

BRIEF THERAPY INSIDE OUT

WITH

LEIGH McCULLOUGH

Welcome to Brief Therapy Inside Out! We have been teaching courses in counseling theory and practice at Governors State University in Illinois for several years. Time and again, we have searched for ways to show students how various practitioners work. What if you know you can only work with this client for a brief time? What are some of the ways you can quickly develop rapport with a client? What does therapeutic hypnotherapy look like? Just what is EMDR anyway? Can you really do “brief” psychodynamic therapy?

We also wanted to share with our students the personhood of some of the leaders in our field. Not all students are motivated to or can afford to attend conferences and workshops where they can meet the leaders in our field. And, as practitioners ourselves, we know how difficult it is to find the time and resources to do this.

This series focuses on thirteen outstanding practitioners who share with us not only the skills and concepts of the brief therapy they have developed, but also tell us about themselves. Therefore, this project has been rewarding to us both personally and professionally. We hope you will share some of this with us as you view this video and follow the study guide.

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LEIGH McCULLOUGH

Leigh McCullough, Ph.D. is nationally recognized as an expert in brief psychodynamic psychotherapy. She is an Associate Clinical Professor and the Director of the Psychotherapy Research Program at Harvard Medical School. She was the 1996 Voorhees Distinguished Professor at the Menninger Clinic and received the 1996 Michael Franz Basch Award from the Silvan Tomkins Institute for her contributions toward the exploration of affect in psychotherapy. She is the author of a book entitled, *Changing Character: Short-Term Anxiety-Regulating Psychotherapy for Restructuring Defenses, Affects and Attachments*, published by Basic Books, 1997. She is on the editorial board of the journal, *Psychotherapy Research*, conducts training seminars in Short-Term Psychotherapy world-wide, and maintains an independent clinical practice in Dedham, MA.

McCullough has served as a Visiting Assistant Professor and Clinical Supervisor for the Norwegian Short-Term Psychotherapy Research Program, University of Trondheim and as a research director of Beth Israel Medical Center's Short-Term Psychotherapy Program.

HOW TO USE THIS TAPE

This tape is divided into three segments. In the first segment (15 minutes), Jon Carlson and Diane Kjos interview Dr. McCullough to gain an overview of her approach. The next segment is client session. Following this, McCullough, Carlson and Kjos review and discuss key points in the counseling session.

The client is a volunteer who has not previously met with McCullough. Following this session, she was referred to a therapist who continued to work with her. Each of the three segments have time markers so that you can quickly find your place. These time markers are designed to

indicate both the segment of the tape and the minutes into that segment. You will note that, in the first segment, the time marker has one line, in the second there are two lines, and in the third, three lines. Thus the therapy session, which is the second segment, has time markers with two lines. This study guide contains a complete transcript of the therapy session with minute indicators so that you can quickly find a particular exchange.

For class or workshop application: You may wish to assign one or more reading prior to having the class view the video. We recommend the following sequence for a class or workshop:

1. Show the opening interview which covers key points concerning this approach to brief therapy and then discuss with the class things they might look for in the counseling session itself.
2. Depending on time available:
 1. Show the second segment without pause, asking participants to note the time markers of interventions they found particularly significant.
 1. Briefly discuss significant interventions and turning points in the session.
 2. Highlight and discuss common or universal skills such as relationship building or challenging that are demonstrated in this session.
 2. Show the second segment with pauses to highlight and discuss significant interventions and turning points in the session.
3. Show the third segment and note the segments of the therapy session that the

discussants highlighted.

4.

The video series is also useful for personal skill building. For example, you might compare how different therapists build a therapeutic relationship with the client or close a session.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE SESSION

This session involves a young mother who was unable to leave her husband although she was being seriously physically abused, resulting in repeated hospitalizations. There were two goals in this very active and focused 45 minutes; 1) confrontation of defenses that prevented her from protecting herself and her child, and 2) crisis intervention. In terms of short-term dynamic treatment, her defenses of masochism, denial, and lack of motivation to leave the dangerous situation were confronted and explored in depth. A number of factors were uncovered which held her in the marriage; the most binding of which seemed to be an intense longing for her son to have the father that she herself had never had. As these factors were revealed, she closed the session just beginning to feel that it might be 'wrong' to remain in the marriage for these reasons. To address the current crisis concerning her physical well-being the therapist gave information about the danger of the situation, made direct suggestions that she leave, and made arrangements for her to receive continued treatment and community support following the session.

TRANSCRIPT OF THE SESSION WITH A WOMAN IN AN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP¹

LM 1 Can you begin by your telling me what you'd like help with?

CL 1 Um, my, ah counseling for like me and my husband fighting a lot.

LM 2 Mm, you and your husband fighting a lot.

¹LM—Leigh McCullough, CL—Client

CL 2 Yeah.

LM 3 Mmm, how long have you been married?

CL 3 Just a year, but we've been together for five years.

LM 4 Mmm, so, can you give me an example of the fights you have, one of the specific fights?

CL 4 A lot of it has to do with money, like he takes it out on me and stuff, and he gets abusive and stuff, but . . .

LM 5 Well, can you tell me of a time when he has gotten abusive?

CL 5 I yell. I argue a lot with him, like when he sleeps a lot. He sleeps, doesn't work. He doesn't do nothing but complain. Then he gets up and he just tells me he can't take it no more and instead of just walking out he just starts attacking me and stuff.

LM 6 Mmm, he attacks you how?

CL 6 He kicks me and . . .

LM 7 He kicks you?

CL 7 Yeah.

LM 8 How bad has it gotten?

CL 8 It's been some, I don't know, it's been bruises and just I've been in the hospital a couple of times for it.

LM 9 You've been in the hospital a couple of times. That's pretty serious.

CL 9 Yeah.

LM 10 Is this the first time you've gotten help or talked to anyone about this?

CL 10 Yeah.

LM 11 It's so good that you've gotten . . .

