



## Saatchi – it isn't working

For a man who has successfully marketed the unpalatable, Saatchi's recent PR seems like a public relations disaster.

Most people were shocked by Saatchi's public coup de grace (coup de crass might be more apt) delivered by via the Mail on Sunday. However, are we really to believe his narrative?

Unlike The Marr Show's paper review, whose guests seemed to conclude that this whole debacle is a cautionary tale about smoking, as it would never have hit the press had they not been sitting outside because Saatchi is a smoker, to me, the article reads like one piece of denial, minimisation, deflection and victim blaming.

Prior to this, we were treated with some kind of updated version of *Let's Call the Whole Thing Off*:

*you say throttling, I say 'playful tiff'*

*you say neck grabbing, I say emphasising a point*

*you say nose tweaking, I say nose wiping*

Hmmm, well I don't think that many were remotely convinced by this, especially when Saatchi himself, in so defending his honour and precious reputation, we are told voluntarily presented himself at Charing Cross Police station and accepted a caution for **assault**.

Bad enough that one piece of ill informed nonsense about domestic violence and **abuse** (my emphasis as there seem to be a great deal of myths abounding that domestic violence is purely about physical violence; see the end of this piece for a detailed checklist of the characteristics of an abusive man) appears in the Daily Mail but this has now been used as the medium to inform Nigella that he is instigating divorce proceedings for not having defended his reputation.

I thought that breaking up with people via fax (obviously passé) was bad enough, then we had texts and now, if you're a multi-millionaire who has spectacularly thrown your dummy out of the pram, you use a British national paper to do it, apparently. I think that most reasonable people would agree that this is not only extremely poor form but totally and unnecessarily cruel. What is also striking is that his actions and words belie the version of a man who frankly doth protest too much. As a friend of mine said in relation to this, "like those lads who, when you turn them down for sex reply "Well I wouldn't shag you anyway".

I mean really, are we seriously expected to believe that this is all Nigella's fault and she is to blame for this? That Saatchi is the injured party? A man who is the victim of a throat grasping cold hearted and unfeeling wife who remains implacable in the face of his endless declarations of love? If it weren't so sad and despicable to treat someone whom one professes to love in this manner, it would indeed be laughable.



Now, I don't presume to know exactly how Nigella is feeling nor the nature of these missives. I do know however, through my own experience and those of plenty of others, that it is almost impossible to be clear headed when in a state of emotional turmoil about what is the best course of action, when lurching from one conflicting emotion to another, when your head is telling you one thing and your heart entirely another. To be on the receiving end of a relentless barrage of pleas for forgiveness, declarations of undying love which when ignored often descend to intimidating behaviour, threats, even those of suicide, is a truly horrible and confusing place to be. The only way to navigate through this maelstrom of emotions is to create a distance. It's called needing space. It takes monumental self-resolve and fear induced self-preservation to resist this kind of emotional blackmail. And let us not forget, Saatchi reminds us that he asked Nigella to leave.

Now, none of us know about their relationship, however, Saatchi's defenders and the man himself have handed us on a plate some useful insights:

*Saatchi reveals that on the day the pictures were published, he was ordered by Ms Lawson's PR advisor Mark Hutchinson to apologise for the assault and admit he was 'ashamed'. He flew off the handle and asked his wife: **'Are you crazy, you know that's not the truth.'** (my bold, refer to the checklist at the end)*

Above, we see one of the myriad of references to Saatchi's 'temper' (several have been made in recent weeks courtesy mostly of the Daily Mail) and what one could easily infer that this is [gaslighting](#); telling his wife that she is crazy as well as deflecting blame.

*'I feel that I have clearly been a disappointment to Nigella during the last year or so, and I am disappointed that she was advised to make no public comment to explain that **I abhor violence of any kind against women, and have never abused her physically in any way.**' (as above)*

Interestingly here we have further denial (after accepting a caution for assault) followed by the much repeated narrow definition of 'physically' in the context of domestic violence and **abuse**.

Anyone with any knowledge and/or experience of domestic violence and abuse will know that it goes beyond physical violence and includes emotional, psychological abuse and control (see the end of this piece).

*It now seems hard to believe but when Saatchi and Nigella were first told, on Friday June 14, that a newspaper was preparing a story about a fight at a restaurant they genuinely thought*



*nothing of it.*

*It was not unusual for them to argue, particularly in recent months,*

Well, this laissez-faire attitude could be one of two things. That it really was a 'playful tiff' and the pair thought nothing of it (in which case, one would have expected Nigella to publicly put the record straight and why would Saatchi voluntarily go to get a police caution?) and forgot.

Or that his kind of behaviour is such a fabric of the relationship to the extent that it is normalised and neither one of them questioned it.

*'Charles's immediate response was to say, look, these are not what they seem,' said the friend. 'He agreed they're horrible but he knows that to a certain extent they're also telling a lie. He wishes to God he hadn't done it but he wasn't exerting any pressure, or trying to scare her. He would never hurt her or any woman.'*

*'He was frustrated because it was Nigella's daughter they were talking about and he felt she wasn't listening to him. That's when he reached over and – yes – some wine had been taken, but they both know it wasn't assault.'*

There are several issues which strike me in the above. Firstly minimising an act of physical assault which judging by the photos, struck fear in Nigella, as seen in her eyes and the misery etched on her face. You do not have to 'exert pressure' to intimidate, frighten and control someone. Denying that this was in any way an attempt to scare Nigella is minimising, to say the least or demonstrates a startling lack of self-awareness

Secondly, does Nigella not have the right to be involved in making decisions about her own daughter? Saatchi is not the father of her daughter after all.

