

Secular Wisdom of the

Bad Dalai Lama 

Prophecy & Advice from the World's Worst Religious Leader

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Our Borderline President and My Ex-Wife

By GLENN CAMPBELL

Latest Incarnation of His Badliness

Many armchair psychiatrists have offered mental health diagnoses of President Donald Trump. Some say he is a sociopath and/or psychopath, but the clearest match is Narcissistic Personality Disorder. If you Google the diagnostic criteria, I think you'll agree.

One diagnosis I have not heard applied to him is Borderline Personality Disorder, which is like Narcissism but with more impulsivity and reactivity. It is possible he has elements of both.

One thing you get with a Borderline is a lot of self-defeating behavior invented on the fly. When Trump picks fights with his own allies, starts trade wars he can't win and lashes out at anyone who criticizes him, it reminds me of a Borderline. Characteristic of Trump is not just narcissism but a need to respond immediately and thoughtlessly to the smallest slight, even when it sabotages his own long-term self-interest.

I am something of an expert on Borderline disorder, having been married to a specimen for six years. The disease is all around us, but it is poorly named. "Borderline" doesn't mean anything. A better term is "Emotionally Unstable Personality Disorder" (EUPD). The patient has such a fragile ego that she can't accept any kind of criticism, spoken or implied. Instead, she lashes out with rage at her perceived accuser.

It all came back to me last night, when I woke up from a nightmare. It was a dream I hadn't had in years, but I was familiar with its parameters.

I am lying awake in the marital bed worried about how to save my family when my wife wakes up and starts yelling at me. Her accusations make no sense, and I have no way to respond to them. I have learned it is counterproductive to yell back. Anything I say or do just enrages her more. All I want to do is get away from the abuse.

I try to leave the bedroom, but she blocks the door. She is smaller than me, but she is trying to put me in a position where I must use physical force to escape. If I do use force, it gives her a chance to accuse me of domestic violence.

Finally, I squeeze past her and head for the car. As I get in the driver's seat, she tries to block me from closing the car door. After we struggle for a while, she has a new idea. She relinquishes the door and sits on the hood of the car. She knows I don't want to hurt her, and she is using this benevolence against me.

This was only a dream, but it closely matched my reality 15 years ago. The irony in her actions, repeated countless times during our marriage, is that her verbal and physical abuse was pushing me away, but she wouldn't let me leave.

In my dream, I know I am facing a dilemma. She is sitting on the hood of my car, effectively holding me hostage. It is like she is holding a gun to my head. I know I can dislodge her by driving a few feet forward and braking quickly, but any injury to her could mean jail time for me.

This mirrors the real times in my marriage when I found myself in great danger. My wife's main method of abuse was to accuse me of abuse. Although

unfounded, I was always afraid that one of those accusations would stick.

How is this relevant to the President? He is constantly abusing his opponents, like the Democrats or the governments of China or Mexico, but he won't let them leave. Part of his M.O. is not just to insult others but to block any possible negotiated settlement.

At the core of the Borderline is fragile self-esteem that cannot tolerate the slightest insult or compromise. This is expressed outwardly in two contradictory impulses: the need to reject others before they can reject him and the desperate fear of abandonment.

Trump needs to trap others in impossible negotiations to prevent them from leaving him. The ploy rarely works in the long run because he hasn't thought through the implications, but in the short term it gives him a sense of relief. No one would love Trump for who he is, so he tries to force them to love him.

In my dream, my wife also hasn't thought things through. She is sitting on the hood of my car in her bedclothes, still screaming at me. It is getting cold, and she doesn't have any other plan. Safely in the locked car, I decide to give her some time.

After a few minutes, I make my move. I give the car a little gas and brake suddenly, and she slides off the front of the car. I then back up quickly and drive away.

I park where I know she can't find me. At last I can get some sleep!

—G.C.

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