- CL 11 Well, I talk to my friends about it, yeah.
- LM 12 Mm, and what do they say?
- CL 12 To leave him and stuff. But, see I think it has a lot to do with me because I get angry and I call him names and stuff because he's Mexican, and I'll go out and say I'll hurt him and stuff.
- LM 13 You'll say things that hurt him. So what I'm hearing is that you're blaming yourself for his behavior.
- CL 13 Well, it has a lot to do with me too though. I am saying, you know, that I could prevent it by not, you know, yelling at him and just agreeing with him. Fine, if he wants to sleep let him sleep, you know. But sometimes I get frustrated when I get off work too I have to cook, clean, and do everything, and he just sits there. He'll pick up a q-tip and throw it on the ground and go, I'm like what are you doing, and he's like it's your job. And I just get really, you know, I start screaming at him.
- LM 14 Mm, so at that moment you get so mad.
- CL 14 Uhuh.
- LM 15 That you start screaming.
- CL 15 Uhuh.
- LM 16 And then is escalates.
- CL 16 Yeah.
- LM 17 To the point where he ends up physically abusing you in some way. And how often does this happen?
- CL 17 It was, it would stop for like three weeks, and then it goes on usually once a week.

Sometimes twice, three times.

LM 18 Once or twice or three times a week.

CL 18 It depends.

LM 19 And it's gotten so bad that you've been put in the hospital.

CL 19 Well, not overnight. I just go in for like my nose or else I have bruises real bad and they swell up like, and, but, I just, some of it's my fault because I think I could prevent it if I stopped screaming at him, but it's just, it's hard. It's hard.

LM 20 It's hard to reign yourself in.

CL 20 Because he is Spanish, and I know he expects a lot different of me than what I was dating before. And I do clean, I do cook, I work, you know.

LM 21 You're supporting the family.

CL 21 But, I practically pay the bills on my own. He works too, but I'm making barely anything and I pay most of the bills, and it just makes me mad because he can do better than what he is doing.

LM 22 Why do you stay with him?

CL 22 Because I have a son, and I'm scared of doing it on my own.

LM 23 Uhuh, you're scared to do it on your own. What are you most scared of?

CL 23 Just to fail and not be able to make the money to pay the bills and stuff.

LM 24 Just to fail. How would you . . .

CL 24 Plus I left him for a couple of weeks at a time, and it's just scary because he is a good father to him, but it's just we can't get along. It's just when we're away from each other it is better than when we're together. We fight every day.

LM 25 Every day. Yeah.

CL 25 There is an argument. But there is an argument every day but it's not always hitting.

LM 26 Mmm, well, there's several things here to look at. One is just for your own safety in the immediate future is how to handle the anger so that you don't elicit the attack. But the other is do you want to stay with this man and how to help you take some steps.

CL 26 See, I know it has a lot to do with my problems like my past and stuff, how I, you know, was raised and stuff, and my mom was abused by my father, so I thought you know . . .

LM 27 That's the way it is.

CL 27 Mmhm.

LM 28 Did you really think that?

CL 28 Well, I never knew my father, but I knew that she had low self esteem against herself and that's why she put herself in the predicament of having eight children with this man and never being, you know, treated good by him. And I feel like I never had a father figure, that I latched onto somebody that would take me, real quickly.

LM 29 Yeah, yeah, and are you in contact with your mother? Does she know this? What does she say?

CL 29 She tells me to leave him, and I'm like well you never did it. It's hard, you know. Everybody can say to leave him, but nobody understands it. I don't want to go back at home. I don't.

LM 30 You don't want to move back to your mother's home.

CL 30 Yeah. I can't. It's just, she's got another of my sister living there, two of her kids, and we just, the way they live I cannot live like that.

- LM 31 So right now there is not a place to go, or is there?
- CL 31 No, I can go like live upstairs from my boss' work, you know.
- LM 32 You could.
- CL 32 But it's just the money. I mean, it's impossible to make that much money you know, with the bills for food and everything for my child.
- LM 33 So, so if you went to live upstairs, your boss has offered you a place.
- CL 33 An apartment, yeah.
- LM 34 Yeah, but you can't afford it?
- CL 34 Mmmm, so, I mean I'm looking for another night job or something you know.
- LM 35 To fill in.
- CL 35 But day care's a hundred . . . It's a lot of money for day care. So it's impossible, because I'm paying day care and paying, you know, half the rent already so, and day care, plus if I have to buy the food and stuff there's no way that I can make it on my own.
- LM 36 So right now you're financially trapped in it.
- CL 36 Yeah.
- LM 37 And you've left for a couple of weeks and gone where?
- CL 37 To my mom's.
- LM 38 To your mom's.
- CL 38 Yeah.
- LM 39 And then what makes you go back to him, and what's his first name?
- CL 39 Miguel.
- LM 40 Miguel.

- CL 40 It's just him calling me and telling me he's sorry, and then sometimes he doesn't, he thinks, like he goes you know it's your fault that I get in that predicament to hit you. He goes, because people don't understand. Like they see these soaps on TV or whatever like shoes, talk shows, and he says they don't understand. It's not the man. He's like it's the woman who talks so much that they get it.
- LM 41 Do you believe that?
- CL 41 No, but he had a rough life too though. And I understand he had a really rough life. He got dropped from Mexico here when he was 13. His mother didn't even, I mean . . . nobody really cared.
- LM 42 A lot of people have a rough life. It doesn't, you're making, you're saying that as though it excuses him beating up his wife.
- CL 42 I told him he can, if I start arguing, he can just get up and walk out for about an hour until I calm down instead of staying there and taking it out on me.
- LM 43 So you, so you know what the appropriate behavior is in men, and do you know how serious it is?
- CL 43 Yeah, it's really serious.
- LM 44 Mmm, you talk about the talk shows. What have you seen on the talk shows?
- CL 44 I mean, it's the same thing. I feel like I'm the same way as them. I complain you know. I do argue, but, and then he tells me he is not going to be a little wimp or little girly by helping me out like cooking or watching my son or changing my son's diaper. He won't help me out like that because he says he's not going to be a wimp like that. I was like we're married together, I was like you should help me as a family you know, instead of

making me do it all while you sit down and watch TV every time you get off work.

LM 45 So it stays in this battle between the two of you, and then you . . .

CL 45 I was, I was going out for a while as soon as he got home. His dinner was ready, and I just took off because I knew we would fight, and I would go to my mom's or something for a couple of hours until he would be sleeping, 'cause I don't want to. I'm so sick of arguing.

