

HOW CAN YOU TELL IF YOUR ABUSIVE PARTNER HAS CHANGED?

Hi. This is Natalie Hoffman of FlyingFreeNow.com, and you're listening to the Flying Free Podcast, a support resource for women of faith looking for hope and healing from hidden emotional and spiritual abuse.

NATALIE: In today's episode, we have the privilege of speaking to Bob Hamp, a licensed marriage and family therapist and author of several books, including Think Differently Live Differently and his newest release, Think Differently Lead Differently. Bob and his wife Polly are the owners and directors of Think Differently Counseling, Coaching, and Connecting which is a counseling and training center in Grapevine, Texas. Bob, welcome to the Flying Free Podcast.

BOB: Thank you, Natalie.

NATALIE: I first heard you speak on a Facebook Live event about a year ago on the subject of abuse, and it was one of the most insightful teachings I had ever heard. Can you tell us a little bit more about what you do on Facebook? It looks like you hold classes locally, and then you offer them live. Tell me a little bit about that.

BOB: It depends if you are asking or if my wife is asking. If my wife is asking what I do on Facebook, I scroll and hangout. What you're asking about, our counseling center, as you mentioned, Think Differently Counseling, Coaching, and Connecting, has a Facebook page for that center. The primary thing we do on that page is use that for our Tuesday night classes, which we host live here at the center. We have a small classroom here. It's open to the local area so people come from all around here, but we also broadcast on Facebook Live a wide range of topics. It will be anything from spiritual growth and transformation, relational issues, and among that would be some of the teaching I do on abuse that you have described, which is how you stumbled across our stuff. Those Tuesday night classes are also mingled in with the variety of events that we do. Those events are also announced. This next year we're going to broadcast those events, not on a Facebook page, but on a separate site. But we will communicate about that on the Facebook page.

NATALIE: That sounds fabulous because a lot of women ... Well, I've talked to a lot of women who don't have Facebook, or they don't go on Facebook. Some of them that are on Facebook have to be careful about what they look at, read, or like because they are in these precarious situations with spouses who are keeping an eye on them and controlling what they're doing. They have to be careful, so that sounds wonderful!

BOB: Absolutely! And there are a lot of people, believe it or not, who just culturally aren't on Facebook.

NATALIE: I can't believe that!

BOB: Shocking, I know. For that reason and several others we're going to move over to another website, but Facebook is still a simple place for communication, and until further notice those live classes are every Tuesday at 6:30, other than the little break I just told you about that we're doing over the holidays.

NATALIE: Okay. So as far as all the different subjects that you talk about, was it just a year ago, or had you talked about abuse prior? When did you start talking a little bit about abuse?

BOB: Probably, the one you are referring to I taught the session a year ago in the fall – a two-part series, the first on understanding abuse and the second one on spiritual abuse. I've actually taught for probably a decade on spiritual abuse because it is so prevalent in the varying positions I've been in. I've regularly encountered people who have been abused in churches by church leaders or by church institutions – obviously leaders are involved in that. But it's only probably been the last two years that I've been teaching on other forms of abuse.

NATALIE: Have you noticed ...? I think you had, when you did this teaching on abuse, tons of shares, and there was a flurry of activity.

BOB: I would like to think people like all the stuff we teach, and we've got a growing, appreciative audience. But when we opened the door and started teaching on abuse, it's like everybody came out of hiding.

NATALIE: Yeah.

BOB: I don't know if that's a fair way to say that or not, but the reaction was significantly higher and stays that way. It continues to be something that people share regularly. Like you mentioned in our other conversation, I'm actually going to do a short ebook about that topic. What I believe is happening, Natalie, is that population, who is either in the midst of an abusive relationship or is getting out of or has gotten out of that, has been a very isolated, silenced group. Much of that is because of the very dynamics of abuse and the way that the rest of the world and the church world understands abuse. Often the people who have been victims and/or have gotten out of an abusive relationship just kind of disappear from sight. It seems that when I've spoken for them,

there just seems to be a real gathering around that voice. I think it's also comparable to what's happening with the #METOO thing these days. People are just finally feeling like, "Somebody sees. Somebody is going to give a voice to this, and I'm not alone."

