



Photo by [Arturo Hurtado](#)

A good friend / powerful mentor in my life for many years and I were speaking yesterday, touching on the subject of what makes alienators behave the way do, even when to us it seems like what many call “crazy.” I cannot directly mention a name right now as it would be too easy for my ex’s attorney to connect the dots between them and and my identity which I have needed to keep under wraps during the course of this custody litigation. I am hoping (but have learned never expecting) that this will change in a few months after the permanent hearing in my case.

When we think of someone as “crazy,” it is always a misnomer for what is actually going on. It may make us feel a little better or be a quick reference to behavior that is way outside the norms we expect from others, but it is not useful when considering effective strategy.

For example—if you’ve ever seen someone walking down the street talking to themselves as though they are having a full on conversation with someone else, it is relevant to know that to them, they *really* are. Many of us talk to ourselves, but most know that’s what we are doing. Others are so inside of their conversation they do not. I am more aware of this than ever now when I see people with a tiny Bluetooth phone earbud in their ear talking. When we can see that, we understand why they’re doing what they’re doing their behavior makes sense to us.

We would do well to apply this same observation to the “crazy” behavior of our exes.

I commented (as I do often with my friend) about their exceptional ability to get to the simplicity of things. The simpler, the easier it is to organize around... and the more behavioral flexibility there is.

In this case it has to do with what our identity organizes around. I am personally very much a “God” guy—I have a deeply rooted experience of a connection that is the center of my world. It is a reference point that I am either in alignment with, or not. If I am not, I feel lost and I can usually get back to it fairly quickly. Whatever your “center of gravity” is for you will determine how you respond. (See [Stop Making Your Child Important!](#))

Get This Next Part, Get Major Leverage.

The same goes for your ex.

Your ex has a “center of gravity” as well. It must contain the elements that you are the cause of the issues you are having, that he or she is a victim, that they must protect your child from you because of this. If you try to poke holes in any of the claims they are making, it is enormously threatening. Since the position of victim and you as perpetrator is their “center of gravity,” this would be absolutely impossible to accept. If even one little thread in the proverbial sweater comes undone, the whole garment would unravel.

Here’s an example of how a good high conflict lawyer could argue this, in terms of color.

What color is the car photo?

Most of you would say blue.

However a good attorney, hired to convince the judge that the car is purple because *the client needs the car to be purple*, would say, “No, it’s purple.”

You would say, looking at the car, “No, it’s blue.”

They might say, “Come one now, isn’t this blue really a shade of purple? Look at it. You’re trying to mislead the court by denying that it has a hint of purple in it, doesn’t it. Your ex has said in private you lie and this proves it.”

You might get a little upset and say, “No, It’s BLUE.”

They might say, “What are you getting so defensive about? Obviously everyone knows blue and purple are closely related and purple contains blue. Stop misleading the court with more of your lies.”

You might say “But I’m not lying! I haven’t lied to my ex!”

They might go on with, “Judge, I am asking we get a continuance on deciding what color this car is until we get to the bottom of this lying business.”

If you haven’t been in the court system long enough, this may seem preposterous. But to those of us who have lived I will assume it is all too familiar.

If you keep trying to defend your position and point out the other side is wrong, you’re

done. And that's what they want. *They must stop that first thread from getting pulled. It is life and death to them. If you win, in any way, that pulls the thread.*

Stay in relationship your center of gravity instead of trying to disrupt theirs.

If you don't know what that is, *find out*. It is the most important thing you can do for yourself and your child.