



**Carol Adrienne, Ph.D.**, notes, “it’s imperative that you recognize the true nature of what’s going on. You are stuck in a classic ‘control’ drama with your client.”

**T**hank you for submitting such a common, and often unrecognized, set up. And I use the term “set up” on purpose. You feel “trapped” because you are stuck in a classic control drama with your client. She is using a “victim” stance (blaming you) so that you will be forced to pay attention to her—especially as she senses that you are moving away from her (thinking of terminating the coaching.) Years ago when I first became involved with the ideas of *The Celestine Prophecy*, one of the most life-changing and useful insights for me was Insight No. 4 (the struggle for power) and No. 6 (the control drama.) I still use these concepts everyday in my own coaching.

Drawing upon the work of transactional analysis, we remember that each of us is always trying to receive energy. Depending on our childhood dynamics, we tend to get stuck in particular techniques that were effective in

our early families. In this case, your client has learned to use blame and guilt to get attention from another person. With you she makes herself the victim of injustice (your fault for her lack of progress.) She then launches into the global victim philosophy that everyone is leaving her and has always left her. She’s probably accurate that most people in her life are distancing themselves from this negative energy. Her goal is to get your sympathy—a form of negative attention that is flowing one way—from you to her.

In your sessions, think back to how she made you feel. My guess is that you probably had some vague (or even virulent) feeling in your solar plexus. You felt drained because the victim literally drains the other person in search of “getting filled up”—that is, trying to get a feeling of being whole and secure from someone else. The important thing to

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**Laura Berman Fortgang, MCC**, personal and executive coach states, “You’re working with a client who is emotionally fragile. You should recommend that she get started with a therapist and be firm about your transition out of the relationship.”

**O**h, I hate when that happens! And it does happen. You already know you are working with a client who is emotionally fragile and your decision to end the relationship was appropriate. As you have been pulled back in and have further work to do to extricate yourself, it may be helpful to see what your options are.

First, get in touch with what’s going on for you. What feelings come up for you in dealing with this person? Setting those feelings aside may help you see your options better. You have three possible choices:

1) Recommend that your client get started with a therapist if she is not already working with one and be firm about transition out of the relationship. There were other factors at work that were not clear upon starting to coach together and that you no longer feel confident that you are the right coach for her. Let her

know you’d help her find another coach.

2) Recommend that she work with a therapist and agree to speak to her until she is set up with one. Have a firm deadline by which that will take place. The focus of your forthcoming calls will be to support this move, but not to process any therapeutic issues.

3) Recommend that she work with a therapist, make clear ground rules about what she works on in therapy and what she works on with you and get back to basics with her. Help her in getting her life together in the most fundamental ways: a support system, money integrity, clearing clutter in her physical environment and taking care of herself while she goes through this tough time. You’ll have to drastically shift your expectations of her to do this.

It is possible to coach someone who is fragile and yet I would completely understand if you do not want to work with her. Do not let her

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