NATALIE: I wish that you who are listening to this could have just heard – Bob just recorded a workshop that is going to be available within the Flying Free Private Membership Group, and it was absolutely incredible! I wish you could do the whole thing right here, but this is just a thirty-minute podcast. One of the questions I wanted to ask you about was ... You know, my audience is women of faith, so, women who have put their hope in Christ. They have invested their lives in their local churches. Many of them are very conservative, so some of them have lots of children. Many of them homeschooled, baked bread from scratch – the whole nine yards, okay? Then they wake up after two or three decades of their lives that have been poured into this relationship that has not worked. It's overwhelming when they first wake up and realize. One of the things I want to say is that the workshop that you just did is a way of seeing what abuse is that helps you actually wake up to it. But the thing is they maybe aren't ready ... When they realize that they really are in an abusive situation, they're not ready to pull the plug right away. Their first reaction is like their reaction all the time, which is, "Oh my word. I've got to fix this! Now I'm going to have to dig down deep into whatever reserves I have left (which is pretty much nothing) and try to figure out how to fix what is now identified as an abusive relationship." Another thing is that they have children. A lot of them have children who might be lots of different ages. Some of them have kids who are in their twenties and thirties, but a lot of them have kids who are still teens or even younger kids. They have money situations or financial considerations because they've been stay-at-home-moms, a lot of them. They don't have a job. They don't have a career. They laid all of that to the side in order to invest in this marriage, help build up their husband, and invest in their children. How would you advise them, as far as what they could do in their current situation when they are first realizing what's going on but they're not ready to pull the plug yet, to manage or think about their situation with their abusive partner?

BOB: Let me step back and then answer that question. I'm going to give a little bit of context that I think is super important to this. One of the things that is primary to emotional and mental health and therefore spiritual maturity is this movement from emotional dependence to emotional independence. Humans are supposed to move from when they are born and fully dependent on their parents to a place of emotional independence where they, as the Bible says, "Leave their mother and father and cleave to their spouse." Each generation is supposed to make that shift towards emotional independence. Emotional independence isn't the kind of rebellious independence that people are afraid of. Emotional independence is, "I think for myself. I manage my own

life. I manage the world around me. I don't carry somebody else's burden when it's not mine. I do carry my burdens so that other people don't have to." It's a way of living free. So emotional independence is both psychologically and spiritually the key to health and freedom. Emotional independence also means learning to discern, "What am I responsible for, and what is someone else responsible for." One of the things I think is crucial to that, and Natalie, you've heard me describe and quoted it in your book, that abuse at its root is an inappropriate assignment of responsibility. It's tied to the struggle to make the leap to emotional and spiritual health of independence. In other words, if I'm responsible for myself and I'm not responsible for other people, then I can be spiritually and mentally healthy.

But if I'm in an abusive dynamic, what that means is that I start to feel responsible for things that aren't mine. Often in control-oriented environments, whether it's a job or a religious setting, the same thing is true. In other words, control uses a variety of things like guilt and shame and even will claim to be God's mouthpiece in order to get other people to feel a burden that is not necessarily their burden. All that to say, the number one thing is to really begin to understand what you are responsible for and what you're not responsible for, what God asks of us in relationships and what He doesn't, and begin to realize that in many cases simply beginning to manage your own internal world and stop trying to manage other people's internal world will change a number of things without ever changing your relational status. That was a lot to throw out there, but I wanted to tie this idea of overarching emotional and spiritual health to this idea that in settings where control or manipulation or domination are being used, whether it's abuse or simply an institutional control like what can happen in some religious settings, then the opportunity to say, "Wait a minute. While God wants me to be in healthy relationships, He doesn't want me to be controlled by others nor does He want me to control others because that takes away the opportunity for genuine love." Allowing people the freedom to make choices, allowing people the freedom to think their own thoughts and even carry their own responsibilities is a tremendous act of love that some people don't actually want.

NATALIE: Right.

BOB: For some reason we seem to have landed here, so let me wrap this up by saying this. There's a moment in the Old Testament where you see that Israel goes to the prophet and says, "Hey, tell God that we want a king." So the prophet comes back to God and says, "The people want a king." God says, "Tell them they can have one." (Which is scary that God is going to give them what they asked for.) He says, "But if I give them a king, he's going to take your kids, your land, and your money." He goes

through about three paragraphs of what the king will take away from people. Here's what I think that's a picture of. Everybody wants someone else to be responsible for them, but that was never God's design. The reason that the Israelites wanted a king is the same reason that we often want to look to someone else to tell us what to do and how to think. But when we're letting other people tell us that instead of discerning that within our community, then we set up half of the control dynamic. Learning to really have your own relationship with God and learning to discern what you are responsible for and what you're not responsible for are actually the foundations of a lot of freedoms, not just freedom from abuse.

