



GASLIGHTING

A MANIPULATIVE TECHNIQUE FOR CAUSING ONE TO DOUBT THEIR PERCEPTIONS AND REASONING

Gaslighting refers to the techniques associated with manipulating a person's thoughts in such a way that the victim comes to doubt and sometimes deny their true perceptions and reasoning. In the 1946 film *Gaslighting*, a husband manipulates his wife into believing she is insane. The term gets its name from this film.

At best, gaslighting can be jokingly playful, but it can also be malicious and cruel. An abusive relationship is an example. At its worst, it is homicidal, all the way from killing a person to killing a people and culture. Some of history's most depraved leaders used it. Nazi Joseph Goebbels famously said the "if you tell a lie big enough and keep repeating it, people will eventually come to believe it." George Orwell's dystopian novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* presents a culture controlled by a dictatorial political machine that manipulates the perceptions of its people to belief that "war is peace" and that $2 + 2 = 5$.