*His ex-wife Miss Hartenstein has cast light on his mercurial manner, saying: 'When the light shines on you, he is charming and amazing and special. I know, because he shone it on me. Then the light fades and there is darkness.'*



I don't know about you, but to me that sounds rather sinister and frankly scary, a bit too close to the Jekyll/Hyde personality type for my comfort. What does one have to do to keep this light ablaze, I ask myself?

*As they settled into married life, Nigella the **'ultimate pacifier'** learned how to deal with his moods, but she was still scared of his sharp tongue. Indeed, friends say that while he is difficult when in a temper*

and:

*'He can be difficult, he's never pretended otherwise. It's often the way with brilliant men. **It's true Nigella is scared of his temper and of him lashing out verbally, but she's never been frightened of him physically.** In private, Nigella has told friends, that of course he has never lifted a finger to hurt her, although he can be difficult and overbearing at times.'*

So, despite not being scared of him 'physically', she is in actual fact scared of him. Words wound too and remember the saying, 'the pen is mightier than the sword'? The same applies to the tongue and verbal abuse is a hugely powerful and damaging weapon of the abuser and something many survivors state they find that hardest to heal from. Physical scars they say heal, emotional ones don't.

Personally, I am really bored of this 'temperamental creative genius' trope which is assuming almost mythical proportions, constantly being used as bullying apologism.

*The row photographed at Scott's restaurant could equally have been Nigella grasping my neck to hold my attention – as indeed she has done in the past.'*

So Nigella now uses a bit of brute force too when she wants his attention? Funny that, as this contradicts the above where she is described as 'the ultimate pacifier'; I personally wouldn't take my chances doing this with a man known to have mercurial temper, especially one of his physique. However, I am well aware that men too are victims of domestic violence and abuse and am not about to deride his claim in the same way that some commentators have dismissed



speculation that Nigella's marriage to this man is an abusive one, however, if this is indeed the case, is anyone asking why Saatchi put up with it? Why he didn't leave? I mean he's not short of a few bob is he? Fool for staying, he must be really weak and pathetic.

*Ms Lawson is not aware of the divorce ultimatum being issued by her husband today and will be devastated by his claim that she is somehow to blame for failing to speak out in his defence.*

So now, it's her fault because she won't take his calls or respond to his texts and she listened to the advice of her press agent instead of doing it Saatchi's way? I am not convinced that these are the actions of a man desperately in love with his wife and willing to do anything to win her back, after having told her to leave in the first place.

*But by 'putting herself in the hands of her press agent' that morning the pictures were published, a devastated Nigella has effectively ended their marriage.*

No, Saatchi has ended the marriage. He has issued his intention to divorce her via the Mail on Sunday, whilst it being simultaneously acknowledged that she will be devastated. Saatchi may think that he has the upper hand and that he has regained control but I sense that it is a Pyrrhic victory.

The full article can be read [here](#) in google docs format, so no £ clicks for the Daily Mail.

## **Characteristics of Abusive Men**

### **Control**

Control is the "overarching behavioural characteristic" of abusive men, achieved with criticism, verbal abuse, financial control, isolation, cruelty, etc. (see [Power & Control Wheel](#)). The need to control may deepen over time or escalate if a woman seeks independence (e.g. going to



school).

## **Entitlement**

Entitlement is the "overarching attitudinal characteristic" of abusive men, a belief in having special rights without responsibilities, justifying unreasonable expectations (e.g., family life must centre on his needs). He will feel the wronged party when his needs are not met and may justify violence as self-defence.

## **Selfishness & Self-centredness**

An expectation of being the centre of attention, having his needs anticipated. May not support or listen to others.

## **Superiority**

Contempt for woman as stupid, unworthy, a sex object or as a house keeper.

## **Possessiveness**

Seeing a woman and his children as property.

## **Confusing Love & Abuse**

Explaining violence as an expression of his deep love.

## **Manipulativeness**

A tactic of confusion, distortion and lies. May project image of himself as good, and portray the woman as crazy or abusive.



## **Contradictory Statements & Behaviours**

Saying one thing and doing another, such as being publicly critical of men who abuse women.

## **Externalization of Responsibility**

Shifting blame for his actions and their effects to others, especially the woman, or to external factors such as job stress.

## **Denial, Minimization, & Victim Blaming**

Refusing to acknowledge abusive behaviour (e.g. she fell), not acknowledging the seriousness of his behaviour and its effects (e.g., it's just a scratch), blaming the victim (e.g., she drove me to it; she made it up because I have a new girlfriend).

## **Serial Battering**

Some men are abusive in relationship after relationship.

**Men can exhibit some or all of these characteristics and never physically assault a woman.**

Source: [http://www.lfcc.on.ca/HCT\\_SWASM\\_4.html](http://www.lfcc.on.ca/HCT_SWASM_4.html)

If your relationship has any the above characteristics and you would like to speak to someone in confidence, you can contact [Women's Aid](#) 24/7 on 0808 2000 247



## Everyday Victim Blaming

challenging institutional disbelief around domestic & sexual violence and abuse

<http://everydayvictimblaming.com>

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