NATALIE: Right. So if a woman sees the dynamic, she might even be tempted to take her notes to her spouse and say, "Hey look. I learned this. I was watching this Facebook video by this guy named Bob Hamp and ...

BOB: I'll give them my address also.

NATALIE: ... and this is how he described the situation. I'm really seeing this in our relationship, and I need you to take more responsibility." She's going to get kickback from her spouse, and it's probably going to blow up in her face. So what would you suggest that she do? If she were to hear what you shared (and by the way, I'll put links to some of his teachings on this that are on Facebook in the show notes so that you can listen to more of what he has to say because he has a lot of great things that you will want to hear but that we won't be able to cover in a little podcast) how can she handle the kickback? There's a cycle, and you're familiar with this cycle, how does she change...? What does she do to change it, and how does she handle the kickback that she's going to get when she does actually try to change what she would normally do in the cycle?

BOB: I think you are wise to point out the cycle. I think it's also a helpful aspect in beginning to walk in freedom. I think the most important part is to learn what is your part of the cycle, and anything you do that is no longer playing your part in the cycle ... When you described that they might be tempted to take it and have a conversation and say, "Look, I know see that I'm being abused," or "I know see that we're in a control/subjection relationship," that might actually feed the same cycle. The wisdom to recognize that capitulating, passivity, or taking care of the other person's needs without expecting them to respond to your needs – all of those are elements of that cycle. I think more so than just going and having a confrontation, I would pick one or two things that you have never asked for before and just go ask. The dilemma is (and I know that you know this, Natalie) some people are in dangerously abusive relationships, and some people are in control dynamics where both of them don't know

better. Those who are in dangerous relationships need to not go provoke more anger or more abuse. But in any of those dynamics it is safe, I believe, to be able to just walk up to your spouse and say, "Hey, I really need more of this. What would it take for me to have more of this?" Whether it's more conversation, more affection, more respect, more honor – if possible, try to describe some of those things in some behavioral ways. In other words, if you just say, "It would really mean a lot to me if I had more honor. Don't just say that. Say, "What would it take for us to have a relationship where I feel more honored by you? For instance, you use a kinder tone with me, or you don't call me names." Or give some specific behaviors that would indicate that shift. It's a little bit like sticking your toes in the water when you do that.

NATALIE: Yeah.

BOB: I think we described in the class that we just had that sometimes when you confront the abuse dynamic it suddenly escalates. The reason it escalates is that the dynamic assumes that the victim will remain passive. So to go from fully passive to fully confrontational might be like burning your house down.

NATALIE: And when you ask for something, the other person thinks that you're implying that they haven't... that they have failed in some way. They don't like that because they are always right. They don't fail. They are perfect. So even by making your needs known you are almost inviting a fight. You don't mean to. You really don't want to do that. You just want to have a meeting of the minds, a connection. You want to hear their heart, and you want them to hear your heart. It's just not possible. Is there ever a time when you just need to...? It feels counterintuitive to just back off because then for sure you can't. I guess I remember thinking in my own relationship, "If I don't keep trying, then I'm giving up, and I don't want to give up. I want this relationship to work." Is there ever a time where you just do need to give up and just refocus your energy? And what do you refocus your energy on?

BOB: Let me first say that the opposite of an abusive relationship is a mutual relationship. It's not the absence of abuse; it's the presence of mutuality. When two partners can meet each other in the middle and meet each other's needs in meaningful ways, you have a healthy relationship. The answer to your question ... What I heard you just ask is "Is there ever a time to give up?" Picture for a minute, you've gone and asked. You've said, "Would it be possible for us to have a relationship where I get more honor from you?" The first time you do that it's like sticking your toes in the water and finding out what comes back. You took us from the beginning to the end of that dynamic, which would be if you've asked a few times and change hasn't happened then the next step would be deciding how you're going to manage your own life. In other words, the

way that Danny Silk can keep your love on describes setting boundaries. Boundaries are not telling the other person what to do. They are telling the other person what you are going to do. It would be things like, "Hey, I've noticed that when I've asked for honor it doesn't seem to come back to me. From now on, if you are not honoring to me, I'm going to not engage in a conversation where you aren't honoring to me." Again, keeping in mind safety issues. It isn't safe to do this in every relationship.