LM 46 Yeah. So that's a step toward taking care of yourself. It's just getting out of the house yourself when you know it's going to happen. That's what I want to focus on the most is well, I guess you're blaming yourself and thinking it's your fault for his behavior, and also what, what can you do in the short term and what can you do in the long run. And I want to just spend a couple of more minutes going back to the financial aspects and the practical things, and then let's go to how you feel about yourself versus him. But, you said you financially were not able right now to make it on your own. What, what thoughts do you have about who you could contact? Are there women's shelters that can help you prepare?

CL 46 No, I don't want to go because he is a good father to my child, and I don't want to take my kid away from him. I know it's not right for him to hit me in front of him, but he is still a good father when I'm not around, and I could never take his son away from him. I know it would kill him. It would.

LM 47 So, you would put yourself in physical jeopardy to keep your son . . .

CL 47 No, I've been thinking about . . . My boss wants me to save money and just give it to her to hold onto and you know, she could save it for me until I can save enough to get out on my own and live upstairs or whatever in the apartment, and once I could do that he could

see the, my child like on weekends or whatever.

LM 48 Right. He could have visitation.

CL 48 So, that's what I need to do is try to save up, but just bills keep on you know, coming up, and it's kind of hard to save when you don't get time to do it.

LM 49 Mmm, so, are there other avenues you've explored of sharing a house with other single mothers or other?

CL 49 No.

LM 50 You haven't thought of that? I mean, are there less expensive living arrangements?

CL 50 Uh, there could be, but . . .

LM 51 And are there support networks? This is something you might need to explore in the community for mothers in your situation. I'm not from this community, so I don't know. But there are in some cities. Have you looked into that?

CL 51 No.

LM 52 Maybe we can ask about that after this. Ah, so there is just some practical planning, but it's hard, and you've already started doing some planning, and you need help, and there might be community support for you. So your long range goal is then to separate from him and give him visitation with the child.

CL 52 We got in a fight once because he left the house, and he said he was leaving, and I just sat down and let him, you know.

LM 53 Mmmm.

CL 53 I'm not going to, I didn't force him to stay at home, and then he took off ten seconds later. He came back and started packing up my son's bag and said he's taking him. I'm like

you're not taking him. I'll have to do whatever I have to do to stop you. You'll never take him. And he goes but you can take him when we get in a fight. I was like well you hit me. I don't hit you. It was like you know I don't want my son to see his mommy get hit. My son is starting to hit me from it now. And I don't want my kid to be the way I was when I was younger like to witness a lot of stuff.

LM 54 Mmm, how awful for you.

CL 54 Yeah.

LM 55 And what happened then?

CL 55 He didn't take him. I mean, if I had to go out and flatten all his tires, he would not take him. I don't care what I would have done, but he didn't take him and then he goes, he goes you're going to get upset because Victor is leaving and I go yeah. And he goes what about me, and I was like no I wouldn't be upset if you left. And then he got mad, and that's when I got hit again. I'm telling him, I should lie to prevent getting hurt.

LM 56 Well, let's look at that. Should you lie? What do you think?

CL 56 I think I should until I get, you know, to the point, you know. I mean, it's hard though. It is so hard to tell him something that's not really true. Like . . .

LM 57 Right. Let's stay with that at that moment. It's really hard to tell him something that's not really true because there is so much anger in you, and you feel like exploding, and you, but then it is provocative and it pulls it back on you because he is an out of control person. So at that moment, what could you have said?

CL 57 I could have said yes, Miguel. I want you to stay home too. I love you, I mean . . .

LM 58 Mmm, but that would be hard.

- CL 58 But then again, but then again no matter what I say sometimes, I try and it ends up me being wrong again. So I mean anything I really say I'm scared to say it, and one day I fought back at him for hitting me. And I jumped on the bed and I stuck my feet out because I knew he was coming after me, and he started coming at me, and I kicked him. He goes never fight me, and I don't know to stop or fight him back or to you know sit around and . . .
- LM 59 Well, what happened?
- CL 59 I got it worse. I got punched in the head so many times I thought, I mean, so many times I got hit in the head I think that I will never wake up you know. I'm just going to keep on getting hit.
- LM 60 Yeah, you were afraid you were going to die then.
- CL 60 It happens a lot though that I feel crazy like that.
- LM 61 Yeah.
- CL 61 It's just hard to leave him.
- LM 62 There must be some place . . .
- CL 62 I left him once. I told him I didn't love him. He cut open his arms, and I woke up and blood all over me and all over him, and he was okay, but it was scary, and I'm scared now that he could do the same thing again.
- LM 63 You're worried for him?
- CL 63 Yeah, I am.
- LM 64 Why?
- CL 64 Because I care about him. He's the father of my son. I don't want to be with him to, you

know . . . But I don't want him to you know, my son to be without a father.

LM 65 What about your son being without a mother?

CL 65 That's true, but you know, it's like . . .

LM 66 But what? I mean . . . You told me you were . . .

CL 66 I don't have no, I care about my son a lot. I do love him. And I know people say how could you love him when you don't love yourself. I will do anything for my son.

LM 67 Sure.

CL 67 And there's . . .

LM 68 You'll do anything for your son.

CL 68 Yes, I will. But I am trying to get out of there.

LM 69 Yeah, because what is your son going to do if he's, if he's left only with your husband.

CL 69 Yeah.

LM 70 You said he was hitting you so much in the head that you didn't know if you were going to wake up.

CL 70 Yeah. It happens a lot. I mean . . .

LM 71 That happens a lot. Where you don't know if . . .

CL 71 He's a black belt in karate. I mean, there is no way I can protect myself from him. Not at all.

LM 72 Ah, that's, this is hard for me to hear. That's, you know, and I'm in the business of listening to painful stories. Ah, what is it like for you hearing that from me?

CL 72 It's scary.

LM 73 It's scary.

CL 73 Yeah. Uhuh.

LM 74 What's scary about it?

CL 74 I don't know. Maybe, I know I should like leave him, I know everybody is saying leave him, but nobody's in my shoes to say just get up and go, you know. It's impossible just to get up and go. I mean nobody thinks I don't like my son to see what happens, what goes on. I just have to deal with it until I can make my own money.

LM 75 You said . . . Let me go back. You said it was scary, my reaction.

