



# Invisible Chains: Overcoming Coercive Control in Your Intimate Relationship

By Lisa Aronson Fontes PhD

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## **Invisible Chains: Overcoming Coercive Control in Your Intimate Relationship** By Lisa Aronson Fontes PhD

When you are showered with attention, it can feel incredibly romantic and can blind you to hints of problems ahead. But what happens when attentiveness becomes domination? In some relationships, the desire to control leads to jealousy, threats, micromanaging--even physical violence. If you or someone you care about are trapped in a web of coercive control, this book provides answers, hope, and a way out. Lisa Aronson Fontes draws on both professional expertise and personal experience to help you:

- \*Recognize controlling behaviors of all kinds.
- \*Understand why this destructive pattern occurs.
- \*Determine whether you are in danger and if your partner can change.
- \*Protect yourself and your kids.
- \*Find the support and resources you need.
- \*Take action to improve or end your relationship.
- \*Regain your freedom and independence.

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## **Invisible Chains: Overcoming Coercive Control in Your Intimate Relationship** By Lisa Aronson Fontes PhD Bibliography

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

"I wish I'd had this book in my youth, when I was the victim of coercion that whittled away at my self-esteem. This book should be in every women's center, police station, and therapist's office. It cuts through the jargon, gets to the heart of the matter, and provides tools of liberation."--Magdalena Gómez, author of *Shameless Woman*

"The first comprehensive guide to overcoming coercive control. Dr. Fontes provides simple tools to assess your own or a loved one's relationship and offers practical steps to getting free, illustrated with real-life stories. The writing is sharp and evocative and the research is impeccable. A path-breaking work."--Evan Stark, PhD, MSW, Professor Emeritus, Rutgers University School of Public Affairs

"Dr. Fontes makes the dynamics of coercive control understandable to everyone. In plain language and with clear examples, she describes the tactics of domineering individuals and their effects on victims. Dr. Fontes is particularly thoughtful about including diverse couples and families. After reading this book, no one will be able to ask, 'Why does she stay?'"--Juan Carlos Areán, Director, National Latin@ Network for Healthy Families and Communities

"This book reveals hidden dimensions behind relationships where one partner is controlled by the other. Dr. Fontes explains the dynamics of coercive control and deciphers the pattern so we can all understand it. Read this book and reclaim your life."--Rabbi Efraim Eisen, marriage, family, and child therapist, Amherst, Massachusetts

"This book is gripping and nuanced. It will be extremely helpful to anyone grappling with issues of coercive control. As a therapist with decades of experience, and a person who has been in coercive relationships, I learned a great deal. The stories of women and men from wide-ranging backgrounds pulled me in deeply. Complex, profound ideas are expressed in easy-to-read language. A 'must-have' resource!"--Janine Roberts, EdD, past president, American Family Therapy Academy

"Fontes's writing is clear and vividly illustrated with real-life stories from her decades of work helping abuse victims become survivors. *Invisible Chains* is a hopeful book that shows a way out of coercive control relationships and illustrates the promise of healing and recovery."--Jeffrey L. Edleson, PhD, Dean and Professor, School of Social Welfare, University of California, Berkeley

"This powerful and informative resource delivers essential information in a nonjudgmental and sensitive manner. People who work in the legal and criminal justice systems need this book to help keep victims and their children safe. The book is easy to read, but in no way simplistic. I will be placing a copy of this book in our office library as a resource for our attorneys and advocates."--Ismael R. Ozanne, Dane County District Attorney, Madison, Wisconsin

"There are illustrations throughout the book, providing insight into the spectra of behaviors that vary from supportive through questionable to outright abusive. The author has included one- and two-sentence sidebars

on many pages, so that a reader can leaf through the book and quickly find issues of interest to read in detail. Although the book is written in a linear fashion, the sidebars make it possible to jump around....Some of the best material in the book reflects the author's willingness to include dynamics that are seldom directly addressed in examinations of domestic violence....Fontes empowers readers by providing questionnaires for assessment of controlling relationships and lethality, as well as determination of victims' coping strategies....People trying to make sense of difficult or isolated relationships will find this book useful to explain what is happening to them, their relatives, or their friends. The vignettes throughout the book make it very readable. Although the concept of coercive control might not be familiar to some readers, this book clarifies what it is and provides practical advice for escaping from it."

(*PsycCRITIQUES* 2016-01-11)

"Excellent for people who are under someone's coercive control or know someone who might be. The book is also recommended for those who have the opportunity to help victims in their work such as therapists, lawyers, and police officers. (starred review)."

(*Library Journal* 2015-04-01)

"This comprehensive, exceptionally helpful guide to coercive relationships will enable readers to identify abusive patterns, determine safe responses, and plan exit strategies. Fontes (*Interviewing Clients across Cultures*) has a doctorate in counseling psychology and is an expert in family and domestic violence. Her expertise comes out in every page as she outlines problem behaviors and presents multiple options (leaving, defining new boundaries, determining how to safely stay in a relationship) in a non-judgmental but pragmatic fashion....Fontes has a firm command of both the explanations and descriptions of coercive behavior, as well as how people in such relationships can extricate themselves. An eminently readable book....Readers who want to check their own relationships or keep an eye out for their loved ones will find this to be a fascinating, disturbing read."

(*Publisher's Weekly* 2015-03-23)

#### About the Author

Lisa Aronson Fontes, PhD, has a doctorate in counseling psychology and has worked in the areas of child abuse, violence against women, and challenging family issues for over 25 years. A professor, researcher, and popular conference speaker, she teaches at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. She survived a relationship that included coercive control and stalking.

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