But setting a boundary isn't telling another person what they need to do, it's about telling them what you'll do if changes don't happen. So you ask for what you need, and if they don't make those changes then you follow through with ... It can be things like whatever you have provided in the relationship. It's not manipulative for you to say, "I'm not comfortable being intimate with somebody who is cruel to me." (By intimate, you're going to have to define if you mean sexually or if you just mean emotional connection.) But whatever boundary you are willing to set, you say, "I'm not comfortable giving my heart to someone who screams at me." Or, "I'm not comfortable sharing connected times with someone who is critical of me. If you're not willing to make that change, I'm going to distance myself a bit more and figure out what I need to be safe. If you're not going to help me get safe, then I'm going to get safe." That's like a step two. Then step three would be the thing you are asking about, which is at some point if you've asked for change and it hasn't happened and you've made some changes that you made to make sure you are safe, provided for, cared for – whatever it is you are needing – and they either escalate ... By the way that would be one sign that it might be time to consider, when you said is there a time to give up, if they escalate when you ask for your needs to be met, that's a pretty good sign that somewhere out there you are going to need to say, "If this keeps escalating," – you don't want to keep feeding an ongoing escalation. It's one thing to not get what you need; it's another thing to escalate things. If you are escalating things, stop right then. If at some point it continues, and they don't respond in meaningful ways to your needs ... Again, there are so many directions to this. It's hard to speak in generalities about it because what one person needs might be time together in the evening after the kids go to bed. For another person it might be, "I need you to not hit me anymore."

So I think the time to give up... and I'm going to go back to the resource that I quoted in our session, *Beyond Boundaries* by Cloud and Townsend. It talks about the difference between hurt and harm. What they say is that we hurt each other in relationships regularly. It's part of being close. Sometimes someone misunderstands. Sometimes someone has a bad day and says something. We hurt each other, and that's not unusual. Harm is when it starts to really affect you detrimentally in your mental and emotional state or in your ability to perform in day-to-day life. If what you are asking for, or if you are asking them to stop something and they are not stopping, and it

begins to harm you, at that point it's time to ask yourself the question, "Is it reasonable that it might change someday or has all of their behavior pointed out that perhaps change is not going to be inevitable and I'm just way too optimistic." Here's the other thing I would add to that. I think there is really a crucial piece of this. I've been a licensed counselor since 1991. Actually, I got my degree in '91 and got my license in '93. I don't think I really understood personality disorders until the last six years. I think that if you are in an abusive relationship, I think it would be important for you to begin to learn about personality disorders. The reason I say that is because if you're just working through conflict, then work hard and be patient. But if you're dealing with someone who shows a strong likelihood that they have a personality disorder, your hard work might actually be fueling the pain that is coming back at you.

NATALIE: Right!

BOB: In short, what I tell people who are in here and trying to work through a relationship issue and I spot what I think might be a personality disorder, what I tell them is that in the DSM-V, which is the book we use to diagnose psychiatric disorder, ninety-eight percent of what's in that book is acute disorders that can be treated in a variety of different ways. Two percent are what's called the axis two or personality disorders. Those are what the American Psychiatric Association would say are not treatable. By personality disorder they mean something that took place during the formation of personality in the early years of life and therefore is kind of cemented in as a natural part of their character. Some people use the term "character disorders" instead of personality disorders to describe the axis two disorders. If a spouse ... If you are married to someone or in a relationship with someone who has a personality disorder that seems to be identifiable, that itself might be a sign that it's time to change your tactics or even consider backing out of continuing to try.

NATALIE: Right. Okay, so what if you ... In Christian circles, there's a lot of spiritual teaching that actually feeds into the abuse dynamic. So a Christian woman, for example, might not feel like she has the right to ask to have her needs met because Jesus is supposed to meet all her needs. Maybe when she starts setting some boundaries or making her needs known, she's accused of being selfish, demanding, accused of giving up on the relationship if she starts to create some distance and protect herself, or told that she has an anger problem and is bitter. Then usually, what I've seen in so many cases, the church tends to come alongside of the abusive person who won't take the responsibility, and they actually coddle that person and join that person in criticizing, shaming, and blaming the victim. It's like abuse round two only more intense because now you don't just have a private situation going on. Now you've got a public smear campaign happening. How do

these women deal with that? How are they supposed to think about that?