CL 75 Yes.

LM 76 It is so painful for me to hear it's scary. It tells you something.

CL 76 That I have a problem. Yeah.

LM 77 Yeah, that really bad things are going on, and that you're in a lot of danger.

CL 77 But sometimes, it's sometimes, he can be great to me. Sometimes for two or three weeks we can be like excellent.

LM 77 Yeah, but . . .

CL 78 Then one day just . . .

LM 79 But look at the price you're paying for sometimes it can be great. You see? You don't have to pay that high a price.

CL 79 He cried once when he hit me, and that's when I was pregnant, and he punched me in the face, and my nose, and I fell to the ground, and that's the only time he cried. He goes I'll never hit you again, I promise. And after that, now it's like, ah he feels like he's doing it so much that it's normal. It's normal life. And he doesn't want me to leave him, but I says, you know, we have to get a divorce. I really want to divorce him, and he just doesn't

agree to it. He goes I don't want my son to be without us to be together. I was like it could be better for us to have you know you can see him whenever you want to see him. You can see him whenever you want to see him, but we cannot be together. He says no. I don't want a divorce. My kid belongs with a mother and a father.

LM 80 It looks like you're trying to reason this out with . . .

CL 80 It shouldn't with a mother and father if this is going to happen. I really want a divorce from him.

LM 81 So intellectually you know this.

CL 81 Yes.

LM 82 And, and our job tonight, as much as possible, is for emotionally how to help you get there.

CL 82 We were fighting before we even got married and I didn't want to get married. He needed his papers to stay in this country. So that was hard. I did it because he needed his papers, and I wanted him to stay with his father. So, then we just ended up being crazy, and as soon as he gets the papers I want to get a divorce. But he wants to stay, he wants to stay for good.

LM 83 As soon as he gets the papers?

CL 83 Yeah. His papers. To be with . . . He wants his father you know with my son. He does. I cannot take my kid away from his father, but I can't be with him no more.

LM 84 Well, I mean, you've got a lot of things to consider. What kind of father is he going to be when he is alone and what danger do you have of him taking your son? Have you thought of this?

- CL 84 He told em at daycare . . . Well, he told me he was going to take my son out of day care and take him to Mexico, so now he doesn't have no rights to pick him up from you know, day care.
- LM 85 So, you've got a really serious problem, and you have a hard time protecting yourself, and sometimes when mothers are in these situations the most they can do is take care of their child. So what's going to happen is he takes your child to Mexico?
- CL 85 I never give him the opportunities to take him.
- LM 86 You watch him.
- CL 86 Yeah. I'll never give him a chance to be with him alone like that.
- LM 87 Ah, I see. So you're being very protective that way.
- CL 87 Yeah.
- LM 88 Let me go to, you're saying you have no self esteem. Mmm, have you, were you beaten . . .
- CL 88 I used to. I used to be, care about myself a lot. And then after I had Victor I stayed big, and he's like . . .
- LM 89 You stayed big?
- CL 89 Fat, you know. And then he goes . . .
- LM 90 That worries you?
- CL 90 Yeah. It does. Cause I felt better about myself when, cause he goes oh you're so fat, and then oh you put so much makeup on. You look like a clown. Oh you, you know, you do your hair to go out of something. I go to be with my mother and I put makeup on for the older ladies there to say you look nice. I mean, it makes me feel good. And I think that's

sick that I have to go to bingo for people to talk to me like that instead of my husband treating me with respect. I think it is. I think he should be nicer to me.

LM 91 Were you physically abused as a child?

CL 91 Uhuh. I only had my mother, though. My father's been dead since I was two, three.

LM 92 I see. So you didn't know your father.

CL 92 No, I just . . .

LM 93 So you haven't been abused.

CL 93 No.

LM 94 And so you said there was a time when you did feel good about yourself.

CL 94 Yeah. I felt good about myself until I guess I met him and then . . .

LM 95 And somehow you're listening too much to an abusive man.

CL 95 Well, sometimes now it's like it's getting to the point that he is yelling at me, and I'm just sitting there looking at the walls and ignoring him. It's like he's crazy. I'm not listening no more. Just let him keep on going.

LM 96 Yeah.

CL 96 And when he . . . then I hear him. He says something that pushes a button, it escalates, and I just get hit for when I yell. And he goes oh your mom, she's so old, she is going to die of cancer, and I mean, you know, it just hurts me.

LM 97 An so then, okay, in that situation. Let's go to that. Your mom, she's old, she's going to die of cancer, and so he is trying to provoke you.

CL 97 Well, I do it too. I provoke him a lot too. I was like you never had a mother. Your mother didn't care about you neither. I was like don't talk about my mom. At least I have a mom.

And we'll go back and forth until . . .

- LM 98 Well, words are one thing. When people get mad they say things to try to hurt, but, but he's using physical violence, and there's no excuse for that. And you keep saying that there's some excuse for what he's done to you. Some part of you knows that's not true.
- CL 98 I feel that I shouldn't provoke him. I could, you know, I could change it a lot. I could stop him hitting me most of the time by just him if he calls me a name of something just go okay, okay, you know. Instead of fighting him back, no I'm not, you know.
- LM 99 So, let's go to that. If he called you a name, and you shrugged . . . How would it be living in that situation?
- CL 99 I don't mean . . . I don't want to live in there either way. I wouldn't want to live there.
- LM 100 Right, but what is the way that is going to make you blame yourself less?
- CL 100 I meant myself leaving there and just doing it on my own.
- LM 101 Well, I guess what I was thinking is again you keep saying if I could just not provoke him.
- CL 101 It's just until I get enough save up to leave him. You know, and just for us to have an understanding that we're, we don't belong together, and I just wish he would understand that we don't belong together. Cause we really don't.
- LM 102 Why is it that you need him to understand? Why do you think he will understand?
- CL 102 Cause I want it to be a mutual divorce. I don't want to fight over nothing. I just . . .
- LM 103 I see. Is that some magical thinking? You've got a man who . . .
- CL 103 Yeah, I know.
- LM 104 . . . you know, is punching you in the face.
- CL 104 Wishful thinking, yeah.

LM 105 It's magical thinking that there is going to be some ah, reasonable divorce here. You're wishing for something that's clearly not going to happen.

