CONQUERING THE GUILT TRIP
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Key Point # 1 We can be easily manipulated by others when our guilt button is tripped.

From a young age, many women are trained to give, to go along and to not hurt anyone’s feelings at all costs. “Be nice,” we’re told, “Or people won’t like you”. We’ve learned to please, to placate, and to pretend in order to not make waves, just to keep the peace.

Passivity and dependence seemed to be the Biblical definition of a gentle and quiet (feminine) spirit. When we try to step out of that definition and be more assertive, many of us feel like we are doing something wrong, or feel guilty.

Key Point # 2 A manipulator’s goal is to control your feelings, thoughts, and behaviors. He or she wants to get what they want regardless of what it costs you. They often use multiple strategies, but one of the most common is the guilt trip.

Here are a few examples:

“If you don’t sign for this home equity loan, I will lose my business and it will be all your fault.”

“Donna’s husband says she doesn’t mind that he has professional friends with other women, what’s wrong with you?”

“Everybody else can go to the party, why do you have to be so controlling?”

“I guess I’ll manage if you can’t come over to help me today, but I don’t know how.”
“I thought you loved (cared about) me. I guess I was wrong.”

**Key Point # 3  Awareness is always the first step of any change. But you are not going to change the person doing the manipulating. You are going to change you.** Manipulation is only effective if it works to control you.

You **must** begin to identify what’s hooking your guilt button and get unhooked.

**Key Point # 4  Lies and fear are the glue that keeps us mentally stuck in the guilt trip.**

**Lies:** We live under a lie that a good Christian should always put other people’s wants and needs ahead of her own.

Women are often taught to be nice at the expense of their own feelings and needs. We become overly accommodating to others and repeatedly cave in to what other people want. We believe a lie that if we say what we need, feel, think or like, we’re being selfish.

But that’s not true. It isn’t selfish to know who you are or what you want. That’s healthy. Selfishness is demanding that you always get what you want or that other’s always put you first. In the same way, when someone else demands that of you, they are being selfish and disrespectful of your personhood.

Read Philippians 2:3,4. What are Paul’s instructions in order to not be selfish?

Does it say we are to only look out for the interests of others or does it say we are to not **only** look out for our own interests but ALSO the interests of other’s.

Manipulators define love as you always doing what I want/need you to do. Therefore, if we have a different opinion, need, want or feelings, we are told are unloving or selfish. When we believe this lie, we feel guilty if we say “no” or want to do something different.
Fears: People who are easily manipulated are afraid of conflict, afraid of being wrong, afraid of being seen in a negative light, afraid of other people’s negative feelings, afraid of rejection.

People who are easily manipulated also don’t have good boundaries.

Here is the problem. Many women enjoy being a giver, making people happy, and taking care of other’s needs. We find satisfaction and our self-esteem and self-worth often comes from doing for others. However, when we don’t have a clear sense of who we are and good boundaries, manipulators sense this in us and exploit it to their own advantage.

Key Point # 5 To Break Free from the manipulator’s power to lay an unnecessary guilt trip on you, follow these steps;

1. Understand this key truth. If you say yes to the manipulator when you really want to say no, you don’t escape negative feelings. You will either feel guilty for dishonoring your own priorities or you will feel angry towards yourself and resentful towards the other person because you gave in simply because you were too afraid to say no.

2. Understand the true purpose of guilt – to warn you of moral failure. If you say no whose rule are you breaking?

3. Learn to tolerate someone else’s negative emotion without caving in. You can be empathetic without enabling.

Read Mark 1:29-39 and see how Jesus said no to Peter and his friends who were waiting to get healed. Do you think they felt disappointed? How did Jesus handle that?

4. Center yourself in God and not in other people’s opinions. Jesus never was guilty, nor did he feel guilty but he did disappoint plenty of people.

Read Proverbs 29:25. How is the fear of man keeping you from becoming the woman God calls you to become?

When we are ruled by other people we will never be free to be the person God wants us to be. Live for his approval rather than other people. When you do so you are less likely to be manipulated.