

THE EXTRACTION PATTERN

# When It's Your Parent

Recognising the extraction pattern  
in the people who raised you

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## **You cannot divorce your mother. You cannot fire your father.**

Recognising the extraction pattern in a parent is a different devastation from recognising it in a partner. The partner relationship was chosen. The parent relationship was not. The partner extraction has a beginning you can trace. The parent extraction is the water you swam in. You may have spent thirty, forty, fifty years inside it before you understood what it was.

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## **1. Why This Is Harder**

A parent with the extraction pattern didn't just exploit your good faith. They built it. The trust you extend, the guilt you carry, the loyalty you feel – these were installed before you had language. The relationship is the foundation, not the furniture. Recognising the pattern means recognising that the foundation was compromised.

You may have been the golden child (over-valued, used as an extension of their identity) or the scapegoat (blamed, diminished, used as the family's container for everything that goes wrong) – or you may have alternated between both. Either role serves the parent, not the child.

The grief is enormous. You are grieving a parent you never had – the one you needed, the one you deserved, the one you kept hoping would appear if you were good enough, successful enough, obedient enough. That parent was never coming. The hope was the trap.

## **2. What the Pattern Looks Like in a Parent**

**Your achievements are claimed or diminished.** If you succeed, it is because of them. If you succeed in a way they cannot claim, the achievement is minimised or ignored.

**Your boundaries are treated as betrayal.** Saying no is disloyalty. Having your own life is abandonment. Choosing your partner over them is a declaration of war.

**Guilt is the primary currency.** “After everything I've done for you.” “You have no idea what I sacrificed.” The debt is unpayable because it was designed to be unpayable.

**Your reality was managed from the start.** The family narrative – who is good, who is bad, what happened, what didn't – was set by the extracting parent. Questioning it is not just disagreement. It is heresy.

**Other family members are recruited.** Siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles – all managed through the parent's narrative. When you try to tell the truth, the family system resists because the system was built to serve the pattern.

### 3. What You Can Do

**Grey rock.** Become boring. Reduce emotional engagement without announcing it. Stop sharing your inner life. Respond neutrally: “That’s interesting.” “I’ll think about it.” “You might be right.” This is not dishonesty. It is architecture.

**Low contact.** Structured interactions on your terms. You decide the frequency, the duration, the setting. Not “I’ll try to see them less” but “I will visit once a month for two hours, in a public place.” Specific. Documented. Held.

**No contact.** This is available to you and it is not a failure. Some parent relationships cannot be made safe. The guilt you feel about this was installed by the person you are separating from. It is their last tool, not your conscience.

**Protect your children.** If you have children, the extracting parent becomes a grandparent – and the pattern does not stop at one generation. You are not obligated to expose your children to what you experienced. Setting boundaries with your parent to protect your children is not cruelty. It is the architecture the village always provided.

### 4. What Recovery Looks Like

Recovery from a parent with the extraction pattern is longer than recovery from a partner, because the wiring runs deeper. You are not just unlearning a relationship. You are unlearning yourself – the version of yourself the pattern built. This takes years, not months. A therapist who understands developmental trauma and narcissistic family systems is essential, not optional.

The good news: you can build the family you didn’t have. Not with your parent – with the people you choose. Chosen family, deep friendships, a partner who sees you clearly. The architecture your parent didn’t build, you can build for yourself. And for your children.

### 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](http://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](http://www.trueregard.com/the-books).

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

# THE EXTRACTION PATTERN

Vaughan Smith

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

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# 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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