

Opinion

America is in an Abusive Relationship

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In medical school, we are trained in how to relay bad news to patients. We actually go through a process where we have actors come into school, and talk to them about a situation that is uncomfortable. In many cases we are videotaped, and scored on how we deliver the news. We spend time talking about the need for “warning shots,” before delivering the information. Consider this article America’s warning shot... we are now in fact, in an abusive relationship. I don’t think I can describe this any more clearly than we need to wake up, and be vigilant about the data we are taking in from politics.

I spend a lot of time talking to people about using multiple sources for data before passing judgment on a person or process. Part of America, unfortunately, isn’t able to do the things I hope high school students can do on their own. We need to critically evaluate the articles, COVID-19 information, news sources, blogs, Face book, ads, etc., and realize that our worldview that was created by our individual experiences isn’t always accurate. We are raised in places, with vastly different resources, and we do the best we can with what we have. However, we need to be able to grow, and change with the changing world. We need to look outside ourselves and see how our actions are affecting other people.

The words of our leaders have power. Right now we can pull multiple examples of words sending our country into chaos. Just like an abusive partner creating an alternate reality, leaders have learned to weaponize fear. We are being gas lighted by leadership in this country.

During a Feb. 28, 2020 campaign rally, President Donald Trump claimed that the Democrats were using COVID-19 as a political tool. He claimed that it was, “*their new hoax*”, in an effort to impeach him.¹ At the same time he continued to downplay the virus equating it to the flu. Even after his own battle with COVID-19, he tweeted, “*Flu season is coming up! Many people every year, sometimes over 100,000, and despite the Vaccine, die from the Flu. Are we going to close down our Country? No, we have learned to live with it, just like we are learning to live with Covid, in most populations far less lethal!!!*” Tweet by Trump.¹ Twitter has removed his negligent tweets due to their misinformation. In a study done by Cornell, 38 million English language articles on the pandemic were analyzed, and the single highest driver of misinforma-

tion, Donald Trump.²

More recently he has started attacking medical professionals for their mismanagement. Doctors have had allegations of fraud leveled at them, at a time that they are trying to protect their communities.

“*Our doctors get more money if someone dies from Covid. You know that, right? I mean our doctors are very smart people. So what they do is they say ‘I’m sorry but everybody dies of COVID-19,’*” Trump said, October 2020.³ This accusation is completely false. There are many physicians losing their practices and taking pay cuts to survive the economic challenges the pandemic has brought.⁴

Dr. Fauci, our leading Infectious Disease expert, has also been disparaged. In reality he has served under presidents from both parties, as part of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease since 1984.⁵ Yet, this abusive boyfriend of ours is name calling him and gas-lighting us.⁶ He is “*devaluing*” him before he is “*discarded*.” He has hinted in recent days that he plans on firing him after the election. CNN reported on a rally Trump held in Florida November, 2020. The crowd chanted “*Fire Fauci!*” Trump responded with, “*Don’t tell anybody, but let me wait until a little bit after the election*.”⁷ This is right from the, how to be a malignant narcissist, play book.⁶

When the pandemic started and the task force was created, January 29, 2020, Dr. Fauci was held in high regard by Trump, often appearing with him in briefings.⁸ We marveled at how Dr. Fauci was involved with treating the Ebola virus in the United States. We were able to hear about the heartwarming letters he wrote in response to kids who wrote him fan mail. He even read an undergraduate thesis and replied to the young author. He encouraged him and offered feedback.⁹

I would like us to remember, that Dr. Fauci, who is honest, passionate, and insightful, is still there. However, through this process he has continued to stand up for what he believes in, which, when contrary to a Narcissist, will change the dynamics.

During one of Trump’s “*ego injuries*”, he couldn’t control the message, he starting minimizing Dr. Fauci’s role. He courted another physician, just like a toxic boyfriend would do. He told us his tale of woe, and how Dr. Fauci was an “*idiot*,” he tried to make him out to be the bad guy. In a Fox

News interview October 2020, Gidley, Trump's campaign spokesperson, said Fauci "isn't the only doctor out there," and that there's "competing science on various things." This was in an attempt to defend Trump calling Fauci, and other scientists "idiots".¹⁰

Trump has played the victim, as is also typical of toxic relationships. When the new source, Dr. Atlas, came on the scene, he was the new idealized partner to deal with COVID-19. Just like any new girlfriend, Dr. Atlas has now been getting the lay of the land. He is finding his role and fully realizes that he needs to agree with everything Trump says, or he will quickly meet the same fate as Fauci. Dr. Atlas has no experience in dealing with public health emergencies, or even directly taking care of patients, he is a neuro-radiologist. "Scott is a very famous man, who is also highly respected," Trump said. "He's working with us and will be working with us on the corona virus and he has many great ideas".¹¹

A cursory review of his Stanford biography points out is academic achievements and interests including the evaluation of the economic impact of future technology advances in healthcare. He has also written a book on Magnetic Resonance Imaging of the brain.¹² This, unfortunately, doesn't even provide him with on the ground, real world, Intel about taking care of patients and dealing with the people of America in an empathetic way.

Trump has also exhibited the all powerful act of abusing Dr. Fauci, and other medical professionals by using "flying monkeys". What are those? Well, they are his followers who won't contradict him, despite being faced with contradicting data.¹³ Flying monkeys perform abuse by proxy.

When we all witnessed a Trump caravan, trying to knock cars and buses off the road that is abuse by proxy. He can claim he wasn't involved, but his language incites this behavior and is classic of mental illness. He further verified his involvement by giving these predators positive reinforcement. "In my opinion, these patriots did nothing wrong. Instead, the FBI & Justice should be investigating the terrorists, anarchists, and agitators of ANTIFA." Trump Tweeted.¹⁴

Dr. Fauci who has stayed steadfast and true, supporting our country, now has security to protect him from Trump's malicious attacks on his credibility. Trump supporter Steve Bannon even called for the beheadings of Fauci and the FBI Director.¹⁵ "I'd put the heads on pikes. Right, I'd put them at the two corners of the White House as a warning to federal bureaucrats. You either get with the program or you are gone".¹⁵

Having said all this, I am not a psychiatrist, however, in my defense, Dr. Atlas isn't an infectious disease expert, and has no contact with patients. I am at least caring for patients in this pandemic.

I also have the unique perspective of surviving narcissistic

abuse. Once you leave the cycle of abuse you never want to get entangled again. I have seen how this story ends, and unless we change the direction of the pandemic, and work to heal the wounds of the country, more innocent and amazing human beings are going to be casualties of the mental illness holding us hostage.

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