
COLLECTION

The Essentials of Applied Psychology

The Silent Treatment and No Contact



Gildas Garrec

Cognitive-behavioral therapy practitioner

psychologieetserenite.com

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It is in no way a substitute for professional therapeutic care.

Table of Contents

Introduction — The Silence That Screams	6
Chapter 1 — Understanding the Silent Treatment	9
Chapter 2 — Emotional Withdrawal: The First 30 Days	26
Chapter 3 — The Temptation to Break the Silence	41
Chapter 4 — When the Silent Treatment Is Imposed on You	55
Chapter 5 — Therapeutic No Contact: Why It Heals	75
Chapter 6 — The Traps of False No Contact	91
Chapter 7 — Rebuilding Your Life During the Silence	104
Chapter 8 — Breaking the Silence: When and How to Resume Contact	114
Conclusion — Silence as Rebirth	126
<i>Bibliography</i>	129

Introduction — The Silence That Screams

There are silences that bring peace. The silence of a forest at dawn, when mist still clings to the low branches of oak trees. The silence of a library, where the rustling of pages composes a quiet symphony. The silence that settles naturally between two people who know each other so well that they no longer need words to understand one another.

And then there is the other silence. The one that tears you apart. The one that settles between you and someone you loved, someone you may still love, transforming every minute into a painful eternity. This silence is unlike any other. It is alive, pulsating, all-encompassing. It greets you upon waking, follows you through your days, lies down beside you at night. It has weight, texture, almost a scent. This is the silent treatment.

If you are holding this book in your hands, it is probably because you know this silence. Perhaps you chose it, in a surge of dignity or survival. Perhaps it was imposed on you, brutally, without explanation, like a door slammed in your face. In both cases, you know what I mean when I say that this silence screams.

Why This Book

For over fifteen years of supporting people in relational distress, I have been struck by one observation: the silent treatment is one of the most universal and most misunderstood emotional experiences of our time. Every week, in my office, I see brilliant, articulate men and women who are fully functional in every area of their lives, yet reduced to shadows by the sudden absence of someone they loved.

They all describe the same thing, with different words but identical pain: the phone obsession, the compulsive checking of notifications, the jolt at every vibration, the disappointment renewed a hundred times a day. They tell me about their shame — shame at suffering so much, shame at not being able to "move on," shame at feeling pathetic in a world that values instant resilience and cool detachment.

This book was born from their suffering and from my refusal to trivialize it. Because no, it is not "ridiculous" to suffer from another human being's silence. Because no, "keeping yourself busy" or "downloading a dating app" is not enough to heal. Because neuroscience has proven, with unyielding rigor, that social rejection activates the same brain circuits as physical pain. Your suffering is not a character weakness: it is a neurobiological response programmed by millions of years of evolution.

What You Will Find in These Pages

This book is not a conventional self-help manual. You will find no magic formulas, no miracle recipes, no promises of healing in seven days. What you will find is a deep understanding of what is happening inside you — in your brain, in your body, in your heart — when silence takes hold. And above all, you will find concrete tools, validated by psychological research, for getting through this ordeal without losing yourself.

The first part of this work, which you hold in your hands, covers the first four stages of the journey. We will begin by understanding what the silent treatment truly is — and what it is not. We will distinguish ghosting from no contact, two phenomena often confused but radically different in their intent and impact. We will delve into the neuroscience of social rejection, so that you understand why your brain reacts the way it does.

Next, we will address the emotional withdrawal of the first thirty days — that critical period when your nervous system is in a state of shock, when your brain craves its fix of the other person just as a withdrawing body craves its substance. I will offer you a concrete survival guide, day by day, for weathering this storm.

We will explore the temptation — sometimes almost irresistible — to break the silence, that urge that drives you to send a message at three in the morning, to "happen to pass by" the other person's home, to create a fake profile to monitor their social media. We will see how Alan Marlatt's relapse prevention model, originally designed for addictions, applies with uncanny precision to emotional dependency.

Finally, we will examine the imposed silent treatment — the one forced upon you without your consent, without explanation, without the slightest opportunity to understand. We will discover the concept of ambiguous loss, developed by researcher Pauline Boss, and why the absence of closure is so devastating to the human psyche.

How to Use This Book

Each chapter ends with a case study and a practical exercise. The case studies are inspired by real situations, but names, circumstances, and details have been thoroughly altered to protect the confidentiality of those involved. The exercises are designed to be completed at your own pace, without pressure. Some will seem simple, others will require courage. All have been tested and refined through years of clinical practice.

I invite you to read this book with a notebook at hand. Write down what resonates with you, what surprises you, what angers you, what makes you cry. These reactions are precious indicators of your healing process. Do not censor them.

One last word before we begin: you have the right to suffer. You have the right to find this hard. You have the right to not be "above it all." And you have the right to take as much time as you need to heal. This book is here to accompany you, not to rush you. At your own pace, in your own way, with the certainty that on the other side of silence, there is a life waiting for you — a full, rich life that is profoundly your own.

Let us move forward together.