CL 105 Yeah.

LM 106 How does that make you feel?

CL 106 I don't know. I just, I just wish that things would be a lot different.

LM 107 It's really tragic isn't it, what's happened?

CL 107 Yeah. I hate my son seeing me get hit. That's the thing that hurts me. Not me getting hit. Him seeing it.

LM 108 Why doesn't it matter that you get hit?

CL 108 Cause I don't care.

LM 109 You don't care.

CL 109 I don't care about myself. I don't, I really don't care, you know, if anything happens to me. I just . . .

LM 110 You don't care if anything happens to you?

CL 110 No.

LM 111 Why not?

CL 111 I don't know.

LM 112 Well, let's just stay with that. Do you want a tissue? You don't care if anything happens to you? Were you always like this?

CL 113 Until I met him I just. He used to . . . When I met him at first he used to stalk me. I'd go to like paper chef parties or something and he would be at the window looking at me, and he goes I seen you talking to some guy, and I was like it was the person that was having

the paper chef party's husband. And I mean he would look through the windows at me, and I never, I never let it bother me. I never thought then . . . I mean . . .

LM 114 Was this before you were married?

CL 114 This was when we just began to date. And I wanted a baby like after a couple of years of dating him. He wanted a baby. That was stupid of us.

LM 115 Did you now care about yourself then?

CL 115 I did. I cared about myself.

LM 116 You cared about . . . So something has happened here that's fairly recent where you're saying you don't care what happens to you.

CL 116 Well you get put down so many times you just start to just give up. I used to take care of myself every day. I used to do my walk around you know, exercise, put makeup on, curl my hair and take care of myself every day. And I would always go out and buy myself something special once in a while. But now it's like the clothes I go, Miguel, I don't have no clothes neither, and he goes well you don't need them. You've got fat friends that can give them to you. I'm like what do you mean I got fat. I was like you know.

LM 117 So what you're telling me is that after getting beaten down physically and mentally you're like, you're like a concentration camp victim or someone whose, whose been . . .

CL 117 I'm just so used to it that, I'm just so used to it.

LM 118 Like the boxer down on the ring gets beaten so much they don't even try to get up anymore.

CL 118 Mmm. It's just like you know I get mad because the neighbors, you know we live in an apartment, they hear it, and they won't even call the police. And if they called the police

on him I'd make him go to jail. I'm not even scared of him no more. I'm putting him in jail because I am tired of getting hit. But I'm just, I'm so used to it . . .

LM 119 Have you ever called the police on him?

CL 119 I didn't. One day I was in front of a laundromat to get him and he bent my finger back and I was getting a ticket on my car for parking the wrong way, and she seen me crying and she goes what happened. I was like nothing. She goes what happened, and I told her, and then she called the police and they took him to jail right away. They're like I'm tired of it. The whole town knows him. They took him to jail, and then when he got out of jail, he goes, see. All the men in there were doing the same thing. All the women at the top it's why they get hit and they think it's our fault. I mean, it's just . . .

LM 120 And so you're one of these women who blame yourself.

CL 120 Yeah.

LM 121 How much do you really blame yourself?

CL 121 I blame myself because I think I could control my anger, my screaming at him a lot. I think I could be a little bit calmer, but I mean I've always, then you know, like I get really frustrated when I am constantly cleaning and cooking and cleaning and cooking and I come home, like I'll come home today . . .

LM 122 Well, you know, anybody who is living in this amount of tension is frustrated, and when you're frustrated, you feel like exploding. So you're blaming yourself for exploding. Yes it is wiser for you to shrug it off, but I don't know how much a normal human being can take, and the answer is to walk out.

CL 122 Like I ask him about his money . . .

LM 123 Now let me stop you. You went quickly away.

CL 123 I'm sorry.

LM 124 It's alright. I just, just this is an important point here. You said you've asked him why don't you just walk out which is what a mature man does before he hits somebody. But also, and it's understandable. People get angry. They lose their temper, but what about you just removing yourself?

CL 124 I can't.

LM 125 Mmm, you can't?

CL 125 He won't let me.

LM 126 He won't let you leave.

CL 126 He blocks the door. I try all the time.

LM 127 I see. So you try to get away . . .

CL 127 He thinks like I'm going to argue with him in the bathroom.

LM 128 So am I hearing that you're blaming yourself for exploding when you're trying to get away, he's blocking the door, he, he continues at you, and we all have a limit. So you're blaming yourself.

CL 127 Not for that, no.

LM 128 No, not for that.

CL 128 You're right. Yeah. (Pause) That's right. Like the money problems, too. It's like he goes, I go Miguel did you get paid today. He won't tell me what he makes and like, I'm like well I need help with the bills and stuff, and he won't help me. He won't tell me what he makes.

LM 129 Why do you ask?

CL 129 Because I think that we should both have the money together.

LM 130 This is true.

CL 130 It shouldn't be just his.

LM 131 But the point I'm making is there is more magical thinking here. There's an illusion you're caring about him and about the marriage that is in part keeping you there. That, that if you ask him and if you reason with him there's going to be something . . .

CL 131 Like if he could buy diapers, or if he could buy, you know, something or . . . I mean, it just . . . He has the money, but when he doesn't have the money, I give in. I give it to him and that's . . . I give him more money than anything. I just constantly give in, and then Kathy, the other day, my boss goes, she goes, I go could you give me some money so we could go out to eat because she owes me money and she could pay me every day if she wants to, and I go no it's alright. She goes no I'm not paying you. I don't have the money, and then she looked at me. She goes, she won't give me money for him. She goes, oh why not, if you need anything I'll do anything for you, but she goes I'll not do it for him. And it kinda made me mad in a way, but then again it made a lot of sense that she's, not going to, you know, she doesn't want me to do it. She finished going through a divorce herself. She's not going to, she went through the same stuff.

LM 132 So you have people all around you wanting you to leave.

CL 132 And that what he says. He's like you're going to listen to people who all go through divorces. You're going to listen to all them people. You don't know anybody who has a normal family? And I'm like actually I don't. I was like everyone is going to have problems.

