

# Neutralising Manipulative Control

Four interaction strategies to reduce reactivity, protect boundaries, and limit escalation

Safety note: These strategies can help reduce escalation. If threats, stalking, intimidation, or coercive control are present, prioritise safety planning and specialist support.

Strategy	Definition & goal	When to use	How to do it	Pros	Cons & risks
<b>Grey Rock</b>	Stay neutral and uninteresting so provocations lose momentum.	Short, unavoidable interactions (e.g., toxic relative, volatile ex, neighbour).	Brief factual replies; no explaining/defending; share no personal details; exit quickly.	Reduces drama; limits bait; preserves emotional energy.	Can trigger pushback/testing; emotionally draining; may read as cold.
<b>No Contact</b>	End communication to remove access and break the abuse loop.	When you can safely and permanently exit the relationship.	Block channels; avoid shared spaces where possible; tighten privacy; tell trusted people; document boundary breaches if needed.	Often fastest route to clarity; restores peace; supports healing.	Not feasible in all cases (work/co-parenting); leaving can increase risk; may trigger retaliation.
<b>Yellow Rock</b>	A civil, businesslike version of Grey Rock: cooperative tone, minimal emotion.	Co-parenting, legal/admin matters, or unavoidable overlap where you must appear reasonable.	Polite greetings/sign-offs; stick to facts/logistics; ignore provocation; confirm agreements in writing; avoid character debates.	Maintains civility; protects credibility; still denies emotional fuel.	Takes effort; can prolong contact; not sufficient for severe intimidation without support.
<b>Medium Chill</b>	Calm detachment while engaging only superficially and setting quiet boundaries.	Ongoing contact with manipulative people (family, workplace, community).	Keep it light and impersonal; avoid sensitive topics; calm boundary statements; exit politely; do not debate distortions.	More sustainable long-term; reduces conflict temperature; protects energy.	Requires vigilance; can suppress emotions if overused; may fail if intimidation escalates.

## Sources (clickable)

- PsychCentral - Grey Rock method
- Out of the FOG - Medium Chill
- NHS - Getting help for domestic abuse
- High Conflict Institute - BIFF responses
- CPS - Controlling or coercive behaviour