BOB: In the class that we just did together, I talked about really counting the costs. Part of that is if you start to realize that you're in an abuse situation that is not going to change, what Natalie just described as the common reaction that in many church settings, because of the misunderstanding of what abuse really is and how it operates, you will want to know ahead of time that the cost of leaving a relationship like that is more than just leaving the relationship. It may affect other relationships in your life as well, and in fact probably will affect, in meaningful ways, your church relationship. It's one of the reasons I started the conversation talking about emotional independence to realize that it may be the most individual decision you've ever made if you decide to get out of that relationship. Let's talk for a minute about what you just described. When people start to talk about it, there is this picture of men and woman and the difference between what they are allowed and all those kinds of things. Ephesians 5 has the verse that says, "Submit yourselves to your husband." That verse is quoted so out of context and so misunderstood that it, along with other verses, set up the dynamic that you are talking about. If you take that verse just by itself, "Wives, submit yourselves to your husband," and don't recognize that there is a difference between the word "submit" and "subject," then what you end up with is a mindset that says, "Wives, subject yourselves to your husband," – which means allow yourself to be controlled by. Submit means choose to give yourself to. Here's the dilemma with that. If you're going to give yourself, but you are only being part of yourself, you're not actually giving yourself, you are hiding part of you. In other words, part of what you described a minute ago when women might be asked to be rescued instead of to endure certain things, the idea of submitting yourself presumes that you are bringing your whole self to that relationship – not a fragment of yourself, not just the servant part of yourself, but all of yourself – your needs, desires, dreams, and hopes. You are giving your husband your needs, hopes, dreams, and desires. Then you have to put that in context because it first of all says, "Give yourselves one to another in love. Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands; husbands, love your wife as Christ loved the church." It is really just one concept with two examples. The concept is, "Give yourselves one to another in love." The examples are, "Wives, submit to your husbands; husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church."

Think about the way that Christ loved the church. Christ loved the church by laying His life down for her; more than that, by giving her back her identity, by giving her back her strength, by giving her back her life. Jesus came not to take from the church and demand servitude. In fact, think about what He said in the book of Matthew. He said, "The Son of Man didn't come to be served, but to serve and give His life as a ransom for many." That would actually reverse the idea that if in the marriage dynamic one

person would serve the other it would be the husband and not the wife. But go back to what I said a minute ago, a healthy relationship, the opposite of abuse, is a mutual relationship. There is mutual servitude. There is mutual strength of identity. There is a mutual meeting of one another's needs. If you've grown up in a faith stream that says a woman's needs are to be set aside for the man's, I would ask yourself two questions. Is that a family of origin belief? Or is that a biblical belief? Often what happens is generations and culture pass things on as if they are Scripture as opposed to going back to the Scripture itself separate from cultural interpretations.

When you have patriarchal cultures that have allowed the men to dominate (obviously back in the ancient cultures men were the economic strength, women were considered as property – all those kinds of things), you have these cultural dynamics where women are subservient. But I think you'd be hard pressed to find that in Scripture if you think differently about the word "submit," and in several other places where Scripture describes the relationship between men and women. If you think about the life of Jesus and the way that He empowered women, there were a number of women that followed him. Even in Paul's letters to the churches, you see that there were women serving in positions of meaningful leadership. I think there ... Jesus, in many ways, reversed the culture of His day that allowed for the subjection of women, and He actually gave women a much more powerful place in His disciple's roles. I think it's important to look at that idea through a lens that is not just cultural but one that steps outside of that. But then ask the question, "If I'm going to give myself to my husband, would I allow him to do things that are harmful to himself? If I'm going to give myself to him, does that mean I'm just going to be silent while I watch him do things that harm himself, the kids, and the family? Or does that mean I'm going to give all of myself to him and share the part of me that could also possibly prevent that harm?"

NATALIE: Right, even if it doesn't work because we're supposed to do what's right whether or not it actually ends up with the result that we want to have. We still do what's right, and we leave the result in faith to God.

BOB: Right.

NATALIE: Sometimes the result, especially when you are dealing with an abusive person, more often than not you don't get the result that you're looking for. To that point though, I'm wondering if, before we close, in the workshop you just did, you talked about some really important things to look for if you want to be able to tell or discern if there has been some genuine inner change in your partner. Can you talk a little bit about those? That's a huge thing. A lot of times women really want to see change and are grasping at straws; and of course, the abusive partner is saying, "I've

changed! Look, I've done A, B, C, and D – all the things that were on your list. I've changed." But yet, the woman is still feeling like, "I just don't know. There's something not right."