He goes one of your friends is sleeping around and they're married. I'm like, and it's not you know, it's not my fault. He goes what about you? When you go out with them what do you do? I was like I've never cheated on him, you know, and I never will. I never, you know, it's like I'm married. I didn't marry him for me to cheat on him. I would never think of that even though it is not working out. I could never . . .

LM 133 And that's the real issue is your inability to leave this marriage, and you're telling me there is no where to go. Ah, and I think there's, with some work, there probably are places you can go. Am I right on that?

CL 133 Yes. I could go to shelters and stuff, I know.

LM 134 You could go to shelters, and then, but also then find some living arrangement that you could afford. Ah, the, the issue is why you don't care enough, and you said . . .

CL 134 See, I don't want to take off like that. I don't want to just leave him and him not know where me and my son are.

LM 135 You don't.

CL 135 I don't think it's right because I think he should be part of my son's life. My son loves him dearly. And, I mean he loves him too. I mean, we have our problems but . . .

LM 136 Okay, now let me go into that one. You don't think you should just leave and get you and your son away from him even though he might kill you.

CL 136 No.

LM 137 Do you, do you . . . What do you think about that? Even though he has . . .

CL 137 I feel like leaving him and then the next day things are fine and normal again.

LM 138 So you pay a huge price for that little bit of normal time which isn't normal because he's

not being a full partner, and he's not helping, but just because he's calm then you're . . .

CL 138 Get back into that. Yeah I do.

LM 139 You'll be seduced back in. The longing is so great. Am I right? The longing . . .

CL 139 It is. It's great to get along with him, you know us be a family and going somewhere, to the park, together and not fighting, and like . . .

LM 140 Have you ever had a boyfriend that treated you kindly?

CL 140 I used, I was like, I used to dump guys a lot. I used, I used to dump guys for wearing square boots, you know. I would dump guys for anything. They were really good guys to me, and I mean before I met this guy. He was a great guy, a really nice guy, but he was balding, and I'm like, I didn't . . . It was stupid because now I look back and I was like it never should have been like that. It should have been for somebody that took good care of me, not . . .

LM 141 Yeah, right. It sounds like in the future you will have a very different take on it. But the issue right now tonight, and it's a serious issue, is how to help you move out of that house. And you're saying you don't want to.

CL 141 I want him to know where we are. I do. I want him to know where we are.

LM 142 Why?

CL 143 For him to see my son.

LM 144 Where's your . . . You want him to see your son. That's so important. That's more important than you son having a mother.

CL 144 No, it's, I, you know I want him to be with me too. You know it's just wishing that things could be okay for him you know for me and him to be together.

- LM 145 Again, there's some magical thinking, isn't it.
- CL 145 So you don't think there is no hope of him getting better?
- LM 146 What do you think?
- CL 146 If he gets counseling of something?
- LM 147 What do you think?
- CL 147 I think he if could get counseling maybe you know or help you know, knowing that he's got problems too.
- LM 148 Well, you've watched the talk shows, you said. What do they say about the husband's who beat up their wife.
- CL 148 Once you get hit, it always happens.
- LM 149 Yes. Once you get hit, it always happens, right? It escalates. Right. So that's information you're not wanting to listen to.
- CL 149 I know.
- LM 150 Uhuh, is that really painful to face? (Pause) That once you get hit it always happens. Yeah. (Pause) Yeah, what's the worst part of that?
- CL 151 It's my kid not having a father.
- LM 152 Yeah. Victor won't have a father. (Pause) What's, what's the worst part of that?
- CL 152 I never had a father.
- LM 153 You didn't have a father. I see. And you're not wanting to put your son in the same place. Your mother never remarried.
- CL 153 Uhuh.
- LM 154 Do you think it is going to be like that with you?

CL 154 No, I don't care about being remarried.

LM 155 Mmm, right now you probably can't even think about it.

CL 155 I just don't want him to be without his daddy. He does so much with him. Constantly plays ball with him because you know he is always with him. And I don't want him to lose that.

LM 156 Mmm, but you can't even trust that he won't take him away to Mexico. He's threatened this. There is serious danger here. But the, one of the really painful thoughts that came up was you don't want your son to be without a father. And there's no man in your life that was a father figure?

CL 156 No.

LM 157 So that's something you're going to have to make sure Victor has whether you remarry or not. Aren't there men in the community that you could, or in your family that would be good. Have you thought about that?

CL 157 Well, actually no. Everybody, I mean in my family, I mean, nobody treats my son in my family like he's anything because he's Mexican. He's not part of . . . You know, my mom calls him a "spic." I mean, it's just, and it kills me. I don't, I don't want to live like that. It's my baby. You can call my husband what you will, but somebody just downs my baby. It just gets bad.

LM 158 Yeah, so you're worried you won't be able to find a father figure.

CL 158 I don't want a father that . . . I want him to be the father. I know it's hard. I know you're saying it's not right to think that way.

LM 159 I'm going to just say it straight out. If it doesn't work out with Miguel and he's not a reasonable husband or parent, you need to find a father figure for the boy. That'll be

important. And you've said that hurt you so much. Ah . . .

CL 159 It's not really hurt me. I just see what I missed out on.

LM 160 Right. You don't want your son to miss out on the same thing. But you're paying too high a price for a father figure. What if your father had lived and you watched him beat up your mother. What good would that have done? Even if he were good to you? Have you thought about that? If you didn't know if your mother was going to live or die? If you . . .

CL 160 That would be scary, more scary than the mom leaving.

LM 161 What would you want your mother to do?

CL 161 Leave him.

LM 162 Yeah.

CL 162 And that's what my family, a lot blame it on her. Says you know what you could have left dad and we would have had a normal life.

LM 163 And here it is again. And what I hear you saying over all, and it's understandable. You so long for the marriage to work. You so long for it, and you think if you could just calm down it would be normal. Ah, but remember what you've heard, "Once they start hitting. The hitting continues." So whether you provoke or say something or not. There's not any insurance here that he's not going to be in a bad mood. So you've got this longing that things are going to be reasonable, but that's what I call magical thinking. It's an illusion. Those are my words. Can you, do you believe me? Do you feel . . .

CL 163 You're right. You're absolutely right. It's hard not to believe that way, I mean, I don't have nothing to look forward to, you know.

LM 163 You have nothing to look forward to.

