

THE EXTRACTION PATTERN

How to Help Someone

A guide for friends, family and
colleagues who can see the pattern

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You can see it. They can't. That's how the pattern works.

If someone you care about is in a relationship with the extraction pattern – a partner, a parent, a colleague, a friend – you have probably been watching with growing alarm and decreasing patience. You can see what is happening. They cannot. Or they can, but they stay. This guide explains why, and what you can actually do that helps.

1. Why They Don't Leave

Not because they are stupid. Not because they enjoy it. Not because they haven't tried. Because the extraction pattern has spent months or years dismantling their capacity to act. Their self-trust is destroyed. Their support network is depleted. Their financial independence may be gone. Their threat detection is neurologically suppressed by the bond itself. And the trauma bond – the intermittent cycle of cruelty and kindness – creates a chemical dependency that operates through the same dopamine pathways as gambling. Leaving is not a decision. It is a project.

2. What Not to Do

“Just leave.” They know. They have thought about it more than you have. Saying it makes them feel judged and makes you feel like someone who doesn't understand. Both are counterproductive.

Confront the abuser. This puts the person you care about at risk. The abuser will retaliate – not against you, but against them. They will also use your intervention as evidence that the person is “turning people against them.”

Issue ultimatums. “If you don't leave by Friday, I'm done.” This replicates the control dynamic they are already living inside. Your patience is their lifeline. Don't cut it.

Diagnose the abuser. “They're a narcissist.” The person may not be ready to hear this. If they defend the abuser, you have lost credibility. Describe what you observe, not what you have concluded.

3. What Actually Helps

Be the grandmother. In the book's framework, the grandmother is the figure who held the long memory of the village – someone who could validate your perception when you doubted yourself. That is your role. Not rescuer. Not advisor. Witness. The person who says: “I saw that too. You are not imagining it.”

Stay in contact. The pattern isolates. Your continued presence – even if reduced, even if difficult – is itself a form of protection. A text. A call. “I'm here. No agenda. Just checking in.”

Ask, don't tell. “How are things at home?” “I noticed you seemed upset after that phone call – are you okay?” “Is there anything you need?” Open questions. No judgement. Let them get there.

Believe them the first time. If they disclose, believe them. Don't ask for evidence. Don't say “are you sure?” The courage it took to tell you is immense. Honour it.

Offer practical help. Not advice. Help. “If you ever need somewhere to stay, my door is open.” “I can hold copies of your documents.” “I can pick up the kids from school if you need me to.” Specific, concrete, no strings.

Share information without pressure. “I read something that reminded me of what you described. No pressure, but here it is if you want it.” Send this guide. Send the Good Faith Problem guide. Leave it with them. Don't follow up demanding they read it.

4. Protect Yourself

Supporting someone in an abusive relationship is exhausting. You will feel frustrated, angry, helpless and sometimes resentful. These feelings are normal. You cannot pour from an empty cup. Set your own boundaries about what you can offer. Get support for yourself – a therapist, a friend, the National Domestic Abuse Helpline (0808 2000 247) takes calls from supporters too.

You cannot save them. You can be there when they are ready. Research confirms that good informal support is the single biggest predictor of whether someone leaves safely. Your patience is not wasted. It is the architecture of their eventual freedom.

Where to go next

If you are in immediate danger: call 999 or the National Domestic Abuse Helpline on 0808 2000 247 (24 hours, free).

Free guides at www.trueregard.com: The Good Faith Problem · Recognising Covert Narcissism · Waking Up · What Is Happening to You · Family Court Survival Guide · Personal Protection Toolkit · Professional Toolkits.

The full framework: *The Extraction Pattern* and *The Capture: How They Stole America* by Vaughan Smith. www.trueregard.com/the-books.

Share this. The pattern survives through isolation. Every copy shared rebuilds the grandmother.

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The five per cent who design extraction. The ninety-five per cent who live inside it. The architecture that could contain it.

THE CAPTURE

Vaughan Smith

How They Stole America. The extraction pattern captured democracy, economy, healthcare, media and accountability – domain by domain.

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