BOB: Yeah, exactly. Let me quickly give the concept of abuse as we described it in that class. Abuse is that inappropriate assignment of responsibility. That's why submission actually means being yourself in the relationship and not letting the other person take away your place in the world. By an inappropriate assignment of responsibility, someone who is angry makes everyone else responsible for their anger. Someone who is sexually abusive makes other people responsible for their sexual needs. But then they move beyond that and they also blame the other people for their misbehavior. The role that an abuser plays in that dynamic is that they look to the world around them to tell them that they are okay, to make them feel better about themselves, or to pay the price if they don't feel good about themselves. That's important because if we are going to talk about what really is an indicator of change, we need to understand what it is that is supposed to be changing. Because the abuser is typically thinking, "There's a behavior that I do that I should probably stop," or "There's a behavior that I do that other people make me do and I wish they wouldn't make me do it," (however they think of that), what people think is, "If they stop being violent; if they stop sleeping with other people; if they stop cursing out their spouse or their kids – then they will have changed." But the reality is if they don't shift to the place where they take responsibility for themselves, the real issue that needs to change isn't even being considered. The things I talked about were first and foremost empathy. The abuser who cannot express empathy hasn't even understood what it is they are repenting from. In other words, empathy is the understanding and expression of what it was like to be you in relationship to me. Empathy would be, "I now see how you have been in pain and what you have experienced in relationship to me. Not only do I understand it, I'm going to express it to you until you feel like I understand it." Number two is responsibility. Responsibility is, "I made choices. I did some things. My choices and my actions harmed you, and it was my responsibility and mine alone." Keep thinking about what we said a minute ago. Abuse is the inappropriate assignment of responsibility, so unless the abuser takes responsibility and admits responsibility – again, in an ongoing way – then there is not real change. Because empathy and responsibility are the two key things, there are two keep qualifiers that need to be there. Number one, if they need to be validated for that, then it's not real change. In other words, empathy and responsibility would say, "I did this, and you've been in pain." It wouldn't say, "Don't you notice how much I've changed? How come you don't validate my change? How come you won't give me credit for what I have done?" In other words, the inability to take responsibility says, "You still have to validate me."

NATALIE: Right.

BOB: If I've "changed," then you have to live with me in such a way to say that I have changed so that I feel good about the change that I have done. So the first qualifier is that the abuser should not need to be validated by anybody else. Their expectation that other people will recognize their change is still a sign of not changing. The second qualifier is time. Because the abuser wants to adjust behavior instead of connection, they want to change behavior instead of responsibility taking, they will adjust their behavior. But in the overall cycle of abuse, there is a part of the cycle where the abuser changes a behavior long enough to guilt the victim of abuse back into the abuse cycle. They will change behavior, and they will advertise to the world, "Look how changed I am." Then the victim will say the first two times, "They've really changed. I'm going to come back." The third time they will say, "I've bit on this bait before, but now all my friends are pressuring me and saying, 'Don't you see how repentant he is? You should go back to him.'" But that part of the cycle where changing behavior is part of the abuse cycle, if that change doesn't maintain over at least three months – by that change I mean empathy and responsibility that are expressed – if that change doesn't remain over at least three months, I would not consider it legitimate change.

NATALIE: So if your partner says to you, "I take responsibility for what I've done, but you also have played a part, and you need to take responsibility ..."

BOB: Once they say the word "but," they have negated everything else.

NATALIE: Exactly!

BOB: If you are taking responsibility, there is no, "But." It is, "I am taking responsibility, period."

NATALIE: Yes. What if it's, "I'm taking responsibility, and you need to also take responsibility."

BOB: "And" – that is a form of blame. Most of the time, the victim of abuse has already been taking too much responsibility. It fits the thing I described in that class where I said a control freak experiences other people's controlling because they believe they own everything. When another person starts to reclaim their own soul and the controlling person believes they had the right to that, they feel controlled when you start to take your own life back. The idea that I've taken responsibility, but you have to also – a third party should be the one to say that, not the offender. If a counselor says that, all power to them. But if the offender says

that, it completely undermines any sense that they have taken responsibility.

NATALIE: Yep. They still don't get it.

BOB: Exactly.

NATALIE: Okay. This has been really, really good. I am so thankful that you were willing to do this. I know you are busy. We're recording this during the holidays, and I'm just grateful for your time. That's it!

BOB: Well, you are very welcome. The timing was actually perfect.

NATALIE: Well, that was God then. Thank you so much. The rest of you, thank you for joining us, and I hope you will subscribe. This is a brand-new podcast, so make sure to subscribe so you won't miss future interviews and future episodes. There is lots of stuff. Like I said in the first episode, I've got a list a mile long of some great subjects we will be talking about here. So thanks for joining us, and we'll talk to you next time.