CL 163 I look forward to, you know, getting ready to go out today and there's not going to be no fighting, and like me coming home one night, like after making dinner, him watching TV, me putting my arm around him and instead of him pushing me away, him just hugging me back.

LM 164 Right. So, so what I'm hearing is that there's nothing, one of the horrible things about breaking up this marriage, is that you're saying there'd be nothing to look forward to.

CL 164 Well . . .

LM 165 I could see how you feel that you . . .

CL 165 I don't have nothing for myself now going on in my life. He doesn't hug me. He doesn't say nothing nice to me.

LM 166 But as long as he's there, you can create an illusion around him and a hope that . . .

CL 166 Things might be normal.

LM 167 Maybe it will be normal. Maybe it will all work out. And when you think about being alone, you think about not being able to pay the bills, never being married again, all these things. You're a pretty young woman. You have a life ahead of you, and yet you're having an awful hard time even thinking about having another life. So it makes you trapped, doesn't it?

CL 167 Yeah.

LM 168 Do you think it's really true that you would never have a better life after leaving Miguel?

CL 168 Even my husband will tell me that or my boss told me. She goes you don't know how many people will be behind you once you leave him. You'll get a lot of help. She'll give me furniture, help you. You're late on your payments, we, you know, will work something

out.

LM 169 Well, it looks like there's an invitation there.

CL 169 It's just . . . it's scary.

LM 170 So, it's not that you don't have a place to go.

CL 170 It's scary too. It is. It's . . .

LM 171 Well, let's go through as many of the fears as we can. Cause you're saying, she's saying you're going to have so much support.

CL 171 How do I know that for sure though, I mean, people will say that and then turn their back on you when you need it.

LM 172 Uhuh, do you think she would?

CL 172 No, I know she wouldn't, but . . .

LM 173 Okay, she wouldn't.

CL 173 But who knows, what happens if I run out of, I mean, I don't have no money for food or something. I don't want to depend on nobody.

LM 174 What happens, what happens if you get beaten senseless? So here's, the way you're thinking now is saying there are a lot of financial fears, which is understandable. And, and before this, when this session is over I am going to ask about community supports and try to find out who knows and can put you in touch with this. Cause it's serious. This is really serious what is going on with you. Ah, but there's some sense that he's providing so much financial support. Well, for one thing if you separate and go to court, he has to give you some child support money. Have you thought about that?

CL 174 He actually doesn't help me, though. I don't need . . .

LM 175 He might help you if the courts mandate it.

CL 175 Yeah.

LM 176 He doesn't help you now you say.

CL 176 Well, sometimes he does. He goes I supported you for four years. Now it's your turn. I'm like I can't pay all the bills on my own, and then that's why we fight. Cause, I get, I get stressed out. I have to pay the electricity and, you know, everything, and it's hard . . .

LM 177 It's not clear what's happening financially, but it's more that you so long for your family to be intact and you're not, you're willing to take physical abuse to keep this hope alive and it's a hope that doesn't have much basis to it.

CL 177 Like now it's like I have a, he gave me his car. Well, I gave him, I had three cars before that, and he blew the engines or whatever, and I understand. They weren't brand new cars in the first place. But then he lets me borrow his car, and then he says, when he gave his boss back his truck, he goes well then that's too bad. It's my car. And I'm like well how am I going to bring Victor to school? How am I going to get to work? And he's like that's not my problem. And I get mad because whenever he needed me, I was always there to help him. Always. And now . . .

LM 178 So what has that gotten you?

CL 178 It's just angry that he could just, you know, treat me like I'm not with him. That, you know, I'm not out to hurt him and he knows that. And it's just he can't you know help me out too.

LM 179 It must be hard for you to understand how someone could be like that.

CL 179 I'm always doing, but I do for him and then I do too much. I feel like I'm doing it and he's not giving me back anything. And that's when I get angry with him. I'm like, well Miguel

I've been giving you money. You can give me money for shoes for me or whatever.

LM 180 You keep going back into the stories about asking him, asking him.

CL 180 I know.

LM 181 And also you tell me about the men who were ah, kind to you.

CL 181 Before him?

LM 182 Yeah, that you pushed away. And you know, you did a really good thing by coming here tonight because you said you were going to start counseling and we need to help you get counseling and get support and get active support on this. It's tremendously hard to leave these situations. What's the likelihood that you will be able to go?

CL 182 I don't know. Part of me, I want to.

LM 183 Part of you. What percent wants to? Is it 50/50? Are you right on the fence?

CL 183 No, it's more that I want to. I need help. I know I do.

LM 184 It's more than 50/50?

CL 184 Oh yeah. It's, I know I need . . .

LM 185 Except you're still there.

CL 185 And I've got, my boss is there for me, you know. She said at least I took a step to go to counseling today. At least you're taking steps instead that you don't have nothing, no problems.

LM 186 So you and Victor could move out into her upstairs apartment.

CL 186 If, yeah, I can. But the money, I mean . . .

LM 187 And what did she say about being late on payments?

CL 187 She said there's going to be people who are helping us out. She goes there'll always be

people to be behind me if I leave him. She said you don't know how many people there are that care about you. But they don't want to help you now because you're with him.

LM 188 I guess you need to find out who those people are.

CL 188 Yeah.

LM 189 Do you have any idea?

CL 189 She wants me to move in there, but she's scared that he is going to show up there. She's scared too. She goes I can't have that. I can't have him come in there too, and it's hard on her too.

LM 190 I see. So you'd need to get a bond out. I mean there are legal procedures you can take to keep him from coming. Did you know that? Did you?

CL 190 I don't want him to be away from his father.

LM 191 You don't want Victor to be away from his father.

CL 191 I don't want to keep him away.

LM 192 So that pulls you back in. You know this is, this is not something we're going to be able to resolve right now, obviously. But there's this tremendous and dangerous thing you're doing, playing with your life this way, ah, because you want Victor to have a father like you didn't. It's a huge price to pay. So, what I want to do is see if we can put you in touch with a support network in the community and get you into counseling. But you need to leave your husband and get yourself safe as soon as possible and your son safe. I know you're nodding, but that seems like an . . .

CL 192 I mean, I know . . .

LM 193 What's, we've got another minute or two.

