



Eve [REDACTED]

Hi[REDACTED]
To: Eve [REDACTED]

Tue, Mar 13, 2018 at 10:42 AM

The short, and incomplete answer to your question is no, I did not experience gaslighting with Franklin. But keep in mind that I was not with him for very long at all, and the period of time when it was just the two of us was especially short. I 100% believe that I would have started to experience the things you are experiencing had I stayed close to and invested in him.

I have come to realize several things about the core problems in my relationship with Franklin that have interfered with any kind of reconciliation that would result in me becoming emotionally invested in him again.

The first is that Franklin has an unhealthy 'tolerance' for emotional pain in his partners. When someone you care about is deeply in pain, it is the very nature of intimacy that you will also experience empathic pain and you will be driven to act to stop that pain. If that pain is directly related to you and your actions -or- if it is somehow within your power to otherwise ease that pain and you cannot or will not (which are both reasonable choices) make the changes or take the action that you need to alleviate that pain, then I really believe for any healthy person that this mutual pain must at some point drive you to leave the relationship. I think this is the natural and healthy course. Franklin will essentially stay for ever with a partner who is suicidally miserable. How is that? Why is that? And how do his partners bend around that reality?

Well, for me, the solution was to attempt to build a skillset that would allow me to manage and take responsibility for the pain and stress that I was experiencing as a direct result of my relationship with him. Of course my history with depression confused the issue greatly about where my experience was coming from, but I understand now that it was straight up coming from the relationship. Franklin has or had a very misplaced admiration for my ability to try to transform, tolerate, or otherwise grow from the pain that I was experiencing. However it was this habit that I developed with him, of internalizing and managing neglect, disappointment, instability, and confusion that made me ripe and tolerant for the gaslighting and control that I experienced in another relationship.

I believe that the way that Franklin is able to tolerate his partner's pain over long periods of time is that he never, fundamentally believes it is coming from him. No matter how bad it is, actually, especially when it is so bad that you, as his partner become hysterical, 'irrational' or otherwise crazy, he will continue to see it as essentially something that is coming from you. And, this being the case, he will be a kind and calm and loving friend, helping you through this thing that you alone are experiencing. In this way, do you see how the very construct of the relationship will gaslight anyone who is emotionally invested in him and then suffers for it? Because you will always be steered towards believing that the pain is ultimately coming from you, when you know, you *know* that it wasn't there until he did that thing, or didn't do that thing, or did that series of things. But because he is now being the kind and loving friend that is helping you through this, it is very difficult to stand strong enough to call him on his actions.

Now, I should give him some credit, because I know he tries to recognize the pain that he has caused. In particular, he did a lot of work around how the relationship between he and [REDACTED] and I put me into a very difficult situation. But the thing that he has never ever understood, that I can tell, is that the situation with the three of us, was just a manifestation of the thing that caused pain in our relationship after he left [REDACTED], and also the thing that seems to cause pain in every relationship he has with someone who is emotionally invested in him. Franklin will not take responsibility for himself, his life and his relationships. The thing that caused me pain when he was with [REDACTED] was not actually the rules he had with [REDACTED]. Those sucked, sure. But it was the fact that he would not take responsibility for his agreement to those rules, and so he was constantly pulling me in and then it became my responsibility to figure out what the emotional effect was going to be on [REDACTED], and so *I* became the manager of those rules. After he left [REDACTED], and it was pretty much the two of us, we were living on my credit cards because he would not get a job. I was working full time and trying with all my heart to go to school and every morning I looked on Craigslist for jobs for him, and I sent them to him, and he did not apply. And he would deflect when I asked him about it. His business was faltering, and the company he was associated with was waiting for investment money, and we waited for months, and he would not take action to make our situation better. I felt like I was holding both of our lives together, and I would sit and cry in my car over my lunch break. And he just would not share that burden with me. We were not a team, I was just holding all the stress and misery over our future by myself. And that's what killed it. That's what extinguished that little light inside. It just went out and smoked a little bit, and I just didn't care anymore. It had nothing to do with poly, and actually very little to do with the situation with [REDACTED]. It's because he wouldn't just be a grown up with me, and I couldn't feel like a parent to him anymore.

And honestly, as far as I can tell, those two fundamental core problems, which is really just the one problem of not taking responsibility, have not changed. I have watched the women in his life do so much labor for him. And I have seen him experience these amazing things, and realize many of his dreams, and have all of these exciting and intense romantic experiences, and what I see is a bunch of women just bearing the labor of the neglect, and disappointment, and the processing, and the scheduling, and all of the domestic world building you have to do so that Franklin can just be Franklin. And so for me, that child like wonder and glee that he has, which for the record, another very damaging person in my life also had, well, it's just not that beautiful thing that I thought it was. It's a way of being that comes at the cost of the time and energy of the women in his life, time and energy that could be used for literally anything else. And I don't like it.

One more realization that I have had, and this is true of both the relationships I was in that were very neglectful, is that there is a difference between intense love and intense relief. I never had a chance with Franklin to really find out what love with him would look like, because I was too busy riding the roller coaster of pain-attachment and relief-attachment. I understand much better now what secure love feels like, and it just.. it just never feels like that. With secure love, sometimes you hurt, and you have to work all the time, but it doesn't feel like almost dying and then being resuscitated over and over again. That's something else.

Franklin is not intentionally trying to hurt anyone. And he is not, exactly, participating or creating these crazy-making constructs to get control. And so, I get that it's really hard to recognize what is happening or how it is damaging you. I hope that my perspective can validate your experience, because I think that being miserable and feeling like you're going crazy is probably an inevitable consequence of being deeply emotionally invested in Franklin over a long period of time. Ultimately though, it's not about him or what he is intentionally or unintentionally doing, or about what he needs to do to fix it or anything like that - That is very seriously not your job to figure out or fix. It's really just about you, and whatever kind of boundaries you need to set and whatever life you need to build to be healthy.

Hope that helps,

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