

Look What You Made Me Do!



The first single off Taylor Swift's new album, *Reputation*, was the addictive "Look What You Made Me Do," which felt like a musical middle finger to everyone who's reportedly wronged her recently. Ain't nobody who does revenge lyrics with catchier hooks. But is getting even as satisfying as she makes it sound?

According to science, yes...and no. Seeking retribution is an instinctual reaction to injustice or betrayal, says psychologist Bernard Golden, PhD, author of *Overcoming Destructive Anger*. That's partly because revenge fantasies stimulate your brain's reward center, making a fierce clapback seem ideal. That center also gets lit when those plans become a reality (e.g., flaunting your new man in front of a cheating ex), says Marie Fang, a clinical psychologist in San Jose,

California. Cue that sweet sensation of unleashing your inner Real Housewife.

But the good feels won't last long. And once they plummet, you'll go back to feeling burned, says Alisa Ruby Bash, a psychotherapist in Malibu, California.

In the end, revenge is a quick high that keeps you from moving on with your life. The only way to bounce back legitimately is to actually deal with your hurt feelings.

Take these healthier (and more gratifying) steps instead.

1 Vent It Out

Dishing to a bestie or to anyone who's been in your shoes can deflate your anger by validating and normalizing your feelings. It can also help jump-start your healing process, says Fang.

2 Watch a Replay

Picture how you were betrayed and what you wish had happened instead, says Golden. This helps you ID what you need and value in a friend or partner (trust? connection? recognition?) and adjust your future bonds accordingly.

3 Skip the Boxing

Visualizing your enemy as a punching bag just puts your anger on repeat, says Golden. Instead, stick to nonstrenuous exercises, like yoga, that relax your muscles and mind.

4 Set Boundaries

If the same person keeps backstabbing you, limit or torch the relationship, says Fang. This will give you a sense of control over your life again—the sweetest revenge of all. ■