CL 193 It's been like this for years. For years I wanted to leave him. It just never happens. Just, it seems like the longer I'm with him it's going to be harder for me. And I see people that are married for ten years and then they are getting a divorce, and I'm like how did you do it? Just . . .

LM 194 Well, you've gotten more and more beaten down each day.

CL 194 And you get, you believe in it. You believe it's the normal life. You're like . . . She goes aren't you mad about him bruising you up. I'm like so used to it now, it's just part of my normal life. It's part of my life. It is.

LM 195 It's outrageous what you're saying.

CL 195 It's not normal, but it's part of my daily life, so . . .

LM 196 Now, if I could wave a wand and get you out of there, I would do it. Ah, it's painful to hear this. And, and I do know how people get so psychologically beaten down that they can't leave and the longing for things to be good is so great. Ah, but you said you were scared when you heard my reaction. Let's end by that. What is the . . .

CL 196 It's just that I've had deep problems but I don't think they're that bad. I don't think they are as bad as other people view them to be.

LM 197 It sounds like, you mean, I'm not following your, you . . .

CL 197 Like you and all the people around me, how they see . . .

LM 198 That we all see you have deep problems, but you don't feel it.

CL 198 Yeah, I think of them as being things will get better, you know. Everybody tells me no they're not. You just go yeah, yeah, just try to block out whatever they say, and . . .

LM 199 So you'll try to block out what I've said, too. Let's just be honest. I mean, you probably

will.

CL 199 No, I understand you're right, but it doesn't mean that I'm going to home right now and go okay we're done. It's not easy like that. I understand that I'm wrong for being in that predicament, but I just do it because it's just, it's scary, you know, to leave, to take off like that.

LM 200 Yeah, there're so many fears. You don't know your supports. You're going to need a whole support network to get out of there, and there's something you're doing that's creating an illusion over and over about it'll be okay. Ah, my son needs a father.

CL 200 Thing's that have to change.

LM 201 Right. When you've been, you've heard that there's not going to be a change, and you've also said your son doesn't need a father like that. You would never need a father like that. So, this illusion you're creating is holding you in there.

CL 201 It's wrong. It's wrong.

LM 202 It's what?

CL 202 It's the wrong illusion.

LM 203 Yeah. It's a mistake.

CL 203 It is.

LM 204 And it's part of your strength. I bet as a young girl you were optimistic and you looked on the bright side and make do, and probably those same things are working.

CL 204 I say well he does these things good. He does this good. He's really good to his son. Yesterday he bought his kid this . . .

LM 205 So you're looking on the bright side. And this is a time when you need not to look on the

bright side.

CL 205 Sometimes I get mad at him . . .

LM 205 But, can you see it's a lot of strength to do that, but this strength now is working against you. (Pause) Hmm, what?

CL 205 Nothing.

LM 206 What were you thinking just then?

CL 206 It's just that it's true, though. I mean, I think of all the good things he does, and then when we get in a fight I'm like, I'm going to leave him, I'm going to leave him, and then when I leave him for a couple weeks, it's like oh but he's good, he really cares. He's not that bad. And then I fall back in the trap. Like on my son's first birthday he kicked me and my son out. Not knowing that it was his birthday. And then he called me at night and said I want you guys home, and I'm like no. I'm not coming back. You kicked me out on his birthday, so you're not going to see him. And I know it hurt him. And he goes, you don't understand how much it hurt me. I would sit there and watch my son's pictures . . .

LM 207 Wait. Your husband's saying to you, you don't understand how much it hurts me. What about . . .

CL 207 He cares about his son. He doesn't care about me just like I don't care about him. It's the same way. We don't care about each other, and I mean, we could, he could tell you the same thing. I don't love him, he doesn't love me, and we established that, but we just don't, he doesn't want Victor to be without him either. And he goes the court is going to give you the kid and not me. I'm like you're right. I was like, you regret I'm the mother, and I never did nothing wrong to him. I don't do nothing, no drugs or nothing. They can't

take my kid away from me. I'm a great mom. But it's just . . .

LM 208 And so the thing I'm hearing over and over and over is I can't take Victor away from his father. That's one of the main pulls as though that were something sacred and yet I've asked you to look at your mother. What, what if she had stayed with, you know . . . What if your father lived in an abusive relationship with your mother? And you're acting as though that was good for Victor. Do you know the damage that it does to a child?

CL 208 It's not good. I know it's not good.

LM 209 So this illusion again which is looking . . .

CL 209 It's awful, I mean I don't want this . . .

LM 210 It's a mistaken illusion that Victor needs his father.

CL 210 And if I really loved my son as much as I say, I should just leave like you know, and . . . But everybody tells me that it's not as easy as people think it is. It's not as easy. I can't do it on my own. It's hard.

LM 211 Yeah, it is hard, and you're going to need a lot of help. But you, but you said something important just now. If you love your son as much as you say you do, you ought to leave. Now, well, we just have a minutes left. If you love your son as much as you say you do.

CL 211 I do, I mean, it's just a lot of . . . it's a lot of saving up and, you know, just doing it. You know, just saving up before I move out . . .

LM 212 Or, if finding support so you can move out as soon as possible.

CL 212 You know, like . . .

LM 213 As we close, I want to say my personal recommendation is for you to get out as soon as possible. I want to go on record as saying that this is a dangerous situation. It should not

continue, and I'm going to ask for you to get support when we leave here. And I also know how hard it is to go. And it pains me greatly to see what you're going through, and I know how stuck women in your situation are. So you shouldn't blame yourself. (Pause) How is it to hear that?

CL 213 I don't know. (Pause) It's easier to say like, "I'm leaving, I'm leaving, I'm leaving." It's so hard to do it.

LM 214 Sure. Sure. (Pause) A lot of fears facing you. Yeah. What's the hardest thing right now?

CL 214 Is I know I'm doing wrong.

LM 215 You know you're doing wrong by staying. Yeah. Well, maybe that's a place to hang onto. Because you haven't known that. I mean, all through this talk you've said you feel like you're, you know, doing right things. You're giving your son a father. You're trying to keep the marriage together. But maybe if you can remember that what you're doing isn't good for you or your son. Maybe that will help. Do you think?

CL 215 Yeah.

LM 216 Okay.

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