible they'll deny it or retreat because they're not used to having their ego bruised. But they'll get over it, and you can feel good about standing up for yourself and the truth. Once you scare this type of Spider away, they're a lot less likely to continue a failed manipulative behavior.

Another tactic of classic manipulators is to put you on the defensive by telling you how you feel. The tendency is to respond negatively with anger, fear or sadness. However, staying in control by remaining positive, happy and joyful is a surefire defense.

It's especially essential to respect yourself in personal and romantic relationships. It may not be possible to avoid emotional attachment, especially if someone doesn't show their true colors right away. Be aware of any signs of being steamrolled. It may be best to back away from the relationship and establish boundaries. Keep it cordial and civil to minimize any fallout. Rely on mindfulness activities to stay grounded and true to yourself.

ACTIVITY 1: WEB RECALL (TIME: 10-15 MINUTES)

Now that you know how to spot Spiders, can you think of 3 incidences when someone intentionally took advantage of you and how they imposed their will? What would you do differently to avoid or escape those webs? How can you become and remain more aware among those Spiders to avoid their webs and protect yourself?

ACTIVITY 2: SPIDER ESCAPE PLAN (TIME: FROM NOW ON)

Be it a relative, coworker or stranger, on what Escape Plan can you rely when you feel them start pulling your strings. Here are some solid comebacks to combat Spiders.

- Just say "No" – there's no need to provide a reason to justify your response
- Reject them by stating your own needs, "What's best for me right now is _____."
- Spotlight their negativity, such as about anger, fear or sadness and suggest the best way to resolve something is when everyone is calm.
- For those who are clearly out of line and violating your boundaries, the best defense is to state that their behavior is unacceptable. That's a web-stopper!

Manipulators can be like predators feeding on easy prey. Now you can stay off the menu.

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