



Photo by Amanda Govaert

*“Feel my blood enraged  
It’s just the fear of losing you  
Don’t you know my name  
Well, you been so long And I’ve been putting out the fire with gasoline”*—David Bowie

There is no doubt that losing or being threatened with the loss of a child or children is one of the most painful things parents can ever face. When it happens due to a caretaker’s conscious efforts to make it happen it makes it even worse. There is good reason to be upset and express that upset. It’s perfectly reasonable.

However for those of us being targeted we MUST be unreasonable.

If we are dealing with a parent who is looking for any reason to remove our children from our lives, we have to remember that any emotional response is like pouring gasoline on an already burning fire. The other, perhaps even more accurate analogy I use on a regular basis is that it’s like supplying crack to a crack addict. If we respond with upset, and that means to anyone who is coming from the point of view of what Dr. Childress refers to as the “pathology”, we feed the fire, the addiction.

I see this happening consistently with distraught parents who continue to make emotional appeals when the truth is the emotional appeals are not your strength. You’re simply never going to win against someone who uses them to distort reality to manipulate people to get what they want.

While I know there is a great deal more to say about this, one thing for sure is that our strength comes from keeping tabs on reality like recordings, documentation, photos, and videos. In addition, it’s easy to look at it in terms of black and white, but that’s never the reality. It may really be 95% - 5% with the other person contributing 95% but we still should be aware of anything we are doing to contribute. Our advantage is that we have the capability of seeing things in shades of grey and as uncomfortable as it might be sometimes, knowing our own issues can help us to correct what we can and stay clear eyed and clear headed. That helps us to remain calm and composed, especially when we are being taunted and provoked by our exes or their allies.

For those times we feel like losing it, we do it behind closed doors with friends and loved

ones who support us - but never where it can come back to haunt us.

Oftentimes, it helps me to remember that this is about my child and I simply cannot indulge my upset because the cost to them is too great.